

## Poetry Section

### The string

By- Dr Nunglekpam Premi Devi

Waking up earlier is too dull and sleepy,  
Still it's always the same; 3 o'clock in the morning;  
Shaking me up hard, pulling off my clothe sheets;  
'Get up' 'get up'; reaching her ice struck hand;  
Water on my face one and two, terribly cold;  
Oh mother! What am I? So angry, I walk on weakly  
No words spoken; so quiet and seriously she pointed;  
'Read your books' 'Read it out loud'  
Sweeter as I yarn, with those teary eyes looking upon;  
Colder as I lay on 'Bora' shaking, holding that 'podon'  
Heavier the 'Pondri' I carry on my back;  
I yarn and I murmur, I read and sleep,  
Jujji! I startle, burning my hair mistakenly;  
Smelling terribly, I rub and I rub concealing hairs.

It's too arousing, smelling those morning breeze;  
It's Sweeter when I see 'him' engaging in work,  
I forget and I smile, I watch and I feel relax;  
All in, Duty to duty; work to work, busy serene morning;  
Incredibly I remark, so perfectly settle, I survey beholding;  
With those 'khudei', 'khwangchet' and 'mojafurit', so perfectly  
match,  
Strong within, those breath takes a moment;  
He cuts and he trims, those wild green and bushes;  
Muddy and dirty, splatter and greasy, as he holds hard;  
Father! Oh father! He divides none  
Brave as he's, stronger as he waves through cutting;  
One and two, he swings and swings across,  
He's been attach bloodily, still he utter a move;  
'kakfeis' fully droll as I saw, sucking to 'his' body.

I read and I stop in between, watching 'him' performing,  
I blink and I roll my eyes, spying 'his' activity;  
He searches for no safety, as he walks out of shallow pond;  
Breathe taking as 'he' carries bamboo logs, muddy;  
He looks for no hour, neither time, he doesn't stop,  
Dusty floor a sitting tool, with his engaging hands;  
Up and down, down and up, to and fro,  
He waves his 'thangjou' sharper and he waves 'payas';  
Bamboo 'payas and payas' one after another,  
Bundle by bundle, he waves no stopping slitting through;  
Up and down, down and up, to and fro,  
Carving and splitting, slitting and slashing;  
'Get me a glass of water' he call  
Fast I jump out, shedding off 'pondri' easing;  
And I ran to give 'him', happily.

I cherish some and I create few moments;  
I stop and I roll up 'bora' as I stand beside 'him'  
Concealing those burnt hairs, rubbing now and again;  
I witness his 'dancing' fingers, none tired,  
Moving and bending up and down;  
Catching and holding 'paya', leg to hand so parallel;  
Joining and framing fences, holding and fastening tightly;  
Waves after waves, knots after knots;  
Twisting and tying, bunch after bunch  
Ah! So mesmerizing,  
Oh! Father, greater you're, taking me to far abundance;  
Forgetting those icy hands, I rejuvenate within;  
This string, this attachment, none breakable;  
Harder you twist, stronger it stands;  
This moment you give, I witness a lifetime.

### AN UNOCCUPIED FOREHEAD

By- Parthajit Borah

A dry leaf can never bear  
the burden of green,  
An unoccupied forehead can never  
be embellished with the dreams  
of joy and tranquillity.  
Every occupants of bare forehead  
can sigh passionately to listen  
the nocturnal tune of wild owls.  
Many unsprouted spring fell latent  
behind their locks,  
Waiting for the final copulation  
with the art of death.  
Deserted dreams beg loving response  
from the elites' lap.  
But nobody listens, only whispers  
the song of late winter moon.

