



Zeliangrong Movement: A Consequential Historical Process

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Abstract

The Zeliangrong movement emerged as popular movement rooting in anti-colonialism and the dream believing in indigenous futurism. It began opposing anti-tribal policy of the colonial authority like flat-rate tax, forced labour, disarming, etc. which became the antecedents of the Zeliangrong movement under Jadonang Malangmei in 1920s to 1931.

The movement has no actual armed conflict with the authority but the latter was apprehensive of imminent danger of his plan which posed danger to the colonial administration. His movement in Manipur hills was coincided with the submission of memorandum to Simon Commission in 1929 and Jadonang's attempt to meet M.K Gandhi at Silchar, Assam. Therefore, colonial authority suspected him to have been infected by the Indian National Congress. Above all, Jadonang had military preparation. So, J.C Higgins sought to contain the impending conflict if not eliminate him. That prompted Higgins to implicate Jadonang to murder case of four meiteis and hanged him on 29 August 1931.

The movement was continued under, Rani Gaidinliu till 1932. Under her violent conflict began between colonial security and her tenacious fighters. Therefore, the colonial authority declared her "wanted" with reward of rupees 500 to informer. After her arrest, the movement continued taking solidarity phase which included Zeliangrong homeland demand with unification of those areas inhabited by the four cognate groups living in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. This democratic movement is continuing till today.

Keywords: Zeliangrong, movement, Makaam, implication, political agent, Naga Hills.

In the onomastics of the Zeliangrongs the term Zeliangrong is ethnonym of four cognate groups: Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei including Inpui. North East India principally Assam (N.C Hills), Nagaland (South West) and Manipur (West, and part of Imphal valley, Senapati and Churachandpur Districts) are home to the Zeliangrongs. They belong to Tibeto-Burman groups. Their population is roughly 4.5 lakhs (Kamei, 2014, P.50). The study of Zeliangrong Movement, which was the first ever comparatively organized tribal movement in north eastern region of India, maintained causal and functional approach for completeness of the study, to this important tribal movement. The movement was not spontaneous process meaning it has its antecedents. Making an observation on how men think and act producing event, W.A. Dunning underlines environment as inescapable force saying, "It is well known fact that external conditions, either consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, are constantly affecting the working of human mind. No man can escape it." (Dunning, 1920 P. 422). This is true of the Zeliangrongs, for that matter,

Jadonang Malangmei, that they showed it in third decade of the 20th century. The arresting antecedents were British policy towards hill tribes, inter-tribal problems and internally their belief in the prognosticated apothegm. Since history is primarily not a study of obscurantist process but process of change, it is constructive outlook over the past. Present study falls in line with what F. Powicke says, "The craving for an interpretation of history is so deep-rooted that, unless we have a constructive outlook over the past, we are drawn either to mysticism or to cynicism" (Powicke, 1948, as cited in Carr, 1990, P. 109). Therefore, we agree with E.H Carr who says, "A society which has lost belief in its capacity to progress in the future will quickly cease concern itself with its progress in the past." (Carr, 1990). Indeed, the Zeliangrongs do not lose sight of their past progress or change they made in early 20th century, for their better future. The Zeliangrong movement can be broadly be divided in two phases: violent and solidarity phases.

Prelude under Jadonang Malangmei (Early 1926–1931):

Born to Thiudai and Chunlungliu Malangmei of Puiluan village, Tamenglong, Manipur in 1905, he grew up as an extraordinary boy. He was perspicacious with hearing and seeing things. And he was also extraordinarily receptive. When he was in early 20s, he primarily did two things: (1) Visiting Ruangmei (Rongmei/Kabui) villages in Cachar Valley, Assam and Tamenglong, Manipur where he performed healings on the sick, conducted rites/ceremonies to departed soul, interpreted dreams, etc. His success in those ventures laid the foundation of his movement. (2) Pilgrim to caves and lakes found in those two States. He received inspiration from that pilgrimage. Eventually he started social reform. Of them the major works were instituting fifteen (15) gennas relating to agriculture, ominous phenomena, natural calamities, etc. and introduction of hymns, rituals of sacrifices. He, for the first time, introduced temple worship in the society. Jadonang also introduced military parade, words of command in drill for young boys and girls. His intent of anti-British plan was revealed by it which he did following his social reforms.

The British policy towards hill tribes as antecedent of Zeliangrong movement perpetrated tribal alienation in Manipur hills. Broadly it had two aspects: collection of revenue (house tax) and disarming the tribe men. Their alienation climaxed into rebellion. Revenue collection was associated with forced labour or coolie and punitive action. While the hill tribes were alien to British rule, the latter collected house tax from penniless tribemen collecting Rs. 3/- (three) per house. The British authority also levied forced labour for its touring officials. These cruel measures were applied to already burdened tribemen by meting out retaliation to them who protested against the first two. While those were the British approach common to all tribemen, the Zeliangrongs, for that matter, the Rongmeis bore the brunt when they were forced to pay taxes for four years by the hand of C.L. Crawford, the Asst. Political Agent of Manipur in 1894 between February and March. He collected to the tune of Rs. 7000/- from them (Kamei, 1997, P.47). The value of the amount, if considered in present monetary value, may be equal to multi-lakhs.

