

STATISTICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

NATIVE STATE OF MANIPUR,

AND

THE HILL TERRITORY UNDER ITS RULE.

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1873.

CALCUTTA :

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF GOVERNMENT PRINTING
1874.**

It is stated that the situation of an under-ground salt spring is discovered by the presence of a peculiar mist seen hanging over the spot in the morning.

The soil and vegetation surrounding the wells show nothing peculiar, and there is no appearance of any deposit of salt on or near the surface.

The whole of the salt wells belong to the raja, and are worked for his benefit. The men employed are, however, remunerated for their labour, and a certain proportion of salt is set aside for their benefit. The proportion that goes to the raja is 30 per cent. of the quantity manufactured; the remaining 70 per cent. is divided among the workmen. The amount of salt manufactured varies according to season, the most being made in the cold weather, when the water is at its strongest. About 150 maunds a month is the average. All the men employed in this work are Manipuris of the loi caste, the lowest among the Manipuris.

No attempt has at any time been made to reach the salt itself; were this possible, there is no doubt that rock-salt in large deposits would be found.

The salt obtained is quite pure and free from smell. Its wholesale price is about Rs. 6 a maund.

Building stone and materials for metalling roads are procurable in the country.

The only parts of the immense tracts of forest lying in the Manipur Territory which are utilized to any extent, are those of the Jiri forest and the hill slopes lying nearest to the valley. The revenue derived from the above is amazingly small.

The jungle products are chiefly bees' wax, India-rubber, tea seeds, and a black resinous fluid called *khair*, much used in japanning. The Nagas of the surrounding hills generally trade in these products. They also bring occasionally elephant tusks for sale.

The country contains many pasture grounds, but no revenue is derived from them. There is no class in Manipur who live by pasturing cattle.

Wild Animals.—The wild animals that inhabit the valley are but few in number—tiger, a species of wild cat, pig, and two species of deer. Jackal is unknown to Manipur.

Wild fowl, comprising geese, duck, teal, snipe, &c., abound all over the valley.

Tiger.—The tiger is common in the Manipur Valley, and frequently attains a large size;—they generally confine their depredations to carrying off cattle and ponies, but man-eaters are not uncommon.

The tiger and wild hog are at times destructive to human life. In one instance a tiger got into a house, killed seven individuals, and was not destroyed until he had eaten one of them.

Mode of capturing Tigers.—As in Bengal, when the lair of a tiger has been noted and marked, it is surrounded by a strong rope net, and information is at once given to the authorities. The officer of the "Lallup" in which the tiger is found makes arrangements for its destruction, first, however, informing the raja in case he might want to kill the animal himself. Villagers are rewarded for the destruction of tigers according to circumstances, the rewards varying in value from a present of land and a robe of honor to small rewards in money, cloth and salt.

In order to keep down the number of tigers, an arrangement is in existence all over the country for trapping them; this is done by "Karrups," or tiger parties, who surround the tiger with a net. There are also scouts,

called "Whiroi," whose duty it is to mark the lair of the tiger, which is then surrounded by the "Karrup."

Now that fire-arms are common in the country they are always used in despatching the tiger. Spear-men are also always present, but their services are seldom required. Formerly when spears alone were used, many fatalities occurred.

When the raja is present at the killing of a tiger, great crowds assemble of both sexes, and all the headmen with sepoy, &c., are present.

Deer.—The best time for deer-shooting is about March, at which time the grass jungle is burned, and the young grass shoots up; at other times the deer retire into the hills. It is at this time, when jungle is being burned, that the wild boar is very dangerous. Driven out from their shelter by the fire, are apt to run a muck and attack all before him. The hare is quite unknown in the country.

Wild Fowl.—The valley towards the Logtak Lake during the cold season positively swarms with wild fowl, especially geese. Both the geese and ducks met with in the valley are fine birds, and make good eating. The wild fowl, especially the geese, nearly all migrate to the hills during the hot weather; they are said to proceed to a lake in the hills about three days north of the Manipur Valley.