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## Tikendrajit: The Lion of Manipur

By - Dr. Lokendra Arambam

....Contd. from previous issue

Tikendrajit though he inherited the best traditions of royalty in the continuity of the concepts of the golden country in the world view of kingship, was not personally ambitious for power and exercise of power. He was simply raised in the ranks of post-holders within the families of the royal household, that he was given the post of supervisor of the affairs of the police, which was termed *Kowal*, a sort of jurisdiction over the cases of crimes and keeping of the peace. Yet as a prince warrior always ready to extend his hand over military affairs, he joined the expeditions of the Manipur army in its support to the high officials of the British Empire to gain experience in war and statecraft where he became associated with the experienced elder statesmen and warriors like Thangal General, General Balram and other distinguished veterans of the Manipur army. His association with Thangal major were evident in the latter period of Maharajah Chandrakirti's life, when he became more and more concerned with the rapid acceleration of the powers of the British Empire amongst the princely families in India. The promises of the British crown no longer to annex territories in South Asia were suddenly overturned when the opportunity arose, and the post-mutiny overtures of the British to secure more effective control over the tribal inhabited territories surrounding Manipur, and their hunger for bigger control in the affairs of Burma after the accession of lower Burma in the second Anglo-Burmese wars of 1852 became critical matters of geopolitics of the time. Though Manipur was an Asiatic State in alliance with the British Empire, the Manipur monarchy extended full hearted support to the extension of the British imperial geography in the north and the south of Manipur. The settlement of the boundaries of the Manipur territories in the north which became contiguous to the British territories which came existence in

the 1860s created irritations in the relationship between the two entities. The Manipur monarchy was suspicious of the land hunger of the imperial power and their meticulous insistence on sheer graphic knowledge of the hills, mountains and rivers, their hunger of conquest of routes, villages and ethnic settlements to ensure security and safety to the future health of the empire, their postures and manners of their military officials towards the native aristocracy of Manipur became indeed sour notes in the relationship between the powerful empire and their officials with the elder warrior statesmen of Manipur. Though in the later stages of Maharajah Chandrakirti's rule in 1870s, most of the warrior tribes like the Angamis and the Lushai were being pacified through force of arms as well as renewed pledges of trust and ritual. Even though in 1874, there was a historic moment of British and Manipur friendship through the famous meeting with Lord Northbrook by Maharajah Chandrakirti over a yacht on the Barak River at Cachar, the latter days were not healthy days for Manipur-British relations. A political agent like James Johnstone could utilize the service of the Manipur Army for his pacification of the Angamis in 1878, as well as help in the final conquest of Burma in 1885, it could be noticed that the martial energy of the Manipur army and the service of men like Thangal, Balram and Col. Shamu Singh were utilised to suppress dissident tribal communities, clear jungles and routes for the imperial army for the ultimate conquest of Burma, and the last few years in the life of Maharajah Chandrakirti Singh, the services of the native army were maximally utilized for the sheer cause of the British Empire without any substantial returns for the cause of the state. The enormous tribal migrations from Burma to Manipur in latter periods of the 19th century were sympathetically settled in the southern and south western hills of Manipur. The suppression of the Angamis in 1878 by the Manipur army by Major

Thangal and Major Shamu were accompanied by the eldest son of Maharajah Chandrakirti, Surchandra Singh, the *Yubaray* of the state. Tikendrajit himself participated in this expedition. James Johnstone was no admirer of the young talent in the princes of the royal family. His concerns for British subjects in Manipur at the expense of the native sons of the soil were matters of cultural and demographic related tensions and the silent activities of companies like the Bombay-Burma Trading Co-operation in their extensive exploitation of timber and other forest resources of Burma, and their deals for connectivity and profit making concerns became matters of deep suspicion by the patriotic native elite. They encouraged surveillance over the activities of these British subjects. The sense of cultural difference developing under the practical processes of empire making, the frictions in boundary issues and difference of British Indian subjects, their culture and economic practices with those of the natives were conflictual in the freshly expanding networks in human movements, migrations and flows of goods and services, which the traditional Manipur nobility experienced as irritable and disturbing of their cherished equilibrium of life. The quantum of Manipur activity in connection with movement of soldiers and suppression of tribal disturbances in Manipur's eastern frontiers which were necessitated by British requests for help in arms and logistics, which were not considered difficult in the heydays of Manipur independence were felt to be wearisome and suspicious in the latter periods of Maharajah Chandrakirti's life. Rebellions amidst clan aspirants for the Manipur throne were too not infrequent, and immediately after the death of the king in 1886, his eldest son Surchandra had to suppress the rising of Sana Borachaoba, and Tikendrajit took a prominent part in suppressing the rebellion. Tikendrajit's post in the new hierarchy rose, and he was made the Senapati or Commander of the army when Surchandra reigned (1886-90).