While repressive and oppressive policy continued, the Britishers disarmed the tribemen. The policy has two-fold objective: to silence the inter-tribe feuds and to squelch the source of trouble to British rule. Under the policy every ten (10) house was allowed to have one (1) gun; other guns were to deposit before November 1899; police were to be posted at the villages which remained recalcitrant; and owners of unlicensed guns who did not subscribe to the declaration be fined and imprisoned. Reward was declared to informer.

This policy in addition to tax collection, had also led to further alienation (Lal, 2008, P. 72) as it created internal insecurity in inter-tribe situation which was intermittent with head-hunting, inter-tribe feuds, inter-village feuds which were intra-tribe and inter-tribe in character of insecurity without self-protecting arms.

In spite of those policies there was loose control over the hill tribes as the foul-up of the authority. The Vice-President of Manipur State Durbar, who was already overburdened, was given the charge of all tribes which spread across over 90% of total territorial area of the State. In such situation, disarming policy was practically failed in the face of circulation and possession of many unlicensed guns from unadministered areas (Lal, 2008). So, inter-tribe conflicts remained unabated among the hill tribes for which the Britishers resorted to punitive expedition without the role of protector.

It was such a state that had led to Kuki Rebellion in the latter half of the second decade of the 20th century. The rebellion was another antecedent of Zeliangrong movement. For atrocities committed on the Zeliangrongs gave ground for their cohesion and preparation for their security which was revealed by Jadonang himself when he was asked about his intent towards the Kukis, saying that the Zeliangrongs would fight them if the Kukis fought them (Kamei, 1997, P. 52). It is true that his movement was not primarily anti-Kuki. But the Kuki leadership under Haokip leaders and chiefs like Tintong and Enjakhup, chiefs of Jampi and Loibol, etc. committed atrocities, depredations on the Zeliangrongs which made them disgust of their pro-Kuki stand and their leniency to them and then left "a deep psyche of the people against them" (Kamei, 2004, P.147). It was their polarization against the Kukis. In other words, the outcome of the rebellion was that it created deep sense of ethnic exclusivism between them and the Kukis. Therefore, the Naga-Kuki clash in 1990s, while the cause was not same, is considered rooted in that exclusivism. In fact, their atrocities and depredations could not be easily forgotten even in the days of Jadonang and they did in 1990s. Even Jadonang prognosticated the end of the days of the Kukis along with the Britishers and of the Meiteis. Viewed history as bringer of change, the Kuki Rebellion also like British policy made the Zeliangrongs ruminate with sense of cohesion and new direction.

The third antecedent, which was traditional and internal to them, was their belief in apothegm which says the "Makaams will be ruler" which was studied with Jadonang's speeches. It is said to have originated from Gairemnang, a famous songsmith of the Zeliangrongs. He vaticinated it some hundred years before Jadonang. He is believed to be the man of the last decades of the 18th century or early decades of 19th century A.D. The apothegm was considered prophetic in effect. Therefore, the Zeliangrongs were on the lookout for the emergence of any man whom they could consider him to be the prospective ruler of the Makaams. So, when Jadonang emerged with his extra-ordinary charismatic power and as he himself claimed to be the one, the Zeliangrongs followed him as, in the words of Ursula Graham, their 'Messiah' which is a deliverer. Therefore, one reason of becoming himself as an undisputed political figure within nearly four years was because of their belief in that prophetic apothegm. Now, they firmly expected its fulfillment in Jadonang who himself claimed the fulfilment in him. So, his movement can be said to be a millenarianism. The Zeliangrongs were avid for it raving about it.

There were tribal movements in latter half of the 19th century AD. A comparison can be drawn with Zeliangrong movement. Of them was the tribal movement of Naikda forest

tribe. It was a millenarianism as they expected imminent golden age or establishment of dharma-raj. Therefore, it prompted them to attack police station in 1868 (Sarkar, 1983, P. 45). Again, the movement led by Korra Mallaya was also to establish his own rule by driving out the Britishers with his magic power. He also claimed to be an incarnate of one of the five Pandava brothers. But his movement came to an end abruptly (Sarkar, 1983). In Manipur itself Chingakhamba Sanachaoba Singh predicted the end of the British kingdom. He started anti-social elements which spread panic even among the authority circle. Therefore, Herderson, President of Manipur State Durbar was apprehensive of his attack even on people of Imphal, the station of Political Agent of the British government and king's palace, on 22 December 1917 (Kumar, 1992, P.50). But he also met similar fate with that of the above two.

Comparing Zeliangrong movement with those three, one can find that the former is more organized and die-hard as its second phase is continuing even today. The three movements came to an end abruptly and no leader(s) is said to have continued after the death or arrest of their leader. So, while all movements are of millenarian in character, Zeliangrong movement sought for kingdom of Makaams, the people who were akin to them in ethno-cultural identity. The people are identified with the Nagas who have been fighting for self-determination for more than eight decades since 1947.

Dreamed and planned against the backdrop of those antecedents, Jadonang made a mass-base for his political movement by initiating social reforms. It was comparable with Indian renaissance which was made precede Indian national movement in first half of the 20th century. The Zeliangrongs in those days were superstitious, extremely custom-bound society. They were polytheists. Sacrifices were, for the people, expensive and most of them found difficult to afford as per custom. It was in such times that Christianity came as great challenge to theirs with the teaching of monotheism. Jadonang aimed at instituting a commonality in socio-religious life so that sense of solidarity prevailed among the Zeliangrongs. He did away taboos and superstitions and introduced monotheism by the name Tingkao Raguang (the heavenly God) with temple worship for the first time. As outcome of his reforms, there were changes in the society with rationalization of Supreme Being, sacrifices, practice of gennas by doing away the obnoxious ones.

