

Sagol Kangjei: The Genesis of Modern Polo

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Abstract

Sagol Kangjei is the name of the game of Polo plying in Manipur, India where Sagol means Pony/ horse, Kang means a ball and Jei is a kind of hockey stick for hitting the ball. The tradition in Manipur says that the game of Sagol Kangjei the forerunner of modern Polo, has been introduced during the reign of king Kangba at around 3100 B.C. the internationally renowned game of Polo locally known as Sagol Kangjei originated in Manipur. This is also recorded in the Guinness Book of Words Record, 1991 publication (page no. 288) with Manipur as the Birth Place of Polo. Basically, this game is played at Mapal Kangjeibung which is described by Sir James Johnstone as “The famous pologround, where the best play in the world might be seen”.

This game is played with the local horse pony an endangered breed which is smaller in size with an average height of 11-13 hands where 1 hand equals to 4 inches. Further, Department of Post (India) released a postage stamp with a denomination of Rs. 5 (INR) in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of introduction of Sagol Kangjei (Polo) to the world. Manipur’s contribution to the game of Polo has been immense. Hence, the International Museum of the Horse also unveiled a new exhibit chronicling the contribution of Manipur towards the game on November 25, 2012 at the Kentucky House Park in Lexington, USA.

Besides, International Polo Tournament is also being held at Imphal, Manipur (India) which has now become a part of Manipur Sangai Festival, a 10 days Tourism Festival in Manipur organized by Department of Tourism Government of Manipur. In this festival, many of the foreign country increasingly coming to participated in the tournament. Moreover, on the Statehood Day of Manipur, Statehood Day International Women’s Polo Tournament is also being organized since 2016.

Hence, Polo is attracting many foreign tourists and can greatly boots up the tourism sector of the country. So, both international and local efforts are greatly required to protect the endangered ponies of Manipur.

Key words: Sagol Kangjei, Polo, Pony, Tourism, Manipur.

Introduction

Manipur, the '**Jewel of India**' as described by Pandit Jawaharal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India is situated at the North East corner of the country. In the northeast India, Manipur is bounded by Nagaland on the north, Myanmar on the south and northeast, Mizoram on the southwest and Assam on the west. The state lies between the latitudes 23° 83' N and 25°68' N and the longitudes 93°03' E and 94°78' E. It is divided into two regions, namely; the Hills and the Valley. The total area of the state is 22,327 sq. km, of which one tenth (2,238 sq.km) covers the valley and the remaining (nine tenths) cover the hills. The valley is about 790 metres above the sea level in the northern side while in the hills the average elevation is from 1,500 metres to 1,800 metres. It has annual rainfall of 1467.5 m.m. and a sub-tropical monsoon type of climate in which the summer months are hot and wet while the winter months are cold and dry. The hills of Manipur comprise two groups; namely, eastern hills and western hills. (Singh 2000, Malayala, 1993)

The Manipuri society ethnically comprises two broad groups of population; viz., population of Meitei, Meitei Panggal, Loi and other groups in the Imphal Valley and the tribal population in the hills. Both the groups ethnically represent several groups and hence make a multi-ethnic society of Manipur. All the above, it is rightly say that the Meitei are physically a fine race and are devoted to games and sports. (T.C. Hudson, 1908). Indeed the Meitei so called one of the major communities of Manipur have a plenty number of indigenous game like Sagol Kangjei (Hockey on horseback), Khong Kangjei (Hockey cum wrestling), Mukna (Meitei style of wrestling), Hiyang tanaba (Boat race), Yubi lakpi (Meitei style of rugby), Thang-Ta (Sword and spear fighting/show or a form of martial arts) etc. Among the various above mentioned indigenous game, Sagol kangjei is one of the most ancient and the most favorite games of Manipur. Sagol kangjei is the name of the game of polo played in Manipur. Sagol literally means local pony or horse, kang means a ball or round object, and jei is a stick used for hitting. Polo has, for time immemorial, been a game patronized by the royalty and the upper crust of society, not only in India but abroad. However in the state of Manipur, it has always been a game for the common man. It is a seven - a - side game, the players mounted on ponies. Besides, the game of Polo in Manipur had a different ancestry. Manipur, one of the 29 States constituting the Indian Union today, was not a part of India until 1949. All the major ethnic groups constituting the Manipuri people are of the Mongoloid stock and their languages belong to the Tibeto-Burman family. Polo is a part of their cultural inheritance, as waves of people migrated from southern Thus, Sagol Kangjei is one of the indigenous games of Manipur ancestral deities which had then been invented and played first by its handed down as a traditional game from generation to generation of the people of Manipur and played as one of the compulsory items of indigenous games on the occasions of Lai Haraoba and other customary festivals and also on the occasions of coronations of the kings (W. Damodar, 2012). In continuation to this traditional features and generosity, the genesis of the game and its origin in this beautiful State is also accepted by the Guinness Book of Records, which in its 1991 publication (page no. 288) records Manipur as the birth of Polo.

