

Chapter III

Marriage as diplomacy between Manipur and Tripura states (15th To 19th Century)

Manipur and Tripura are two of the most important North East states of India which were subsequently absorbed by the British as Princely States. It was only after two years of Indian independence that both the states joined the Union of India from being Princely states. Since remote olden years Tripura and Manipur are said to have maintained gracious relationships. During their princely regime they were neighbouring states and came into contact with each other in many occasions such as for trade, diplomacy, dwelling, matrimony etc. There are many instances of elephants brought to Manipur from Tripura. Moreover, an assortment of crucial political circumstances demanded the kingdoms to come in close contact with each other for political interdependence. Such as in times of strong external raids over their territories the Rajas of the kingdoms sought help from each other for relief from the intruders. The relation was however not always smooth and war fares between the two monarchies are also found in many occasions. The political interdependence between the two kingdoms of Tripura and Manipur was boost up by the policy of the inter-dynastic marriages. Similar with other monarchies, marriage alliances were utilized as great tool of foreign policy by the kingdoms

both in time of peace and war to avoid political turmoil and to develop mutual friendship.

In the light of history the first reference of matrimonial alliances between the royal houses of Manipur and Tripura took place during the reign of 43rd Tripura King Taidakshin. The inclination of marriage alliances among the states continues until 20th century. Ahead of further discussion about the diplomatic Manipuri-Tripura marriage alliances during 15th to 19th century A.D. a brief summary of the history of Tripura is discussed hereafter. In the previous chapter a short history of Manipur has already been discussed.

Brief History of Tripura

Tripura is one of the important states of present North East India. The state is bounded on the north, west, south and south-east by Bangladesh. In the east Tripura shares boundary with the state of Assam and Mizoram. The state is filled with land of towering hills, hillock accompanied with various river valleys and forest coverage of state is more than half its area. About the state of Tripura we find mention in the famous epic of India the ‘Mahabharata’. This naturally highlight about a very ancient origin of the kingdom. Tripura was ruled by various commanding rulers who thrived in setting a landmark in the historical arena of India. The state existed as an independent princely state and maintained its integrity unless the kingdom joined in the Indian Union on Oct. 15, 1949. Added, Tripura gained its statehood on January 21, 1972.

There are various opinion specified by different scholars regarding the historical root from which the present name of the state “Tripura” has been originated. According to Kailashchandra Singha the word ‘Tripura’ has derived from the combination of two words ‘Tui’ and ‘Pra’ which together was

pronounced as 'Tuipra'. In Tripura language 'tui' means 'water' and 'pra' means 'near'. Thus, it indicated the land near water. In the later years, the name 'Tuipra' was deviated and corrupted to the term "Tipra" and then to 'Tripura'.¹ Some historians are of the opinion that the name of the state is originated from "Tripurasundari". But, the view cannot be accepted as the said deity was installed only during the reign of Dharma Manikya in sixteenth century whereas the name "Tripura" was coined from very early age. Yet again, the royal chronicle of Tripura "*Sri Rajmala*" recorded that it was King 'Tripur' who gave the name "Tripura" to the land but modern historians rejects this view on the ground that the history of Tripura prior to the inception of Manikya dynasty is merely imaginary and not authentic. Another view expressed is that the people who settled in the land of Tripuresha Siva came to known as Tripuri and the land as Tripura.² However, modern scholars are of the opinion that Tripura was a Sanskritized form of Tipra, a tribe to which the ruling family belonged.³ Above all the view, the view of Kailashchandra Singha is more probable on the ground that it is fact that in days of yore the boundaries of Tripura extended up to the Bay of Bengal when its rules held sway from the Garo Hills to Arakan. It might be that the name appropriately derived its origin from its nearness to water.⁴

According to the royal chronicle of Tripura "*Sri Rajmala*" and other ancient literatures of the state the dynasty trace their origin from the 'Lunar dynasty' and from the great King Yayati. However, Druhyu, the son of King

¹ Singha, Kailashchandra., "*Rajmala Ba Tripurar Itihas*", Akkhar Publication, Agartala, 1995, p-1

² Roychoudhury, Nalini Ranjan., "*Tripura Through the Ages, A short History of Tripura from the earliest times to 1947 A.D.*", Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1983, p-1

³ Majumdar, R.C., "*Bangla Desher Itihas*", vol-II, p-480 or Roychoudhury, Nalini Ranjan., "*Tripura Through the Ages, A short History of Tripura from the earliest times to 1947 A.D.*", Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1983, p-2

⁴ Menon, K.D., "*Tripura District Gazetteers*", Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-1

Yayati laid the foundation of Tripura dynasty.⁵ Dr. N.C. Nath recorded that the territorial expansion under King Druhyu were, the river Tairang on the North, Acaranga on the South, Mekhali on the east, and Koch and Vanga or Bengal on the West.⁶ In the line of descendants of Druhyu, King Diatya colonized the vast land of the Kirata country. Among the early rulers of Tripura, the reign of King Tripur was significant, son of Daitya. The history reveals that Tripur was a man of cruel and ill religious nature who was fond of killing and atrocities. It was a popular belief that Lord Siva in order to bring a steady and alleviate the people from the atrocities of Tripur killed him. After his death with the blessing of Lord Siva, a son named Trilochana was born by a widow of Tripur. Unlike his father Trilochana was a man of religious nature and succeeded to build up a peaceful and powerful kingdom. Trilochana married a princess of the neighbouring Hedamba King. The Hedamba King had no legal heir, therefore he adopted the first son Drikpati of King Trilochana and his daughter. Thus, the second son of Trilochana, Dakshin became the King of the Tripura country. But, Drikpati, the King of Hedamba country being the first son of Trilochana claimed the throne of Dakshin. He attacked the Tripur country which led Dakshin to flee from his kingdom and established a new capital on the bank of the river Barabakra (the Barak river near Silchar).⁷ However, after many years it was Raja Jujharu Fa, the Raja Lika of Rangamati made Udaipur his capital. About the ancient Kings of Tripura the "*Tripura District State Gazetteers*" stated that the ancient rulers and history of Tripura beginning with the rule of

⁵ Bhattacharjee, A.C., "*Progressive Tripura*", Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Govt. Of Tripura, 2012, p-4

⁶ Nath, Dr. N.C., (translated) "*Sri Rajmala*", vol-I to IV, Tribal Research Institute Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1999, p-14

⁷ Roychoudhury, Nalini Ranjan., "*Tripura Through the Ages, A short History of Tripura from the earliest times to 1947 A.D.*", Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1983, p-2

Daitya to Yujharpha, the 72nd King may be called the Puranic or mythical period.⁸ The most discernible event in the history of Tripura began with the reign of King Chhengthum Fa or Kirtidhar, the 22nd ruler after Yujharpha or Hamtar Fa. A livid battle took place between the royal army of Tripura with that of King of Gaur (Bengal). In this battle the Tripuris succeeded to drive away the Gaur army from Meherkhuls and it opened the chapter of Tripura-Bengal conflict which was followed by frequent clash in future years. It was however Ratna Fa, son of Dangar Fa who could win the heart of the Gaur Raja. As a result the Gaur King helped the prince to acquire the kingdom of Tripura by Ratna Fa. The King of Gaur besides such help conferred the title of ‘Manikya’ to Ratna Fa. Since then all the Tripura Kings have used the title ‘Manikya’ by suffixing to their names.

After the death of Ratna Manikya, his son Mahamanikya successfully ruled the Tripura country for many years. His rule was followed by his son Dharma Manikya (1431-1462 A.D). The most notable contribution of the Raja was the change of the language of the royal chronicle “*Sri Rajmala*” from Tripura dialect into Bengali or Su-bhasa⁹ for general understanding of the people. The next King who put his position over the throne in firmer hold was Dhanya Manikya (1490-1520 A.D.). Dhanya Manikya has in his credit for extending the territory of the kingdom as far as Burma in the East. He also had a historical fight with Hossain Shah, the ruler of Gaur over the issue of conquering Chittagong. In the occasion of reciprocal win by both the forces in the battle many soldiers of both sides lost their life. However, the final win was acquired by the royal forces of Tripura. As a remark of this great victory

⁸ Menon, K.D., “*Tripura District Gazetteers*”, Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-70

⁹ Nath, Dr. N.C., “*Sri Rajmala*”, Tribal Research Institute, Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1999, p-60

Dhanya Manikya built the famous temple of ‘Tripurasundari’ at Udaipur in 1501 A.D.¹⁰ The next important King was Deva Manikya (1520-1531 A.D), son of Dharma Manikya. He soon came in conflict with the Nawab of Gaur, Nasarath Shah over the previous issue of acquiring Chittagong. But, this time Chittagong area was annexed by the Gaur army. Shortly after, the place was again reoccupied by Tripura King Bijoy Manikya (1532-1572 A.D.). He also took possession of the territory of Sylhet, Khasia and Jayantia. After a reign of 47 years Bijoy Manikya died of small pox.¹¹ Though Ananta Manikya succeeded his father to the throne but he was shortly murdered by one Gopi Prasad, the Commander-in-chief. He climbed the throne with a new name Uday Manikya. Uday Manikya changed the name of his capital from Rangamati to Udaipur. According to the *“Tripura District State Gazetteer”* Uday Manikya suffered a defeat at the hands of the Mughals who invaded and annexed Chittagong.¹²

