

**Nupi Landa Thaunaphabishing**

(Brave Women During the Nupi Lan)

**Publisher:** Lamlai Area Nupi Marup

In the year 1939 Nupi Lan

Inscribed through actions

Flight from miseries of life

Living in foreign land

And

Who fell into the final sleep

Your courage and bravery

We today's generation

Show our respect and regard

All Manipur Nupi Marup

Lamlai Area Committee

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Jananeta Irabot (1896-1951)

A great leader

Devoting to you

“Nupi Landa Thaunaphabishing”

Lamlai Area Nupi Marup

Minister

(Power/R.D. & Panchayati Raj)

Manipur: Imphal-795001

Imphal, December 3, 1991

**Message**

I am glad to learn that the Lamlai Area Nupi Marup is celebrating “Nupi Lal Ningshing Thauram” [Nupi Lal Observation Day] on the 12th December, 1991 at Irabot Park, Lamlai and is also bringing out a Booklet on that occasion.

I wish the celebration and the publication of the Booklet all success.

Sd/-

(P. Parijat Singh)

Minister (Power/R.D.)

### **A Few Things Worth Noting**

Lamlai Area Nupi Marup took a stand to bring out a book on brave women, at least a few if not all, who took part in Nupi Lan in the upcoming December 12, 1991 Nupi Lan Observation Day. It will be in the form of life story. In the short time I was entrusted to research for this book. A majority of mothers who took part in Nupi Lan have passed away. Finding the roots of those who have expired is difficult. In today's time people who know the name of their great grandparents are few. What is being written is history. We went to many places for research; only the life stories of few have been presented here. Iboyaima of Keishampat who have in-depth knowledge of Nupi Lan gave many advice and supplied an essay on the same during my journey. Editor of “Kangleikhol(?)”, son of Kangjam ongbi Sanajaobi who took part in Nupi Lan, also wrote an essay on the brave woman. Brother Langol Iboyaima wrote an essay on ema Leibaklei. Longjamba Meetei (Netaji), son of ema Rajini, shared many histories and photo blocks. With these the book could be published in a short time. My friends Shri Manglemjao, Nabakumar, Manaobi, Ebecha, Lembi, and Ibetonbi and others provided with write-ups because of which today the book can be published.

The book is not comprehensive. It is stories of a few brave women. Women who took part in Nupi Lan cannot be counted. Stories of many brave women have been left. We will try to take those up in the second edition. If any mistakes are found in this book, please tell us. While asking we took utmost care to avoid mistakes. Lamlai Area Nupi Marup will consider it fruitful if the public happily accept this dedication.

Yours Chana Lukhoi

6/12/1991

Lamlai

### **Few Words**

People make history. “Masses are the real makers of history.” “Nupi Lan” is a great piece of history by the common people of this land. Manipuri women who contributed in the making of history could be relegated to folk tale due to lack of proper record.

Including public, steps of history cannot be stopped. The community cannot escape from history. Written record form testimony for history. However, folk tales cannot be history.

Nupi Lan of December 12, 1931 was a revolt led by women which cannot be separated from the life of the great leader Hijam Irabot who tried to establish a new history of Manipur.

Even though it is a history of a short period, there were deficiencies in collecting the stories to produce a paper. This piece of history of the land that cannot be skipped fills with the imagery of women tying a piece of cloth around their waists to face the soldiers of the government. Also, as if one can hear the heartbroken cry of Jananeta Irabot, "Cheng khuya amatang nijarabada e khujok ama happirakle" ["Begged for an ounce of rice but got a handful of blood"]. Even though it was Poinu (lunar harvesting month, December-January) businesspeople freely hoarded rice and grains, and sold at high prices causing suffering to common people. Unable to feed wives and children and elderly, condition of women who took care of family became worse. These women broke the godowns of businesspeople organizing dehoarding campaigns and faced the government's soldiers. To support the campaign and in praise of brave blood running in the hearts of women Jananeta said thus:

Nakhoi lao, yenghauro laone  
Nupi kaya landa changlido  
Chandbibi, Durga, Padmini  
Lakshmi Bai, Jhanshi Rani  
Laumigi mayumda makhoi kaya(?)  
Lishing lakh poklakkhido  
Nakhoi lao yenghauro laone  
Nupi akhoibu hairanu abla  
Sannapot oibinu nupigi thawaina  
Senjao paibagi tamthiba nitina  
Munkhare eikhoigi setna-chanaba  
Nupi landa nupi kaya  
Thawai katkhido...  
Nakhoi lao yenghauro laone

[You come and watch (before it's too late)]

Many women going to war  
Chand Bibi, Durga, Padmini  
Lakshmi Bai, Jhanshi Rani  
Many of them born to farmers' home

In thousands and lakhs  
You come and watch  
Don't call us women weak  
Don't treat life of women like a toy  
Cruel rules of the rich  
Snatched from us our cloths-food  
In nupi lan many women  
Gave their lives...  
You come and watch]

Because of the lack books on such an important part of history, there are few who know about it in depth. To fill these gaps, effort made by All Manipur Nupi Marup, once known as Mahila Smmelini, Lamlai Area Committee to bring out this booklet "Nupi Landa Thauaphabishing" compiling life stories of some brave women of nupi lan is a big contribution.

Although it is not comprehensive, it will be a big help in building the history of nupi lan. Also, whatever little has been presented can be the basis if any correction can be made or elaborated further.

I feel thankful of All Manipur Nupi Marup, Lamlai Area Nupi Marup for introducing few of these women who took part in nupi lan, both those who are living and who have died. I believe that the names of those whose bravery stood above others will remain.

Shri Manglemjao Karam

Leimakhong Mapan

December 7, 1991

### **Acknowledgements**

Lamlai Area Nupi Marup in trying to bring out this booklet received advice and monetary contributions of which following are notable:

Thaunaojam Irabot (E.E.) Keishampat

S. Kirankumar (E.E.) Elang Leikai

Nandeibam Sarat (A.E.) Lilasing Khongnangkong

These big-hearted people provided the major necessary monetary requirements. Also, we cannot forget contribution made by Pantijai Kabui (Sawumbung), Ningthaujam Yaima (Kongpal), L. Gulati (E.E.) Lairikyenbam Leikai, L. Debadutta (E.E.) Elangleikai, Bolaichand Elangleikai. Importantly, to bring out this book, hard work by well-known writer Chana Lukhoi, convenor of Nupi Marup Oinam ongbi Lembi, Oja Lanjikpu of Sawumbung Kabui village, sister Tombi, sister Ebemhal of Nungoi, Ibetombi of Seijang, and Nganbi Devi are notable. Also, we cannot forget heart and soul put in by the staff and manager at Haobam Priting Works of Etam Nungoi in printing this book.

With the help from all of these people, this book can be printed. Lamlai Area Nupi Marup thanks all the above.