Therefore, the present study is going to highlight the genesis of modern polo which is believed to be originated from Manipuri traditional style of Polo i.e. Sagol Kangjei.

Objectives Of The Study

The board objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To highlight the historical perspective of Sagol Kangjei.
2. To study the status of the local horse Pony an endangered breed.
3. To highlight the traditional rules of the game of Sagol Kangjei.
4. To explore the contribution of Sagol Kangjei for creating the tourism hub in Manipur.

Historical Background

Ningthou (King) Kangba (1405-1359 B.C), the son of Tangja Leela Pakhangba and Sinbee Leima, is considered to be the first and most foremost King of Manipur. Sagol-Kangjei was invented by Ningthou Kangba for the first time in Manipur. So, the term Kaang-Chei or Kang-Jei (a hockey or stick made of cane), Kang-droom (a ball made of bamboo root) was taken after the name Kangba. This story was written in "Kangjeirol" (the story of Kangjei). The same game was played during the time of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba with Namu Pong, the followers of Poireiton, the ruler of Manipur (34-18 BC) and their descendants being on one side and Lai (which means those followers and descendants of Tangja Leela Pakhangba, the father of Ningthou Kangba), being the other side as proposed by Leima Laisra, the beloved wife of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba. Marjing of the Lai-group was the authority for the game on horse. Since then Lai and Namu-Pong were amalgamated to form the Meitei group, which started with Tangja Leela Pakhangba's time with intermarriages among three different tribes, namely Tang-Shang, Lei-Hou and Kou tribes (Tensuba, 1993).

The Royal Chronicle of Manipur, Cheitharol Kumbaba, gives an account of a Polo match between the friends of Ngonda Lairen Pakhangba who ascended the throne of Manipur in 33 A.D. On that occasion, he introduced his Queen Laisana to the royal crowd as a proof of his marital fidelity to her. The game was played with seven players a side. The name of the players who played on the occasion and their respective positions are as follows:

TABLE 1: THE NAME OF THE PLAYERS WITH POSITION WHO PLAYED IN THE FIRST MATCH

Sl. No.	TEAM 1 Team Facing The South	Fielding Position	TEAM 2 Team Facing The North
1.	Marjing	Pan-ngakpa (Full back)	Thangjing
2.	Khamlangba	Pan-ngakchang (Half back)	Khoriphaba
3.	Irum Ningthou	Pallak Chang (Mid-fielder)	Wangbaren
4.	Ikop Ningthou	Langjei (Centre)	Yangoi Ningthou
5.	Irong Ningthou	Pallak Chang (Mid-fielder)	Mayokpha
6.	Nongshaba	Pangjeng Chang (No. 2 forward)	Oknaren
7.	Panthoiba	Panjenba (No. 1 forward)	Loyarakpa

According to Cheitharol Kumbaba, king Khagemba of Manipur introduced Pana Sagol Kangjei in 1606 which are played between the four Panas of higher status and also between the two Panas of lesser status. The Panas of higher status were Laipham, Khabam, Ahallup and Naharup. The two Panas of lesser status were Hidakphanba and Potsangba. Each team of the Pana (a social institution of Manipur) was given a particular colour of uniform for games.

TABLE 2: TEAM OF THE TRADITIONAL PANA WITH THEIR PARTICULAR COLOUR OF UNIFORM FOR GAMES

Sl. No.	Status	Uniform Colour
	Higher Panas	
1.	Laipham Pana	Red colour shirt
2.	Khabam Pana	Green colour shirt
3.	Ahallup Pana	White colour shirt
4.	Naharup Pana	Yellow colour shirt
Lesser Panas (Pana Khumei)		
1.	Hidak Phanba	Black colour shirt
2.	Potsangba	Blue colour shirt

Further, no Polo game could be played between a Pana of higher status and a Pana of lower status. When the selected player's from Laipham Pana and Ahallup Pana made a combined team and played against the selected combined team of Khabam Pana and Naharup Pana, the Polo match was known as Chere-Kare (N. Tombi Raj).