The next important Raja of Tripura was Amar Manikya who ascended the throne in 1577 A.D. He constructed a new palace called ‘Amarpur’ in his name. Amar Manikya occupied the Bhalua and also suppressed the rebellious zamindars of Sylhet. He in addition defeated the small feudatories like Bakla, Sarail, and Taraf. The turning point in the successful rule of Amar Manikya was his conflict with the King of Arakan. The Arakan King Sikandar Shah occupied Chittagong and marched towards Tripura and reached Udaipur in 1584 A.D. As a result the Tripuri Raja had to take shelter in the forests. But he could not stand the shock and disgrace of this crushing defeat and committed

¹⁰ Menon, K.D., *“Tripura District Gazetteers”*, Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-78

¹¹ Long, The Rev. James., *“Analysis of the Rajmala or Chronicles of Tripura”*, Tripura State Tribal Research Institute and Museum, Govt. Of Tripura, 2008, p-18

¹² Menon, K.D., *“Tripura District Gazetteers”*, Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-82

suicide by taking poison.¹³ Amar Manikya was succeeded by his son Rajdhar Manikya (1586-1600 A.D.). Rajdhar and his subjects passed some times in pleasure. But, in a little while the Gauda King attacked and dispatched a huge army against the Tripura country. But, Rajdhar made a strong defend against the invaders which led them to flight without fighting. After a successful rule of 14 years Rajdhar Manikya breathes his last and his son Yosodhar Manikya became the next Raja of Tripura. The new King ruled the kingdom peacefully for 31 years after which he had to suffer the frightful attack of the Mughals. The then Mughal King was Shah Selim or Shah Jahan. The Mughal armies were joined by the troops of Nawab of Bengal Fatojang. A huge battle took place in which the Tripura King and his soldiers unable to defend the strong joint attack of the Mughals and Nawab of Bengal had to flee from their country. Thus, Udaipur was captured by the Mughals as well as the escaping King Yosodhar was also trapped by the enemy. The Mughals however had to abandon the conquered territory due to the outbreak of the epidemic.¹⁴ During the absent of the King from the capital the people of Tripura put to the throne one Kalyan Manikya. The Tripura-Mughal clashes renewed during his reign over the previous issue. This time the Mughals were defeated and Kalyan Manikya could recover the lost territories. But, in 1658 A.D. the Mughals under Shah Shuja could defeat the Tripura soldiers and again a portion of Tripura was annexed by the invaders. Kalyan Manikya died in the year 1582 A.D. and he was succeeded by his son Gobinda Manikya. The history of Tripura kingdom went to low ebb when Dharma Manikya II ascended the throne in 1714 A.D. The King was always in midst of internal troubles and external

¹³ Menon, K.D., "*Tripura District Gazetteers*", Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-84

¹⁴ Menon, K.D., "*Tripura District Gazetteers*", Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-87

invasions. Dharma Manikya II was soon attacked by one Jagat Roy in collaboration with the Nawab of Dacca. Unable to defend himself Dharma Manikya II had to flee in the neighbouring hills. Jagat Manikya thus became the King of the plains of Tripura which was named Roshnabad or the 'Land of Light'.¹⁵ Meanwhile taking advantage of the circumstances the Raja of Manipur raided and annexed a portion of Northern frontier. But, the deposed King with the help from the Nawab Sujauddin of Mursidabad succeeded to regain the lost territory of Roshnabad. Dharma Manikya II was succeeded by his brother Mukunda Manikya (1729-1738 A.D.). The new King was also not free from the Muslim incursions. The Muslims attacked the Tripura capital and captured its King Mukunda Manikya along with his family. At such situation Mukunda Manikya committed suicide. At this juncture, a man named Rudramani, a descendant of Chhatra Manikya organized a huge army in the jungles of the kingdom and made a surprise attack on the invaders. The Muslims were compelled to retreat back from the capital. With this Rudramani became the next King of Tripura assuming the title Joy Manikya. The fate of Tripura was not for long in the hand of Tripuri Rajas. It was one Samsher Ghazi, Zamindar of Meherkhul who declared himself independent during the reign of Indra Manikya, ransacked the capital and occupied the kingdom. He ruled the kingdom from 1748-1760 A.D. with strong hand. He also promised the Nawab of Bengal to pay the revenue in time. But, on the refusal of Tripura subjects to recognize Samsher Ghazi as their head, he appointed one Lakshman Manikya, a descendant of the royal house as the new ruler. But, whole administration of the kingdom vested under his powerful hand. After long 12

¹⁵ Bhattacharjee, A.C., "*Progressive Tripura*", Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Govt. Of Tripura, 2012, p-27

years of Samsher's cruel rule over Tripura, he was seized by the Nawab of Bengal on complain of the Tripuri subjects. With an approval from the Nawab, the throne of Tripura was ascended by Krishna Manikya in 1760 A.D. The new Raja shifted the capital of Tripura from Udaipur to Agartala (now old Agartala). But, Krishna Manikya in a little while came in quarrel with the Nawab of Bengal and the English, who were then most fast growing powers. The Britishers were constantly in hunt of opportunity to obtain the land of Tripura. Finally, in 1765 A.D. the opportunity aroused and Tripura came under British rule. Krishna Manikya was now made Raja by the aid of the English.¹⁶ However, after ruling the kingdom for 23 years Krishna Manikya died in 1783 A.D. without an heir. Thus, his wife Jahnvi Devi made proxy rule of the kingdom for some years. However, in 1785 A.D. on the petition of the Queen Jahnvi, Rajdhar Manikya, her nephew was put as next successor to the throne of Tripura. Rajdhar ruled the kingdom peacefully for 19 years and died in 1804 A.D. During his life time Rajdhar established friendly relations with the kingdom of Manipur by organizing matrimonial relations. Since then Tripura was ruled by many Kings without much changes in the administration of the state. However, with the accession of Krishna Kishore Manikya (1830-1849 A.D.) events of historical importance took place. He shifted the capital of the kingdom to Agartala and named the palace as "Natun Haveli" (New Residence) at a distance of five miles from Agartala.¹⁷ The remarkable event of his reign was that the then British Governor- General Lord Auckland recognized the independence of Tripura in his letter to the Commissioner of Chittagong, dated

¹⁶ Long, The Rev. James., "*Analysis of the Rajmala or Chronicles of Tripura*", Tripura State Tribal Research Institute and Museum, Govt. Of Tripura, 2008, p-30

¹⁷ Bhattacharjee, A.C., "*Progressive Tripura*", Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Govt. Of Tripura, 2012, p-36

the 27th of December, 1838.¹⁸ Thus, Tripura regained the status of an independent princely kingdom. The King was however soon faced by a strong revolt of 25 thousand Paite Kukis who resisted the rule of Tripura King. The revolt was finally subdued by the British infantry. Krishna Kishore Manikya due to his habit of spending time in hunting, sports and merry making became bankrupt at the time of his death in 1850 A.D. The empty treasury of the kingdom made very difficult for his successor Ishan Chandra Manikya (1850 – 1862 A.D.) to maintain a stable administration of the state. In order to improve the treasury of the kingdom Ishan Chandra brought about new changes in the administration of the state. In his work of administration some of his ministers tried their heavy hand over the subjects which led some of the Tripuris to revolt against the authority. But, the royal forces succeeded to suppress the revolt. Again, during the span of his reign the Revolt of 1857 broke out. But, the Raja in spite of participating in the revolt sided with the Britishers and helped them in suppressing the revolt. It is believed that the spiritual guru of Ishan Chandra, Bipin Behari Goswami in order to increase the treasury of the state adopted a new policy that the rent-free lands of such tenure holders who had more than 100 Bighas of land and whose titles were either defective or could not be traced were to be surrendered by the land holders to the state.¹⁹ After the incident the King did not survive long and died in the year 1862 A.D. Ishan Chandra Manikya was succeeded by his younger brother Bir Chandra Manikya in the same year. However, Bir Chandra could not formally be invested as de jure ruler in

¹⁸ Bhattacharjee, A.C., *“Progressive Tripura”*, Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Govt. Of Tripura, 2012, p-36

¹⁹ Roychoudhury, Nalini Ranjan., *“Tripura Through the Ages, A short History of Tripura from the earliest times to 1947 A.D.”*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1983, p-44

1870 following the verdict of the Privy Council.²⁰ Again in 1871 A.D. the Office of the British Political Agent in Tripura was established for the first time by Lord Mayo, the then Governor-General of India. The era of Bir Chandra's rule is regarded as the beginning of modern period in Tripura. Bir Chandra Manikya introduced new model of administration in the kingdom under the model of the European process. He introduces new departments for the smooth Civil and Executive administration. Civil and Criminal laws were codified in Tripura during his reign.²¹ New departments like Excise, Stamps and Registrations were opened and reorganized the judicial administration in the British Indian fashion. The most epochs making act of the Raja was the abolition of 'Slavery' and 'Sati' from the land of Tripura in 1879 and 1888 A.D. respectively. Though Birchandra Manikya was successful in introducing the new administrative measures but was not free from internal raids. The most important raids were made by the Jamatias under the leader of Parikshit in 1863 A.D. and by the Lushais in the East of the territory. The Jamatias and its leader were severely defeated and killed by the King with the help of his Kuki forces. However, the dangerous Lushais were finally subdued with the help of the Britishers on 11th July 1871 A.D. But, at the end of the expedition Tripura had to lose large track of land to the British Government. It is stated that "Birchandra Manikya earned from the grateful people of Bengal the covetable but appropriate title of Vikramaditya of present age".²² The King was not only a good administrator but also a man of great lover of art and culture. King Birchandra had a very good relation with the eminent writer Rabindranath