The outcome of his reforms was social unification or cohesion promoting ethno-social solidarity among the Zeliangrongs. What was vagary was that young Jadonang for the first time, was able to emerge as religious leader in the society where old-folk dominated socio-religious affairs (Kumar, 1992). He had now leadership with overwhelming sway among his tradition-bound people. His popularity spread far and wide drawing people of cognate groups like the Zemes, the Liangmais, the Puimeis/Inpui, the Ruangmeis (Rongmeis/Kabuis) and kindred groups like the Paomais, the Marams, the Thangals, etc. from different places, inside or outside of Manipur. They thronged to PUILUAN, his native village which became nerve centre of his movement.

Having seen the success of his reforms, Jadonang was pertinacious of his political dream. As stated earlier, his political movement was conjointly held with the traditional belief in the apothegm and for its fulfilment in him. Therefore, his social reforms went side by side with military preparedness. He predicted the end of British rule; spread his slogans: no tax to the government from 1931-32; disobey law of the government. Regarding the coming of new rule after the British rule, he first propounded it so that his

people might respond to him about it. Later, what had been made exoteric he made it esoteric drawing the serious attention of the British government. Remember, the British approach to problem was not normally dovish in action. As S.J. Duncan welled up about it, he proposed J.P. Mills, D.C. of Naga Hills that he allowed no man from Henima village to visit Tamenglong, Manipur except via Imphal (Kamei, PP. 59-60).

The first British action against his anti-British activities and prognostication was imprisonment of Jadonang at Tamenglong on the 6th December 1928. After his release on the 8th December of the year, he gave new lease of life to his movement by expanding his remit and starting non-cooperation including the declaration for physical elimination of government servants. He openly declared that "...Milongs (Nagas) will become great; let us now try and kill the Sarkars" (Reports, 15-2-1931, as cited in Kumar, 1992, P. 61). Literally, "Milongs" in Kuki Ruangmei (Rongmei/Kabui) Nagas only but the Britishers used it in generic sense meaning the Nagas of the Naga tribes. The situation emerged was unsafe for government servants in Tamenglong, Manipur.

In view of connascence of his non-cooperation activity with the proposed visit of Mahatma Gandhi in Silchar, he was suspected that the Congress had infected him. Jadonang also planned to meet Gandhi by taking two contingents of boys and girls of 100 each. So, British government alerted all military outposts and military operation without orders from Political Agent or President of Manipur State Durbar and free hand to operation commander who should update any event associated with the movement (Kumar, 1992, PP. 61-62). The operation was conducted under the leadership of Ksh. Bokul Singh, a Lam Subedar and two Lambus of Tamenglong. They reached his native village just to have learnt that he left for Silchar. Following that Higgins was informed about his presence in neighbourhood of Lakhimpur. Finally, Jadonang was arrested by Imtiaz Ali, a police officer on 19 February 1931. He was brought to Imphal and imprisoned under Section 302/109 and 149 of IPC being accused him of instigator and prime mover of the murder of four Meiteis. A verdict passed against him was on unfounded ground of the murder and hanged him on the 29th August 1931 near Imphal jail.

Martyred for the Makaams:

The real import of the movement which still remains recondite to many especially among the Nagas was known to colonialists. The political movement popularly known as "Naga Raj", a title given by colonialists, of Jadonang is part of history of the Nagas from the angle of context in which the event occurred. The four cognate groups under the ethnonym "Zeliangrong" are Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei and Puimei whose inhabited areas, according to Prof. Gangmumei Kamei (2004), is "nearly 12 thousand square kilometres" (P.2). The areas cover the whole Tamenglong district, Western Sadar Hills, Mao West, Loktak Project area in Manipur State, and the Haflong Subdivision of North Cachar Hills district of Assam State along with Peren Subdivision of Kohima district of Nagaland State (Kamei, 2004). This is contracted area resulted from historical vicissitude experienced by the groups. The territorial area is within the political map of the Nagas. Historically raked up, the extent of their native homeland covers.

"The great Barail range and its Southern branches, from the Dhansiri river in the north and to the confines of the Chin Hills of Myanmar (formerly Burma) including the present Churachandpur District of Manipur in the South, the Bhutan Hills and Jiri River and the Haflong plateau in the west,

and the Barail watershed in the North East adjoining the Angami country; the Mao-Maram Hills and Koubru Laimaton Hill Range overlooking the Manipur valley” (Kamei, 2004).