Thangjam Ibecha  
Lamlai Area Nupi Marup

### **Why the fire of Nupi Lan was lit?**

Iboyaima  
Keishampat

In 1934, a comprehensive party called Nikhin (Nikhil?) Manipuri Hindu Mahashabha was formed with Maharaj Churachand as President and Hijam Irabot as Vice President. The purpose of the party was to try various measures to distance itself from the colonial exploitation. For example, the British awarded the CBE title to reigning king Maharaj Churachand in 1917 for services during the first German war. Later again the British awarded KCSI. In 1934 to receive the king on his return after getting the award, a meeting was organized at a scale never seen before. In Manipur other than religious gathering (such as Rasa Leela), such gathering at large scale with important dignitaries never happened. In Chingmeirong, a reception was built with banana, sugarcane, and lamps at the gate and people gathered in large number never seen before. The king was so pleased with it that toward the end Nikhin Manipur Hindu Maha Shabha was formed.

In 1938, when Manipur Mahashabha in its fourth session took many political stands, the court durbar declared the Mahashabha has become illegal. The king resigned from the position of president and several dignitaries left one by one. Shri Elangbam Tompok became General Secretary.

From the past several years the British and the king looked down upon the common people and followed repressive policies, namely: (1) women and princes related, (2) VIP culture, (3) clothing and food related, (4) administration related, and (5) religion related.

Women and princes related: Whether young or old, if someone belonged to the royal family one had to bow one's head on meeting. In any festivity, they sit in the front. They called the common people as "aramba(?)" (one who is hungry?). If a girl is liked by a boy of royal family, she would not be able to marry any other. If a boy from royalty married a non-royal girl, then he would be called "shijamawa" and children would be called "shijamawa" or "leima taibungngo maibungngo".

VIP culture: If someone could beat the king/royalty in wrestling or sagol-kangjei (polo), then he would be either beaten or made to serve the king. If any big feast was organized by the common people, then they would be punished on charge of "king-making".

Clothing and food related: Since the olden days, there were restrictions on what common women, married and unmarried, could wear. New cloths were donned during the lunar month of Lamta, during the Yaoshang (Holi) festival. The women of royalty were allowed all kinds of cloths, which were forbidden to common village women. Some examples are phanek hangampan (yellow-coloured phanek(?)) and phanek with certain embroidery pattern. Also, other than women of royal family, no village women were allowed to wear bangles on their hands.

Administration related: The royalty and those close to royalty were carried in palanquin in festivities and fairs. They owned paddy fields which were tax-free. For example, if anyone became distant from the royalty the phrase "lau chadaba" (paddy field that would not feed) was used. There were many

paddy fields that did not pay taxes to the government. On the other hand, some fields were taxed so much that unable to pay the taxes, they were gifted to the king or other dignitaries. Not only this, there were many middle-level officials in the administration. At the centre of village or "pana", there used to be a "padhyai(?)". They provided rulings over small matters, not big crimes. To deliver their services, they were helped by "dolai paba" (which was a life-time job), "bambom(?)" and "sambru(?)". After the proceedings, the members will secretly hold a discussion (called "gupha changba") and have a vote.

Religion related: Since the olden days, it is believed that the royalty is the family of Pakhangba. Hence, the common people worshipped the king like god. For example, if an illness persisted then it was believed if the king touched with his feet, they would be cured. And the elders bowed to Brahmins and children of the king. The elders of the village would allow only Brahmin and royalty to sit on "kamen phak" (kamen mat), while others will be sat on ordinary mat or "phan" (wooden stool with two legs) in the "mangon" (verandah). Hill people and Muslim will be sat in "sumang" (courtyard) or "sangoi" (a shed outside the house). After they leave, the carpet will be taken inside only after washing. In feasts if "yumnak" and "sagei" (familial lines) came in contact, it was considered "mangba" (desecration/defilement). Even if someone is from high-ranking family, they marry "tumman" or a widow, then people would not even accept water from their hands. If someone married a "Loi" (lower class) girl, people would unfriend him. If one married from same "yek" (family line) or "lailuk tinnaba" (literally sharing the same food offered to god; close neighbours worshipping the same local deity(?)), they were made to live separately from others in "haojonban". On the other hand, hill people and plain people lived so differently that no valley boy could marry a girl from the hill. For example, if hill people and valley people had quarrel and if the hill people threatened to spit on the valley people, then the hill people had to run and hide in the land of "mayang" (leave "Meitrabak" and run to "Tekhao"). Also, in the name of religion, until the king applied "chandan" on his forehead, "Chandan senkhai" and "sentek(?)" (a form of tax?) were taken.

In the beginning of 1935, Irabot initiated "samaj sudhar" (social reform) while British power and power of the king were high under which to strengthen the bond between the hill and valley the king of the western hills would come to the valley for few days bringing gifts and cultural festivities would be organized, and thus satisfied the king.

In 1938, in the fourth assembly of Manipur Mahashabha at Chinga, unanimous resolutions were taken on community, government, and politics. Because of this, the Durbar issued a notice that the Mahashabha has become a political organization. Hence, no government employees be a member of the Mahashabha. Gradually, one after another, people left or distanced themselves from it.

When Irabot took the charge of Vice President of Manipur Mahashabha, the Mahashabha expressed its solidarity when labour union of Digboi, Assam oil workers called a strike against the company. At that time politics was not well established in Manipur.

Most of the leaders were followers of "suwidha-wadi(?)" and "sajat(?)". After 1938, the committee could not sit properly.

Those who did not have the ability to lead like Irabot but wanted a share in the rewards of work, when rebellion against exporting rice and not buying foreign products were taken in 1938, the division became apparent. In December 1939 Nupi Lan, clear division of followers of Irabot and another group emerged.

Incarceration of Irabot: In 1940, Irabot was imprisoned. After spending a long time in Manipur jail, he was exiled to Srihat jail. In Srihat jail he met with many revolutionary leaders. The communist leaders had fought against the colonial empire and got caught. However, you Irabot on the other hand had already organized a people's movement against the empire and king, they said. Hence, we believe you are a proper follower of Marx and Lenin, they added. Irabot felt that since he did not know that what he did was in line with communist ideology, he should study this ideology further. To bring development to vast majority of farmers in Manipur, after coming out of Srihat jail, he attended krishak sabha (farmers' meeting) all over India as representative of Cachar jila, wearing farmer's cloth and singing and dancing like farmer and giving the message of freedom. This was during the time of Second World War.

The biggest enemy of the British colonial empire was communism. When Irabot declared himself to be communist, the government of Manipur tried to destroy his image. They spread rumours like he is an atheist, an enemy of religion, violent man who says something but harbours something else in his heart, and that he cannot come back to Manipur etc.