²⁰ Menon, K.D., "*Tripura District Gazetteers*", Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-109

²¹ Menon, K.D., "*Tripura District Gazetteers*", Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-113

²² Bhattacharjee, A.C., "*Progressive Tripura*", Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Govt. Of Tripura, 2012, p-40

Tagore. After having contributed enormously to his kingdom Birchandra Manikya last his breathe in 1896 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Radha Kishore Manikya in 1897 A.D. and ruled till 1909 A.D. The reign of this King was filled with numerous works of state development as well as with some short of economic problems due to failure of crops. Soon after his accession to the throne a great earthquake occurred, this severely destroyed the palace building as well as other masonry buildings. A new palace was constructed called the 'Ujyanta Raj Palace' at Agartala. Many new buildings were also erected like the Victoria Memorial Hospital, Museum, a school and the temple of Jagannatha was also built. The Tripura State Gazette an official newspaper was first published during his reign.²³ He also took the task of re-editing the state chronicle 'Sri Rajmala'. Besides such work of development the King has to face a severe economic problem due to failure of crops and cotton. However, the situations were controlled and improved by providing relief works to the people. After ruling the kingdom successfully for about 12 years Radha Kishore Manikya died in a motor accident in 1909 A.D. at Benaras. In the same year Birendra Kishore Manikya became the Raja of Tripura. The installation ceremony was done by His Honour Sir Lancelot Hare, the Lieutenant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam on behalf of his Excellency.²⁴ Birendra Kishore Manikya introduced several important measures for the development of the state. Being a lover of education he established many educational institutions as well as dispensaries in the state. Added in order to improve the agricultural condition of the state he also opened schools for agriculture and sericulture education and training. The administration of the state was also re-organized by

²³ Roychoudhury, Nalini Ranjan., "*Tripura Through the Ages, A short History of Tripura from the earliest times to 1947 A.D.*", Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1983, p-56

²⁴ Menon, K.D., "*Tripura District Gazetteers*", Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-115

the King. The new Arms Act and Penal Code Amendment Act were passed. The Amatya Sabha or the Advisory Council was also reconstituted. The striking achievement of the time was the establishment of tea industry in Tripura. However, in the administration of the hill areas there were only a few concrete measures adopted by the Raja for the better development of the hill people. After the death of Birendra Kishore his son Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya ascended the throne in 1923 A.D. But, the Raja being a minor, the administration of the state was run by a council till 1927 A.D. until he came to power after the formal installation ceremony. The King firstly paid his attention towards the administration of the state. For overall development of the state the Raja decentralized the power of the state. Thus, he constituted some new Council such as – Mantrana Sabha (Advisory Council), Byabasthapak Sabha (Legislative Council) and Mantri Parishad (Executive Council). Again, at the village level the Raja introduces the Grama Mandali. The military department was brought under the direct control of the King and even provided personal supervision to the soldiers. One of the most beautiful eye catching constructions of the King was the ‘Nirmahal’ or ‘Water Palace’ built at the centre of lake Rudrasgar. Being a man of education and especially of western education the Raja gave due emphasis on the development of education in the state. Various scholarships and prizes were introduced as an encouragement for the merit students and also selected the members of Civil services from the meritus scholars. Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya also had various honourable personal achievements. He was a distinguished member of the Chamber of Princes and also was subsequently elected President of the

Council of Rulers for Eastern States.²⁵ After having made several remarkable development of the kingdom Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya died at very young age of 39 on May 17, 1947. But, the commendable work of the Raja before his death was that he was very much conscious about the changing scenario in the political affairs of the mainland India. Thus, better understanding the call of the time he decided to join the Indian Union. However, it was only two years after the Indian independence that Tripura became a state of Indian Union.

Manipuri-Tripura Matrimonial Alliances (15th to 19th Century)

Manipur and Tripura were the two independent princely kingdoms till 1949 A.D. In the early period Manipur was called by the Tripuris as Mokhali/Mekhali and to the Manipuris the kingdom of Tripura was known as Takhen/ Takhel. The word 'Takhen' has come from the Bengali word 'Dakhin' which means South. The people of Sylhet used to call Tripura 'Dakhin' which was pronounced by the Manipuris as Takhen. They deviate the 'd' sound changing to 't' and that of 'i' sound changing to 'e' due to their speech habit.²⁶ However, Naorem Sanajaoba, an eminent scholar of Manipur opined that perhaps, the Manipuris pronounced the unfamiliar name 'Taidakhin' as 'Takhel' or 'Takhen'. And in the course of time, Takhen and Takhel came to stand for Tripura.²⁷ In relating to the name 'Takhel/Takhen', the Manipuri ladies who were married to the Tripura Kings or Princes were called as 'Takhel/Takhen Leima'.

²⁵ Menon, K.D., "*Tripura District Gazetteers*", Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 1975, p-117

²⁶ Singha, R.K. Jhalajit., "*History of Medieval Manipur, part 3*", History section, E-Pao, Now the World knows (online news paper), September 24, 2010

²⁷ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) "*Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones*", Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-316

The history of Manipuri-Tripura relation is filled with diverse events of mutual co-operation, occasional conflicts and war fares. There were several cases of hostilities between Tripura and Manipur particularly between 16th to 18th centuries, they were in 1533, 1634, 1696 and 1724 A.D. The most remarkable armed clash between the two took place during the reign of Tripura King Dharma Manikya II (1717-1733 A.D.) and the Manipuri King Garib Niwaz alias Pamheiba (1709-1748 A.D.). In this battle Tripuris were severely defeated by the Manipuri troops. In order to commemorate the glorious victory over Tripura, a book was written called “Takhel Ngamba” (Conqueror of Tripura). However, despite such hostilities, the traditions of wed-lock between the two kingdoms were common phenomenon since centuries back. In this regard, the first reference of Tripura–Manipuri matrimonial alliances is recorded in the royal chronicle of Tripura “Sri Rajmala” that “Tripura Raja Taidakshin, grandson of King Trilochana married a princess of Mekhali (modern Manipur)”.²⁸ But, the chronicle does not provide any details about the marriage as to when, how and why the marriage was organized. Besides, there is absent of literary sources of Manipur in support of commencement of the marriage. In spite of such vacuums in references about the event it can be assumed that the alliance must have developed a good relationship between the two kingdoms. It might be that being immediate neighbours the marriage was organized as a symbol of diplomatic move. However, an authentic date cannot be fixed due to absent of reliable chronological order of the Tripura Kings. After this we do not find references of matrimonial alliances between the two kingdoms for many centuries. However, scores of years later the state chronicle

²⁸ Sen, Sree Kaliprasanna., “*Sri Rajmala*” Vol-I, Upojati Sanskriti Gobesona Kendra, Govt. Of Tripura, Agartala, 2003, p-38

of Manipur “*Cheitharol Kumbaba*” recorded for the first time that in 1609 A.D. Akhoicham girl ‘Yangnu’ wife of the King of Takhen (modern Tripura) went to her country.²⁹ Like the former instance, the detail of the second marriage is also unobtainable in other sources available. But, it can be contemplated as per the cited year of the marriage that the ruling monarchs of the kingdoms were Meitei King Khagemba (1597–1652 A.D) and the Tripura Raja Yosodhar Manikya (1600-1623 A.D.). A glimpse into the political scenario of the two kingdoms during the years of their rule shows that Manipuri King Khagemba was a powerful Raja who had many successful military achievements. For his military valour and successful administration of Meitei kingdom, he was also known as the Nation Builder of Manipur. However, the Tripura King Yosodhar Manikya since the time of his accession to the throne was surrounded by numerous troubles. Thus, in such circumstances the Tripura Raja must have sent the marriage proposal in order to abstain from probable Manipuri invasion. Thus, though the cause of marriage is not mentioned clearly in the chronicle but it can be inferred that the marriage was organized to maintain a friendly relationship between the two kingdoms. However, later years in 1634-1635 A.D. the mentioned Meitei King invaded Tripura and succeeded in capturing many Tripura subjects as captives. Before this event is found recorded in the state chronicle, Naorem Sanajaoba mentioned that in 1601 A.D. prince Sanongba, brother of Meitei King Khagemba married a Tripuri princess.³⁰ But, it is not clear whether the

²⁹ Singh, Lairenmayum Ibungohal & Ningthoukhongjam Khelchandra Singh., “*Cheitharol Kumbaba*”, Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, 1989, p-34

³⁰ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) “*Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones*”, Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-xli

marriage was organized by the royalties of the kingdoms or Prince Sanongba married the Princess while his exile at Cachar.