His struggle was for freedom of people which is found to be an exemplar for many including Naga nationalist illustrious leaders like A.Z. Phizo, Th. Muivah, etc. With regard to exemplar, former Union Home Minister (MOS), Prof. Meijinlung Kamson, during lecture in the 50th death anniversary of Jadonang, recalled what A.Z. Phizo, the father of Naga freedom movement, said about Jadonang. Phizo is said to have told to MZU (Manipur Zeliangrong Union) leaders that “he followed the footsteps of Jadonang” (Meijinlung Kamson, Personal Communication, August, 29 1981). Kamson was interviewed on the matter for ascertaining his mentions of the account. He said, A.Z. Phizo went to East Pakistan via Tamenglong region, met MZU leaders and commended Jadonang’s freedom struggle and told them Jadonang left footsteps to follow. He told them he followed his footsteps. (Kamson, Meijinlung. Personal Interview. November, 16 2005). “A.Z. Phizo was, at that time, enroute for erstwhile East Pakistan (now renamed Bangladesh) through Zeliangrong region, Manipur West district in 1956. He was accorded escortage by Zeliangrong men to Silhet and late Tadingpou Gangmei, former Tatar of NSCN (IM), Binakandi, Cachar district was one of the escorts who was fluent in Bengali” (Gangmei, Ashinpou. Personal Interview. August, 19 2021). Th. Muivah was impressed with the patriotism of Jadonang and he said that “Jadonang had set an exemplary work for all of us. He did not surrender to the British but stood for the cause of the people till death”. (Muivah, personal communication, 2010). He urged the people to follow his footsteps. He said this when he visited Peren district headquarters on 13 July, 2010. Interestingly Jadonang’s movement had coincided with the submission of historic memorandum to the Simon Commission in January 1929 in Naga Hills. Ultimately the coincidence, as history proves, was a reason, on the part of colonial authority, to have suspected his movement to be ‘potential source of danger’ to colonial administration.

Truly, Jadonang wanted freedom for the Makaams who are his people to which his cognate groups belong. The people are the Nagas. In Rongmei (Ruangmei) lexis the term Makaams are an aggregate of people who are common in history, origin, cultural life, etc. He started roping in other Naga groups like the Angamis, the Zemes, the Liangmais (now called Zeliangs) of Naga Hills and the Zemes of N.C Hills, the Marams, the Paomais, the Puimeis (Inpuis), the Zemes and the Liangmais (Kacha Nagas) of Manipur into his movement. According to “Report on Jadonang” by J.P Mills, Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, Jadonang was said to have spoken that his people and the Angamis had common origin stating that” ... though we and Angamis had different countries and different languages, we had a common origin” (Kamei, 1997, P.52).

According to J.P Mills, the Angamis, on the question whether to support Jadonang or not, were said to have discussed at Khonoma village. Again, SDO Tamenglong conducted, after a report given by the Kuki employees of Manipur, on the involvement of other Naga tribes. The report says that “the Angamis of Khonoma visited Tharon Village... and there was a whole night dancing and feasting, hinting at the possible collusion between the Angamis and the Liangmais of Tharon...” (Kamei, 1997, P. 59). S.J. Duncan, the then SDO, Tamenglong reported that “...he is being held in awe and respect by the superstitious

Nagas on account of his vagaries, even villages from the Naga Hills have gone to him with tributes" (Kamei, 1997, P. 60).

Interestingly, Duncan's report also mentioned Jadonang's declaration not to pay tax to the Govt. the impending end of British Government and about the new ruler which was to replace the British Govt. His report also had a mention pleading that the Nagas from Naga Hills be constricted their entry to Manipur through Henima village of Naga Hills. Further the report pleaded that both Jadonang and Gaidinliu be arrested and made confine in jail for not less than a year (Kamei, 1997). And, Higgins informed Christopher Gimson, D.C of Cachar to arrest Jadonang when he was enroute for his home-centre from his worship at Bhuvan Hill in Cachar. Further he also consulted Mills for carrying out his conspiracy plan against Jadonang. After the arrest of Jadonang at Lakhipur/Binakandi, Silchar, he wired Gimson to extradite him to Manipur State. Finally, it was J.C. Higgins, upon him the authority of police, judiciary and executive lay, judged him with a sole intent of execution of Jadonang.

As a result of that connections, D.C. of Naga Hills was informed to prohibit the entry from Naga Hills through Henima to Manipur except through Imphal (Kamei, 1997). The clasp they maintained on Jadonang was, as has stated elsewhere above, that the colonial authority viewed his movement as potential of trouble in the hills of Manipur West and Naga Hills and the colonial administration had stepped up their conspiracy plan of physical elimination of Jadonang. For their apprehension was that if the wave of his movement spread unchecked to other Naga areas including Naga Hills, colonial administration would be in trouble.

While the extent of the troubles cannot be stated, the apprehension carries reality as his preparation, though humble for mighty British, was turned out to be an armed struggle against British India. He conscripted 500 youths for the movement; he was said to have acquired more than 30 muzzle loading guns and sizable numbers of other weapons including daos, spears for his movement. The youths were trained in wielding daos, spears and shooting guns along with military drill and words of command after his own innovation (Kamei, 1997). He devised and applied strategy for the formation of military alliance among the Makaams living in the region for which he sent spear to villages and whichever villages accepted the same it was taken as signal of their support and solidarity with him. His military preparation began with the slogan: "The Makaams will rule".

In his communication with J.C Higgins, J.P Mills informed him about his connection with the Angamis of Khonoma and Zeme villages of N.C Hills (Kamei, 1997, P. 52). He also informed the Commissioner of Surma Valley about him stating that Jadonang was leading a political movement for the Makaams with a declaration that the days of the British, the Manipuris (or the Meiteis) and the Kukis would end in three years (Kamei, 1997, P. 61).

