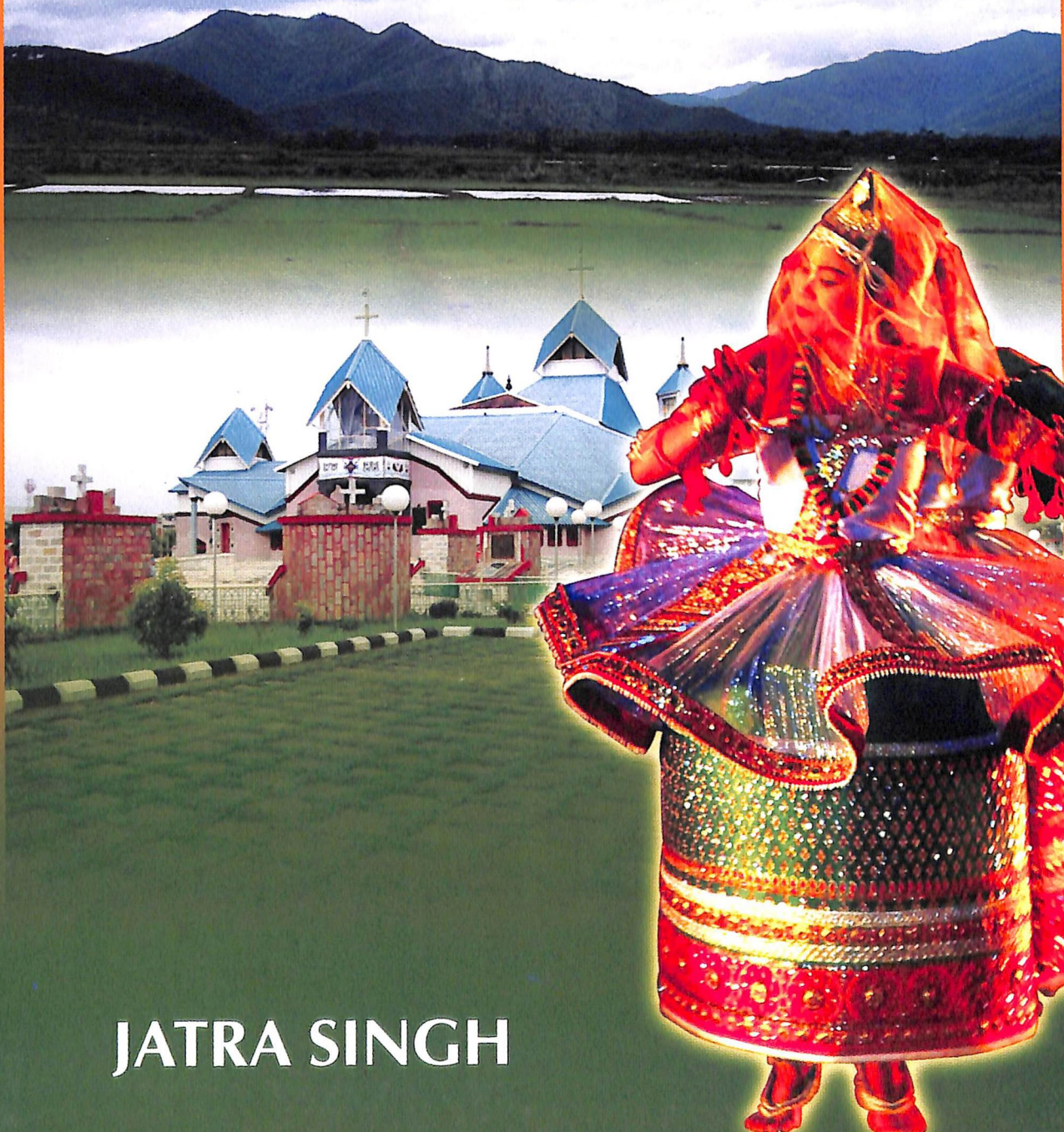


# ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF

# Manipur



JATRA SINGH



*Encyclopaedia*  
*of*  
**MANIPUR**

Volume 1



Jatra Singh

**ANMOL PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.**  
NEW DELHI - 110 002 (INDIA)

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# PREFACE

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Manipur is bounded by Nagaland in the north, Mizoram in the south, upper Myanmar. In the east and Cachar district of Assam in the west. The valley portion of the state is surrounded by hill ranges from all sides. Manipur had been a Union Territory from 1956 and became a full-fledged state from 1972. Manipuri was recognised as a national language in 1992.

There are many mythical stories about the origin of the name Manipuri. Some local people narrate its link with the Mahabharata. They say the name is from Mani, a jewel. This jewel was formerly in the possession of the Rajas of the country ages ago. The country was at one time named Mohindrapore but the Raja named Bupra Baha changed the name to Manipur. According to the Mahabharata the name Manipur was in existence before the birth of Bupra Baha and Mahindrapore was the name of a high hill which is situated a short distance to the east of the capital. Jawaharlal Nehru described Manipur as the 'Jewel of India'. By virtue of its geographical situation, Manipur is a shining pearl in the Himalayan system. Manipuris call it as Meithei Leipak. In the valley Kongba (Imphal), Eeril and Thobal are the big rivers which originate from the hills and flow down into the valley and forms the drain for all waters flowing into the valley carrying them off by Sagnu river through the southern ranges of hills further into the Ningthee. The Bark river flows through its western borders. The natural lake Loktak is a big water reservoir of 36 metres depth. It is 8 miles long from north-west to south-east and 5 miles broad at its greatest breadth from the east to west. The dark green Eichornia (water Hyacinath) reed and other aquatic plants floats on its surface abundantly.

In the valley there are numerous small lakes and swamps. The hills around the cup-shaped valley add to the natural beauty of Manipur. The hills are part of the Himalayas and are termed as Sub-Himalayan ranges. They are spread into ranges with irregular serrated ridges with tapering cliffs. There are several names given to these ranges. On the west : Nunjaibong, Kala Naga, Chakka Nungba, Kanpum and Kopru-Laimotol. On the north : The Khhunho spurs, Thumion (Mayang Khang), Laison and Sirohi farar. On the East : Surameti or Chinganguba, Somrah, Kassom, Nupitel or Maphitel and Yomadoung and on the South : Hawbi. Among these



Chinganguba or Surameti peak is the highest with 12,557ft. All the hills are covered with luxuriant growth of forests with nagesar, jurul, India-rubber, tan, oak, ash, teak, palm (in eastern slopes). There are different varieties of bamboo all over Manipur. *Pinus Longifolia* is found in Somrah basin and in northern portion. It has been planted on the hillock adjacent to Imphal town. The forest department of Manipur should make it a policy of reforestation of these entire ridges if they are really keen on aesthetic reflection of Imphal town in its peripheries. In the high hills the red and white rhododendron is seen. The flame of the forest trees are also found on the way to Tamenglong.

Manipur represents population of two ethnic groups, the people who inhabit the hills called the Nagas and those who inhabit the valley called the Meiteis. The hills are also inhabited by the group called the Kukis. Imphal is the political capital of Manipur. The earliest recorded history dates to 900 AD. In the course of its history there have been several invasions from Myanmar (Burma) which borders with Manipur and numerous clashes with the Nagas. In 1826, Manipur was brought into India by the treaty of Yandavo by Raja Jai Singh with the British at the end of the Indo-Burmese war. This followed a dispute in accession to the throne. With the intervention of the British the dispute was settled. In 1891 Churachand was nominated the Raja and it came under British rule as a princely state. During World War II Imphal was occupied by the Japanese. After Indian independence Manipur became a Union Territory and subsequently achieved statehood in January 21, 1972.

The book is an asset for all scholars, researchers, teachers, students and ofcourse, the general readers.