In the following years there were many references about diplomatic and economic correspondences between the two states but it was until 18th century that we find rare mention of many inter-dynastic marriage alliances. But, Nalini Ranjan Roychoudhury has mentioned in his book *“Tripura Through the Ages”* that “Chhatra Manikya sent an envoy in 1662-63 A.D. to the court of Manipur accompanied by one girl and one elephant”.³¹ But the writer did not provide further information on the issue. The non-supportive sources available made the event neglectable. Speculation however may be set that the girl sent to the court of Manipur did not belong to the royal family of Tripura therefore neither the royal chronicles nor other literary sources of Manipur has recorded about the incident. It can also be assumed that the Raja of Manipur might not have accepted the girl in the royal palace due to her origin of belonging to simple family. However, the most prominent cases of matrimonial alliances between Manipur and Tripura started towards the end of 18th century. Unlike the previous instances of the matrimonial alliances there are plenty of literary sources which provide details about this marriage. At the end of the 18th century in 1785 A.D., Rajdhar Manikya II ascended the throne of Tripura and ruled up to 1804 A.D. In Manipur, his contemporary Raja was Bhagyachandra alias Jai Singha (1759-1761 & 1763-1798 A.D.). During their rule the first historically significant marriage union took place. The old Raja Bhagyachandra alias Jai Singha of Manipur was a religious individual and after installing his eldest son Labanyachandra as new King to the throne of Manipur started for

³¹ Roychoudhury, Nalini Ranjan., *“Tripura Through the Ages, A short History of Tripura from the earliest times to 1947 A.D.”*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1983, p-27

pilgrimages to numerous secret holy places of India in 1798 A.D. The Manipuri Raja on his pilgrimage journey visited Sylhet, the Tripura kingdom and also halted at Agartala for some days. During his stay at the place he gave one of his daughters princess Hariseswari in marriage to Tripura King Rajdhar Manikya II. Thus, with this the old tradition of wed-lock between the royal houses of Manipur and Tripura was rehabilitated. However, the Manipuri princess did not have any heir. This marriage was effective in bringing gracious relations among the states. It is recorded in the book of Naorem Sanajaoba that “On the 5th February, 1798 the King with a large retinue started on a pilgrimage to Brindavan. He was accompanied by his Queen, 3 sons and 3 daughters and a large number of nobles and attendants. While the King was at Leimatang, Rajdhar Manikya, raja of Tripura met the King Joy Singh and proposed to marry one of his daughters. The proposal was accepted and Rajdhar went back to Agartala to make preparation for the wedding.”³² Sri Kailashchandra Singha has also accounted about the same incident in the way that “Maharaja Rajdhar Manikya married the daughter of Manipuri King Joy Singh. It was the first marriage alliance established between the royal families of Tripura and Manipur. She was also the first Manipuri princess to enter the capital of Tripura as a queen.”³³ About the visit of Jai Singh in Agartala and of the marriage, Francis Hemilton in his book “*An Account of Assam*” has written that “Manipur is only the name of the capital. The country and people subject to the Raja of Manipur are by themselves called Moitay, as I learned both from those at Ava and from a priest with whom I meet at Comilla, in the year 1798,

³² Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) “*Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones*”, Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-318

³³ Singha, Sri Kailashchandra., “*Rajmala Ba Tripurar Itihas*”, Akkhar Publication, Agartala, 1995, p-90.

and who had accompanied the Raja Jaya Singh, then at Agartala (in the vicinity of Comilla) on a visit to the Raja of Tripura. The Chief of Manipur was then an old man and had with him three sons and equal number of daughters one of whom had married to Radan Manikya... The direct communication between Manipur and Bengal is by Khaspur, the capital, of Kachhar, to Srihatta; but the Raja of Kachhar having killed two messengers and threatened Jaya Singh, that chief cut a new road through the forests of the south, and made his way to Srihatta with 700 men, of whom 300 were porters carrying provisions. The chief travelled on horseback as the road could not admit of elephants.”³⁴ In little contrast to the above records Dr. Dwijendra Narayan Goswami opined that on the invitation of the King of Tripura brought many presents and princess Hariseswari from Manipur and gave her marriage to Rajdhar Manikya. The Tripura aristocrats were dispatched to Manipur for bringing the princess.³⁵ The narration of Dr. Dwijendra Narayan Goswami indicated that the Meitei princess or Hariseswari was at Manipur when her father Jai Singha was on his pilgrimage voyage. It was on the acceptance of the marriage proposal by Raja Jai Singha that princess Hariseswari was brought from Manipur by Tripuri aristocrats. Francis Hemilton and Naorem Sanajaoba however had similar observation that the princess accompanied her father in the journey. Though opinion is at variance among the scholars but they evidently mentioned about the solemnization of the marriage alliance which brought about enormous close association between the monarchies. The ‘Kanya Dana’ or ‘bride offering

³⁴ Hamilton, Francis., “*An Account of Assam: With Some Notices Concerning the Neighbouring Territories. First Compiled in 1807-1814*”, Government of Assam in the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Narayani Handiqui Historical Institute, 1940, pp-81,82

³⁵ Goswami, Dr. Dwijendra Narayan., “*Rajarshi Bhagya Chandra*”, Akkhar Publications, Agartala, 2002, p-116

ceremony' of princess Hariseswari was performed by her brother Sri Tulajit.³⁶ Following after the wedding Raja Jai Singha did not extend his stay for long at Agartala and started for his pilgrimage. The journey thus being through water ways the Tripuri Raja Rajdhar Manikya helped him by supplying 15 boats for the river journey and also gave seven hundred rupees to Raja Bhagyachandra for his travelling expenses.³⁷

Various opinions sprang up about why and how the marriage alliance was organized. The royal chronicles of the states do not endow with any concrete reason about the marriage. However, A.C. Chattapadhyay opined that "Rajdhar married the daughter of the King of Manipur and they established friendly relation with Manipur."³⁸ This view was accepted by many other scholars. On the other hand, Dr. Dwijendra Narayan Goswami has made various assumptions about the reasons behind the marriage. He puts on questions like was Jai Singha not permitted to pass through the kingdom of Tripura? If he was permitted, he would go straight to Nabadwip, but why did he come to Agartala? Was Rajdhar Manikya II was charmed by the beauty of the Manipuri princess? Or did he intend to uplift his social status by marrying a real princess? Did Janhabi Devi, his Queen mother, the Queen of Krishna Manikya advised him to marry a Manipuri princess?³⁹ The scholar again made an assumption that King Jai Singha might have some understanding with the Tripuris in the frontier. In lieu of this he gave his daughter to the King of

³⁶ Singha, Rajkumar Sri Snahal., (edited) "*Chingthangkhomba Maharaja Ganga Chatpa*", Sri Noimangthem Kali Singha, Nagamapal, Imphal, 1964, p-40.

³⁷ Adhikari, Udaynarayan., "*Socio-Cultural Relations Among States in Pre-Independence India, A study of Tripura and Manipur*", Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2010, p-18

³⁸ Chattapadyay, A.C., "*Progressive Tripura*", Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Govt. Of Tripura, 2012, p- 35

³⁹ Goswami, Dr. Dwijendra Narayan., "*Rajarshi Bhagya Chandra*", Akkhar Publications, Agartala, 2002, p-116

Tripura and maintained the mutual relation. In respect to the questions raised and the information provided by Francis Hemilton assumption can be made that Manipuris had bitter relationship with its neighbour Kacharis through whose kingdom Raja Bhagyachandra had to pass thorough his journey. In such situation Raja Bhagyachandra had the only option of continuing his journey through Tripura. Thus, it was perhaps a diplomatic step by the Manipuri Raja to conduct the marriage organization with the Tripuri Raja for easy way to his pilgrimage journey. The step was also sure to boost up a healthier relationship between the two monarchies. On the other hand, in view of the Tripura King Rajdhar Manikya, the proceeding journey of the Manipuris through Tripura was an ample opportunity to re-establish the age old tradition of wed-lock between the two royalties. Again the idea of having high origin of Meiteis as linked with 'Pandavas' of the 'Mahabharata' and rapid cultural development conducted by Raja Bhagyachandra must have impressed the Tripura Raja. Thus, like the Ahoms the Tripura King Rajdhar Manikya desired to marry a princess of such royal family having high origin. In such cases, the dignity and prestige of the kingdom was to rise high.

Though there is no authentic answer to the questions cited above but it is the fact that the marriage brought about an intimate and long lasting relationship between the two kingdoms. Road connecting Tripura and Manipur were widened and easy immigration between the states became constant. It was in 1804 A.D. that the Meiteis even helped the Tripuris in suppressing raids made by the Kukis in the Tripura border. But, sadly in the same year the Tripura Raja died.

