

Sunday Special
Poetry Section

The bridge

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Over looking to the eastern side of Imphal;
Upon crossing the Imphal river banks isolating;
One of the side miniature local birdies resides;
So panicky so stubborn, themselves amour affairs;
One on the other stands the majestic damsels;
Beauty Sheila so picking blooms randomly behind;
Connecting the two barriers so differently;
Long it stands; dare to cross this sole bridge comfortably;
Strong it stood firmly; connecting these two natives;
Scattering calls Echoing through within banks;
Hatred and love blooms on either bank;
One a marriage, two a marriage;
Wedding happens amongst these inhabitants;
With those music bands lifting palanquin,
This bridge, negotiating native's dull of all times.

Happy crossing when in marriage processing;
Lights and music and drums, all jingling;
Left and right; left and right marching forward;
To those land of bride, to those home of groom;
Lonely and secluded; private and sheltered;
No rain stopping them; no storm blown them away;
Thunder and lighting, caress their tiptoe;
Sunshine making their day happy and contented;
This bridge, a nameless one untitled;
This bridge bordering and connecting two natives,
Half a 'kourou' half a 'bashikhong';
Driven by those ethics, a ruthless connecting tall;
No motor neither car stops in the middle,
Straight it goes towards that land of grooms;
This bridge, negotiating native's dull of all times.

Courageous as they slay misunderstanding;
Strong as they argue discontented;
Kill them and kill all; exploit them and punish all;
Hatred and disliking each other either banks;
This bridge, a colorless one standing strong,
Symptoms of bitterness over generation;
A symptom of flourishing love and peace;
This bridge, a maiden bridge standing tall,
No flooding rooted its pillars collapse slip;
No lighting rooted its arms fall and sink;
Alone she stands amidst disputes,
Holding toughness villain's miscreants;
Night so deserted crossing her worry;
This bridge standing firmly in nowhere,
Connecting those inhabitants fast and fury;
This bridge, negotiating native's dull of all times.

A Garland of Tears

By-Parthajit Borah

Why you pour spring into the heart
of the dry leaf?
Left fallen from the brunch of a tree
before a long time.
But you blow fresh falsely.
I am wreathing a garland of tears
for greeting my guest grief.
I am the dying course of losing my entity
Which river left me is a memory of pangs
You often ask me that the shower
of monsoon is the invitee of my heart.
Many dreams filled my heart's palace.
It colours my heart as they
play and dance.
These are the past, not now .

The Merger of Manipur

By- H. Bhuban Singh

After the Anglo-Manipuri war of 1891, Manipur became a Maharaja's native State under British Indian Empire. As per Sanad granted by the Governor-General in Council on 18 September 1891, Churachand, son of Chaobi Yaima and great grandson of Rajah Nar Singh of Manipur was selected to be the Chief of Manipur State with the title of Rajah of Manipur and a salute of eleven guns. The sanad further stated that the Chief ship of Manipur State and the title and salute would be hereditary in the family and would descend in the direct line by primogeniture, provided that in each case the succession was to be approved by the Government of India. Furthermore, Churachand was informed that the permanence of the grant conveyed by this Sanad would depend upon the ready fulfillment by him and his successors of all order given by the British Government with regard to the administration of his territories (Manipur State) and any other matters in which the British Government might be pleased to intervene. Two things are very clear now. Firstly, every case of succession to the Manipur throne could not be a matter of right by birth of any prince and needed the approval of Government of India. Secondly, the British India Government could interfere in the internal administration of the State whenever pleased, at any point of time.

Maharajah Sir Churachand Singh KCSI, CBE was a boy of only six years when he became the Chief of Manipur State in 1891. While he was being prepared to assume the responsibility of Chief ship of Manipur by English education, English culture, English Sports and Games, English ways of thinking and above all, loyalty to the British crown, the State of Manipur was administered on behalf of the Rajah by a Superintendent who was also the Political Agent. Before the British conquest of Manipur, Government of India had stationed a Political Agent in Imphal to watch mutual areas of co-operation and bilateral matters. Correspondingly, the Manipur Government during Maharaja Chandakirti Singh's time had a Manipuri Ambassador at Calcutta in the person of Major Gulab Singh.