Towards the end of 1945, Irabot returned to Manipur. Those who were steeped in superstition (believed in the rumours?) watched him closely. However, there was no change in his behaviour. One after another he visited homes of his former friends and those who were in service with the king. All the time he went with Laishram Kanhai(?), Longjam Bijai, and Khetri(?) Iboyaima. On the other hand, he tried to establish organizations with students studying outside to relieve sufferings of the society. Also, he discussed with former workers on ways to revive the Mahashabha, people's union, and mahila sammelani (women's union).

### **Irabot and Mahila Sammelani**

In 1940, during people's uprising in the wake rising food prices, women of Manipur decided unanimously to form a women's organization called "Manipur Mahila Sammelani". But in the absence of Irabot to lead, the organization broke up into pieces. They seemed to go on separate ways. After the release of Irabot in 1945, they welcomed him and discussed what they endured. With the war just ending, people needed to build their lives, educate their children, bring equality among men and women, and fight against exploitation. That will make us "khuya tushitpa punshi" (self-reliant?), otherwise we will remain to live like slaves.

In 1947, Irabot arranged praja sabha, praja sammelani, krishak (farmer) sabha etc. Bijai and Iboyaima were tasked to do this—to visit houses of well-known leaders of nupi lan to fix a date of gathering at Keishamthong Top Leirak, in the playground near Ramlanpan. Those who came that day included Shabi, Tongau, Khongnang, Chaobiton, Rajini, Patsoi Leiren, Thoibi, etc., a total of about 100 people. In that meeting, it was decided to re-establish/revive the old Manipur Mahila Sammelani. Next, for its working committee, the name Shrimati Wahengbam ongbi Matonkhombi(?) (Tongdau) was proposed for the position of president. "I decline to be a part of it, please select sister Shabi for this position," she declared. The working committees endorsed to work to revive the sammelani. Shabi as sabhapati (president) and Indurekha as secretary were selected. 11 members were selected as karyakari (workers) committee. They were Indurekha, Thoibi, Patsoi Leiren, Bubati(?), Lalita, Ibeyaima (Kiranmala), Ibeton, Apambi, Agani(?), and Amu.

### **How Was Sammelani Revived?**

Manipuri women lived under exploitation, who could not go out or study and lived by weaving some cloths at home and looking after children. Few elderly people knew what was to come and educated their daughters and these women raised awareness to revive "Manipur Mahila Sammelani". They

targeted mainly Manipuri bazars, namely, Singjamei, Kongba, Lilong, Thoubal, Wangjing, Khongjom, and Kakching, when there was crowd. Next, it was Khwairamband, Lamlong, and Lamlai bazars. After that Lamshang bazar, Yairipok bazar, Hiyanthang bazar, Nambol bazar, Bishenpur, Ningthaukhong, and Moirang were targeted. At times they were received well, but at times they were mistreated.

Further to this, in Lamlai bazar, in the second meeting Irabot was received by many including former members of Mahashabha. Among them were Oinam Sahai(?) of Chana village and Kanhaimacha among men and Kameng Jati and Apanbi (Kabui) among women. On the following day a complete committee of Manipur Mahila Sammelani was formed which elected Kameng Jati as president (sabhanetri). Thus, even area committees were formed. Similarly, the strength of Manipur Krishak Sabha also grew.

The two worked together and on 21 September 1948 upon death of Naran Babu, Mahila Sammelani and Krishak Sabha were suppressed. Elderly and younger generation unable to bear became underground; workers of Mahila Sammelani made sure they did not fall into enemy hands.

In 1950-51, due to rise in food prices and stealing, under a decision taken by Manipur Mahila Sammelani more than 200 families of Tekcham and Khongjom villages were taken by vehicles to near Lamlai bazar and looked after for nearly 3 months. To this day, people did not forget the volunteers of Manipur Mahila Sammelani and Kishan Sabha for that. Some of those who took part in this might be still alive, but due to misinformation and in the garb of communist ploy, it has been forgotten.

Khwangchet machi lang

Tem khutta paiduna

Lanthengnakhibi

“Kameng Jati”

[Tying cloth around waist

Holding a weaving stick

Warrior

“Kameng Jati”]

This story was written after discussing with my father Khaidem Nimai Meetei who was friend of ema Jati. Ema Jati used to come to my in-law's home in a red dress holding a walking stick. I used to take part in the feast of Mera month offered by elders. Today, I am able to write this essay with the blessing of my parent. This is not a complete biography of ema Jati. It is only few things that I knew and heard.

Oinam ongbi Lembi Chana

### **President Kameng Jati**

Kameng village is located 18 km from Imphal in Ukhrul, on the eastern side of Ukhrul road. Even before 50 years from now the village has been flourishing. There were not many houses. Still now it is a small village. The village reminds of one of the seven maichaus, Kameng Fadiba. It also reminds of Jati among women who played a major role in nupi lan. Kamen Jati reminds of parts played by



nupi lan, scattering of shops of Yaingangpokpi and leading of the farmers by Irabot. Red cloths of Pheiroijam Kanhai holding an iron rod flying red flag can be imagined. Among what can be remembered, in a small office of mohori (jewellery?) on PWD road in Lamlai bazar red flag was hoisted by farmers to declare it to be their office. Kamen Jati worked closely with Jananeta Irabot and Kanhaimacha. She took part in many farmers' uprisings. At that time there was one Pheiroijam Khrishna Singh who taught a song called rajniti bashok. Women singers included Khumbongmayum Ningol Tombimacha of Kameng, Ibetombi of Uyumpok, and Khaidem Sanahanbi of Lamlai. They sang songs written by Jananeta: Hauro ... (Rise...) awaba ahinggi amamba koktuna (Freedom from miserable dark night), khaoro khaoro sana-phau (Harvest-harvest golden rice), Bharat jatigi apunba washak (United promise of tribes of Bharat), etc. Jati provided encouragement so that this group of singers could survive. When Irabot went underground, he spent some time at the house of ema Jati. When masun located in Sawungbung started causing miseries to farmers and common people living in the foothills, women decided to rise against it. For this they went to villages to gather women in which Kamen Jati played a prominent role. She herself called women leaders from Imphal valley. After discussing with Rajani, Sanajaobi, Tongdou, and others, women group scattered things that were given to masun. When servants and dignitaries of the king came to punish those who did not pay taxes to amin or secretly gathered tera (semal cotton, *Bombax ceiba*), she was among the frontline who faced them. Kameng Jati and Apanbi Kabui played major role in destroying Tilipati oil. Big shops in Gwaltabi that had hoarded rice, dal, thoiding (perilla seeds), etc. secretly were also destroyed led by Jati.