The new queen Hariseswari brought all along the idol of “Sri Radhamadhav” from her parental house which was installed in the royal compound. The King brought the priest of the temple, some musicians, some noble men and maid attendants of the queen from Manipur and gave them settlement near the royal house at a village called ‘Mekhlipara’ (village of Manipuris). This was the first Manipuri village in Tripura which was formed as a result of the matrimonial alliance. But, unfortunately, at present no Mekhli/Meitei inhabits in the village. When the capital of the kingdom shifted from old Agartala to the new Agartala (Nutan Haveli) during the reign of Tripura King Krishna Kishore Manikya (1829-1849 A.D.) the deity of the “Sri Radhamadhav” was also shifted to the new palace and installed. After the name of the Radhamadhav the place came to be known as ‘Radhanagar’.⁴⁰ As an impact of Manipuri Vaishnavite culture many Hindu festivals like ‘Maharasa’ (of various forms) were performed in Radhamadhav temple. Numerous cultural functions and festivals were organized as an imitation of that which were performed in ‘Sri Sri Govindajee’ temple of Manipur. Thus, Manipuri Rasa dance became famous not only in Manipur but also in the Tripura territories. After the death of Rajdhar Manikya his son Ram Ganga Manikya succeeded the throne of Tripura. The King did not marry any of the Meitei ladies like his father but like his predecessors the King was sympathetic towards the Manipuris.

The tradition of marrying Manipuri girls by the Tripuri Rajas continued thereafter. The distinguished verity of the later marriages was that the Tripura Rajas not only married the princesses of the royal family of Manipur but also

⁴⁰ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) “*Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones*”, Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-321

the Meitei maidens who have migrated and settled in Tripura due to political instability in their native or for economic necessity. Sri Kailashchandra Singha in his book *“Rajmala Ba Tripurar Itihas”* has written that during the Burmese invasion of Manipur in 1819 to 1825 A.D. which is called in the history of Manipur as the ‘Seven Years Devastation’ many Manipuris had to flee from their native land and took settlement in the nearby kingdoms. Among them numerous obtained shelter at Tripura and later became permanent domicile of the land. The then Raja of Tripura Kashichandra Manikya (1826-1829 A.D.) was fascinated by the beauty, cleanliness of the Manipuri girls. In 1826 A.D., being captivated by the beauty of Meitei princess Kutilakha/Kutilakshi of Manipur, the King married her. The King also married three other Manipuri girls who were from plebeian families and had taken shelter in Tripura due to the Burmese invasion of Manipur.⁴¹ The Meitei queen Kutilakshi gave birth to a son named Krishnachandra who was appointed as Barhakur in later years. But, it was unfortunate that prince Krishnachandra died at his early age. The unavailability of detail informations about the cited marriage compelled to cut short the significance of the marriages. Kashichandra Manikya also had many other wives from different communities. Though Kutilakshi is said to have belonged to royal family but no information is attainable about her origin and family in any of the sources. Here the questions arises like who was she? Did she come along with many other Manipuris during Burmese invasions and took settlement at Tripura? Or was it a formal political marriage? Though there are many questions but unavailability of proper written material fails to give any answers to the questions. In this regard, it is factual that if princess Kutilakshi

⁴¹ Adhikari, Udainarayan., *“Socio-Cultural Relations Among States in Pre-Independence India, A Study of Tripura & Manipur”*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2010, p-19.

had married the Tripura King through royal exchanges of proposals from either the houses then the event must have been recorded in the state chronicles of the states. As such records are not jotted down in the royal chronicles of Manipur, it can be considered that it was not an inter-dynastic formal marriage. The orientations however simply signify that the intention of the Tripura Raja behind marrying the Meitei women was purely an act of his ardor for beauty. Along with his Manipuri Rani, Raja Kashichandra Manikya also married the daughter of the King of Assam named Ratnamala on 21st December 1822 A.D. The Assamese retinues who accompanied the princess were provided settlement near 'Mekhlipara'. The area was called Assam-para and to the Manipuris, it is known as Tekhao Leikai (village of Assamese).⁴²

After the death of Raja Kashichandra Manikya, his son Krishna Kishore Manikya (1829-1849 A.D.) ascended the throne of Tripura. Similar to his forerunners, he also married many Manipuri girls and increased the number of Meitei queens in the royal house of Tripura. Of the queens three of them were the daughters of Manipuri King Marjit Singha, they were – princess Chandrakola, Vidhukola and Akhileswari. Queen Akhileswari gave birth to prince Nilkrishna. The three princesses were perhaps settling in Sylhet along with their father prior to commencement of the marriage. Because, in 1824 A.D. after eviction of Burmese from Assam the British authority called the Meitei three brothers – Chourjit, Marjit and Gambhir Singha with the proposal to hold the positions of Chourjit as Rajah, Marjit Juvaraj and Gambhir Singha as Senapati or General-in-chief. However, the two elder brothers rejected the proposal and as thus Gambhir Singha was made the Rajah of Manipur.

⁴² Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) "*Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones*", Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-319

Chourjit with a monthly pension from the British govt. left for Nabadwip. Likewise, Marjit also got a pension of Rs. 100/- per month and settled in Sylhet. He died at Balughat, a place in the southern part of Sylhet.⁴³

Maharaja Krishna Kishore Manikya at his old age also married a beautiful Manipuri Brahmin girl called Purnakala who was appointed as cook in the Tripura royal kitchen.⁴⁴ She was the 4th 'Rani' of the King. The Manipuris of Tripura called the new Rani as 'Bamon Leima' or 'Brahmin queen'. This marriage became a matter of discussion and criticism among the subjects in the kingdom. Simultaneously the marriage was not supported by the majority of the subjects including the Manipuris of Tripura. It was a superstitious believes among the Meiteis that it was a sin for a Kshatriya to marry a Brahmin girl which will lead to misfortune of the King. Curved with numerous problems Raja Krishna Kishore Manikya did not take the new Rani Purnakala to the royal fortress. Therefore, he built a house at Haidra (Dholeswar) for the Rani where she was kept along with some attendants and sepoys. As the queen was Manipuri it undoubtedly indicates that her attendants must have been mostly Manipuris. This ultimately heightened the number of Meitei settlement in the new place. The place 'Haidra' was situated 5 miles in west of modern Agartala, which was a forest area full of woods and birds and a convenient place for hunting and games. Krishna Kishore Manikya was a lover of hunting and visited the place severally. In was thus being fascinated and attracted towards the beauty of the place that in 1838 A.D. he decided to shift his capital there. Soon the construction of a new capital or Nutan Haveli at Agartala began. Thus, present Agartala town had its origin in the growth of

⁴³ Roy, Jyotirmoy., "*History of Manipur*", Firma KLM private Ltd., Calcutta, 1999, p-81

⁴⁴ Adhikari, Udainarayan., "*Socio-Cultural Relations Among States in Pre-Independence India, A Study of Tripura & Manipur*", Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2010, p-19

Manipuri community there and the love for his Manipuri beloved and her relatives in 'New Agartala'.⁴⁵ Again, it is very obvious that Rani Purnakala became one of the factors behind the establishment of a new capital at Agartala. In the history of matrimonial alliances between Manipur and Tripura, an event noticeable was that one Kumari Urmila, daughter of Krishna Kishore Manikya was married to Kumar Tilok, son of Duljit (Daoji) who was one of the grandsons of Maharaja Bhagyachandra.⁴⁶ In the realm of marriage alliances between the two monarchies it was the second instance of marrying Tripuri royal ladies by the royal descendants of the Meiteis. Naorem Sanajaoba has already mentioned about the first instance of prince Sanongba marrying a Tripuri princess. However, in future years we do not find any such references of reciprocal marriage. The Tripura King Krishna Kishore Manikya was killed by thunder in 1849 A.D. In relation to his unnatural death the Manipuris of the time believed that such an un-time death of the King was due to his sin of marrying the Brahmin girl Purnakala.⁴⁷

Krishna Kishore Manikya was succeeded by his son Ishan Chandra Manikya who ruled from 1849 to 1862 A.D. The new King also followed the long tradition of wed-lock with the Manipuri girls. Ishan Chandra Manikya had three Manipuri Maharanis and one Bengali Maharani. The Bengali lady was called Rajlakshmi and the three other Manipuri Maharanis were viz. Moirangthem Chanu Muktabali, Keisam Chanu Jatiswari and Khumanthem Chanu Chandreswari. It is also clearly cited that the three Meitei Maharanis are

⁴⁵ Adhikari, Udainarayan., “*Socio-Cultural Relations Among States in Pre-Independence India, A Study of Tripura & Manipur*”, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2010, p-33

⁴⁶ Singha, Sri Rajkumar Kamaljit., (edited) “*Marup, Sharat ki Echel*”, Agartala, 1980, p-61

⁴⁷ Singha, Sri Rajkumar Kamaljit., (edited) “*Marup, Sharat ki Echel*”, Agartala, 1980, p-69

kshatriyas.⁴⁸ Maharaja Ishan Chandra Manikya did not have any child from his first wife Rajlakshmi. His second wife Muktabali Devi gave birth to prince Brajendrachandra. From his fourth wife Jatiswari prince Nabadwipchandra and from his third wife Chandreswari prince Rohinichandra was born.⁴⁹ Maharani Jatiswari is mentioned to have 3 more girl child along with Nabadwipchandra.⁵⁰ About the home-place of Maharani Muktabali L. Biramangal Singha and Pannalal Roy has written in their book *“Itihaser Aaloke Tripura-Manipur, Itihaski Mityengdagi Tripura-Manipur”* that ‘Maharani Muktabali was a girl of Moirangthem clan who inhabited at modern Srimangal area of Bangladesh. Maharani Muktabali’s elder brother Moirangthem Shovananda was brought to Agartala and gave land for settlement and cultivation at Dholeswar by the Tripura Raja.’⁵¹ The famous Manipuri musician of the time Babu Moirangthem Babuni was his son. He was one of the teachers who introduced ‘Rasa’ dance in Tripura. Regarding the heritable history of Maharani Mukatabali, Sri Rajkumar Kamaljit Singha, a local scholar of Tripura opined that during the reign of Meitei King Chingthangkomba alias Jai Singha, the Moirangs had severe enmity with the Ningthoujas. The political conflict made one Moirangthem Govinda and many Moirang subjects to leave their native and transfer their settlement at Srimangal Satgaon Khajipur (modern Bangladesh). Moirangthem Muktabali was granddaughter of Moirangthem Govinda.⁵² It is also interesting to note that the name