- Jatra Singh

# INTRODUCTION

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Manipur pronunciation (mnipur in Meitei Mayek) is a state in northeastern India, making its capital in the city of Imphal. Manipur is bounded by the Indian states of Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the south and Assam to the west; it also borders the country of Myanmar to the east. An area of 8,628 sq mi (22,347 km<sup>2</sup>).

The Meiteis, who live primarily in the state's valley region, are one of the primary ethnic groups. Their language, Meiteilon (also known as *Manipuri*), is also the lingua franca in the state, and was recognized as one of India's national languages in 1992. The Kukis and Nagas live in the hills of the state. Manipur is considered a sensitive border state. Foreigners entering Manipur (including foreign citizens born in Manipur) must possess a Restricted Area Permit, which can be obtained from the Foreigners' Regional Registration Office in the "metros" (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata) or certain other state government offices. Permits are valid for only 10 days, and visitors must travel only on tours arranged by authorised travel agents, in groups of four. Furthermore, they may come to Imphal only by air and are not permitted to travel outside the capital.

## *History*

Manipur came under British rule as a princely state in 1891. This ended the independent status of the Kingdom of Manipur, the last kingdom to be incorporated into British India.

During the Second World War, Manipur was the scene of many fierce battles between the Japanese and Allied forces. The Japanese were beaten back before they could enter Imphal, and this proved to be one of the turning points of the War.

After the War, the Manipur Constitution Act, 1947, established a democratic form of government with the Maharaja as the Executive Head and an elected legislature. In 1949, King Prabodhchandra was summoned to Shillong, capital of the Indian province of Assam. He signed a Treaty of Accession, merging the kingdom into India.



The legislative assembly was dissolved on the integration of the state with the republic of India in October 1949. Manipur was a union territory from 1956 and later became a full-fledged state in 1972.

Maharaja Bhagyachandra, king of Manipur from 1759–98, is a legendary figure in Manipur. The inventor of the Ras Lila dance, he is also credited with spreading Vaishnavism in Manipur after his grandfather Pamheiba Rajah made Hinduism the official religion and for creating a unified Manipur.

### ***Geography, Vegetation and Climate***

Manipur is one of the eight states of Northeast India, and one of the Seven Sister States. The state is bounded by Nagaland in the North, Mizoram in the South, Assam in the west, and by the borders of the country Myanmar in the east as well as in the south. The state capital of Manipur is Imphal. The state lies at latitude of 23°83'N - 25°68'N and longitude of 93°03'E - 94°78'E. The total area covered by the state is 22,327 km<sup>2</sup>. The capital lies in an oval shaped valley of approximately 700 sq.miles surrounded by blue mountains and is at an elevation of 790 metres above the sea level. The slope of the valley is from north to south.

The presence of the mountain ranges not only prevents the cold winds from the north from reaching the valley but also acts as a barrier to the cyclonic storms originating from the Bay of Bengal. Within the State of Manipur, there are two major river basins, viz. the Barak River Basin (Barak Valley) and the Manipur River Basin. The total water resources of the two basins have been estimated to be 18.487 cubic kilometres in the form of annual yield. The Barak river, the largest river of Manipur, originates from the northern hills and is joined by a number of tributaries such as Irang, Maku, Tuivai, etc. and thereafter enters Cachar District of Assam. The Manipur river basin has eight major rivers such as Imphal, Iril, Nambul, Sekmai, Chakpi, Thoubal and Khuga. All these rivers originate from the surrounding hills. Almost all the rivers in the valley area are in the mature stage and, therefore, deposit the load in the Loktak lake. The rivers draining the Manipur Hill Area are comparatively young due to the hilly terrain through which they flow. These rivers are corrosive in nature and assume turbulent form in rainy season. Important rivers draining the western area include Maku, Barak River, Jiri, Irang and Leimatak. Rivers draining the eastern part of the State include Chamu, Khunou and other short streams.

Physiographically, Manipur may be characterised in two distinct physical regions - an outlying area of rugged hills and narrow valleys and the inner area represents the features of flat plain topography with all associated land forms. These two areas are not only distinct in respect of physical features but are also conspicuous with regard to various floras and faunas. The valley region would have been a monotonous,

featureless plain but for a number of hills and mounds rising above the flat surface. The Loktak lake is an important geographic feature of the central plain area. The total area occupied by all the lakes is about 600 km<sup>2</sup>. The altitude ranges from 40 m at Jiribam to as high as 2,994 m at Mt. Iso Peak near Mao above MSL.

The soil cover can be divided into two broad types, viz. the red ferruginous soil in the hill area and the alluvium in the valley. The soil generally contains small rock fragments, sand and sandy clay and are of varieties. The top soil on the steep slopes are very thin. In the plain areas, especially flood plains and deltas, the soil is of considerable thickness. Soil on the steep hill slopes is subjected to high erosion resulting into formation of sheets and gullies and barren rock slopes. The normal pH value ranges from 5.4 to 6.8.

### **Districts**

Manipur has currently nine administrative districts.

<b>District</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Headquarters</b>
Bishnupur	496	208368	Bishnupur
Churachandpur	4570	227905	Churachandpur
Chandel	3313	118327	Chandel
Imphal East	709	394876	Porompat
Imphal West	519	444382	Lamphel
Senapati	3271	283621	Senapati
Tamenglong	4391	111499	Tamenglong
Thoubal	514	364140	Thoubal
Ukhrul	4544	140778	Ukhrul

### **Vegetation**

The natural vegetation occupies an area of about 14,365 km<sup>2</sup>. which is nearly 64% of the total geographical area of the State. The vegetation consists of a large variety of plants ranging from short and tall grasses, reeds and bamboos to trees of various species. Broadly, there are four types of forests below:

1. Tropical Semi-ever Green.
2. Dry Temperate Forest
3. Sub-Tropical Pine
4. Tropical Moist Deciduous

Teak, Pine, Oak, Uningthou, Leihao, Bamboo, Cane, etc. are important forest resources growing in plenty. In addition, rubber, tea, coffee, orange, cardamom, etc. are also, grown in hill areas. Food and cash crops occupy the main vegetation cover in the valley.



***Climate***

The climate of Manipur is largely influenced by the topography of this hilly region which defines the geography of Manipur. Situated at an elevation of 790 meters above the sea level, the state of Manipur is wedged between hills from all sides. This north eastern corner of India is blessed with a generally amiable climate though the winters can be a little chilly. The maximum temperature recorded in the summer months of Manipur is 32 degree Celsius. In winter the mercury often falls to sub zero temperature making it frosty in the wintertime. Snowfall sometimes occurs in some hilly regions due to the Western Disturbance.

The coldest month in Manipur is January and July experiences the maximum summer temperature. The ideal time for tourism in the state, in terms of the climate of Manipur, is from the months of October till February, when the weather remains bright and sunny without the scorch of the sun. The hilly state is drenched in rains from the months of May and continues till the middle of October. It receives an average rainfall of 1467.5 mm, annually. However, the rain distribution varies from 933 mm in Imphal to 2593 mm in Tamenglong. The downpour ranges from light drizzles to heavy showers. The normal rainfall of Manipur enriches the soil and helps in agricultural processes and irrigation. The South Westerly Monsoon picks up moisture from the Bay of Bengal and heads towards Manipur, hits the Eastern Himalaya ranges and produces a massive amount of rain in the state.

***Population***

Manipur has a population of 23.88 lakhs (2001 Census). Of the total population, 58.9% live in the valley and the remaining 41.1% are in the hill areas. The hills are inhabited mainly by the tribals and the valley by the Meiteis (including Meitei Muslims known as Meitei Pangal or Pangal). The distribution of area, population and density, literacy rate, etc. as per the 2001 Census provisional figures are as below:

Total Population	23,88,634
Male Population	12,07,338
Female Population	11,81,296
Rural Population	18,18,224
Urban Population	5,70,410
Sex Ratio(Female per 1000 Male)	978
Density ( Per km <sup>2</sup> .)	107
Literate Population	14,29,656 (68.87%)
Towns	33

## *Language*

The official languages of the state are Manipuri and English.