J.P Mills was an administrative authority who informed J.C Higgins about the connections between Naga Hills and the Nagas of Manipur hills particularly, Manipur West and North in those days. It was also he to whom Lhoupa, Mauzadar of Henima informed about Jadonang's declaration of would-be new reign which the Nagas of those areas, who were under his sway, accepted it; the urgency of prevention of the movement by deploying security forces in the areas (kamei, 1997, PP. 57-58). It was also he whom S.J. Duncan, Tamenglong SDO, by report to J.C Higgins, wanted him to take up restriction of

entry of the Nagas from Naga Hills into Manipur via Henima village. Higgins who was deadly hot after Jadonang had chance to prosecute him.

The prosecution of Jadonang by J.C Higgins was without due legal procedure but it was politically motivated. This is proved on two counts: the crime for which he was charged was not justified; the process of prosecution was implicative for political end. J.C Higgins implicated Jadonang in the murder case of four Meitei traders and Higgins, with the implication, passed capital punishment and hanged him. Was the implication justified? It was the false charge framed against him on the following grounds:

Jadonang was not at Puiluan (Kambiron) village at which the murder took place. He was at Luangkao (Nungkao) village at the time of the incident. Jadonang himself told it to Higgins on 5 June, 1931 and he said that the crime was committed at the behest of Rani Gaidinliu (Kamei, 1997, P. 75). The murder was spurious of his movement. For, the Rongmeis/Kabuis had no ill-feeling with the victims-community. It was a stray incident committed in his absence allegedly on unrelated ground.

Jadonang's appeal petition submitted to the Governor of Assam against Higgins' verdict through the President of Manipur State Durbar, 26 June 1931 which reads as follow:

1) "The evidence of five co-accused against him was given an afterthought as the whole village could find no reasonable ground for the murder, according to the village opinion after one complete year." 2) The judgement of the Political Agent did not trace out the real murderer, as the actual murderer was not identified, as the whole mob attacked the said persons. He urged the court to trace out the prime mover of the crime and the real culprit, who, according to Jadonang, was Gaidinliu who was absconding. 3) He was not present at Kambiron at the time of the occurrence of the murder as he was staying at Nungkao (Kamei, 1997, P. 79).

J.C. Higgins could not ascertain the real culprit(s) which he himself admitted stating that as crime was committed nocturnally and who caused the death of four traders were not known. But his political end of prosecution had overridden the findings about Jadonang's innocency. So, J.C Higgins started plotting a plan to implicate him in crime of the murder as principal culprit. His intent was reflected in his Manipur Administrative Report 1931-1932 stating "Jadonang was wanted not only as leader of the New Movement but also as a murderer" (Kamei, 1997, P. 72). Does not this statement contradict the evidence of innocency of Jadonang in the crime which he had admitted? For Higgins the murder case, which was a stray and unrelated incident, was a conceivable ground for implication. In fact, it enabled Higgins to implicate him to the crime whereby he could be successful for political end (to eliminate him for this anti-British movement). Higgins was now able to implicate Jadonang by manipulating what was that belied in the murder case. Remember the murder case which became "much needed evidence" for conviction of Jadonang leading to his death, came after 30 March 1931 but Higgins' trial of Jadonang had been completed before 23 March 1931 in which he found no crime worthy of his death.

In the process of his plan to incriminate Jadonang to the murder case, he persuaded the co-accused to put blame on Jadonang that they should incriminate Jadonang as principal culprit. They were persuaded to broach it. And, some of them gunned up about it. While he did that, he promised the co-accused to acquit them of punishment. For this purpose, Higgins sent Mr. Jinlakupou, a road muhori to visit villages from where the co-accused hailed. He, in order to incriminate Jadonang to the murder case, told that Jadonang would

never be released from jail and sure to die under capital punishment and persuaded them to fix responsibility of the murder on Jadonang so that they might be acquitted of the crime. In this way Lulungpou, Accused No.6 of Mukti village was won over and he, in turn, won over other co-accused also (Kamei, 1997, P. 75).

Therefore, Higgins' implication and incrimination of Jadonang to murder case as principal culprit were without rhyme or reason. The motive behind capital punishment on Jadonang without convincing evidence has clearly shown how the colonial authority in India viewed the 'Naga Raj' or freedom movement of the Zeliangrongs. During the movement continued under Rani Gaidinliu, the perception of the Government of Assam of the movement was that it was 'potential source of danger' and 'grave' and J.P. Mills believed that it was truly to establish 'Naga Kingdom' replacing British rule (Gangmei, 2005, P. 7).

The political motive of J.C. Higgins, obvious to us in his prosecution of Jadonang, is also seen in the procedure of the prosecution. We have seen that Higgins manipulated the murder case for an incriminating ground done without positive evidence. Firstly, when Jadonang was arrested on 19 February, 1931 at Lakhimpur, it was under Section 108 of IPC. The Section has nothing to do with murder case. Their intent was to contain his movement by arresting the leader who was nobody but Jadonang. Therefore, the Section 302 of IPC, applied later which has to do with the murder and it was part of Higgins' plan to implicate Jadonang to the crime. Secondly, the application of other Sections such as 109 and 149 of IPC along with the Section 108 was to drag all accused into the crime. And, while all accused admitted the crime Jadonang did not. But the former who admitted were acquitted or not executed but the latter who did not admit (for he was innocent) was condemned to hanging. Thirdly, Higgins made two flimsy pretexts for the denial of legal defence in the court of Political Agent for Jadonang, he says: 1) "no counsel was provided for the accused in my Court, as the case did not involve much legal question". Was a murder case involved no much legal question? 2) "the accused (Jadonang) has not sufficient means to defray the expenses". Higgins groundlessly justified his denial of legal defence for Jadonang.