Even when she was weak and walked with a stick, she was public spirited. While she was alive, every year on full moon day of mera, remembrance day was observed. Red flag with sickle would be hoisted. Jati used to offer flower upon the names of those who sacrificed their lives. Jananeta who passed away in Tangbo village of Burma was remembered. Ema Jati was born in Khurai Lairikyenbam Leikai (colony), to Waribam family. She was married to Khumbongmayum Nabadwip(?) of Kameng village. She organized women of north-east of Manipur, notably, Laikangbam ongbi Radhetombi (Kameng), Khumbongmayum ongbi Pujari Devi (Kameng), Konsam ongbi Thambal Devi (Chana), Laishram ongbi Leibaklei Devi (Chana), Laibi Devi (Sheijang(?)), Laishram ongbi Janbi (Lamlai), Mutum ongbi Thagoi (Lamlai), Yumkhaibam Amu Devi (Lamlai), Khaidem ongbi Amureima (Lamlai), Apanbi Kabuini (Sawumbung), Hawaibi Devi, Pungdongbam Phijam Janita(?) (Sekta), Khaidem ongbi Tharo Devi (Sekta), Bamon Radhe(?) (Yaingangpokpi), Thokchom Punimashi (Sheijang), Khumukcham Ketuki (Nongren), Takhelmayum Nupimacha (Mongren). Ema Jati spent in custody many times. She could not read and write. She died about 20 years ago [as the book was first printed in 1991, that means she died around 1971] in Kameng village. A lot of people who took part in the uprising came to express their condolences.

### **Nupi Lan Leader Longjam ningol Shabi**

Manglemjao Karam

Near Leimakhong

In the history of new Manipur, nupi lan of December 12, 1939 will remain an inescapable part. It is testimony that if not more than Manipuri women are no less than any women on the earth who struggled for the land along with the poverty they fought at home. Nupi lan was a big step in social revolution. It was a big step towards socialist revolution. In a feudal system poisoned by capitalism it carved a way of freedom from these. In the pages of history written in golden letters of nupi lan,

Shabi Devi remains a shining leader. Shrimati Tongbram ningol Shabi Devi was born on October 10, 1910 on Thursday to Tongbram Ningthaukhomba of Wangkhei Ningthem Pukhri (pond). Her mother was Kundalei. Her father died when she was only 4 years old. Within a year of her father's death, her mother passed away.

She was brought up by her aunt Leihao. For survival she had to earn daily living. Thus, she was courageous and did not shy from labour. Endurance and sacrifice were inherent in her from childhood. She served people without any self-interest.

Shabi Devi married at the age of 15, but alas became a widow without any child at the age of 23. Thereafter, she lived in poverty. In 1939, uprising against British colonial empire became strong in India. Civil Disobedience Movement and Non-cooperation Movement also reached this land surrounded by mountains. From that flame the 1939 nupi lan was formed. Through this they fought against exploitative laws brought from outside and even faced section 144 of IPC. The road and canal leading to rice mills were exempted from tax; those who did not pay octroi tax were not even allowed to fish in canals (under the logic that the water of the canal is connected to the water of the lake [Loktak?]); people were not allowed to cut wood and ee (a kind of straw used for roofing) from mountains; people were asked to carry palanquin for free (?); people were forced to convert to Gauriya religion and asked to put on Chandan as proof (?); those who were ostracized by the king and those who were related to them were not allowed to cremate on death, and shradh-karma (rituals for the dead) was not allowed for them; against these they fought.

Men and women who took part in this uprising were tortured by the police, including trampling with boots, stabbing with bayonet, and putting in prison. Not only this, properties were seized and houses were auctioned. Truly speaking, the administration was cruel.

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From a small community, some among the small number of women like Shabi Devi are precious who believed that only a united uprising without self-interest, endurance, and courage would be successful. In the freedom struggle of Manipur, without the name of Shabi Devi, it would be an incomplete history.

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In the India's freedom struggle, one who stood against a frightening power was imprisoned by foreigners for 6 months. On 15 August 1947 when India got freedom from British colonial empire, the government recognized Shabi Devi as political prisoner and honoured her. She died on January 1, 1977. Her body was covered by communist party flag. During the last rites party members made their offerings.

### **Kabui Chanu Apambi of Nupi Lan**

Chana Lukhoi

The Nupi Lan during the reign of king Churachand was not by the valley women only. This event which could not be washed by fire or water was contributed in major way by other indigenous communities. Although language and clothing were different, similar opinions were met with promise of unity by the courageous. Steps were taken to remove oppressive measures of the king. Born in Longmei Kabui Apambi (Paupan Lunglu) had graceful face. A face that was becoming when smiling always had sympathy for others. Not only in name but also by nature she was courageous

(lingel panbi). She was born to Longmei Maicham Kabui. Her place of birth was Sawungbung Kabui village in Imphal's Ukhrul road. She was the eldest of the four children born to Maicham Kabui. Her upbringing was proper and happy. Even though a Kabui girl, due to friendship with princess, she had access to the king's palace. She knew the character and behaviour of princess very well. At that time it was not easy for a Kabui girl to eat and drink with princesses in the palace.

It was a time when people were deeply divided into big and small and pure and impure. Bramha sabha(?) could make someone pure or impure. Hill people who came down the hill would not step inside the gate. One had to put money in the vessel from where water will be sprinkled with tulsi for purification. During Churachand Maharaj, someone could be purified with money. At that time, the god that you can see with your eyes was Bramha sabha. If someone gets "charan-amrita" from Brahmin member of the sabha then the person was considered purified. Under the guise of caste, man behaved like god, men tortured men, against whom emerged Hijam Irabot and many courageous women. Among them are Shabi, Khongnang, Jati, Tongau(?), Leibaklei, Leiren, Bhubati(?), Pujari, Sanajaobi, Sanatombi, and Kabui women Tomthil Nganbi Apambi. Difference between people observed in royal garden(?) and people torturing people in the name of religion were disliked by Apambi. And seeing the exploitation of the labouring farmers by the king and British, Apambi took a firm stand to fight against it.

Even before the 1939 nupi lan, Apambi had met with many women leaders and had discussions. She had close relations with Tongbram Shabi. In open and secret meetings held by Jananeta Irabot further from Lamlai, she took an active part, and had firm belief in his leadership. After meetings, she met with neighbours and told them that no one else can save us from our miseries like Irabot. She took major part in the nupi lan against rising cost of rice. She was involved with other women from north-east in breaking secret rice godowns of marwaris and, big shops hoarding in Gwaltabi. Vehicles ferrying rice, paddy, and chengpak (food made from rice) from north-east to Imphal were destroyed at Khurai by Apambi Kabuini and others.

"Meipui nungoi(?) patgeitho

Akaigoi li sutlatho(?)