Of other birds, there are mostly the varieties common to eastern Bengal. The only crow seen is the large black variety. Kites are few in number; singing birds, varieties unknown by name, are common; their song is chiefly heard in the early morning.

The wild animals found in Manipur Hill Territory may now be briefly enumerated.

Elephant.—This animal exists in large numbers both to the north and south of the Manipur Valley, also to the south of the Government road and in the Jiri Forest. The hill-men hunt and kill them for the flesh and tusks.

Tigers.—These are not very plentiful or destructive; they are chiefly found following up the herds of elephants, upon whose young they prey.

Leopards.—These are few in number.

Wild Cats.—Of these there are several varieties.

Bears.—Of these there are two varieties, one small, and one large and fierce. They are both black, and are mostly found to the north.

Deer.—Of these, there are said to be a large variety of a brown colour, probably Sambar, the variety peculiar to Manipur, of which a few only are found in the hills; three varieties of small deer, ravine deer, barking deer (this variety is plentiful), and a small red deer.

Wild Goat.—One variety very rarely seen of a reddish brown colour and short hair.

Wild Pig.—Plentiful and very large; tusks very long, and curved upwards.

Porcupine.—Plentiful.

Wild Buffalo.—This animal is found to the south of the valley only.

Wild Methna or Hill Cow.—This animal in a wild state is now rare, and is found to the south only.

Rhinoceros.—Is found only in the hills to the east and south.

Flying lemure.—Are said to be not uncommon.

Mole or Mole-rat.—This animal is said to be found of a reddish colour. Should a Manipuri meet this animal on the road, he will not pass the place until he has caught and killed it; he afterwards splits the animal length-ways,

and flings the halves on either side. If the animal cannot be caught, it is considered a very bad omen, and the journey is resumed reluctantly.

Rat.—This animal is very plentiful in the hills, and is of large size. This rat often occasions great destruction of the hill-man's crop; they appear in immense swarms at times, and their coming is said to be simultaneous with the flowering of the bamboos. These swarms are common in the west and south; they appear suddenly, it is said, at night, and eat up the ripened but standing grain, and the stores in the villages disappearing as rapidly and mysteriously as they come. Their last appearance was in 1868, when they invaded the Naga villages lying close to the Manipur road, and committed so much damage, that supplies of rice had to be sent to the sufferers from the Manipur Valley. Besides this rat, there is also found the common brown rat and musk rat. Mice are also common.

Otter.—Of this there are two varieties, one large, and the other small.

Monkeys.—Hoolook, there are plentiful; lungoor, a large monkey resembling the ourang-outang, is said to be found to the north; the common brown monkey, a small reddish monkey, which is said to hide its face when observed by men.

Rats and flying-foxes, birds, jungle-fowl, partridge, quail, snipe, hawks, kites, black crow, doves, eagles of a black colour are said to be found in the highest peaks; owls, parrots, small birds in great variety, mostly without song.

Snakes.—The boa-constrictor is found in the dense forests to the south, and is said frequently to attain a large size; other small varieties of the snake tribe are found in the jungles, they are all or nearly all innocuous.

Reptiles in the Valley.—Manipur appears to be singularly free from dangerous reptiles; poisonous snakes are nearly, if not quite, unknown. The cobra does not seem to exist in the valley. The natives mention the existence of a green hill snake, which is said to be poisonous. Small harmless snakes are common enough. Large serpents are said to be found in the dense jungle in the hills and the swamps to the south of the valley.

The marshes in the vicinity of the Logtak also afford a retreat to serpents of a formidable size. Other places in the valley are infested by the serpent tribe; some of them are exceedingly active and bold, as the tanglei. This snake is very fond of ascending bamboos, along the branches of which he moves with great velocity, and if enraged, throws himself from an extraordinary height upon the object of his anger. His bite is said to be mortal. This, added to his great activity and fierceness, makes the tanglei an object of much terror. This snake is quite as active in the water as he is on dry land. The Manipuris speak too of a snake-god called Kharow which, when met, utters a loud sound, like an ox bellowing, and spits his venom to a great distance.