It is clear that entire legal proceedings were studded with guises in the prosecution which he devised for political end by physically eliminating Jadonang from the scene. To be precise, Higgins planned to physically eliminate Jadonang under the guise of dispensing justice which is supposed to be in favour of the victims. A pertinent leading question to ask is: Had not been a murder case at that time, what pretext the colonial authority could have against Jadonang for his capital punishment? Remember, he had not yet, at that time, launched military campaign against the authority except impending military conflict with it.

Taking his game-plan and intent into consideration, what is seen is that his hidden political end, the decimation of Jadonang's movement, was so obsessive. The implication and incrimination carry, in the words of Prof. H.K. Barpujari, "much desired pretext". He says, "in the absence of positive evidence, a verdict cannot be passed that the case was pursued beyond all reasonable doubt. The alleged murder of Manipuris afforded the Government the much-desired pretext to nip in the bud. The establishment of the "Naga Raj" in the problem-ridden frontier would endanger the British Indian Government!" (Bajpujari, H.K. 1981, P. 218)

Jadonang has carved out a place in history with freedom struggle for the Makaams who are aggregate of people living as groups yet belonged to each other in the region. His contribution is primarily two-fold: history and freedom. He scripted history of freedom struggle among the tribes of India in general and among the Nagas in particular. His freedom struggle is incorporated in the academic syllabus. Jadonang's movement will never be oblivious to scholars, the educated in the study of socio-political movements of the tribes of India and remains as comparatively significant to the study of North-Eastern tribes.

Jadonang is ranked among the tribal leaders, who fought against the British Government, of the region and India. He occupies a place in history. He was a freedom fighter that the Naga society has ever produced in early part of the 20th century. No study of Nagas' past can be made in isolation of the freedom history scripted by Jadonang Malangmei. The study is part of Naga history. For what he, as son of the soil, did was part of Naga history. The geographical context and how he allied with other Naga tribes of Manipur and Naga Hills during his movement sustain the fact of Naga historical process in the third decade of the 20th century.

As to his contribution to freedom struggle of the Nagas, Jadonang's movement is also one which shall never fail to tell the people that the Nagas have striven for self-determination prior to the likes which were sprung up outside the Nagas in India's soil. For the period proves prior to their struggles existed or existing. While the movement may be short of desirable extent in contribution, it still remains as a seed of freedom struggle sown hundred years before or pre-Indian independence. His movement was launched after a gap of nearly hundred years from first Anglo-Naga conflict began in 1832 or so. If localised the base of the movement its extent is comparatively limited. But it holds true of the saying, "Something is better than nothing" if held an overall consideration of the movement. In fact, for example, the movement launched at the periphery of the Nagalim speaks of glaring fact about boundary of present Naga inhabited areas in south Nagalim. Therefore, even tall Naga nationalists like A.Z.Phizo, Th.Muivah, etc. could not commit oversight of him and his freedom movement.

In brief, since Jadonang's movement is part of history its significance and relevance exist inerasably which may be given to effect if exploited for noble cause. The two aspects of his contribution which are concomitant in the movement always remain above all trivialities whinged about Jadonang. It seems the observation of Prof.R.Mahadevan, in this regard, is correct. He observes the Jadonang's movement a Naga Raj is "one of the most important anti-imperialistic struggles... the beginning of the political struggle of hill people of Manipur against the British... an organised rebellion with clear-cut programme and objectives of shaking off the imperialistic yoke, and the establishment of a Naga Raj" (Mahadevan, R. 1974, PP. 107-111). Jadonang's movement is studied because he also sacrificed his life for freedom. He has played his part leaving room for his succeeding generations.

Zeliangrong movement under Rani Gaidinliu (1931 - 1932):

Born to Mr. Luathuannang Pamei and Mrs. Kaluatlianliu on 26 January 1915, Rani Gaidinliu became an unflinching loyalist of Jadonang in her late teenage. She had been together with him in his pilgrimage and was part of social reforms. As an extra-ordinary girl, she was so pertinacious for the movement. Indeed, the movement was not desultory

under her leadership. After the arrest of Jadonang she went hiding with a plan taking with her 50 youths. Since April 1931 till her arrest, she spearheaded the movement pretermitted by Jadonang changing her remit in trans-Barak basin in Western Tamenglong, Manipur. The government was hot after her for arrest by declaring award amounting to Rs. 200/- to Rs. 500/- for informer (Kamei, 2004, P. 160).

The warriors of Rani Gaidinliu began their fight attacking the patrol party of Assam Rifles in February 1932 in N.C Hills. Then they attacked the outpost of Assam Rifles at Hangrum village in March 1932. In the attack they killed six Assam Rifles men and eight died on their side. How she could subtrude her movement in those days in N.C Hills was that there were many secrets: secret routes or paths for her mobility and the secrets kept by the Zemes before military and civil servants. The Zemes were exceptionally sequacious of Rani with their rare fortitude (Kamei, 2004, PP. 160-161).