### *Manipuri Language (Meiteilon)*

Meiteilon, the official language of Manipur, has a long history. Courses on Manipuri Language and Literature are offered as a subject up to M.A. level in both Central and State Universities. It is the main language of communication among all different tribes and people inhabiting Manipur. English Language is also slowly gaining ground as a common language of communication here. Meithei has been recognized as the Manipuri language by the Indian Union and has been included in the list of scheduled languages (included in the 8th schedule by the 71st amendment of the constitution in 1992). Meithei is taught as a subject up to the Post-graduate level (Ph.D.) in Universities of India, apart from being a medium of instruction up to the undergraduate level in Manipur.

### *Meetei Mayek (Manipuri Script)*

Meetei Mayek is a script, commonly referred as Mayek, which is being used since the ancient times. Though it was not in vogue for a certain period, its revival in recent past has gained popularity.

### *Tribal Languages*

There are 29 different dialects spoken in Manipur. Six main tribal dialects recognised by Government of Manipur for medium of instruction & examination up to class V are :

1. Tangkhul, language of Tangkhul people
2. Hmar, language of Hmar people
3. Paite, language of Paite people
4. Lushai, language of Lushai people
5. Thadou/Kuki, language of Kuki people
6. Mao, language of Mao People

### *Transportation*

Tulihal Airport, the airport of Imphal, connects the state capital with Delhi, Calcutta and Guwahati. National Highway NH-39 links Manipur with the rest of the country through the railway stations at Dimapur in Nagaland at a distance of 215 km. from Imphal. Highway NH-53 connects Manipur with another railway station at Silchar in Assam, which is 269 km. away from Imphal. Road network of Manipur, having a length of 7170 km, connects all the important towns and far off villages.



***Religion***

The people of Manipur follow several faiths and religions which can be traced down to its unique historical past. Manipur preserved an ancient indigenous religion rich in mythology and colorful in ritual, known today as the Sanamahi. Sanamahi worshiped is concentrated around Sidaba Mapu, the one God. The Manipuri copper plates dates Saka year 721 issued by King Khomtekcha, ruler of Manipur from 763 AD to 773 AD, mention worship of Sanamahi. Early Manipuris were the devotees of a Supreme deity "Lainingthou Soralel" following the footprint of their Godly ancestors. That particular kind of ancestor worship and animism, with the central focus of worship on Umang Lai - that is, local governing deities worshipped in sacred groves. Some of the local gods (*Lais*) they worship are Atiya Sidaba, Pakhangba, Sanamahi, Leimaren, Oknarel, Panganba, Thangjing, Marjing, Wangbaren, Koubru. The religious life of the people, even when they adopted mainstream Hinduism, retained many characteristics inherited from their prehistoric ancestors. The essentials of this religion remain recognizable to the present day. Hinduism has a long tradition in Manipur, however Vaisnavism penetrated Manipur during the reign of King Kyamba and King Khagemba in the 15th century. Towards the end of the 17th century and at the advent of the 18th century, a great force of Gaudiya Vaishnavism came and spread in Manipur. Over the last couple of decades there has been a revival of Sanamahi religion and this is evident in the significant growth of the 'other' religion category in the 2001 census. Around 10% of the population identified themselves under this category. Sanamahi religion is the original religion of the Meitei people living in Manipur. Due to the changing demographic profile of the state, Sanamahi will now be included in the next Government of India population census in 2011. Other religions prevalent in the region are:

***Christianity***

Christianity in the hill tracts of north-eastern region spread as a result of the British religious policy in the area. At present almost all of the hill tribal population is Christian. All groups of Nagas and Kukis of Manipur have adopted Christianity. The Bible is available in Tangkhul, Thadou, Lushai and Meitei dialects. Christianity is the second largest religion in the state accounting for 35% of the population.

***Islam***

Most of the Muslims in Manipur are descendants of Bengali immigrants and are commonly referred to as Pangans. Muslims form about 8% of the population.

***Culture of Manipur***

Theatre and society in Manipur, as in many parts of the world, have concomitant relationship as they progress along each other. Manipuris are a culturally enthusiastic

people. Cultural spirit has never been allowed to be blown out despite its geographical aloofness from the outside world. This is the main reason for it to be still thriving valiantly in Manipur valley. Theatre has always been part of the Laiharaoba festivals since time immemorial. Theatre in Manipur today can be broadly divided, based on their texts, into religious and secular. The former is the adaptation of religious epics or some episodes from them, performed mainly in the sacred sphere such as temples. Within this Gouralila (the story of the childhood days of Gouranga Mahaprabhu), Sanjenba ( an episode from the play between Krishna and his cows and his Gopis ), Udukhol (an episode from Krishna's childhood days) can be incorporated.

They are seasonal performances commanding spiritual devotions among the audience. On the other hand secular theatre is mostly confined in themes which are not religious and is performed in the secular or profane spheres. Within these are Shumang lila and Phampak lila (stage drama). Though the religious genre is loved profoundly by the audience, the torch of theatre is being held aloft by the secular ones. Among the latter also Shumang lila commands a very wide rustic popularity among the audience though the stage drama still doesn't lack its serene and dignified position mostly because of its community based themes and styles. Etymologically Shumang lila is the combination of "Shumang" (courtyard) and "Lila" (play or performance). It is performed in an area of 13/13ft in the centre of any open space. It is performed in a very simple style without any raised stage or any set designing or heavy props such as curtains, background scenery, visual effects etc. but with only one table and two chairs, kept on one side of the performance space. Its claims of being the theatre of the masses can be exemplified by the way it is performed in the middle of an audience which surrounds it from all sides leaving only one passage which serves as both entrance and exit connecting the performance space with the green room. Shumang lila is performed by a touring band of 12-13 professional artistes on invitation basis.

These troupes may be either exclusively female (Nupi Shumang Lila) or exclusively male (Nupa Shumang lila). Though the male characters are enacted by the female artistes in the case of the former what is most intriguing is the enactment of the female roles by the male artistes or nupishabis (male actresses), in the case of the latter. They are feminine par excellence in their looks, bodily gestures and facial expressions guised in the masculine souls. Historically the actual seed of Shumang lila was sown in Phagee lila (farce), performed during the reign of Ningthourel Chandrakirti (1850-1886), though the traces of it were already present in the episode of Tangkhul-Nurabi Loutaba of Laiharaoba festival. Then it was succeeded by such plays as Ramlila, Sabha parba, Kabul lila etc. But the real Shumang lila with various rasas (sentiments) was ushered in with the epic play Harishchandra (1918). Then it was followed by others such as Meiraba charan, Thok lila etc. One of the most successful plays of this era was Moirang parba (an epic play based on the legendary lovers-Khamḁa and

Thoibi of Moirang). On the other hand, the world of Phampak lila ( stage drama ) performed in the proscenium theatre is similar, in form, to the Western theatrical model and Indian Natyasastra model though its contents are indigenous. The so called modern theatre descended on Manipuri theatre culture with the performance of Pravas Milan (1902) under the enthusiastic patronage of Sir Churchand Maharaj (1891-1941).

The pace of theatrical movement was geared up with the institution of various groups such as Manipur Dramatic Union (MDU) (1930), Arian Theatre (1935), Chitragada Natya Mandir (1936), Society Theatre (1937), Rupmahal (1942), Cosmopolitan Dramatic Union (1968), The Chorus Repertory Theatre of Ratan Thiyam (1976) etc. These groups started experimenting with various types of plays apart from historical and pauranic ones. Today Manipuri theatre is well respected because of various excellent productions shown in various parts of the country and the abroad. Manipuri plays, both Shumang lila and stage lila, have been a regular feature in the annual festival of National School of Drama, New Delhi.