The British Connection

Manipur existed as an independent kingdom for centuries until the British defeated them in 1891. However, Anglo-Manipur relations were firmly established in the aftermath of the First Anglo-Burmese War 1819-24 which also resulted in the annexation of Assam to the British Indian Empire. A British Political Agent was stationed at Imphal, the capital of Manipur, from 1835. British officers certainly saw Sagol Kangjei (polo) being played regularly at Mapal Kangjeibung (Polo ground) in Imphal because it was adjacent to both the royal palace and the Political Agency. Polo is generally associated elsewhere with the royalty. In Manipur it was, and still is, played with enthusiasm by ordinary people so much so that, as a popular story goes, polo players were known to have pawned their wives to buy a pony. The enthusiasm apparently infected Captain Robert Stewart, assistant deputy commissioner of Cachar, a district in Assam under British administration which also had a sizable Manipuri population as it was contiguous to Manipur. During 1853-54 he invariably joined the Manipuris when Sagol Kangjei was played at Silchar, the district headquarters.

In 1859, Stewart became the deputy commissioner and Lieutenant John Shearer joined as assistant deputy commissioner. The duo enthusiastically took to the game and they decided to start a polo club to play in matches against the Manipuri players. Thus came into existence, in March 1859, the Silchar Polo Club in a meeting held at Stewart's bungalow. Its first elected members were Captain Robert Stewart, Lt. John Shearer, James Davidson, Julius Sandermon,

James Abemetly, Arthur Brownlow, Earnest Echaradt, W. Walker and A. Stewart. The Silchar Polo Club, now called the Retreat Club, is possibly the world's first polo club. By 1861, polo was played in Dacca on the initiative of Captain Eustace Hill of Lahore Light Horse who saw the game being played on a trip to Cachar. British merchants from Calcutta were similarly introduced to the game and got interested. The Calcutta Polo Club was formed in 1862. Now the game spread rapidly to almost every cantonment in British India. In 1864, on invitation from Calcutta, the Silchar Polo Club raised a Manipuri polo team known as The Band of Brothers and Lt. John Shearer took them, with their ponies, to Calcutta by country boat. The Manipuri team easily defeated the Calcutta team. A match was also staged between the Calcutta Polo Club and the Manipuri team on the occasion of a visit to Calcutta by the Prince of Wales in 1876. It ended in a draw. It was largely due to the tireless efforts of Lt. John Shearer that Sagol Kangjei got transformed into the popular game of modern polo. When Shearer retired as a Major General, he was rightly acknowledged as the father of English Polo. The first regular match in England was played at Hounslow in 1869 between the 10th Hussars and the 9th Lancers with eight a side. It was then known as 'Hockey on Horseback', a curiosity in the British society. The 10th Hussars won by three goals to two. Hurlingham started polo in 1874 and soon became the headquarters of the game. The rest is part of fairly known polo history.

MAPAL KANGJEIBUNG (Polo Ground)

The history of Imphal Polo ground is one of the oldest as history of Manipur. The cradle of polo game or Sagol Kangei, as known locally, through centuries of Meitei civilization, Mapal Kangjeibung, the historic polo ground, rectangular in shape, is situated in the heart of Imphal city. This majestic game has always been an integral part of the Manipur ethos. It was, however, British influence and initiative that gave it global popularity.

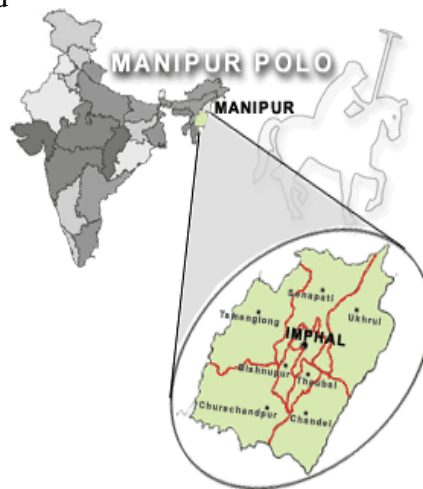


Fig. 1 Manipur Map
(Source: www.indianpolo.com)

The Manipur polo ground, Mapal Kangjeibung, is 225 yards long and 110 yards broad, and is covered with very fair turf. But its most striking feature is that it had no goal posts, the ground

being surrounded by a low bank about two feet high, the striking of the ball across which at either end was the Manipuri equivalent of a goal. On the western side, a stand for members of the Raja's family, most of whom are good players, being well mounted and having been trained to lane game from childhood. Mapal Kangjeibung, the famous polo ground, between the Residency grounds, the Sana Keithel, and the great road is described by Sir James Johnstone as "the famous polo ground, where the best play in the world might be seen".

