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HIJAM IRABOT : A HERO OF MANIPUR



There was a time in Manipur during which the common people suffered terribly. Besides social divisions, there were religious discriminations too. The people were made to pay tax even for putting *chandan* on their faces. The condition of the poor people particularly the peasants and the labourers was very bad.



In the midst of these social inequality and religious excesses, a precious child was born in a poor family at Imphal, the capital of Manipur. The child grew up to lead the people of Manipur and fight against the social evils and injustice. He is none other than our beloved leader Hijam Irabot. He was born on 30th September 1896 at Pishum Oinam Leikai. In the fond memory of our departed leader, we observe his birthday as **Irabot Day** every year.

Right from his childhood, Irabot grew up fighting against injustice and inequality. Once, while he was reading in the fifth standard in Johnstone School, a teacher beat a student very severely. He even kicked the student with his boot. Young Irabot could not tolerate it. He organised the students of the class and put up a strong protest against the excess of the teacher. It turned out to be the first students' strike in Manipur.

Irabot was a very bright and well-disciplined student. He also took part in many co-curricular activities like singing, acting, sports, debating and recitation.

The then king of Manipur knew his talents and gave princess Khomdonsana in marriage to him. He was also appointed the member of Sadar Panchayat Court. But Irabot gave up honour and comfort to fight for the downtrodden people of Manipur.

Irabot always stood up against any wrongdoing that he came across. In December 1939, the women of Manipur revolted against the government for causing scarcity of food. They were severely wounded because of the bayonet charge by the soldiers. In a public meeting, Irabot said, "We have begged for rice but they have given us blood. We should avenge this." For saying so, Irabot was arrested and imprisoned in the Imphal jail in 1940. There he saw the prisoners ill-treated and tortured. He immediately organised the prisoners and launched a strike. The jailer was made to correct his mistakes. Irabot was put many times in prison in the course of his struggle for freedom and justice.

Manipur became a part of India in 1949. But inequality between the rich and the poor still remained. Irabot continued to fight for the rights of the peasants, and for bringing social equality. He demanded that the peasants should own the paddy fields. Later, he had to leave Manipur. But he did not live long. He died of typhoid in Myanmar (Burma) on September 26, 1951. In recognition of his valuable services the Government of India has issued a commemorative postal stamp in his name. Irabot is no more. However, he has left everlasting footprints. Manipur has given birth to a man who gave up his life for his motherland.



New Words :

discrimination (noun) : treat differently

departed (verb) : dead

protest (noun) : object to

talent (noun) : high mental or artistic ability

comfort (noun) : a state of physical well being

commemorating (adjective) : be a memorial of

footprints (noun) : marks left by a person's foot

EXERCISES

1. Answer the following questions :

- (i) Who was the precious child?
- (ii) Where was Hijam Irabot born?
- (iii) When was Hijam Irabot born?
- (iv) What kind of student was Irabot?
- (v) Name the princess whom Irabot married?
- (vi) Why did Hijam Irabot put up a protest against a teacher when he was reading in class V?
- (vii) What post did the king give to Irabot?
- (viii) When did Manipur become a part of the Indian Union?
- (ix) Why is Irabot called a hero of Manipur ?
- (x) Why did the Women of Manipur revolt in 1939 ?

2. *Match the words of Group A with the words of Group B of opposite meaning.*

<u>Group A</u>	<u>Group B</u>
justice	death
wrong	foolish
accept	poor
birth	follower
attack	weak
imprison	right
strong	reject
rich	injustice
leader	release
clever	defend

- 3.(a) *The words given below are used both as Nouns and Verbs.*

Example : (1) A teacher is the best guide of the students.

(2) He will guide you in your studies.

In sentence 1. 'guide' is used as a Noun.

In sentence 2. 'guide' is used as a Verb.

Now fill in the blanks in the following sentences using both the forms of the words given in the box in their correct forms.

<i>water struggle colour work smoke</i>

- (i) The glass on the table is full of
- (ii) My father the flowers.
- (iii) My father a cigarette every morning.
- (iv) from factories makes the surrounding dirty.
- (v) The peasants very hard in the field.
- (vi) Every student should do his share of
- (vii) Gandhi's for India's freedom is still remembered.
- (viii) Poor people very hard for survival.
- (ix) The rainbow has seven
- (x) He the picture.
- (b) ***Complete the sentences with the Noun forms of the Verbs given in the brackets. Make use of a dictionary.***
- (i) Democracy is a (govern) of the people, by the people and for the people.
- (ii) We should keep ourselves away from (tempt).
- (iii) In the past caning was a form of (punish) for naughty boys.
- (iv) The Minister gave a lengthy (speak) in the meeting.
- (v) Hjam Irabot's (decide) to leave Manipur was not known to others.
- (c) ***Combine words from the two boxes to form compound words:***
Example : rail and way = railway

<i>bosom</i>	<i>fresh</i>	<i>gold</i>	<i>black</i>
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<i>board</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>water</i>	<i>chain</i>
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