⁴⁸ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) *“Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones”*, Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-320

⁴⁹ Singha, Sri Kailashchandra., *“Rajmala Ba Tripurar Itihas”*, Akkhar publication, Agartala, 1995, p-103

⁵⁰ Singha, Sri Rajkumar Kamaljit., (edited) *“Marup, Sharat ki Echel”*, Agartala, 1980, p-61

⁵¹ Singha, L. Birmangal & Roy Pannalal., *“Itihaser Aaloke Tripura-Manipur, Itihaski Mityengdagi Tripura-Manipur”*, Akkhar Publication, Agartala, 2007, p-170, p-89

⁵² Singha, Sri Rajkumar Kamaljit., (edited) *“Marup, Sharat ki Echel”*, Agartala, 1980, p-70

of Maharani Muktabali was also inscribed in the coins of the kingdom. It was inscribed as “*Radhakrishnapade SriSrijukta Ishanchandra Manikyadeb SriSrimati Muktabali Mahadebya Saka 1771.*”⁵³ Maharani Chandreswari, another Maharani of Ishan Chandra Manikya was the daughter of Khumanthen Khirod who was a settler of Kasba (Keilasgar, Tripura). The marriage brought about close relationship between the childrens of Ishan Chandra Manikya and that of the Khumanthems. In the upcoming itinerary of history we come across the progress of such rapport.

Maharaja Ishan Chandra Manikya was succeeded by his brother Birchandra Manikya (1862-1896 A.D.). He is also considered as the maker of modern Tripura. The new King also did not stay aloof from totaling Manipuri women in the regal fortress of Tripura. He not only continued the tradition of marrying Manipuri girls but also encouraged the development of Manipuri culture in Tripura as the King being a patron of art, literature and music. During his reign Rabindarnath Tagore also came in close association with the royal family of Tripura. Birchandra Manikya had many wives, of which there were three Manipuri Maharanis and one Rani. The Meitei Maharanis were Ningthem Chanu Bhanumati, Panganbam Chanu Rajeswari or Kaboklei and Khuman Chanu Manmohini.⁵⁴ Maharani Bhanumati was most favourite queen of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya. She was the daughter of Rajkumar Ningthem Kulendra of Kasba (Keilasgar) and sister of Rajkumar Ranadhvaj who was one of the influential ministers of Birchandra Manikya. Ningthem Kulendra was the son of Rajkumar Tilok who married Tripuri princess Urmila. Maharani

⁵³ Singha, Sri Rajkumar Kamaljit., (edited) “*Marup, Sharat ki Echel*”, Agartala, 1980, p-70

⁵⁴ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) “*Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones*”, Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-321

Bhanumati gave birth to prince Samarendra who was appointed as Barthakur. Birchandra Manikya also appointed one of the brothers Rajkumar Nardhaja Thakur of Maharani Bhanumati as an administrator. The Maharani had in her disposal the whole Bishalgarh pargana and some portions of Agartala pargana. It is said that Maharani Bhanumati had a premature death in 1882 A.D. which strickened the King with great grief. He appointed an Administrative Council consisting of five distinguished officers and members of the Raj family with Prince Radha Kishore as President and left for Brindavan to perform the last rites of the deceased.⁵⁵ The Raja by the time composed many narratives which was compiled and came out in the form of novel called “Prem Marichika Kabya”. At that juncture of time the young poet Rabindranath Tagore presented the Raja an anthology called “Bhangnahriday” (broken heart).⁵⁶

Panganbam chanu Rajeswari alias Kaboklei was the second Maharani of the King. She was also known as ‘Dityo Ishwari’. The father of Maharani Rajeswari was Panganbam Preamsingha Thakur, a settler of Sylhet. It was after the marriage of his daughter to Tripura King that they moved their settlement at Agartala. Maharani Rajeswari gave birth to three sons, they were – Kumar Radha Kishore, Kumar Debendra and Kumar Nripendra. The eldest son of the queen prince Radha Kishore succeeded the throne of Tripura after his father. The area which was at the disposal of the queen was named as ‘Naran Rajeswaripur’. The queen died in 1907 A.D. The third and the youngest queen of Raja Birchandra Manikya was Khuman Chanu Manmohini alias Khuman Chanu Tharo. She was the daughter of Khumanthem Kirtidhvaja from his

⁵⁵ Bhattacharjee, A.C., “*Progressive Tripura*”, Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Govt. Of Tripura, 2012, p-38

⁵⁶ Singha, L. Birmangal & Roy Pannalal., “*Itihaser Aaloke Tripura-Manipur, Itihaski Mityengdagi Tripura-Manipur*”, Akkhar Publication, Agartala, 2007, p-89, p-170

fourth wife Dharmeswari. She was one of the sisters of Maharani Bhanumati.⁵⁷ Maharani Manmohini was only 13 years and Maharaja Birchandra Manikya was at the age of 50 when the marriage was solemnized. The King gave the land Banamalipur at the midst of the Agartala town as her share. He let her father and their family members to settle at the place. She also established a temple and a 'mandapa' near the present Iskon temple at Tripura. The King also allowed her to construct a one hundred feet high 'moth' in honour and memory of her father Kirtidhvaja on his cremation ground at Banamalipur, Agartala. The place is known as 'Maothchoumuhani'.⁵⁸ Birchandra Manikya died in 1896 A.D. After the death of her husband Maharani Manmohini led the life of pure widow. She did not used mirror to look her face as it was prohibited in the society for the widows. To abstain from looking her replica she also avoided taking bath in the palace pond. After nine years of the death of her husband Manmohini also breathe her last and her shraddha ceremony was performed by her 14 years old son prince Brajanidhu. According to Sri Kailashchandra Singha the name of the prince was mentioned as Jyotirindranath.⁵⁹

During the reign of Birchandra Manikya many development work of Manipuri culture was promoted. He encouraged his Manipuris Maharanis to construct temples and 'mandapas'. Maharani Rajeswari installed the 'Sri Sri Radhamadhav' temple at Dholeswar and 'Lainingthou Pakhangba' temple at Banamalipur. The temple is known to the non-Manipuris of Tripura as 'Pagla

⁵⁷ Singha, Sri Kailashchandra., "*Rajmala Ba Tripurar Itihas*", Akkhar Publication, Agartala, 1995, p-126

⁵⁸ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) "*Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-I, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones*", Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-322

⁵⁹ Singha, Sri Kailashchandra., "*Rajmala Ba Tripurar Itihas*", Akkhar Publication, Agartala, 1995, p-134

Debota' or 'Mad God'. It is also noteworthy that the Manipuri traditional festival 'Lai Haraoba' was introduced for the first time in Tripura by Maharani Rajeswari. The third queen of Birchandra Manikya, Maharani Khuman Leima Manmohini also installed Sri Sri Radha Gobinda at Banamalipur. Birchandra Manikya also honoured the noble Manipuris by conferring on them the title of Thakur, Debvarma, Kabra, Narayan, Chowdhury etc. and made them member of the royal 'Darbar'.⁶⁰ He was also well versed with Manipuri language and could speak like his own mother tongue.