When Raja Churachand Singh attained adulthood, the administration of the State was handed over to him on 15 May 1907. A rule called "Rules for the Management of Manipur" was introduced in 1907. As per provisions of this rule, a Manipur State Darbar of eight members was constituted. The Darbar was like the present day cabinet of ministers with Darbar Members having departmental portfolios. The Darbar was presided over by the Maharaja but later on he changed it and the Darbar was headed by a British Officer of ICS (Indian Civil Service) or IPS (Indian Political Service). The proceedings of the Darbar were put up to the Maharaja for approval. So in a way, the internal administration of the State was in the hands of the Maharaja. But to check autocratic rule of the Maharaja, the Political Agent could step in, if the Darbar and the Maharaja differed on certain issues. The Political Agent would draw the attention of the Governor of Assam and the Governor's decision was binding to all. The Political Agent did not however directly intervene. That was the kind of administrative set-up in Manipur during the native statehood days under British India Government. The Maharaja was free to do what he pleased with his State and his subjects. There were cases of Mangba-Sengba (ex-communication) involving entire villages. By a royal decree, the Maharaja would not allow anyone to have name prefix of "Ibungo" unless entitled by custom. So Shri Salam Ibotombi Singh, Ex-speaker, Ex-Minister, Ex-MP had to change his name to plain Salam Tombi. No person who was his subject was allowed to use an umbrella in presence of the Maharaja. Incidentally, there was an area in

Manipur which was designated as British reserve in which the Maharajas laws were inoperative. Such areas were Babupara, Kangla area of Assam Rifles, Maxwell (Khwairambund) Bazar, Kanchup etc. The inhabitants of these areas were British Indian subjects.

Even the Maharani also used to indulge in such idiosyncrasies of personal vanity. Maharani Dhanamanjuri Devi popularly known as Ngangbi Maharani prohibited the use of thambal machu phanek (pink lotus coloured sa-rong) by any woman. She and she alone could use that phanek of that colour. These examples are brought out to highlight the extent of non-interference by the British in the internal administration, of the State. The British could not care less if the Maharaja's subjects were treated like serfs. They would turn a blind eye. The British would poke their nose only when British interests were jeopardized. But they were pragmatic and would not hurt local sentiments. Cow-slaughter was prohibited in the Manipur valley area during Maharaja's time and Sir Robert Reid, the Governor of Assam failed to persuade Maharaja Sir Churachand Singh to lift the prohibition. Similarly, Sir Andrew Clow, the Governor of Assam even with the backing of the Viceroy, failed to allow cow-slaughter in the valley for feeding British, American and African troops of Second World War during Maharaja Budhachandra Singh's time. The plea for contribution to war effort fell on the deaf ears of the Maharaja. The British would not insist, though they could.

Then Indian Independence was coming nearer, the Maharaja became more assertive. The admittance of the hill areas, which was earlier carried out by the President Manipur State Darbar (PMSD) on behalf of His Highness, was brought under the Maharaja's control by passing the Manipur Hill People's (Administration) Regulation 1947. The Maharaja abolished the Darbar and brought in a set-up called His Highness in Council something similar to the Governor General in Council. The PMSD was designated as Chief Minister and the Darbar members, ministers. Mr. F.F. Pearson, IPS, the then British PMSD became the first Chief Minister of Manipur on 1 July 1947. When Mr. Pearson left Manipur on 14 August 1947, Maharajakumar Priyabrata Singh became the Chief Minister of an Interim Council on 15 August 1947. Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh desired to give his people a kind of democratic government with himself as the Head. So he directed Mr. Pearson to draft a Manipur State Constitution which was not ready when independence came. Therefore till the regular constitution came into effect and a constitutional ministry installed Manipur administration was carried out by the Interim Council. Hence the term interim.

Like any progressive Indian Prince, Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh of Manipur signed the Instrument of Accession and Stand Still Agreement with the Dominion Government of India on 11 August 1947. The Indian Independence Act 1947 passed by the British Parliament stipulated the formation of two independent Dominions known as India and Pakistan. When British paramountcy lapsed the native states were to continue to maintain the same relations with either of the Dominions as successor to the British Indian Government. In any case Manipur's accession to India and Manipur becoming a part of the Dominion of India on 15 August 1947 is not in doubt since the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession and Stand Still Agreement 4 days prior to Independence. There is no ambiguity on this score.