### ***Indigenous games of Manipur***

The indigenous games of Manipur can be classified as Outdoor and Indoor.

#### ***Outdoor***

1. Mukna
2. Mukna Kangjei (Khong Kangjei)
3. Sagol Kangjei (Polo)
4. Yubi Lakpi (Coconut Rugby)
5. Oo-Laobi
6. Hiyang-Tannaba
7. Arambai Hunba

#### ***Mukna (Manipuri wrestling)***

Mukna is a very popular form of wrestling. It has fundamental rules agreed by all Mukna organizations and with Royal Consent. Traditionally the game is controlled and organised by Pana Loisang of the Ruler of the state and village organizations. There are four Panas-Ahallup, Naharup, Khabam and Laipham who control all fixtures and time for the games and State Meet in which Final is invariably graced by the ruler and presents the Title of Jatra (Champion) for the year along with reward of Thum Nama ( A ful bag of salt) and Ngabong Phi (hand made cloth of coton yarn), exemption of all state duties and Ningham Samjin dress (traditional). The game has two categories (1) Takhatnabi (League), (2) Naitom (Knockout). The young talents

work and play all the year round with dedication for the title of 'Jatra' (Champion) of Mukna of Manipur.

### ***Mukna Kangjei (Khong Kangjei)***

Mukna Kangjei is a game which combines the arts of mukna (wrestling) and Kangjei (Cane Stick) to play the ball made of seasoned bamboo roots. The origin of the game goes back well to Aniconic worship. People celebrate 'Lai Haraoba' (festival to please traditional deities) and include this item to mark the end of the festival. It was believed that Khagemba Ningthou (King) - (1597-1652) patronised this game. In later generation, the game is organised in the villages. Presently, associations are formed in Panas with rules and regulations of Mukna Kangjei. The game is played by two teams each consisting of seven players. All players hold a natural cane stick with root, gradually increasing the size of the root, to the length of about seven inches to play the ball made out of seasoned bamboo roots of approximately a diameter of four inches (102 mm). The players put on Mukna Kisi Phijet (dress of cloth knot) to secure protection and holding each other.

At present a short pant is added below Kisi (like cloth belt with knots). The game starts by throwing the ball in front of the panjenbas (leaders) of the two teams standing face to face to each other on the line. If possible they can pick up the ball and run. The process of running and obstructing each other to put the ball on the goal line of the ground is allowed, Pun onba (change of side) and end of the game is given by the command of the umpire. The rules for the game is known as Kangjei lon. It has improved a lot and was demonstrated during the Fifth National Games 1999 at Imphal.

### ***Sagol Kangjei***

To Manipuris according to Chaitharol-Kumbaba, a Royal Chronicle of Manipur King Kangba who ruled Manipur much earlier than Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (33 AD) introduced Sagol Kangjei (Kangjei on horse back). Further regular playing of this game commenced in 1605 during the reign of King Khagemba under newly framed rules of the game. The game requires perfect control of the pony, the stick and the ball with proficiency of riding.

The sense of 'fair Play' was the main guided factor of this game. This is played between two teams of Seven players a side. During the time of the late Sir Chandrakirti Singh, K.C.S.I Maharaja of Manipur introduced regular game at Mapal Kangjeibung (now near Tikendrajit Park) on the ground of Sana-Lamjei (length 160 and 80 width in dimension) being one Lamjei equal to 6 ft (1.8 m) The game can be played in smaller ground also if occasion demands. Earlier, there was no definite rules for foul in traditional Sagol Kangjei. Manipur has produced players of outstanding calibres like



Jubaraj Bir Tikendraji (Senapati of Manipur Army) as legendary player described by Mrs. Grimhood (1887-90). After 1891, Manipur produced outstanding players like (L) Ojha Tombi and Shyamjai Sharma who never had the chance to play in international tournament. From the history it is an established fact and accepted that Manipur is the birthplace of Polo of the World.

### ***Yubi Lakpi***

Yubi (Coconut) Lakpi (capturing) is like rugby except that its an Individual game. Before the start of the game, players rub their bodies with mustard oil and water to make slippery to catch each other. A coconut properly soaked with oil is place in front of the Chief guest of the function. The players put on kisi (Langot) on an underpant properly tied in front. A senior Jatra is the umpire of the game to start and check fouls of the players. Before the start the coconut is placed in front of the seat of the Chief Guest. Official game is held on the occasion of the Yaoshang Festival of Shri Shri Govindajee at palace ground and with Royal presence.

### ***Oolaobi***

Oolaobi is an outdoor game mainly played by the female. Meitei mythology believes that UmangLai Heloi-Taret (Seven deities-seven fairies) played this game on the Courtyard of the temple of UMANG LAI LAIREMBI. Number of the participants were not fixed but are divided into two groups ( size now as per agreement). Players are divided as:- (1) Raiders (Attackers) (2) Defenders (Avoiders) Action of raider: Say "oo" without stopping as long as they can continue and try to touch the avoiders. If a raider touches an Avoider is out. This process goes on till avoiders are out or surrender. If a raider fails to say "oo" or out of breadth, Raider is out. Points are counted on the elimination of Raiders/Defenders. Change of Side: If Raiders are tired they declare for change. Now time limit is decided for change. The outline principles of Woo-Laobi is very much similar to that of Kabaddi in India. The ground (court) is not marked, normally the open space available within the premises of the house or temple is used for the game. This game, is very much liked by the girls and also became a source of talent in Kabaddi.

### ***Hiyang Tannaba***

Hiyang Tannaba (Boat Race) : Hiyang tannaba (Hi Yangba Tannaba) is a tradinional function of the Panas. This is held during the month of November. This was introduced during the time of Ningthourel Khunjaoba, the second son of King Khagemba, who dug the Kangla Moat around the Palace to make it impregnable in the year of 1660 after he ascended the throne in 1652. In the traditional function two boats "Tanahi" (Race Boat) are detailed for leaders known as "Tengmai Lappa". In each boat forty Hiroys (Boatsman) operate the boat. The boat which reaches the finishing line is the

winner and all boatsman raise their (Nows) oars high in the air as a sign of reaching the finishing line first and thus the winner of the race is declared. The leader pays his respect to the deity and the King of Manipur.

### ***Arambai Hunba***

People of Manipur are very fond of riding horses specially those who are in the village near the breeding areas. Since the ponies are easily available , the young boys get the chance of riding ponies without saddle on horse back. Sometimes they ride horse using a rope in place of regular bridle throwing branches of small trees in place of Arambai. This practice helped the Manipur Arambai force as a martial art which was very much required during the advance and withdrawal of forces. This art was very popular as an indigenous game of the youth of Manipur. This game is displayed even now , during the festival “Kwak Jatra” after Durga Puja.

## **Indoor Indigenous Games**

### ***Kang***

Kang is played by both male and female Meities of Manipur. Manipuris believe Kang is a game played by deity “ Panthoibi”. It is also believed that Manipuris began to play this game well before Vaishnavism came to Manipur. It is culturally a fine game of Manipur specially of Meiteis. It is played under a shed of building on an earth ground ( court) smoothly levelled to suit the course of the ‘Kang’ the target on the court. It is well marked for the respective positions of the players of both to hit the target on the court. It has rules and regulations formed by the associations to suit the occasions of the games either for tournaments or Friendly. The dignitaries of the Palace, even Queen and King also participated on social functions. In olden days ‘Kang’ was played during summer, starting from Cheiraoba (Manipur New Year) to Kang Chingba. Presently the game is played in several touranaments throughout the year, organised by the Associations. Rules and regulations have been modified to suit the improved process of the game.