Gaidinliu's rebarbative activities were directly against the hope of government. For Assam government in its report to Government of India stated that with the death of Jadonang 'the unrest would then cease' but the movement was found prosilient under her. Many in N.C Hills and Naga Hills stood proactive to Gaidinliu. After the attack at Hangrum, she changed her stronghold remit to Naga Hills. It was onset in her movement. Her people continued to be pertinacious of the fulfilment of the prophetic apothegm. Her grip over them was, in that way, strong because of that stunning situation. J.P. Mills spoke about the "real danger" which, according to him was "spirit of defiance" and the Nagas who were once "truthful and friendly" became aggressive because of her anti-British influence (Kamei, 2004, PP. 162-163).

In Naga Hills Gaidinliu repositioned her fighting force. Masang of Kapelo was made commander who firmly believed in her supernatural power. She also employed many spies to keep informing her about military movement of the government. Not only these, she also sought the hands of the Maos, the Marams, the Angamis, etc. (Kamei, 2004). Then she came to Pulomi which proved to be her waterloo. As her strain the villagers constructed a big stockade which could accommodate 3 to 4 thousand warriors and fighters. But since all were not with her the strong stockade could not save her without the support of some responsible men. Dr. Haralu was not on her side and proved Achilles' heel to her. For how Mr. Hari Blah, Extra Assistant Commissioner welled up about her had really nerved the plan of arrest with enough military strength (100 rifles) under Capt. Macdonald. They arrested her without fight and bloodshed on the 19th October 1932 (Kamei, 2004, PP. 163-164).

As the government apprehended that the movement would continue after her arrest as she did after the hanging of her political godfather, Jadonang. The apprehension was true failing to quiesce the movement under her sequacious followers. On suspicion of informer, her followers killed the wife and child along with two of their guests at Lakema and Leng and Bopungwemi villagers were responsible for the incident. Following that her die-hard follower, Haideo of Pabram preached the millenarianism of Jadonang and Gaidinliu with demonstration of his charismatic power and prognostication. Yet he was arrested at Henima village in May, 1934. Then, he was imprisoned (Kamei, 2004, P. 165).

Bopungwemi village was her stronghold in her remit in Naga Hills. There were her four confidantes. Ramjo who was "most heroic" of all leaders in Naga Hills kept the movement alive for two years. He continued Jadonang's slogan of "no tax" to government in Naga

Hills. He was arrested in July 1934 and imprisoned. He died in jail. The movement continued under Dikeo of the same village for more than four months in the Hills. He escaped from jail and remained absconding for some years but he was shot dead. Again, there were two more Gaidinliu's strong followers called Gomhai and Areliu. They were imprisoned for their involvement in the movement (Kamei,2004).

The British Government was able to suppress the Zeliangrong movement of violent phase by killing or imprisoning most of her leading Zeliangrong myrmidons and virtually phased out in Naga Hills. But it was just a glitch to the movement. It was roughly so in September, 1935. In Zeliangrong movement its remit kept changing from Tamenglong West, Manipur to N.C. Hills and finally in Naga Hills covering mainly almost all Zeliangrong inhabited areas of the three States.

What is paradoxical, considering the perception of the British government, is that it gave viceral feeling to the government even after hanging and imprisoning of its founder and leaders and suppression of the movement. For it carried the fact of die-hardness and its tensility was unpredictable. Therefore, the British Government, in reply to Lady Astor's plea for the release of Rani Gaidinliu, replied saying, "the movement among the Nagas has not yet died down and would break out if she were released and that she is at present considered a potent source of danger to the peace of Manipur State and Province of Assam" (Kamei, 2004, P. 166). Similarly, Manipur Government was also not in favour of her release for having similar apprehension.

India's Patronage to Rani Gaidinliu:

While Rani Gaidinliu was in prison, Jawaharlal Nehru, INC President came to know of her when he was Sylhet in 1937. He, then published in the Hindustan Times giving title "In the Surma Valley, Daughter of the Hills" in which he called her "Rani". He initiated the process of her release with Lady Nancy Astor, a member of House of Commons. She placed the proposal in the House but the House, in view of exigency for peace in Manipur and Assam, was not in favour of the release. Again, Nehru wrote to Astor in May 1939 but without fruit (Kamei, 2004). He had to wait till 1947. Before her release she was put in four jails. Efforts for her release continued from different quarters. Mrs. Philips Jones of England attempted to meet her after she heard about her in British Parliament. Her pressure for release and Nehru had conjointly convinced the Assam government and she was released on condition in 1947. She was not allowed to return to Manipur for five years during which she lived at Yimrap, a Chang village in Naga hills (Kamei, 2004, PP. 181-182).

In recognition of her sacrifices government of India conferred awards and honours on her. Within 43 years from 1972 - 2021, Government of India conferred and awarded more than twelve items of awards/honours to Rani Gaidinliu. The Tamra Patra (1972), Padma Bhusan(1981), Vivekananda Sewa Summan (1983), Birasha Munda Award (1994), One Rupee Postage Stamp (1996), Stri Shakti Puraskar Award (2000), Dharmasala Guest House (Rani Gaidinliu Bhavan), Mumbai (2000), the Navy Coastal Vessel (Rani Gaidinliu) (2010), Rani Gaidinliu Library-cum-Museum, Kohima (2011) and currency note of Rs. 100 and a coin of Rs. 5 issued in her name (2015), ICGS Rani Gaidinliu (2016), and Rani Gaidinliu Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum (2021). The Museum was at her native village, Luangkao.

