

LESSON No. 5



LOCAL GAMES AND MARTIAL ARTS

Every community has their own form of local games and martial arts. Some of them are popular and internationally accepted. Some remain to be played by the locals during traditional festivals. These games are known as indigenous or traditional games of the community or the state because the games originated there and continue to be played even today. For example, badminton and hockey are indigenous games of India. Likewise, table tennis or ping pong and Kung-Fu had their origin in China. Sumo wrestling and Judo are from Japan. Tae-Kwon-Do is from Korea and Karate is from India.

Manipur is equally blessed with numerous indigenous games and forms of martial arts. Let us have a brief account of some of the popular traditional games of Manipur.

Sagol Kangjei (Manipuri Polo): *Sagol Kangjei* has been adapted and adopted by the international enthusiasts of the game as Polo and now it is now being played worldwide. Today, the world has accepted that the game of Modern Polo originated from Manipur. *Sagol Kangjei* is played with seven players (in each side) who mount and ride Manipuri Ponies. Each player is fitted with polo-stick made of bamboo. The mounted player gallop after the ball (made of bamboo root) to hit it straight into the goal.



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Yubi Lakpi (Manipuri Rugby):

“Yubi” in Manipur means coconut and “Lakpi” means snatching. The game is played on an open ground. Each side has 7 players in a field that is about 45×18 metres in area one side of which forms the central portion of the goal line. The coconut serves the purpose of a ball and is offered to the king or the judges who sit just beyond the goal line.



Hiyang Tannaba (Boat Race): It is generally held in the month of November at Thangapat (Moat). The boats called Hyang Hiren are regarded to be invested with spiritual powers and the game is associated with religious rites. The rowers wear traditional dresses and head-gears. The game is also conducted during spells of natural calamity.



Mukna (Manipuri Wrestling):

The game is the Manipuri style of wrestling played between two male rivals for trial of strength by sheer physical strength and skill. Athletes of the same or approximately the same physical built, weight or ages are made to fight with each other.



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Almost every community in Manipur their own variant of Mukna, which can be witnessed during traditional festivals.

Kang: It is an indoor game played on the mud floor of a big out house. Fixed targets are hit with “Kang” which is a flat and oblong instrument made of either tortoise shell or lac. Normally each team has 7 male partners. The game is also played as a mixed



doubles contest during the period between Cheiraoba (New Year’s Day of Manipur) and the Rath Yatra festival.

Thang-Ta & Sarit Sarat: These are the forms of Manipuri Martial Arts, the traditions of which had been passed down over the centuries. The indigenous martial art-forms were meant to hone one’s battle-craft during peace times in the olden days when Manipuri was a warrior required to serve his country during war-times.



ACTIVITY

1. Make a list traditional games which your parents played during their childhood for amusement and fun (for example, Marum Konbi). Request them to show you how to play.
2. Learn to play a local game under the supervision of a teacher.