### ***Festivals of Manipur***

The various festivals of Manipur are Ningol Chakouba, Yaoshang, Ramjan ID, Kut, Gan-ngai, Chumpha, Christmas, Cheiraoba, Kang and Heikru Hidongba. Most of these festivals are usually celebrated on the basis of lunar calendar. Almost every festival celebrated in other states is observed here and it makes Manipur a mini metropolis.

### ***Ningol Chakouba (November)***

A social festival of the Meiteis where the women (Ningol) are invited (Chakouba) to a feast at their parental house along with their children. Along with the feast, gifts

are given for them as well as the children. It is the festival that binds and revives the family relations between the girls married away and the parents. Nowadays, other communities had also started celebrating this festival. It is held every year mostly during the month of November. Sometimes it falls in October.

### ***Yaoshang (February/March)***

A riot of colours and water and the various chanting of the devotees of Lord Krishna is what you will come across during this festival. Another feature of this premiere festival is the Thabal Chongba (Dancing in the Moonlight). The boys from various places will come to the site of the festival and dance with the girls by holding on to their hands and moving in circles. It is celebrated for five days starting from the full moon of Phalguna (February/March).

### ***Christmas (December)***

Another community comprising of the Kukis, the Nagas, the Tangkhuls, the Marings, etc in Manipur are all Christians and celebrate Christmas for two days with prayers, reading of gospels, eating, singing of hymns, lectures on Christ, sports etc. It is usually observed on December 24 and 25. The Kuki are the second largest people in terms of population, next to the Meitei people. Few of them living in the plain area but most of them living in the hill area from generation to generation.

### ***Gaan-Ngai***

Gaan-Ngai is the greatest festival of the Zeliangrong people. Its a 5 day long festival and is usually performed on the 13th day of the Meitei month of Wakching as per the Meitei Calendar of the lunar year. It is a festival which symbolises the beginning of the harvest season. The Gaan Ngai is celebrated with folk songs and cultural dance contributing to Almighty (Tingkao Ragwang).

### ***Ramjan ID***

The Manipuri Muslims observed this festival in the very spirits of joy and festivities as in other Muslim world. During this month the Muslims practice self denial by taking a fast, abstaining from smoke and drink from pre-dawn till sunset. After the second day of shawwal, when the new moon is visible they break fast which is also popularly known as Id-Ul-Fitre. They offer prayers at the mosques, have delicious dishes, exchange greetings and call on the friends and relatives. Ramjan is the ninth month of the Hijri year.

### ***Cheiraoba (New Year of Manipur) (April)***

The people of Manipur clean and decorate their houses and make a sumptuous variety of dishes to feast upon after offering the food to the deity on this day. After

the feast, as a part of the rituals, people climb the nearest hill tops (*Cheiraoching Kaba*) in the belief that it would excel them to greater heights in their worldly life. It is observed during the month of April.

### ***Problems***

The implementation of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in 1958 resulted in the designation of Manipur as a “disturbed area” .

There have been some minor border disputes with Myanmar (formerly Burma), which were resolved through treaty of Yandaboo.

Manipur as a state in India is also involved in a border dispute with another state Nagaland.

There have been a few social upheavals in the recent past, resulting in mounting tensions between the Meiteis (the valley people) and the Nagas residing in Manipur.

The long-standing demand to include the Meitei language in the 8th schedule was finally granted by the 71st amendment of the Constitution in 1992.

On November 20, 2004 Prime Minister Manmohan Singh fulfilled a long-standing demand of the Manipuri people by officially handing over the historic Kangla Fort(which was being used as headquarters of Paramilitary forces since 1915) to Manipur state government. Kangla Fort is now open to general public.

The Prime Minister also upgraded Manipur University into a Central University and laid the foundation stone for a 97.9 km long, Jiribam - Imphal, broad gauge rail line project. The line ends at Tupul, 25 km away from Imphal.

United National Liberation Front (UNLF) is one of the largest unrest causing armed organisation in the state and it purports to work for independent manipur.

Ordinary Manipuris are tired of the rebels' influence as apart from disruption of life and economy they issue diktats and rulings on moral and social behaviour, enforced with the threat of violence. Extortion is also rampant in Manipur. Most professions are forced to pay the rebels regular sums of money that are locally called 'tax'.

The disturbed area status for manipur has been extended for one more year on 23rd Nov, 2007.

### ***Tourism***

Manipur as the name suggest is a land of jewels. Manipur's culture and the present mix of the races stem from the influences of the Vaishnavism and the embedded traditional values in the region. Its rich culture excels in every aspects as in martial arts, dance, theater and sculpture. The charm of the place is the greenery with the



moderate climate making it a tourists haven. The beautiful and seasonal Shirui Lily at Ukhrul (district), Sangai (Brow antlered deer) and the floating islands at Loktak Lake are one of the rare things found at Manipur. Polo, which can be called a royal game, also originated from Manipur. Some of the main tourist attractions are:

### ***Imphal (Capital)***

The city is mainly inhabited by the Vaishnavites and it is just 7 km from the airport of Manipur (Tulihal Airport). The district is divided into East and West and the recently constructed sports complex (Khuman Lampak Sports Complex) is also one of the attractions comprising of every thing, from a cyclists velodrome to the main stadium. Most of the imported goods are sold here at its Paona Bazar, Gambhir Singh Shopping Complex and Leima Plaza.

### ***Keibul Lamjao National Park***

Keibul Lamjao National Park, 48 km away from Imphal is an abode of, rare and endangered species of Brow Antlered deer (also known as Sangai). This ecosystem is home to 17 rare species of mammals. The greenery of the place and the moderate temperature makes a pleasant experience to visit.

### ***Loktak Lake (Freshwater Lake)***

Loktak Lake is the lake where most of the people of Manipur get their share of fish meat. The special treat to watch are the floating islands popularly known as Phumdi which is made out of the tangle of watery weeds and other plants. With a nominal fee, people can hire small boats and see this fascinating way of living on these floating islands. The wetland is swampy and is favourable for a number of species to thrive on. It is in the district of Moirang.

### ***Manipuri Dance (Ras Lila)***

A classical form of Manipuri dance based and inspired by the theme of Lord Krishna and his beloved, Radha love story and the devotion of the Gopis (companions) towards Lord Krishna. This graceful and slow movement of the dance makes it one of the most acclaimed classical dances of India. The costume is elegant, as there are nicely embroidered clothes that give luster to the beauty of the art.

### ***Shree Govindajee Temple***

This temple is the premiere temple in Manipur and it adjoins the palaces of the former rulers of the state. The temple is simple in design with gold domes, a paved court and a large, raised congregation hall. The deity in the center has other idols of Radha Govinda, Balaram and Krishna and Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra on either side of it.

### ***Chorus Repertory Theater***

The auditorium of the theater is situated on the out-skirts of Imphal and the campus stretches for about 2 acres (8,100 m<sup>2</sup>). It has housing and working quarters to accommodate a self-sufficiency of life. The theater association has churned out internationally acclaimed plays like *Chakravyuha* and *Uttarpriyadashi*. Its' 25 years of existence in theater had disciplined its performers to a world of excellence. *Chakravyuha* taken from the Mahabharat epic had won Fringe Firsts Award, 1987 at the Edinburgh International Theater Festival. *Chakravyuha* deals with the story of Abhimanyu (son of Arjun) of his last battle and approaching death whereas *Uttarpriyadashi* is an 80-minute exposition of Emperor Ashoka's redemption. Other places of interest are:

### ***War cemeteries***

Commemorating the memories of the British and Indian soldiers who died during the Second World War, these cemeteries are managed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Serene and well maintained, the graves carry little stone markers and bronze plaques, recording the sacrifice of those gallant soldiers.

### ***Khonghapat Orchidarium***

7 km from Imphal, on Highway No. 39 is the Central Orchidarium, which covers 200 acres (0.81 km<sup>2</sup>) and houses over 110 rare varieties of orchids, which include almost a dozen endemic species. The peak blooming season is March - April.