Contemporary historians of Manipur did not ponder the reality of the British occupation of the entire sub-continent of Burma through Manipur support in 1885 and its impact on the nature of British relations with native states in South Asia. It must be mentioned that the post 1885 British conquest of Burma and the fall of the Konbaung dynasty had its impact on the defeated psyche of the Burmese patriots and there were furious resistances in upper Burma for nearly four years, and the British took harsh measures to quell them. The Burmese insurgency after the annexation of Burma lasted till 1890, and the British took severe measures like massacres, hangings of leaders of the rebellion in the roadsides, and women and children were not spared. The insurgents too murdered Scottish doctors, the hanging of the rebels on the roadsides did not receive international attention, but it became a scandal at the end of Anglo-Manipur war through the sacrifice of Tikendrajit and his freedom fighters. A British captain wrote a poem on the hangings in post-annexation Burma and its message was very clear. *Under a spreading mango tree A Burmese Chieftain stands His hour has come; a captive he Within the conqueror's hands And they fasten around his sturdy neck A noose of hempen strands. Under a spreading mango tree A lifeless body swings Though bound its limbs a soul is free And spreads on joyful wings To solve the perplexing mysteries of Ten Thousand hidden things. Under a spreading mango tree A Buddhist chapel stands, Where children pray on bended knee. Amidst the simmering sands. That the seeds of Western culture may Take root in eastern lands!* (Quoted by MaungHtin Aung, 1967).

(To be contd)

### Natl. & Intl News

## Ahead of SC hearing on Article 35A, Jammu and Kashmir braces for 2-day shutdown, BJP says 'ready for debate'

Agency, New Delhi, Aug 5,

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday said that it was ready for a debate over the contentious Article 35A of the Constitution, which guarantees special status to permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir. Saturday also witnessed protests across the state over the sensitive issue, while the separatists' groups called for a two-day shutdown in the state demanding that Article 35A should not be scrapped. The remark from the saffron party came ahead of the crucial hearing in the Supreme Court, which will take up a bunch of petition challenging the provision in the Constitution on August 6. The apex court is expected to hear a clutch of petitions, seeking the quashing of the controversial article. Among the petitions is also a plea filed by an RSS-linked NGO 'We the Citizens'. Meanwhile, speaking on the issue, J&K BJP chief spokesperson Sunil Sethi reportedly said, "The BJP is open to a debate with anyone or

any political party on whether or not Article 35A is in the interest of the people of the state. We are extending an open invitation." He added that since the last few days, political tension in Jammu and Kashmir had intensified over Article 35A and said that certain political parties, especially the ones which are active in Kashmir, had taken an "anti-national and anti-people" stance over the issue. The state BJP chief also attacked the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference (NC) and the Congress for "misleading" the people in the state by claiming that Article 35A was for their betterment and in the state's interest. Sethi said, "The continuation of Article 35A will not have any benefit for the state. The central government has pumped crores of rupees into the state over the last 70 years but the development has not been as it should have been." On the other hand, separatist leaders Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Yasin Malik have joined hands to call for a two-day shutdown across the state on Sunday and Monday. The

*The Supreme Court is expected to hear a clutch of petitions on August 6, seeking the quashing of the controversial article 35A which grants special status to permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir.*

shutdown-call has been made under the banner of Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL). Zee News reported. Notably, a report by NDTV stated that the intelligence agencies had cautioned about a possible "revolt" in the ranks of police forces and a massive unrest in the state, if the apex court delivered an "adverse" verdict in the matter. As per a report by India.com, state government employees, business associations, trade unions and lawyers have

warned to go on strike if the SC verdict scrapped the article that conferred special constitutional status to the state. On Saturday, National Conference and People's Democratic Party held protest marches to agitate separately ahead of the SC hearing over the matter of Article 35A on August 6. One of the banners at the rallies read, "If there are no Articles 35A and 370, then there is no accession (of Jammu and Kashmir to India)."