Kagan chana thengnashau metai

Akaigoi katana (kapumpuina) khei-ngam-puthe

Abao akaigoi

Lei-lei bamlupui nammakhe"

(Apambi)

These words were spoken to women of Kabui village when her house in Sawungbung was about to be destroyed. "Now all of you come out, it is time to go to war. If this goes beyond this, we will die. Let's fight while there is time." Kameng Jati from Lamlai side, Laikangbam ongbi Tombi Chana, Konsam ongbi Thambal, Laishram ongbi Leibaklei, and Pungdongbam Hawaibi, and Khagoi of Lamlai discussed few things under banyan tree in Sawungbung. They decided that masun gate of Sawungbung was repressing the people. Working a tem (stick used for weaving), or carrying a tareng (spinning wheel) or wooden khudeng (a large vessel) would not be allowed to pass without paying money. Carrying even small amounts of eatable, dal, or thoiding would not be allowed. Against this women uprising holding tem began. Decision was taken to destroy the food items hoarded in masun. On January 16, 1940, women leaders of Imphal were requested to come. Thus, Khongnang, Kumari,

Sanatombi, Rajani, etc. came towards Lamlai. After coming there, all the food items confiscated in masun for not giving money were scattered. Government employees were surprised to see the bravery of these women, went into hiding. Apambi took part in these brave acts.

Even in old age, she was public spirited. Walking with a stick, she took part in farmers' movement. She had one son called Patyajai(?) Kabui. Born in 1876 Apambi Kabuini died in 1978. On her demise, many Indian communist leaders came and red flag was put over her body.

- ❖ Even today there is a small shanglen (remembrance house) on Ukhrul road, near Iril river dedicated to her by the communist party.
- ❖ The story of ema Apambi was written with the help of Iboyaima of Keishampat, son Patyajai Kabui, Lanjikpu Kabui, and Khaidem Nimai of Sekta.

### **Laishom Leibaklei Devi (One of the women leaders of nupi lan)**

Iboyaima  
Singjamei

Nupi lan of 1939 is a well-known event in history. The courage of Manipuri women was shown by this. Without the sacrifice and courage of the women leaders, it might not have been this big.

Among these leaders was Laishom Leibaklei.

Leibaklei was born on January 30, 1905 (Wakching lunar month, Sunday) in Naoriya Pakhanglakpa, Heirangoithong. Laishom Ningthaujao Singh and Khuman Cheirappam(?) Gulaptombi Devi were her parents. She was the eldest of six siblings. She was married to Chongtham Tomcha Singh of Pishum Ningom Leirak. They did not live together for long. She lived mostly in her birthplace Heirangoithong. She did not have any children. She took care of Srilaishom Bhumeswar(?) as her own child. In December 12, 1939 nupi lan, she was among those who fought at frontline against the king and the British against the guns and bayonets.

The president of Manipur state durbar was kept at telegraph office surrounded by women to put pressure to stop sending rice outside, but they were brutally dispersed in the name of saving him. "They called out Assam Rifles, who would stab with bayonet. Someone called Tomba, I think, was forcibly submerged in water. When trying to stop them from drowning him, one policeman hit me in the eye with his elbow," recalls old Leibaklei. She showed the right eye which still seemed to hurt. First, she was kept at Imphal central jail for 2 months, and then after trial she was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment. After 2 months, her cloths were changed(?) and she had to do spinning. Recalling life within jail, she said, "Inside the jail, we sang together loudly 'Raghupati raghav Raja Ram' [the song helped them through the hardships]. At that the jailor Sarangthem Nodiachand would shout back, 'This is jail. What are you boasting about?' We said, 'This is godi(?) time, none of your business' and sang again and again loudly." Along with that we sang another song, "Bande ma Bhawani jagat janani [Glory mother Bhawani, mother of earth]."

Within the jail, one fish meal was given each Sunday. After some time they stopped saying that there are no Bamon (Brahmins whose main job is cooking) to cook. Due to fear of being unclean she had to eat "phola" instead. Due to lack sleep and not eating properly, she fell ill. Then a Bamon (Angaubi from Yairibok) was called to cook. For singing, they even threatened to shoot but they kept singing. She remembers meeting Jananeta Irabot in jail fondly, "Why did you come in? You feed your children by going to the market," he said.

Shrimati Leibaklei Devi gets a pension as freedom fighter. Regarding pension, she got Rs 500, then Rs 600, and then Rs 200. After further cuts now she gets Rs 1000. In August 15, 1973, she got the Tamra Patra award (an award for outstanding contribution to freedom struggle).

She lived her life through her own labour. She not only sold fruits at Khwairamband bazaar but also collected konshak(?) (weaved cloths?) from the poor living in Moirang, Yairipok, Chandrakhong, and Ningel without fear.

She is weak now; even getting out of the house is difficult. However, the courage is still there.

Bhumeshwar, whom she is taking care of, was born to her brother Chaoba. Bhumeshwar had four children. Bhumeshwar is a central government employee. However, he is posted at Haflong. She wishes to stay with him as she gets older.

Remembering her life will set an example for the coming generations to follow. Today's generation owes a lot to these women who truthfully and fearlessly stood against the spread of colonialism and exploitation by the king.

- ❖ One day reminded by our Chana Lukhohi, on afternoon of 18 November, with my friends L. Sashikumar and A.K. Mani, we three went to meet her. The write-up is based on what was told to us.

### Short Story of Kangjam ongbi Sanajaobi

N.J. Kangjiya(?)

Rajkumari Sanajaobi Leima was in 1906 (on 14th of Enga lunar month [June?] on Friday). She was born to Raj Chaonusana(?) of Sagolband Tera. Under order no. 301/R/IPC/3246-69 by Home Minister of India for huge contribution to the country, an award of Rs 500 was given on May 27, 1958.

Rajkumari Sanajaobi married into Kangjam family and died in Tera, Khuraijam. She was 33 years old when nupi lan was fought in 1939 and took part in major struggles.

Few noteworthy incidents:

1. In the nupi lan that started from the evening of December 12, 1939, she was one of the courageous women who took part in it. She did not know (shy?) how to speak in public; that is why she played a major role in taking actions including destroying (hoardings?), facing those who resisted to fight against the police, gathering people, and encouraging women.
2. December 15, 1939 incident: In December 15, 1939, she took part in a meeting in Haring khongban (drain) held in morning. On 14 December from Heirok, Wangjing, news came that 18 women were arrested; on the meeting decision was taken to go the police to secure release of these women. Among "action" women selected to undertake this was Kangjam ongbi Rajkumari Sanajaobi. They were to go inside the jail and secure release of these 18 women. When the police started beating the women, from a shop selling axes(?) they started snatching and fighting with these. Many men unable to bear also took up the axes and started fighting the police. Sanajaobi sustained injuries on right and left upper arms and wrist from beating by stick (causing "ee ashiba changba", ecchymosis). She claimed beating seven police herself. The conflict was termed "December 15 gi Utup Lal" ("Wooden baton, club, truncheon war of December 15).
3. Steps following December 15 judgement: The next day following the Utup Lal, around 6 am of December 16, Sanajaobi was among 20 women who gathered in front of cheirap(?). The gathering noted: (1) kicking by IP on the face of Shabi, (2) beating women with weapon by police in the Utup Lal, (3) judgement on Kaguri's son statement, "Manipuri nakhoidi khuya uphulga chagemga totnaraga pijage" (You Manipuri we will feed broken rice(?) mixed with dust from our feet), (4) taking judgement on women who have been imprisoned. Decision on all of these must be taken, work must be started, must not lose the war, and papers must be sent. Khwairakpam che (sister?) Memba(?) was asked to write the same.
4. Took part in breaking durbar: Until December 25, no judgement was pronounced on the guilty. Women were gathered in front of the durbar. Sanajaobi and 20 "action" women were there to break the durbar as soon as wakai (pronouncement?) would come. Instead of discussing about the guilty people, as they kept on discussing about purity and impurity, she was among the first to throw

stones at the windows of the durbar building. Then they entered inside the durbar and destroyed it. She was among those who held the members by the neck. Out of 8 members, 7 fled.