### ***Manipur Zoological Gardens***

6 km to the west of Imphal, at the foot of the pine growing hillocks at Iroisemba on the Imphal-Kangchup Road are the Zoological Gardens. Not to be missed is an opportunity to see the graceful brow antlered deer (Sangai) one of the rarest species in the world, in sylvan surroundings.

### ***Moirang***

45 km from Imphal, the town is one of the main centres of early Meitei folk culture with the ancient temple of the pre-Hindu deity Lord Thangjing, situated here. In the month of May, men and women, dressed in colourful traditional costumes, sing and dance in honour of the Lord at the Moirang "Lai Haraoba" which is a ritual dance festival held each year. The town also has a special place in the history of the Indian freedom struggle. It was at Moirang that the flag of the Indian National Army was first unfurled on April 14, 1944.

### ***Loktak Lake and Sendra Island***

48 km from Imphal, lies the largest fresh water lake in the North East India, the Loktak Lake, a veritable miniature inland sea. From the Tourist Bungalow set a top

Sendra Island, visitors get a bird's eye view of life on the Lake-small islands that are actually floating weed on which live the Lake people, the shimmering blue waters of the Lake, labyrinthine boat routes and colourful water plants. The Sendra Tourist Home with an attached cafeteria in the middle of the lake is an ideal tourist spot.

### ***Kaina***

It is a hillock about 921 metres above sea level and a sacred place of the Manipuri Hindus. So goes the story that one night, Shri Govindajee appeared in the dream of his devotee, Shri Jai Singh Maharaja and asked the saintly king to install in a temple, an image of Shri Govindajee. It was to be carved out of a jack fruit tree, which was then growing at Kaina. The scenery in this place is charming and the hill shrubs and natural surroundings give the place a religious atmosphere. It is only 29 km from Imphal.

### ***Khongjom***

36 km on the Indo-Myanmar road, a war broke out between Manipur and British India in 1891. It is here that Major General Paona Brajabashi, one of the great warriors of Manipur proved his valor against the superior force of the invading British Army in 1891. A War Memorial has been constructed on the top of the Kheba Hill.

### ***Tengnoupal***

69 km from Imphal. The highest point on the Indo-Myanmar Road, from here, you can have a full view of the valley of Myanmar.

### ***Ukhrul***

83 km to the east of Imphal, this district headquarters of Manipur East is the highest hill station of the state. A centre of the colourful warrior tribe Tangkhul Nagas, it is well developed and famous for its peculiar type of land-lily, the Shirui, grown in the Shirui hills. Shirui Hills and Khangkhui Lime Caves are interesting places for excursions.

### ***Manipur State Museum***

The interesting museum near the Polo Ground in the heart of Imphal has a fairly good display of Manipur's Tribal heritage and a collection of portraits of Manipur's former rulers.

### ***Maibam Lotpa Ching***

It is a hillock about 16 km from Imphal on Tiddim Road. It is a thrilling spot where a fierce battle took place between the British and the Japanese force in World War II and regarded as a holy place. There is also a monument in memory of the Japanese Martyrs who sacrificed their lives in this fierce battle.

## Economy

### *Macro-economic Trends*

This is a chart of trends of gross state domestic product of Manipur at market prices estimated by *Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation* with figures in millions of Indian Rupees.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Gross State Domestic Product</i>
1980	2,180
1985	4,180
1990	8,210
1995	16,270
2000	29,200

Manipur's gross state domestic product for 2004 is estimated at \$1.2 billion in current prices.

### List of Districts of Manipur

Manipur, a state of India, has currently (2005) nine administrative districts.

A district of an Indian state is an administrative geographical unit, headed by a district magistrate or a deputy commissioner, an officer belonging to the Indian Administrative Service. The district magistrate or the deputy commissioner is assisted by a number of officials belonging to different wings of the administrative services of the state.

A superintendent of Police, an officer belonging to Indian Police Service is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order and related issues.

The nine districts of Manipur state are:

<i>District</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>
Bishnupur	496	208368	Bishnupur
Churachandpur	4570	227905	Churachandpur
Chandel	3313	118327	Chandel
Imphal East	709	394876	Porompat
Imphal West	519	444382	Lamphelpat
Senapati	3271	283621	Senapati
Tamenglong	4391	111499	Tamenglong
Thoubal	514	364140	Thoubal
Ukhrul	4544	140778	Ukhrul



## **Bishnupur District**

Bishnupur is the district of Manipur state in India with the smallest area. Its name is derived from a Vishnu Temple located at Lamangdong. The main towns in the district are Bishenpur and Kumbi.

## ***Churachandpur***

Churachandpur also known as Lamka is the district headquarters of Churachandpur district in Manipur. Due to its commercial origins, Lamka is the most multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan hill town in Manipur. During WW II, Churachandpur did not escape Japanese bombing; but it enjoyed about five decades of quiet and peaceful progress in the post-War period. Especially during the 1970s and '80s, Lamka was an "island of peace" which exerted a magnetic pull for many moneyed investors seeking good profit.

## ***Education***

On a positive note, Churachandpur district (and Lamka town in particular) boasts a high literacy rate of 74.67% (2001 Census), above the state literacy average of 68.87% and the Indian average of 64%. To a large extent, this reflects the contributions of faith-based initiatives (especially the Church and NGOs) and private *edu-preneurs*, rather than the presence of several ineffective government schools in the district. Despite the apathy of the state Licence Raj, the enterprising people of Lamka possess a strong drive for success and adopting "best practice".

At Lamka, some private high schools offer quality education, but private venture in college education is a recent development. Public education is a "free" meal at the expense of the tax-payer, but it has been failing to satisfy the educational hunger of the community. Private education provides "value for money", yet the cost was beyond the means of the average family. Until public education gets more autonomy and freedom from political interference, the mess in the Govt. education system will continue to remain for some time.

***Schools:***The town has a number of ineffective government high schools (with the exception of Rengkai Government School). However, the town is well-served by competitive private schools with a reputation for "clean" examination practices at the High School Leaving stage. Some of the private schools which have made excellent contribution to the educational standards of Churachandpur districts are Donbosco School, St. Mary's School, Sielmat Christian Hr. Sec. School, St. Paul's Institute, Blue Star Academy, Rayburn School, Radhakrishnan Foundation School, Lalpuithluaii Foundation School and Young Learners School. Lalpuithluai Foundation is the only school in CCpur district to offer Computer Science as an additional subject.

**College:** Lamka town has two government degree colleges - Churachandpur College and Lamka College. Affiliated to Manipur University, all the local colleges offer several Three Year Degree (TDC) courses in science and liberal arts. Bethany Christian College is the oldest among private colleges in Churachandpur. Mangminthang College of Arts & Commerce is a new private college. Meagre funding and poor management made Govt. colleges in Lamka an idle rite of passage than an education. Of late, much of the time and energy of students in Govt. colleges are spent in strikes, protests, vandalism and student politics.

Due to the absence of good colleges, many students leave Manipur to seek admission mainly in private colleges elsewhere. Delhi and Shillong are popular educational destinations for students from Lamka. While this may be good investment for the future, it incurs huge financial drain for the local economy. On top of that, these pupils are not much welcome even as edu-consumers by the host states where they study and spend money. However, in spite of the adverse circumstances, many have made it to the top and today, the district can boast of 39 persons serving in senior positions in the Parliament of India.

### ***Socio-Economic***

The district is inhabited by several tribes, mainly belonging to the Kuki-Chin-Mizo group. Each tribe has a distinct social order as well as community laws. The system of hereditary chiefship as well as community ownership of village land is prevalent in the district. In case of hereditary chiefship the chief is all-powerful as he controls not only the economy of the village through his ownership of the land but exercises social control over the households in the village. An overwhelming majority of the tribal population has converted to Christianity. Christianity has not materially changed the social order but was the critical faith in bringing to an end the head-hunting wars and savagery that characterized early tribal societies. Education rapidly spread through English medium schools. In the last hundred years the society has undergone radical change from the past.