After the death of Birchandra Manikya on 11th December, 1896 A.D. he was succeeded by his son Radha Kishore Manikya (1896-1909 A.D.) whose mother was Maharani Rajeswari. Having a close relationship with the Manipuris and being a tradition, Radha Kishore like his antecedents married many Manipuri girls. He had three Manipuri Maharanis and six Manipuri Ranis (total - 9). The three Maharanis were – Ningthem Chanu Ratna Manjuri or 'Dhaka Rani', Thongam Chanu Tulsibati and Thongam Chanu Manamanjuri of Nalgaria.⁶¹ However, the names of the other six Meitei Ranis are not available anywhere. Maharani Ratna Manjuri was called by the Meiteis of Tripura as 'Dhaka Rani' which means 'Dhaka queen'. She was the daughter of the exiled King of Manipur Maharaja Debendra Singha. Maharaja Debendra Singha ruled the kingdom of Manipur from 1849 to 1850 A.D. But, unfortunately his half-brother Chandrakirti Singha returned from Cachar and captured the throne of Kangla, as a result Debendra Singha had to flee from his native and took

⁶⁰ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) *"Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones"*, Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-321

⁶¹ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) *"Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones"*, Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-322

settlement at Dhaka along with his family members and relatives. The Tripura King Radha Kishore Manikya married the daughter of the exiled Meitei King ahead of his succession to the throne. During the lifespan of his father Birchandra Manikya, in 1875 A.D., the King arrived at Dhaka to meet Lord Northbrook the then British Governor General to discuss on various issues. During this trip, Birchandra Manikya also visited the palace of exiled Meitei King Debendra Singha to congregate with the Meiteis settled there. On his visit to the place of exiled Meitei King, Birchandra Manikya saw princess Ratna Manjuri, the beautiful 10 years daughter of the dethroned King. He was charmed by the beauty of the princess and decided to make her his daughter-in-law. Thereafter, he brought the princess at Agartala and arranged her marriage with his son Maharajkumar Radha Kishore. The marriage ceremony was performed according to the norms and customs of the Manipuris. Thus, Ratna Manjuri became the first Manipuri queen of Radha Kishore Manikya. The new queen was accompanied by her brothers namely Damanjit Rajkumar, Chitragupta (Amusna) etc. The King arranged their settlement at Keilagar.⁶² The area near Bishalgarh where the relatives of Ratna Manjuri settled is at present called as Dhakarbari. Maharani Ratna Manjuri was the mother of the next Tripura King Birendra Kishore Manikya. The queen built the temple of 'Lamdem Lairembi' at Bajalghat. In 1916 A.D. she also repaired the temple of Pakhangba which was originally constructed by her Meitei mother-in-law Rajeswari. In 1930 A.D. Maharani Ratna Manjuri along with her children visited her original native Manipur to meet with her relatives and elders. At the age of 75 the queen died at Agartala. The shraddha ceremony of the deceased

⁶² Singha, Sri Rajkumar Kamaljit., (edited) "*Marup, Sharat ki Echel*", Agartala, 1980, p-97

queen was performed at Agartala under the initiative of her grand-son Maharaja Bir Bikram. The most important and revolutionary queen of Radha Kishore Manikya was Maharani Tulsibati. Unlike other, Tulsibati was a girl of simple cultivator family of village Tarou (Nalgariya) situated a little far away from Agartala. Her father was Thongam Rupananda who inhabited along with his wife and five daughters at the village. After the immediate death of Rupananda the responsibility of the family fell upon Tulsibati and her mother. But, soon the misfortune was swept away and Maharaja Radha Kishore Manikya married the cultivator girl Tulsibati. Two sisters of Tulsibati were given in marriage to Yarekpam Raghav Singha and Chingabam Chandra Kobra. Maharani Tulsibati brought her youngest sister and mother in the royal palace. The queen made remarkable contribution in the educational history of Tripura. She was a great social activist and kindhearted person. Even today she is remembered by the people of Tripura for her various contributions for the development of the society. She is credited for initiating the spread of women education in Tripura. During the last part of 19th century a wave for the development of women education in Tripura was initiated by the Maharani. With her effort she succeeded in establishing the first girls' school in Tripura called "Maharani Tulsibati Balika Vidyalaya" in 1894 A.D. at Agartala. The finance of the school was provided by the queen from her own income. She personally took initiative to collect students and to appoint teachers for the new school. The teachers of the school were Banamali Pandit, Bhuban Pandit and Sarojini (Choudhury). The school at its initial stage was situated in the palace compound but it was destroyed later by wildfire. This ultimately led the new school to be shifted at the present location near the palace compound. Prizes

were distributed to the talented students in each year. The talented students were encouraged by Maharani Tulsibati by distributing as reward utensils like plate, bowl, jug, trunk etc. every year. Added, Maharaja Radha Kishore Manikya also established vocational training schools where handloom training was given priority. The queen had at her disposal the area of her birth land as her share from the King. In 1905 A.D., the Maharani established a separate woman cell at the Victoria Memorial Hospital (presently known as I.G.M) at Agartala.⁶³ An English female Doctor Miss Aige was brought to Tripura for the first time with salary Rs. 150/- per month.⁶⁴

Maharani Tulsibati also could feel the difficulty of the people who had to come far away from villages to Agartala only for the purpose of marketing. Therefore, she requested the Raja to establish a market (bazar). As such, a market was established and to commemorate her contribution the name of the bazaar was kept as “Ranirbazar” (Market of the queen).⁶⁵ Her parents lived near the bazaar (market). Thought Maharani Tulsibati was an uneducated person but she was expert in compositions of songs and poems. Her composed songs related to ‘Holi’ festival were very famous during the time. The temple of ‘Sri Sri Radhamadhav’ at Nalgaria and ‘Lainingthou Puthiba’ at Abhoynagar were installed by the queen. Beside these we find that in almost all the Manipuri villages of Tripura such as Bishalgarh, Bamutia, Murabari, Dhakarbari etc. the Manipuri queens erected a number of temples and mandapas. Rent free lands were provided by the queens to their relatives for the erection of the same. In the royal palace of Tripura the queens introduced

⁶³ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) “*Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones*”, Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-323

⁶⁴ Singha, Sri Rajkumar Kamaljit., (edited) “*Marup, Sharat ki Echel*”, Agartala, 1980, p-94

⁶⁵ Singha, Sri Rajkumar Kamaljit., (edited) “*Marup, Sharat ki Echel*”, Agartala, 1980, p-94

the plantation of 'Basil tree' as it was an important plan for offering to gods. The Manipuri queens brought along with them the culture and religion of their parental state which they enriched even in the royal palace of Tripura.

The next Tripura Raja was Birendra Kishore Manikya who ruled from 1909 to 1923 A.D. The year 1909 A.D. was a memorable and historical moment for both Tripura and Manipur. The then Manipuri King Churachand Singha paid a visit to Tripura on the occasion of coronation ceremony of the new Tripura King Birendra Kishore Manikya. It is recorded in the "*Report on the General Administration of Tripura State for the year 1908-1909*" that "On 2nd Magh (15th January), His Highness the Maharaja of Manipur paid a visit to the state. The occasion was one of universal rejoicing. The Manipur house had been related to the Tipperah family by marriage, from a very long time, but this was the first occasion when the Heads of both the houses met one another as relatives. On this occasion, the Talukdars of Nurnagar, the most important section of the tenure holders in Roshnabad were invited, and all of them attended the Durbar held in honour of his Highness the King of Manipur".⁶⁶ During his visit, the Manipuri King also visited many Manipuri villages of Tripura and rendered financial help to the settlers for their development. Soon after, Radha Kishore Manikya died in a car accident in 1909 A.D.

After the death of his father Birendra Kishore Manikya was installed to the throne of Tripura. The new King had six Maharanis who belonged to the Nepali community and ten (10) Manipuri Ranis.⁶⁷ Though the King married Manipuri girls like his predecessors but he did not confer them the status of

⁶⁶ "*Report on the General Administration of Tripura State for the year 1908-1909*", pp-1-2

⁶⁷ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.) "*Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones*", Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-323

Maharanis. None of the names and details of the Meitei Ranis are recorded in any sources available. The absent of any related material about the marriages made those events closed pages in history. However, in 1911 A.D. Maharaja Birendra Kishore visited his maternal land Manipur along with his children and soldiers. He was also accompanied by Mahim Cornel, Sanasam Nabakumar, Panganbam Kumud Thakur etc. About this visit it is recorded in “*Cheitharol Kumbaba*” that “On Monday the 30th, Raja of Tripura, his younger brothers, 4 Babus, 7 Officers, one Sahib, 25 Sepoys in all 61 persons arrived and the party witnessed the traditional hockey. The first day of the month of Sajibu (April), was Tuesday, and the Tripuri party witnessed Holi festival and Jatrawali called Yotsabi Phagi (fun) and on Wednesday the 2nd, they witnessed and heard the songs of Mayang and Khubak Eshei (song by clapping with dance) of the Meiteis. On Thursday the 3rd, they witnessed Sova Parba and Khubak Eshei of Sugnu on Friday the 4th and on Saturday the 5th, the visiting party heard Khulang Eshei (a kind of traditional song), witnessed the boat race between Ahallup, Laipham and Naharup, Khapam on Sunday the 6th in the Imphal river and the competitors were winners in turn. On Monday the 7th, the visiting team witnessed Polo and rice cooking competition on Tuesday the 8th and wrestling and spear dance on Wednesday the 9th on Tuesday the 10th, the Raja of Tripura left for his country.”⁶⁸

Birendra Kishore died in 1923 A.D. and the young prince Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya succeeded his father on 14th August 1923 A.D. But, as Bir Bikram Kishore was only 16years then, thus the coronation ceremony was accomplished when the prince completed his 19th year. Bir Bikram Kishore had

⁶⁸ Bihari, Nepam., (edited & translated) “*The Cheitharol Kumbaba, The Royal Chronicle of Manipur*”, Spectrum Publication, Guwahati, 2012, p-416

seven (7) wives, two Maharanis and 5 Ranis. Among the five Ranis three of them were Manipuris. In due respect to the talented Manipuri people, the King made many Manipuris to hold higher positions in the administration of the kingdom. One Sanasam Thakur Kamini Kumar Singh was appointed as a member of the Council of Ministers.⁶⁹ Like his predecessors the King also promoted the culture and custom of the Meiteis in the kingdom.