5. Hurt by bayonet: After breaking of durbar in December 25, attempt to send telegram by capturing Suto saheb was made. Maharaj Churachand had gone to Sahib (British?) for safety. Suto saheb hid in the telegraph office. Action group including Sanajaobi broke windows of the telegraph office with stones. Then 4th Assam Rifles wielding bayonets were sent in. In the struggle to snatch bayonets from the police, she was stabbed twice in the left arm. Even after stitch, the marks were left for the rest of her life. The incident in which many women were injured with bayonets was popularly known as "sanging parva" in those days.

6. Took part in stopping taking masul (tax?) in Lamlai: Taking masul for even carrying khudeng started in Lamlai. For carrying some thoiding for business masul was taken. Private tem for weaving was taxed; spinning wheel and oil was charged. News of these taxes came from Lamlai of Jati. In January 16, 1940, Sanajaobi participated in a meeting was held in Lamlai to decide to go to Sawungbung masul office to stop collection of masul. Late night they reached and stayed at Kameng Jati. Although tired, the next day they went inside the Sawungbung masul office and destroyed the confiscated items stored in it.

7. Major role is stopping marketing: On February 27, 1940, breaking the ban imposed by women, Uripok tauwangbam group and Maharaj Churachand's group came to the market. At the Maharani thongkhong (foot of bridge), Sanajaobi swinging a "thangchep" scattered them. People came rushing and beat up people who broke the ban. Police came and they were so afraid that armed police had to carry them home. During Yaoshang (Holi), cloths bought from "mayang" (outsiders) were snatched, torn, and putting them on a stick shouted on the streets not to buy cloths from them. She took part in this procession consisting of around 60 women.

8. Tearing of pheijom (lungi) and shirt of Bamon Sanamatam(?) in public. The court fined her Rs 100/- for this. She brought the money from home to pay the fine. On the way she shouted that she was happy that she had taken revenge.

[Note from translator: Due to poor print quality of the copy, the last two incidents have been abridged.]

Source of the story: Among many stories, the above were taken from the following mothers who had conversations with Sanajaobi in 1960 when she laid sick.

Mothers who told the stories:

1. Wahengbam ongbi Tongdau(?) Devi
  2. Nongthongbam ongbi Khongnang Devi
  3. Ayekpam ongbi Rajni Devi
  4. Kumari Devi
  5. Laishom ningol Leibaklei
  6. Tongbram ningol Shabi Devi
  7. Ningonbam Ibecha Devi
  8. Chongtham ongbi Tingong
- Etc.

Recorded by: Kangjira (son)  
(4/11/1991)

**Meetei Chanu Khongnang Who Bravely Took Part in Nupi Lan**

Writer: Thangjam Ibecha  
Sawungbung

People of Manipur who were largely dependent on rice cultivation were facing large-scale famine. However, the British and marwaris exported rice/paddy in collusion and mahajans hoarded foodgrains in secret godowns. The brave women demanded to stop export of rice, to stop the mills, and stop giving rice/paddy to the marwaris. Sahibs and businesspeople who came from beyond the mountains were surprised by the relentless struggle of the women.

Police officer shouted at women who were taking organizing protest march in cold winter, "Mischievous Meitei women why are you making ruckus at night without fearing man or god? Are your men incapable of controlling you? Send your men instead to loot." When the women heard these insults coming from police station, they rushed towards it. Tongbram ningol Shabi was among the first to go inside the station. Khomdram IP kicked her. Along with Shabi five women were beaten down to ground with sticks. Khongnang who had also fallen to ground raised one hand and shouted to women outside the station, "Shabigi laibakta kaoba natte, chenburoi-tamburoi Manipur praja miyamda kaobani. Lao changsillashi nupi miyam pumnamak nupigi thauna utlashi." [It was not a kick at the forehead of Shabi but a kick at the people of Manipur. Come all women let us show the courage of women.]

As long as the sun and moon keep going around, nupi lan of December 12, 1939 will be remembered and with it the daughter of "Khongnang" Abujam Achau. The birthplace was Yurembam village in Imphal west. Among five children born to the couple, Khongnang was the second daughter. She was married to Nongthongbam Chaoba. She had one son. When the son was 7 or 8 years old, her husband died. As a widow who had bring up a small child, she refused to injustice of the British rule and the Brahma Sabha. Taking the small child with her she took part in various meetings on development/reform of the land. She was part of women's uprising for reforms. She disagreed with excessive powers of the king and exploitation by those close to the king. Not allowing to open umbrella in the palace, not allowing girl or women to let loose their hair in the presence of the king and king's dignitaries; if someone did not notice the king or his dignitaries and let the hair loose then her hair would be cut and ostracized in public. The king and his men would come to the village and claiming that "their eyes fell on the girls", the lives of those girls would be ruined. Such matters were discussed with learned people of Akhil Manipuri Hindu Mahasabha and the king's men. Not only she met with members of the sabha living close by but also went to faraway places for dialogues. Going to Lamlai, she met with Pheiroijam Kanhaimacha and Takhellambam Amusen(?) of Khurai. She met with women's leader Tongbram Shabi, Rajani, Kameng Jati, Apambi Kabuini, Wahengbam ongbi Tongau(?) frequently for welfare of women. For participating in nupi lan, the authorities put her in jail for 6 months on charge of revolting against the king. Leaving her small child Gaurango(?), she stayed in jail. When the writer met her son, he recalled that a man with red turban wearing a khagi came saying he had orders from "Sriyukta". Mother left leaving me. I used to go to jail to see her. The people there took pity and let me see her. Sometimes tears came down her eyes but she wiped them secretly. In the evening I would return alone leaving her and she would look sideways at me from the walls of the jail. After independence, the government declared Khongnang Devi as freedom fighter and gave her pension. In March 1972, she passed away in her new home in greater(?) Langjing. At her last moments she wanted to meet with her friends and colleagues of nupi lan.

### **Ayekpan ongbi Rajini in Nupi Lan**

Thokchom Nabakumar  
Lamlai

Rajini of nupi lan was born in 1908, on Thursday in Laukrakpam leirak, Tera keithel (bazaar). Her parents were Haorokcham Chaoba and Haorokcham Muhi Devi. Being born to a poor family, she faced difficulties from early childhood. This hardship made her strong. Because of poverty and social mores of not educating girls too much, she did not get much education.