Insects, as butterflies, moths, crickets, &c., are plentiful, but present nothing peculiar to those of Eastern Bengal generally.

The mosquito is very common and troublesome during the hot season; they disappear during about two months of the coldest part of the year.

Honey-Bee.—A small variety of the honey-bee is common in the valley. Another variety of large size, named "Khoibi Namthow," is found chiefly towards the southern extremity of the valley. This bee makes its nest underground, and it so hollows out the ground and weakens the surface, that cases are not unfrequent of pedestrians breaking through and being seriously and even fatally injured by the stings of the insects. The only sign of the nest below is a withering of the grass over the spot. The

Manipuris catch this bee, and by tying a thread round its body, so retard its movements, that they are able to follow it up and discover the nest. The insects are then smoked out at night and the honeycomb extracted. The honey is considered a great luxury.

The whiteant is common and destructive: children eat it in the winged state; they will also eat the grass-hopper.

Deaths from wild beasts and from snakes are very rare; none have been heard of for the last few years. No reward is paid for snake killing. No trade is carried on in wild beast skins, and the *feræ natura* contribute nothing towards the wealth of the district.

No attempt to take a census has ever been made. The population of the valley of Manipur, including only Manipuris, not hill-men, was estimated by McCulloch in 1859 at 50,000; in 1868 at from 65,000 to 70,000.

The following is a list of the different castes of men living in the valley. In the Meithei or Manipur Proper—

Brahman.		Pheesooba	or	Dhobí.
Ganak.		Kolesaba	or	Goldsmith.
Kshatrias.		Sumkokpa	or	Nápit.
Kirtaná	or	Thao Soomba	or	Teli.
Larik Yengba	or	Thang-ga	or	Fisherman.
Thang Zaba	or	Eithibee	or	Hári.
Phoosaba	or	Musalman	or	Meithei Pangal.
Pheesaba	or	Jogi.		

The Brahmins only are exempted from all duties and taxes.

The peculiarity of the Manipur Eithibee or mehter caste is that he will perform his useful but filthy office for the raja and his family alone.

To the different classes of people according to the Lallup system various and differing employments are assigned. Amongst the Meithei or Manipuri population, there are four great divisions in their order of seniority as follows:—

Laipham. Kapham. Ahalloop. Nehároop.

These, again, are divided into the following classes, the names of which, with the nature of their employment are herein stated:—

Sub-division of Classes.

1. Ningthow Selba	Raja's body and house servants.	13. Poogai	Charge of money-chest.
2. Iaima Selba	Rani's ditto.	14. Maiba tul	Strikers of gongs.
3. Maiba Sunglei	Medical practitioners or kabiraj.	15. Doolai Baba	Chuprassies and messengers.
4. Pacha	Court of Justice for women.	16. Apalba	Mounted troops.
5. Pena Khongba	Musicians and singers.	17. Doolai roe Sung	Carry doolais.
6. Sagol Sung	Overseers of the royal stables.	18. Sebuk Thang-sooba	Raja's sword-bearers.
7. Samoo Sung	Overseers of the elephants.	19. Oo-saba	Carpenters.
8. Arángbá	Butlers, look after the food.	20. Low roongba	Cultivators.
9. Thángxia-páuaba	Overseers of blacksmiths.	21. Thángx-jaba	Blacksmiths.
10. Bolodeo Seino	Ditto of firewood.	22. Kon-sába	Jewellers and workers in brass.
11. Phauroongba	Ditto of rice.	23. Koodumba	Bone-setters.
12. Thoomjaeroongba	Ditto of salt.	24. Ahniaba	Metal-casters.
		25. Sungle	Cutcherry work.
		26. Sungooba	Ditto.
		27. Lai-kai	House-builders.

After the above come the following:—

Phoongnai.—This class were formerly slaves of the raja (according to another account they still are so), who were liberated and formed into a