In the history of Manipuri girls adding in the royal families of Tripura, many nobilities of the Tripura royal family also married many of them. Some of them were Maharajkumar Navadipbahadur, Brajendra Kishore alias Lalukarta, Ramendra Kishore alias Nimukarta who married Nirupama Devi, Bhadravati Devi and Jotirani Devi respectively. Maharajkumar Navadipbahadur was the son of the Manipuri queen Jatiswari, the third wife of Ishan Chandra Manikya. Nirupama Devi was mother of famous Indian musician Sachin Deb Barman (S.D. Barman). Thus, we find that there were many cases of Manipuri girls who were taken as wives by the Tripuri Rajas and its nobilities. But, it is worth mentioning that no Manipuri King married Tripuri princess except the case of prince Sanongba and Rajkumar Tilok kumar Singha as mentioned above. Though it was alike one way in the inter-dynastic marriages between the two kingdoms but they maintained mutual and friendly relations. When Maharaja Churachand of Manipur died, many Meitei nobles from Tripura were sent to attend the shraddha ceremony and vice-versa on the death of Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya, the then Meitei King Bodhachandra visited Tripura and participated in the shraddha ceremony in 1947 A.D. M.K

⁶⁹ Sanajaoba, Naorem., (ed.), *“Manipur Past and Present, The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization, Vol-IV, Pan-Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones”*, Mittal publications, New Delhi, 2005, p-324

Binodini (daughter of Maharaja Churachand) in her introductory note for the book *“Itihaser Aaloke Tripura-Manipur, Itihaski Mityengdagi Tripura-Manipur”* by L. Biramangal Singha and Pannalal Roy has revealed that her grand-mother (in relation) Dhakarani alias Ratna Manjuri made her visit to Manipur. The Tripuri queen being a representative of both the states made a marriage proposal for Tomal Manjuri (elder sister of M.K Binodini) with her grand-son Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya. The then Raja of Manipur Churachand accepted the marriage proposal to hand over his daughter. But, unfortunately the marriage could not be solemnized. Rumours sprang out in the kingdom about the failure of the marriage in many ways. The reason as pointed out was the social system of un-touchability. Meiteis has the custom of regarding those people as untouchable who crossed the Indian Ocean. Commenting on the unsuccessful arrangement of the marriage the queen, mother of Tomal Manjuri said in grief that ‘I had the wish to marry one of my daughters to the Raja of Tripura and gain her the status of Maharani. But, the royal politics has destroyed the marriage’.⁷⁰ Thus, due to such social restrictions the marriage could not be organized and the attempt to re-establish the long lasting wed-lock tradition between the two royalties failed.

The sequence of Tripura Rajas of marrying Manipuri girls not only has political significance but also cultural. The amalgamation of two different cultures of the states can be seen even today. Meitei culture was promoted and extended in whole the kingdom to great extent with special impact in the royal palace of Tripura. Irrespective of their status the Meitei Ranis and Maharanis in the royal house of Tripura made their great contributions in the upliftment of

⁷⁰ Singha, L. Birmangal & Roy Pannalal., *“Itihaser Aaloke Tripura-Manipur, Itihaski Mityengdagi Tripura-Manipur”*, Akkhar Publication, Agartala, 2007, p-170, p-101

Meitei culture and religion. At the same time, it was a boon on the part of the Meitei royal ladies that the subjects of the Tripura did not make any hindrance in the process of upliftment of the new culture. It was a custom in the royal family of Tripura that on the death of any royal member the shraddha ceremony of the person is performed with Meitei 'Ningthem Pala' (a kind of Kirtan). Again the patronage of Tripura Rajas in the field of culture proved as feathers in the development of Meitei culture. The Meitei queens disseminated their parental culture which they brought along with them. They were the followers of Vaishnava cult whereas the royal family of Tripura was staunch follower of Saktism which included various animal sacrifices, the example of which is the temple of Goddess 'Tripurasundari' and 'Fourteen Deities'. At this point of differences the Meitei queens attuned with the situation and began to start practicing and propagating their belief slowly. They introduced several Vaishnava festivals like Holi, Rasa Dance, Rathayatra, Jhulan etc. in the kingdom. They also introduced Manipuri dances and Kirtans in the royalty. The famous Manipuri musician during the reign of Ishan Chandra Manikya was Babu Moirangthem Babuni was one of the teachers who introduced 'Rasa' dance in Tripura as cited earlier. During the reign of Radha Kishore Manikya Manipuri 'Vasanta Ras' dance was shown to Rabindranath Tagore in his honour. The poet was mesmerized by beauty of the dance and finally decided to take it to his native at West Bengal. The Manipuri Dance form was immediately introduced at the initiative of the poet in the Institution of Santiniketan. At the proposal of Rabindranath, the then Tripura Raja Birendra

Kishore Manikya sent one Rajkumar Buddhimantajit Singha to Santiniketan as first Manipuri dance teacher in 1920 A.D.⁷¹

Thus, the historical evidences revealed that there were plenty of cases where matrimonial alliance occurred between Manipur and Tripura during the span of the study. Numerous descendants of the Manipuri queens therefore existed in the Tripura royal house and took active participation in the administration of the kingdom. The unique character of some of the marriages solemnized was that the Manipuri ladies whom the Rajas married simply belonged to cultivator family. Such instance indicates that the Tripuri Rajas were desperately charmed and mesmerized by the beauty of the Meitei girls. The elegant ethnicity and tradition of the Meiteis also engrossed the members of the royal family and interested them to develop such wed-lock. But, it is also a fact that all the Manipuri ladies were not bestowed the rank of the 'Chief queen'. It is noticeable that the Tripuri Kings married many ladies of Manipuri royal families and nobilities who left their native land and settled in various places like Dhaka, Tripura etc. Though they married royal ladies of exiled Manipuri royalties or of simple families, many of them were bestowed the position of high ranks in the palace. In study of the marriages occurred between the two monarchies a clear picture can be drawn that until 19th century the Tripura Rajas basically married the Manipuri royal ladies who were at the palace of Manipur. Since the time when political instability began in Manipur due to repeated external invasions and internal troubles there emerged changes in the marriage policy of the Tripura Rajas. The Rajas did not opt for marrying the Manipuri princesses who were at their royal palace and inspite choose to

⁷¹ Adhikari, Udainarayan., "*Socio-Cultural Relations Among States in Pre-Independence India, A Study of Tripura & Manipur*", Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2010, p-59

add Meitei ladies who settled either at Dhaka or Tripura or Cachar. Though unsuccessful, attempt was made to revive the years old tradition of wed-lock between the two royalties in the first half of 20th century. It is observable that in direct inter-dynastic marriage between the two monarchies the result was significant for both. Such marriage boosts up the political and economic relations between the two. However, in regard to practice of marrying Manipuri girls who settled outside the Manipur kingdom, the result was different. No direct impact of the marriages can be seen in the kingdoms but it indirectly has great role in improving the relationship between the people of the two kingdoms as a whole. Adding numerous Meitei ladies in the royal fortress of Tripura thus heightened the respect and love towards the Manipuri by the Tripuris.

As stated above, the history of Tripura is filled with various contributions made by the Manipuri Maharanis such as – introduction of women education by Maharani Tulsibati, Manipuri dance, erections of temples and mandapas etc. Thus, Manipuri Maharanis had very important position and high respect in the majestic house of Tripura. Many of them were mother of Tripura Rajas. However, it was only because of the support and love of the Tripura Kings which made the Meiteis achievable to expand their culture in Tripura. The marriage alliances brought not only cordial relation between the two states but also there was assimilation of cultures and religion. With the span of time the cultural life of the Tripura ruling house began to stand in synonymous with the Manipuri culture.

Despite the detailing of the marriages occurred between the two kingdoms it is unfortunate that the unavailability of proper related materials in

the historical sources regarding most of the marriages organized kept a part of history vacuum. It also remained unexplored whether there were any cases where the princess or the plebeian girls made any kind of resistance. Though such instances are not found recorded anywhere, but, in an interview conducted by the researcher with Maharajkumari Tamphasana, daughter of his Highness Late Maharaja Bodhachandra of Manipur, she was given in marriage to the Tripura prince Maharajkumar Sashadhar Bir Bikram Kishore Deb Barman, son of Tripura Raja Bir Bikram Kishore Deb Barman in 1963 A.D. On the ongoing arrangement of the marriage the princess did not opt for any kind of resistance as it was a tradition in the royal houses to get married with princes or Kings of other kingdoms. As a tradition the Meitei King also offered gold coins which valued Rs. 50,000/- to the Raja of Tripura.⁷² This shows that the system of dowry prevailed during the time. The purpose of the marriage was however to maintain friendly relation among the states and to continue the long tradition of wed lock. In supplement it can also be said that the ladies who were settling at Dhaka or Tripura territory did not make any resistance for their marriage with the Rajas of Tripura as their status and positions naturally became higher by becoming Rani or Maharani of the Raja of such glorified kingdom. On the other hand the event of marriages also displays the fascination of the Tripuris towards the beauty, culture and custom of the Meiteis.

⁷² Personal Interview - Tamphasana Maharajkumari, daughter of His Highness Late Maharaja Bodhachandra of Manipur, dated – 2/07/2012, time-9.30 am, palace compound, Manipur