All tribal societies are patriarchal, but the women are not discriminated against. They play a significant role in agriculture and animal husbandry, besides being actively involved in weaving.

### ***Politics***

Churachandpur is part of Outer Manipur (Lok Sabha constituency).

### **Chandel District**

Chandel is a district of Manipur state in India. Located within this district, the town of Moreh is an important trade centre between Manipur and Myanmar.

***Imphal East***

Imphal East is a district of Manipur state in India.

***Imphal West******Senapati District***

Senapati District is located between 93.29° - 94.15° East Longitude and 24.37° -25.37° North Latitude. The District is Bounded on the South by Imphal District, on the East by Ukhrul District, on the west by Tamenglong District and on the North by the state of Nagaland.

***Geo-Hydrology***

The District is under humid subtropical climate. The soil is moderately fertile with clay loam soil with little patches of clay and loam. The temperature ranges from a minimum of 3.36°C to a maximum of 34.14°C. The annual rainfall ranges from 671 mm to 1454 mm.

There are about 110 watersheds each of geographical size ranging from 2000 to 3000 hectares, which are drained finally at about 5 major rivers /streams of different aspects and sources as indicated below:

***Administrative Set-up***

The Senapati District with its Headquarters at Senapati, Senapati is under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner cum District Magistrate assisted by a number of other officials including District Supply Officer (FCS), One Assistant Engineer (Dev), One Assistant Election Officer, One Assistant Project Officer and One office Superintendent.

The Deputy Commissioner functions as the Additional Development Commissioner and he is also the Ex-Officio Chairman of the District Rural Development Agency, Senapati.

The District is divided into five Sub-Divisions namely:

Sl. No	Sub-Division	Headquarter
1	Mao-Maram	Tadubi
2	Paomata	Paomata
3	Purul	Purul
4	Kangpokpi	Kangpokpi
5	Saikul	Saikul
6	Saitu-Gamphazol	Saparmeina.



**Infrastructural Facilities**

Sl. No.	Infrastructure facilities		numbers
1	Community Development / Tribal Development block		6
2	Autonomous Hill District Council		2
3	Police Station		6
4	Population Served per Police Station		41,212
5	fire Station/ Sub-Station		1
6	Vidhan Sabha seat		6
7	Lok Sabha seat		Nil
8	Gram Panchayat		Nil
9	Assembly Constituencies Comprising Parliamentary Constituency		
	a	Inner Manipur	Nil
	b	Outer Manipur	6
10	Post Office		
	a	Head Office	Nil
	b	Sub-Office	11
	c	Branch Office	73
	d	Letter Boxes (excluding those at P.O.)	26
	e	Village Postmen	89
11	Tele Communication		
	a	Telegraph Offices	Nil
	b	Telephone Exchanges	5
	c	Combined Offices	9
	d	Sub-Station	754
	e	DEL working	751
	f	P.C.O.	10
	g	L.D.P.C.O. (VIPs) Connected to VC/GPC on MARR	121
12	Employment		
	a	. Employment Exchange	3
	b	Registrations	1,019
	c	Placements	Nil
	d	Applicants on live register	23,145
	e	Population served per Employment Exchange	0.82 Lakh
13	. PHED		
	a	Villages fully covered	43
	b	Partially covered	26
14	Power		
	a	Installed Capacity of Hydro (State owned)	1.30 MW
	b	Electricity Generated by Hydro (State owned)	0.41 MKWH
	c	132/33 KV Sub-station	2
	d	No. of villages electrified	485

**Tamenglong District**

Tamenglong district is one of the nine districts of Manipur state in northeastern India. This district is bounded by Nagaland state on the north, by Senapati district

on the north and east, by Churchandpur district on the south and by Imphal West district and Assam state on the west. Tamenglong town is the headquarters of this district. The district occupies an area of 4391 km.

### ***Divisions***

The district is divided into four sub-divisions: Tamenglong, Tamei, Tousem and Nungba.

### ***Demography***

Population of the district is 1,11,493 and literacy rate is 50.16% (2001 census). Several Indigenous peoples reside in this district, which include the Zeliangrong Nagas, the Kukis, the Chirus, the Hmars and the Khasis.

### **Thoubal District**

Thoubal district is one of the nine districts of Manipur state in northeastern India. This district is bounded by Senapati district on the north, Ukhrul and Chandel districts on the east, Churchandpur and Bishnupur districts on the south and Imphal West and Imphal East districts on the west. The district occupies an area of 519 km<sup>2</sup>. The population of the district is 3,94,140 (2001 census). Thoubal town is the district headquarters. This district is known for Khongjom, where the last battle of the independence of Manipur was fought in April, 1891 against the British army.

### ***History***

In May, 1983, this district came into existence, when Thoubal sub-division of the erstwhile Manipur Central District (later Imphal district) with all its administrative units was transferred to form a new district. Later, in November, 1983, Thoubal district was divided into Thoubal and Kakching sub-divisions comprising Kakching and Waikhong Tahsils.

### ***Geography***

The district occupies the larger part of the eastern half of the Manipur Valley. The shape of the district is an irregular triangler with its base facing north. It lies between 23° 45' - 24°45' North latitudes and 93°45' - 94°15' East longitudes. Its average elevation is about 790 m above the sea level. The district is dotted by a few hillocks and hills of low heights. Of these, Punam hill has an elevation of 1009 m above the sea level.

### ***Rivers and Lakes***

The Imphal and the Thoubal are the most significant rivers that flow through the district. The Thoubal River originates in the hill ranges of Ukhrul and is an important

tributary of the Imphal River. It passes through Yairipok and Thoubal before joining the Imphal at Irong near Mayang Imphal.

The Imphal River rises in the hills of Senapati district and flows south. It forms the northern and western boundaries of Thoubal district. Other rivers in the district are the Wangjing, the Arong and the Sekmai. These rivers originate in the hills of Ukhrul district. The Arong River flows through Khangabok and falls into Kharung Pat. The Wangjing River flows west via Heirok and Wangjing before joining the Loushi Pat.

The southwestern part of the district is a part of the Loktak Lake region and this area has a number of shallow and rain fed lakes, the important ones being Kharung, Ikop, Pumlun, Lousi and Ngangou. The Waithou Lake in the northern part of the district is formed by the drainage waters collected between Waithou hill on the west and the villages and paddy fields on the east.

### *Climate*

The district has a moderate climate with relatively abundant and widespread rainfall. The rainy season starts in June and continues till September. Intermittent rains continue till October. The winter season lasts from December to February. During the winter months light rainfall occurs under the influence of the northeast monsoon. The average minimum temperature during winter is 6°-4°C, sometimes the minimum temperature goes below 0°C. April and May are the summer season. The average maximum temperature is 32°-35°C during these months, seldom the maximum temperature goes beyond 37°C. Occasional thunderstorms occur during these months. The average annual rainfall was 1318.39mm during the period 1983-89.

### *Divisions*

The district is divided into two sub-divisions: Thoubal and Kakching. The 10 Vidhan Sabha constituencies located within this district are: Lilong, Thoubal, Wangkhem, Heirok, Wangjing Tentha, Khangabok, Wabagai, Kakching, Hiyanglam and Sugnu.

### **Ukhrul District**

Ukhrul is a district in the north eastern state of Manipur in India. It lies about 84 Km kilometers to the east of Imphal.

### *History*

It was marked out first as a Sub-Division in 1919 during the British Raj. It was later upgraded to a full-fledged district, bearing the nomenclature of Manipur East District in November 1969 by the Government of India. The District now has five Sub-

Divisions which are co-terminous with the five Development Blocks. In addition to these administrative units the District has four Sub-Deputy Collectors Offices.