The Zeliangrongs Movement from 1935 onward:

As has stated above that the violent phase of Zeliangrong movement was ended in 1935. It was replaced by peaceful solidarity movement. While the object was not same with that of the violent phase, they worked for solidarity, unity and tried to shape up for their future. The solidarity movement virtually coincided with Naga Raj movement of Jadonang. It lay stress on their oneness following two ways: 1) Cognate solidarity work began in 1925 among the Ruangmeis (Rongmeis/Kabuis) especially in Imphal valley. It was christened as 'Agangmei' which was renamed as 'Kabui Chingsang' in 1927. The organization was further changed to 'Kabui Samiti' in March 1934. Barely after month of that event the Zeliangrongs performed a vow rite called 'Chuksumei' on 1 April 1934. The rite was performed so that, according to traditional belief, crimes committed against each other (primarily the four cognate groups: Puimei, Zeme, Liangmai and Rongmei) through head-hunting, intra-group feuds, inter-village rivalries, etc. might be warded off and lived, which they should as children of common ancestor, in peace and unity forgetting their past misdeeds (Poushinglung, November 6 2015).

The further process of organization work continued after 1940. An organization called Kabui Naga Association came into being in 1946. Then, following the line of Jadonang's ethnic solidarity and oneness principle applied for his movement, they formed Zeliangrong Council on 15 February 1947 which was renamed Manipur Zeliangrong Union on 14 December 1947 at Dailong Village, Tamenglong. The common ethnonym of the Zeliangrongs kept changing to suit the imperatives of the generations. From Zeliangrong Naga Union 1960 to Zeliangrong Union and finally it is called Zeliangrong Baudi, Assam, Nagaland and Manipur (ANM) (Kamei, 2000) in last part of 1990s.

The second phase of Zeliangrong movement was also rooted in the principle applied by Jadonang. It was behind the performance of that vow rite. The second phase, according to a leading authority on Zeliangrong history, was "the pro-government customary organization... spreading the idea of pan-Zeliangrong" leaving the "spirit" held by their leaders Jadonang and Gaidinliu (Kamei, 200, P. 37). They focused on Zeliangrong solidarity and unity based on ethnic oneness, common ancestors and history, cultural identity of the cognate groups. It is true that the Zeliangrong groups are not kindred but cognate fold and they have kindred groups whom they consider their offshoots. They are close to the Zeliangrongs or they to them.

The Zeliangrongs are not without movement at any stage after Jadonang and Gaidinliu. The movement was a discovery of their past of oneness and is continuing for certain common quest which they differently cherished and they do even today. This is evident during 1980s which was called "Zeliangrong regionalism within Naga nationalism". The regionalism surfaced as homeland demand movement under Rani Gaidinliu.

Concluding remarks:

The popular Zeliangrong movement which began since early 1926 lasted nearly ten years. The period was violent phase particularly after 1931. Then, its peace phase set in from 1935 characterised by solidarity and unity of the Zeliangrongs which is continuing even today. As continuation of the movement, they launched Zeliangrong homeland under the leadership of Rani Gaidinliu in 1980s. The line of Zeliangrong regionalism within Naga nationalism is not absent even today. In its halcyon the movement was combined millenarian goal with political freedom from British government. Therefore, the

Zeliangrongs applied both charismatic and military approaches to their political problem which were prevalent till 1935.

Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu scripted one of important tribal movement in Indian sub-continent by opposing colonial power in the region for which colonial authority martyred him and imprisoned her. He died for the cause of his people. His martyrdom is, in some respects, different from others like Tirot Sing of Meghalaya, Thangal or Paona of Manipur. They were political authorities of their princely States. But, Jadonang rose from his humble position and stood his ground till his death without military might. Politically viewed, he relied upon two forces: (a) Like Gandhi he relied upon moral force of non-cooperation expressed in non-payment of tax and non-subscription of labour or coolie, disobeying law of the government. With these he believed government and its servants would be helpless in the land and success through sustained and prolonged non-cooperation would make the government leave the land as its days, which he prognosticated, would also go. (b) The Britishers were looked upon as cruel foreigners who ruled over others violating inherent human right which gives equality of men. He opposed it and held that if they ruled over his people others also can rule themselves. Therefore, he says, "The white men and we are all human beings. Why should we be afraid of them? All men are equal... Our days have come... We shall become the rulers" (qtd.in Kamei, 150). He urged his people to stick to this human equality and fight them whose rule would be replaced by the rule of the Makaams. So, Jadonang's movement was not to defend kingdom, as done by Manipur or Meghalaya patriots, but to begin a new kingdom by fighting the Britishers with those weapons of non-cooperation and opposition (to government which ruled unequally).

Jadonang and Gaidinliu left a rich political legacy to their next generations. Their people have the past over which they can have creative outlook and progress in their future if they do not lose belief in their capacity. The bigger identity of the Zeliangrongs is originated from those two illustrious tribal leaders and freedom fighters. They were exemplars for many concerning freedom struggles. Men live with the quest of freedom for protecting or attaining it in human society. What is unique in it was that the struggle for freedom began from mere typical Ruangmei village but it shook colonial power in the region. Rani Gaidinliu herself has lived out gender equality in patriarchal society. She was, undoubtedly, a pioneer in it. So, she is a living exemplar for women of today and of tomorrow. The study of the history of the Zeliangrong movement reminds the Zeliangrongs that their future, undoubtedly, lies in the due appreciation of their past of oneness and common dream.

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