Mr. G.P. Stewart ICS (Indian Civil Service) who was the then Political Agent became the first Dominion Agent of India. He was succeeded by Shri Debasar Sarmah. When Sarmah left Imphal abruptly in the

middle of 1948 to contest election in Assam, the post of Dominion Agent. Meanwhile Manipur Constitution Act 1947 was passed and election held and the members of the first Manipur Assembly were sworn in on 18 October 1948. Interim Council was dissolved. P.B. became regular Chief Minister. Since the Chief Minister Maharajakumar P.B. Singh had a good rapport with Sir Akbar Hydary, the Governor of Assam, it was decided by Sir Akbar to use P.B. as the Dominion Agent. But since the offices of Dominion Agent and Chief Minister could not be combined, without provoking incongruence of higher and lower offices, the nomenclature of Dominion Agent was changed to Dewan (Hindustani equivalent of Prime Minister but referred as Agent) and P.B. became the Dewan and Chief Minister in November 1948. Very soon the Government of India found a suitable Dewan and major General Rawal Amar Singh was appointed on 10 April 1949 as Dewan of Manipur with powers to interfere in the internal administration of the State. This was the beginning of the exercise of powers by the government of India as successor to British Indian Government as conferred by the Sanad of 1891. The Maharaja did not like the interference of the new Dewan. He wanted to thrash out his problems with the Governor of Assam. After fixing due appointments, the Maharaja reached Shillong on 17 Sep. 1949. Though his intention was solving the administrative problems of his State

caused by undue interference of the new Dewan, he was confronted with the signing of the merger of Manipur. Perhaps on instruction from the Government of India, he was more or less put under house-arrest in his Redlands Bungalow of Shillong. Maharaja Budhachandra Singh wanted to sign the Merger Agreement after consulting his Council of Ministers. But the Governor of Assam, acting on behalf of the Government of India maintained that consultation was not necessary as the Maharaja and Maharaja alone was competent to decide the future of his State. After a few dilly-dallying, the Maharaja signed the agreement on 21 September 1949 allowing his State (Manipur) to be merged into India on 15 October 1949. By that time, all the Indian native states were merged into India except for Manipur, Tripura and Varanasi. These three last states got merged on 15 October 1949.

The changes brought about by the merger were that the Maharaja's rule ended and democratic participation by the people of Maharaja through the Council of Ministers stopped. The Maharaja was given a Privy Purse of Rs. 3 Lakhs and the State was transformed into a province ruled by a Chief Commissioner. Later, Manipur became a Part 'C' State, a Union Territory and then a full-fledged State in 1972.

(This article from the book called 'Annexation of Manipur 1949', is reproduced by Imphal Times after taking prior permission from the publisher)

Legal Clinic

Punishment of rape under Section 376 of the Indian penal Code

- Whoever, except in the cases provided for in sub-section (2), commits rape, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than seven years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.
- Whoever—
 - being a police officer, commits rape,
 - within the limits of the police station to which such police officer is appointed; or
 - in the premises of any station house; or
 - in a woman in such police officer's custody or in the custody of a police officer subordinate to such police officer; or
 - being a public servant, commits rape on a woman in such public servant's custody or in the custody of a public servant subordinate to such public servant; or
 - being a member of the armed forces deployed in an area by the Central or a State Government commits rape in such area; or
 - being on the management or on the staff of a jail, remand home or other place of custody established by or under any law for the time being in force or of a women's or children's institution, commits rape on any inmate of such jail, remand home, place or institution; or
 - being on the management or on the staff of a hospital, commits rape on a woman in that hospital; or
 - being a relative, guardian or teacher of, or a person in a position of trust or authority towards the woman, commits rape on such woman; or
 - commits rape during communal or sectarian violence; or
 - commits rape on a woman knowing her to be pregnant; or
 - commits rape on a woman when she is under sixteen years of age; or
 - commits rape, on a woman incapable of giving consent; or
 - being in a position of control or dominance over a woman, commits rape on such woman; or
 - commits rape on a woman suffering from mental or physical disability; or
 - while committing rape causes grievous bodily harm or maims or disfigures or endangers the life of a woman; or
 - commits rape repeatedly on the same woman;
 shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than ten years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life, which shall mean imprisonment for the remainder of that person's natural life, and shall also be liable to fine.

Explanations

- For the purposes of this sub-section—
 - "armed forces" means the naval, military and air forces and includes any member of the Armed Forces constituted under any Law for the time being in force, including the paramilitary forces and any auxiliary forces that are under the control of the Central Government, or the State Government;
 - "hospital" means the precincts of the hospital and includes the precincts of any institution for the reception and treatment of persons during convalescence or of persons requiring medical attention or rehabilitation;
 - "police officer" shall have the same meaning as assigned to the expression "police" under the Police Act, 1861;
 - "women's or children's institution" means an institution, whether called an orphanage or a home for neglected women or children or a widow's home or an institution called by any other name, which is established and maintained for the reception and care of women or children.

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