MANIPURI PONY

The Manipuri Pony, Meitei Sagol, is a rare breed from the Southeast Himalayan state of Manipur in northeast India. Manipuri Horse breed is Indian developed Horse breed. It is believed that Manipuri Horse breed came in existence from crossing Mongolian White Horse, Arabian or Tibetan Horse. The ponies are extremely agile and tough, and are also known for their stamina, speed, and intelligence. The Manipuri Pony resembles other ponies of the region such as the Burmese Pony and the Batak and Sumba Ponies from Indonesia, but the Manipuri is considered to be more powerful. It stands 10 to 13 hands high, and has an attractive wedge-shaped head with a straight profile, alert ears, and slightly epicanthic, wide set eyes. The muzzle is broad with nostrils that dilate. The neck is muscular and nicely shaped with a good length of rein, and thick mane. It is broad through the chest, with a compact body and well-sprung ribs. The shoulder is sloping which allows for a fast, long and low action. The quarters are muscular with the croup slightly sloping and the tail set and carried high. The Manipuri Pony may sometimes exhibit slightly concave and dish-shaped profiles. Dish-shaped profiles are generally considered a hallmark of the Arabian horse. The legs are in proportion to the body, and they have strong knees and hocks, with good density of bone, and very tough feet. The hooves of the Manipuri Pony are closed and very strong. Hence, shoeing is unknown in Manipur. (Manipur Horse-Riding and Polo Association)

Once, the name of polo is taken, the name of Manipuri Pony, on which back the game has been played since time immemorial comes in our mind. The polo and Manipuri Ponies are inseparable for the Manipuris. But now, for all of us it is a matter of shame that this pride of the state is living in disgrace, facing abuse of one and all for raiding crops of somebody or for being a traffic hazard. Many of them are victims of hits by vehicles, some of them died, many are incapacitated. (L. Ibetombi Devi, 2013).

On the side of the world's oldest polo ground in Imphal, one of two large hoardings sends out a strong appeal to the public: "Save Manipuri pony, the original Polo pony." The other, simply states, "We gave the world the game of Polo." And they did. Modern polo can be rooted back to Manipur, and is derived from the indigenous game called *Sagol Kangjei*, originally played with Manipuri ponies. The animals, often considered the 'pride of Manipur', are believed to be the descendents of *Samadon Ayangba*, the winged steed of Lord Marjing, one of the many deities in Manipuri mythology. They are warrior horses, among the five equine breeds in the country. Today, these animals, once revered as gods, are on the brink of extinction. As per the Quinquennial Livestock Census of India, conducted after every five years, the population of Manipuri pony has been dwindling since 2003, from a total of 1,898 ponies to only 1,011 in 2012.

Despite, Manipuri Ponies are among the seven recognised breeds of horses found in India; the rate of death is much higher than the rate of birth so the number of ponies must be even lesser than the expectation. Road accidents and food poisoning are the two biggest factors for undesirably high fatality rate of the ponies. Rapid urbanisation has also caused the natural habitats (grazing fields) of the ponies to dwindle, and they come out to the roads. Here, they survive on the garbage and little patches of grazing ground left in and around valley. This leads to multiple diseases which gradually kills the breed. The Manipur Horse Riding and Polo Association and Manipur Pony Society have recorded around 30 deaths of young colts in 2017 alone.

Earlier the Manipur government allotted two temporary sanctuaries for the ponies: one at Lamphelpat, Imphal West and the other in Marjing foothills, Imphal East. “The Lamphelpat’s sanctuary remained flooded throughout the rainy season while there was a shortage of fodder at the Heingang sanctuary—thus driving out ponies to the streets a usual”. Thus, the e government declared the ‘Manipuri Pony’ as an endangered breed in 2013. Subsequently, in a bid to protect the horse breed, the government introduced the Manipuri Pony Conservation and Development Policy in 2016. However, the policy has failed to achieve anything substantial.