As per king's order, for putting chandan on face tax would be collected, for ear and nose piercing ceremonies also money was taken. If fruits and flowers (cotton ball seeds?) of *tera (Bombax ceiba)* growing on roadside gets blown by wind into someone's courtyard, they could be punished. Women objected to such cruel measures. However, people had to keep mum otherwise they would be punished.

Lives of the people of Manipur were in the hands of businesspeople. The king of Manipur was no longer king of the people but a puppet of the businesspeople. The rich businesspeople could make the people eat in the morning, at night, or starve them at will. In the rain the farmers worked on the paddy among the leeches, forgetting tiredness and sickness mended the barrages and women tying cloths in their waist looked after the paddy in the summer in the hope harvest later. However, these farmers did not see the paddy in the month of Poinu in 1939.

Towards the end of Hiyangei and beginning of Poinu in December 12 it will be written in blood in Cheitharol Kumbaba. It was evening, people queued in front of Marwari shop for rice. Pot-bellied businesspeople pretending not to see the people laughed. They refused to open the shop. Kasturi(?) and his younger brother Phulachand and other main shops remained closed. From many directions women came and shouted to open the rice shops and not to hide rice. Kasturi was no longer visible. His son Yuriya, not knowing how tough Meitei women could be, shouted derisively, "Meitei women, this year you might get broken rice (chagem), next year you might not even get chengkup (bad quality broken rice mainly used for poultry). Your lives are in our palms." This inflamed the women. Boro sahed, chhoto sahed return to your lands. We are unable to tolerate your exploitation. It is because of you that we could not see any paddy in Poinu. When women marched to bungalow of Saheb to ask them to go back, the police kicked the women. Rajani fell on ground beaten by police with sticks. Although people like Khomdram Ghanachandra kicked the women, some newly recruited police refused to do the same. They declared that the women's demands were for them also. Not just within Imphal but also in Pukhao Sagolmang, Rajini organized her friends walking long distances. Whenever she heard that houses were about to auctioned off for not paying "pangsel" (some kind of tax?), she went there to stop them. Women gathered and held meetings. Rajini herself shouted not to give pangsel. As soon as meeting was over, the police arrested them like cattle. Rajini was arrested from her house. Rajini was involved in destroying masun located in Sawungbung. She took part in meetings held at the home of Kameng Jati. She was an active member of Nikhil Hindu Mahasabha. She was jailed for 6 months.

Former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru on May 27, 1958 in an order issued by Home Minister (order no. 301/R/RPC/3246-69) recognizing Rajini as freedom fighter gave an award of Rs 500/- and gave her Tamra Patra award. She narrated the story of nupi lan to her son which was published by her son Longjamba Meetei (Netaji) as "Manipurda Nupilan." Ayejpam ongbi Rajini died at the age of 82.

### **A Strong Woman Yengkhom ningol Shabi Devi**

Researched and written by Maibam Ibetombi Devi  
Nambol Phoijing  
State Executive Member  
All Manipur Nupi Marup

"When many women citizens went to the government begging for rice, instead of rice handful of blood was given. Revenge will be taken with five handful of blood for three handful of blood."

(Irabot)

After the valiant Khongjom battle which left its mark in the famous song Khongjom Parva came the Sangin (Bayonet) Parva of the nupi lan. In the protest against high price of food in Poinu women were kicked with boots and some were pushed into cold water during the winter. They were beaten



so hard that marks were left. River of blood flowed as they were stabbed with bayonets. Her father was Yengkhom Chaoba. Shabi Devi was born in Sagolband. She was married to Khumanthem Ningthaukhom. Shabi Devi was among those who truly believed in Jananeta Irabot and his message for freedom. For taking part in many women's uprisings, she was put in jail many times. Shabi Devi has since passed away.

### **Nupi Lan and Wahengbam ongbi Tongau (Aton Khombi)**

Manaoba  
Khurai  
AIR Imphal Poem

The writer has a writing by Jananeta Irabot about the December 12, 1939 nupi lan.

December 12  
Ngashi ahing lelle  
Numit ama chatkhre,  
Sam punshillu devi  
Epha pharibado.  
December 12 ama haukhre  
December 12 ama lakle  
Kaorabra?  
Thajabra sam pungani haiba?  
Ningbra numit ashi lakani haiba?  
(Emagi Puja la: 49)  
[December 12  
Spent the night  
One day is gone  
Tie your hair  
It's unkempt.  
One December 12 is over  
One December 12 has come  
Have you forgotten?  
Did you believe hair will be tied?  
Did you think the day will come?  
(Mother's Prayer, Page: 49)]

This poem of Jananeta is his heartfelt message for Manipuri women about the fateful day. A huge meeting was organized in response to the cruel treatment meted out to women on December 12. Irabot who was fearless from birth vocally denounced the act. For this Irabot who wanted to uproot the feudal system was put in jail for fomenting the nupi lan.

Tongau Devi was born in Ningthaukhongjam near Uribok. Her father was Kanhai(?). She was married to Wahengbam Chaoba Singh. Due to her inability to read and write, she used to ask Radhamohon to write to the government about the food scarcity and other matters. She went to many places in Manipur and took part in discussion on difficulties faced by women.

### **Tingnong Devi Who Took Part in Nupi Lan**

Keisham ningol Tingnong Devi who took major part in nupi lan was born in Uripok. She was born to Keisham Khomdomba and Thokchom ningol Keisham ongbi Chaobi Devi. She was married to Chongthan Manaoton. She shed blood in the Sangin Parva of nupi lan. Our mother who fought bravely in the nupi lan is now no more.

## **Nongthongbam ningol Tombi in Farmers' Uprising**

Researcher: Waikhom Tomba(?)

Pungdonbam incident has been misrepresented in the history of Manipur. Under the leadership of Hijam Irabot there was a farmers' uprising on September 21, 1948 in Pungdonbam in which police officer Naralbabu died.

In this farmers' uprising Nongthonbbam ningol Tombi took part. She was known as Hawaibi by the people. Along with other women who were part of the uprising were Maibam ongbi Keinya Devi, Aishem ningol Irungbam ongbi Thambal, Mutum ongbi Thagoi Devi, etc. After OC Naralbabu died of his own bullet, a lot of police came to Lamlai and beat the farmers severely to which the women could not remain silent. Small son of Nongmaithem Anganghal was beaten until he vomited blood. Farmer leaders of Pungdongbam village, namely, Irungbam Netro, Yumnam Leibakchao, Khangjrapam Amu (Sekta), Kshetrimayum Ramsingh (Chana), Ningthaujam Tomba (Leimakhongmapal), Laishram Ibochau (Lamlai), Laishram Chandrasingh (Lamlai), Moirangthem Tomba (Chana), etc. were also beaten. The police pulled front hair of Hawaibi.