### ***Geography and Transport***

The district Headquarters, Ukhrul is linked with Imphal, the state capital by national highway 150. The national highway no. 150 also links Ukhrul with Kohima via Jessami. It has the distinction of being the highest hill station of Manipur.

Ukhrul District is best known for the Shiroi Lily, (*Lilium mackliniae* Sealy), which is found in its natural habitat on the peak of Shirui Kashong, some 18 Km east of the district headquarters.

### ***People***

The total population of Ukhrul District was 140,778 at the 2001 Indian census.

The Tangkhul Nagas form the majority ethnic group in this district. Legend has it that when ever a robust strong, fair child is born in a Manipuri society the elders of the family thanked and praise god for sending a tangkhul in the family. Though the district has not seen much developmental works so far the place has produces many famous personalities of Manipur, the district is the home to two non Manipuri chief ministers, namely Yangmaso Shaiza and Rishang Keishing. It is also the home town of the first Indian ambassador from the north east region, Mr. Bob Khathing.

### ***Places of Interest***

Besides the Shirui Lily, the district is known for many natural wonders like the Khangkhui Mangsor (cave) which is one of the oldest archeological cave of India. Ukhrul town the headquarters of the district has also many scenic places like the Duncan park, the Japanese pond, Elshadai park and the Phungrei at the southern part of the town. Fifteen km from the town lies the majestic Sihai Phangrei which is ideal for picnic. The district is also a home to various water fall of the state, most famous among them is the Khayang water fall 20 km from the district headquarters. Besides being the tourist spot of the state, Ukhrul is by common consent considered as the fashion capital of the state. The youth of the district exhibits keen sense of fashion consciousness it is this consciousness that has made many a Tangkhul to take up design profession.

### ***Education***

In the earlier days when education was sparse and primitive, Ukhrul was a well sought after place for the different tribe of the North East. The first school was set up by the then missionary Rev. William Pettigrew in 1896. Since then, not only has the place increase in the number of schools and colleges but it has produce many



scholars and professionals in various fields. Today with more than 90% literate population it is considered as the most educated town of the state. Some of the well known schools of the town are: Sacred Heart Higher Secondary School, Alice Christian School, Little Angels School, Savio School, Holy Spirit School, Patkai Academy, Juniors Academy, Sentinel College and Saint John School.

Though the Tangkhuls are highly educated community, hardly have they abundant the traditional way of life. In many village to the delights of the tourist one still sees the enchanting traditional lives of the past. The highest cultural and judicial institution of the tangkhuls is the Tangkhul Naga Long which was established in the year 1929. To this day all the disputes within the community is settled through the court of the LONG (organisation).

## **Manipuri Dance**

Manipuri dance is one of the major Indian classical dance forms. It originates from Manipur, a state in north-eastern India on the border with Myanmar (also known as Burma). In Manipur, surrounded by mountains and geographically isolated at the meeting point of the orient and mainland India, the form developed its own specific aesthetics, values, conventions and ethics. The cult of Radha and Krishna, particularly the raslila, is central to its themes but the dances, unusually, incorporate the characteristic cymbals (kartal or manjira) and double-headed drum (pung or Manipuri mridang) of sankirtan into the visual performance. Manipuri dancers do not wear ankle bells to accentuate the beats tapped out by the feet, in contrast with other Indian dance forms, and the dancers' feet never strike the ground hard. Movements of the body and feet and facial expressions in Manipuri dance are subtle and aim at devotion and grace.

## **History**

### ***The Early Period***

A copper plate inscription credits King Khuoyi Tompok (c. 2nd century CE) with introducing drums and cymbals into Manipuri dance. However, it is unlikely that the style resembled the form known today before the introduction of Krishna bhakti in the 15th century CCE. Maharaja Bhagyachandra (r. 1759 – 1798 CE) codified the style, composed three of the five types of Ras Lilas, the *Maha Ras*, the *Basanta Ras* and the *Kunja Ras*, performed at the Sri Sri Govindaji temple in Imphal during his reign and also the *Achouba Bhangi Pareng* dance. He designed an elaborate costume known as *Kumil*. The *Govindasangeet Lila Vilasa*, an important text detailing the fundamentals of the dance, is also attributed to him.

Maharaja Gambhir Singh (r. 1825–1834 CE) composed two parengs of the tandava type, the *Goshtha Bhangi Pareng* and the *Goshtha Vrindaban Pareng*. Maharaja

Chandra Kirti Singh (r. 1849 – 1886 CE), a gifted drummer, composed at least 64 Pung choloms (drum dances) and two parengs of the *Lasya* type, the *Vrindaban Bhangi Pareng* and *Khrumba Bhangi Pareng*. The composition of the *Nitya Ras* is also attributed to him.

### ***Modern Times***

This genre of dance became better known outside the region through the efforts of Rabindranath Tagore. In 1919, he was so impressed after seeing a dance composition, the *Goshtha Lila* in Sylhet (in present day Bangladesh) that he invited Guru Budhimantra Singh to Shantiniketan. In 1926, Guru Naba Kumar joined the faculty to teach the *Ras Lila*. Other celebrated Gurus, Senarik Singh Rajkumar, Nileshwar Mukherji and Atomba Singh were also invited to teach there and assisted Tagore with the choreography of several of his dance-dramas..

Guru Naba Kumar went to Ahmedabad to teach Manipuri dance in 1928. Soon, Guru Bipin Singh popularised it in Mumbai. Amongst his pupils, most well known are the Jhaveri sisters, Nayana, Suverna, Darshana and Ranjana.

In 1954, the Manipur Dance College of Imphal (renamed Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy in 1957) started with three great exponents of the genre in its faculty; Guru Amubi Singh, the principal, Guru Amudon Sharma and Guru Atomba Singh. Later Guru Bipin Singh became the principal of the Sri Sri Govindaji Nartanalaya (later renamed Manipur State Dance College) in Imphal: Kalavati Devi and Binodini Devi are the alumni of this institute. In 1972, Guru Bipin Singh, the Jhaveri sisters and Kalavati Devi founded Manipuri Nartanalaya in Mumbai, Kolkata and Imphal, and Rajkumar Singhajit Singh founded Manipuri Nrityashram in New Delhi.

### ***The Dance***

The traditional Manipuri dance style embodies delicate, lyrical and graceful movements. The aim is to make rounded movements and avoid any jerks, sharp edges or straight lines. It is this which gives Manipuri dance its undulating and soft appearance. The feet move is viewed as part of a composite movement of the whole body. The dancer puts his or her feet down, even during vigorous steps, with the front part touching the ground first. The ankle and knee joints are effectively used as shock absorbers. The dancer's feet are neither put down nor lifted up at the precise rhythmic points of the music but rather slightly earlier or later to express the same rhythmic points most effectively.

The musical accompaniment for Manipuri dance comes from a percussion instrument called the Pung, a singer, small cymbals, a stringed instrument called the pena and wind instrument such as a flute. The drummers are always male artistes and, after

learning to play the pung, students are trained to dance with it while drumming. This dance is known as Pung cholom. The lyrics used in Manipuri are usually from the classical poetry of Jayadeva, Vidyapati, Chandidas, Govindadas or Gyandas and may be in Sanskrit, Maithili, Brij Bhasha or others.

### ***Other Indian Classical Dances***

The Sangeet Natak Akademi currently confers classical status on eight Indian dance forms:

1. Bharatanatyam - Tamil Classical Dance
2. Odissi - Orrisa Classical dance
3. Kuchipudi - Telugu Classical dance
4. Mohiniaattam - Kerala Classical Dance
5. Sattriya - Asamese Classical Dance
6. Kathakali - Malayalam Classical Dance
7. Kathak - North Indian Classical Dance