Hawaibi also played a major role in 1939 nupi lan. She was a member of Mahila Sammelini. Under the president Kameng Jati, she took part in many steps taken by the sabha. She died about 8 years ago at the age of 65 at her birthplace Pungdongbam.

## **Short Stories of Few More Brave Women**

Researcher: Oinam ongbi Lembi

Convener

Lamlai Area Nupi Marup

### **Wangthem ongbi Kumari Devi**

Wangthem ongbi Kumar Devi was put in jail for 6 months for taking part in nupi lan. She was born in 1905. Her late husband Nawangsingh(?) was a member of Manipuri Hindu Mahasabha. She herself was a member of this sabha. She lived in Sagolband.

### **Oinam ongbi Amubi Devi**

Amubi Devi was born on 17th of Hiyangei 1903 in Meiband Hijam Leikai. Her father was Moirangthem Chura Singh. She was imprisoned for 7 months for taking part in nupi lan. After that she was put behind jail as political prisoner for another 6 months.

### **Kshetrimayum ongbi Mukhi Devi**

Kshetrimayum ongbi Mukhi Devi was in born in 1906 in Oinam Thingel(?), Imphal. Her father's name was Thambau Singh. From early childhood, she was public spirited. She was against the policies of British and King. For opposing the government, she was put behind the jail twice, for 7 and 6 months. Shrimati Mukhi Devi was a member of Mahasabha.

### **Maibam ongbi Keinya Devi**

Maibam ongbi Keinya Devi was born in Irungbam family of Pungdongbam village. She married Maibam Sanaton who lived in Laushangkhong. Her husband participated in many uprisings under the leadership of Irabot. She took part in destroying of masun in Sawungbung during nupi lan and women's meetings held in Pukhao, Sagolmang. She took active interest in the activities of her uncle Irungbam Netro of Pungdongbam under Irabot even before she was married. When Irabot's friends went underground, she was among those who secretly provided food and cloths to them. She is still alive and can walk about. She is 84 years now.

### **Mutum ongbi Thagoi**

Thagoi Devi who took part in destroying the masun in Sawungbung and rice, dal, and thoiding hoarded in Gwaltabi along with Kameng Jati and others was married into Mutum family in Lamlai. Her husband Sagai was involved in uprising of farmers. Jananeta Irabot frequently came to his house for meetings. She gathered women to listen to Jananeta. For allowing Jananeta in the house and accusing of being a communist, the family was not allowed to take part in the festivities in the neighbourhood.

### **Laibi Devi**

Leichombam Laibi Devi was from Seijang. She was involved in destroying and throwing away rice and thoiding hoarded in shops in Yangangpokpi and Gwaltabi. She was only 22 years old then. She was arrested along with Kameng Jati and Lamlai Angangjaobi. She was born in 1917 to Leichongbam Chaoba of Seijang. She was married into Ayekpam family. Right now she is not quite weak.

### **Patsai Leiren Devi**

During the nupi lan, people lovingly called her eche Leiren. She was born in Chabungbam family of Kwakeithel Mayaikoibi. She believed in Irabot. She was against one person exploiting another and hoarding another person's hard labour. She died in 1970.

### **Laishram Ramani Devi**

Ramani Devi earned living by pounding paddy. Hence, high price of paddy hit her hard. She 77 years now.

### **Heisnam ongbi Bujari Devi**

She was born into Athokpam family of Bamon Kampu. She was close friend of Shabi and Tongau. She had many discussions with Kameng Jati. She took part in many farmers' uprisings also. Shrimati Bujari Devi is no more now.

### **Hajarimayum ningol Chaonuhai Devi**

Hajarimayum ningol Chaonuhai Devi was born in 1902. She was elder daughter of Iboton Sharma and Chandrabali Devi. At the age of 15 she married Dhauno Sharma. For taking part in nupi lan against the British, she was imprisoned for 6 months.

### **Khumukcham ongbi Ketuki**

She was born in 1922 in Lamlai. Irom Achau and Rukmani were her parents. At a tender age she took part in nupi lan along with her mother. She is public spirited. She still takes part in establishing nupi marup (women's organizations).

### **Ibemhal**

Ibemhal Devi was born in Khurai Thoidingjam Leikai to Shamulailatpam Kanhai. Her mother's name was Ibemani Devi. At the age of 32, she followed Tongau and Shabi into the nupi lan. She took part in reviving Mahila Sammelini. Now she is 74 years old. She is in business (buying-selling) which she used to do as a child.

### **Kangjam ongbi Lalita**

From a young age Kangjam ongbi Lalita followed on the footsteps of Kangjam ongbi Sanajaobi. She was born in Shaugrakpam Leikai, Sagolband, Tera. Her father was Chongtham Ibohal and mother was Chongtham ongbi Kumari.

### **Sanatombi Devi, Nahabam Leikai**

She was born in Brahmapur Nahabam Leikai on 12th of Engen (lunar month, sometime around July?) 1906. Her father was Rajkumar Sanatomba and mother was Pukhrambam ningol Angaubi Devi. She took part in 1939 nupi lan. She objected to collecting money for applying chandan and cremation. Government of India recognized her as freedom fighter.

### **Kaboklei (Chaobi) of Nupi Lan**

Yumkham ningol Waribam ongbi Kaboklei was married to Waribam Thabal Singh of Lairik Yengbam Leikai. She raised voice against a custom called "rong chatpa" in which village and neighbourhood people had to guard the rich people. Her son Tomba told us researchers the following: Ema Kaboklei is now no more. During the "Sangin lan" she shed her blood. She was admitted in hospital for a long time because of the injury. She used to mention Jananeta Irabot frequently and cry.

### **Kongjengbam ongbi Leiphon Devi and Mera Devi**

Leiphon Devi was born in Patsoi Langjing Khongnangkong. Her father was Taorem Ghono Singh and mother was Thambalsna. Her husband was late Aber. She had no child of her own and brought up Angauchau as her own. She is 86/87 years old now.

As an official looking into Gwaltabi, Yaingangpokpi, and Sawungbung incidents, Khomdram I.P. had asked her, "What family are you from? Which family did you marry into? Do you have any younger sister?" Angered by this, she threw handful of rice at him three times shouting, "You came here to stop nupi lan, how can you talk in such ill manner? What do you see me as?" and he fell from the chair. Leiphon was arrested on charge of assaulting a police officer.

Her younger sister Kongjenbam ongbi Mera Devi was daughter of Yengkhom Tomba and Kumari. Her husband was late Kala Singh. Although weak, she still makes lukmai. She is about 82 years old now. For scattering hoarded materials in Gwaltabi, Leiren and Thambau were falsely accused of stealing fish (ngamu leirau) and hentak for which Mera twisted the ears of Sato Babu. For her bravery, Jati, Khongnang, Shabi, Tongau, and other leaders shook her hands. There are stories of her leaving behind her 5-month-old child to take part in uprisings.