Keeping the above threats into consideration, the state government thoroughly discussed the issues regarding the rehabilitation, long term sustainability to preserve and conserve the Manipuri Pony. It was also decided that a breeding farm would be developed and maintained by the State Government so that the rare and precious gene of Manipuri Pony breed is not diluted at any cost. Regarding the stray ponies in the streets, it is also decided that every Pony owner of the State needs to register their Ponies with the Government. If the owners fail to register their ponies, necessary action would be taken and they would be auctioned in public.

TRADITIONAL RULES OF THE GAME

Rule no. 1: Pony

- a. The game can be played on ponies of any height.
- b. The average height of Manipuri ponies is 11 to 13 hands where 1 hand equals to 4 inches.
- c. No defective pony is allowed to play Polo.
- d. Pony should be healthy.

Rule no. 2: Size of the field

- a. The dimensions of the rectangular playing field are 210 yards in length and 100 yards in width. But it can be played also on smaller fields according to local conditions.

Rule no. 3: The Players

- a. The number of players in a team will be seven.
- b. The players have definite names to denote their respective positions.
- c. He or she must be a good rider.
- d. No left hander is allowed to play Polo.

Rule no. 4: Officials

- a. When the two teams have lined themselves up in the middle of the field behind the center line, each side on their respective side of the field, the match is started by the Huntre-hunba. He advances from the side of the field towards the center and from there he tosses the ball high up in the air shouting Huntre to indicate the start of play, and he retreats quickly. He repeats the procedure to start the play again after a goal has been scored and when the play starts after an interval. The ball should be thrown up as vertically as possible.
- b. There is a Kangburel (assistant) who remains outside the field and watches the game. His decisions are final regarding the conduct of the game.
- c. There are two Goal Judges who raise a white flag every time a goal has been scored on their respective goal line; two Line Judges who toss the ball up in the air, like the Huntre-hunba does, from the spot on the sideline where the ball has gone out of the playing field. Nowadays, there is also a Timekeeper and a Scorer.

Rule no. 5: Size of the ball

- a. The ball is made from the seasoned bamboo root and painted white.
- b. The size of the ball is about 100 mm in diameter and about 150 gms in weight.

Rule no. 6: Score

- a. There are no goal posts. A goal is scored by a team when the ball crosses the terminal line on the other side i.e. the line on the width of the field.
- b. The scoring of a goal is formally announced by the sounding of a bugle or the blow of a conch.

Rule no. 7: Duration of the game

- a. In traditional Manipuri Polo, there is no fixed duration of time of a match. It is according to the number of goals to be scored as fixed earlier by the rival teams before the start of the match. But, in no case the goals should be less than seven. If the number of goals fixed earlier cannot be scored in a day, the match may continue on the next day or the other. In a challenge match, if a team scores the stipulated number of goals against their counterpart the team may declare at their wish that the match is ended.
- b. Nowadays, the game is usually played in two periods of 20 minutes each, with a breather of 5 minutes at half time. The teams change ends at half time. There is still no limit to the number of players and ponies that can be substituted during play.

Rule no. 8: How a game is won

- a. The team that makes most goals will win the game.

Rule no. 9: Style of play

- a. Sagol Kangjei is not a game played at an easy canter. When the Huntre-hunba or the Line Judge has tossed the ball up in the air, the players are at liberty to strike the ball before it reaches the earth.

- b. A mounted player is allowed to pick the ball up from the ground by hand if he can. An expert player can make the ball roll up the mallet by a flick of hand and catch the ball. But in both cases, to score a goal, he must throw the ball up in the air and hit it with his mallet before reaching the goal line.
- c. There are no restrictions to a player regarding right of way so long as he is in control of the ball.

Rule no. 10: Foul

- a. In the early times, the traditional rules regarding the game were delightfully indifferent to any kind of foul. The conduct of the players was governed by thakshasi (discipline) or social etiquette which compelled a player to play fair.
- b. In 1928, the Maharaja forbade sagol tipnaba i.e. riding across an opponent or into a player with deliberate intent at an unsafe distance, and hairou i.e. deliberately hitting or hooking the mallet of an opponent above pony height or across the opponent's pony at any height. These are still regarded as fouls.
- c. It is up to the decision of the Kangburel (assistant) whether the offending player should be simply warned or stopped from playing further in the game.

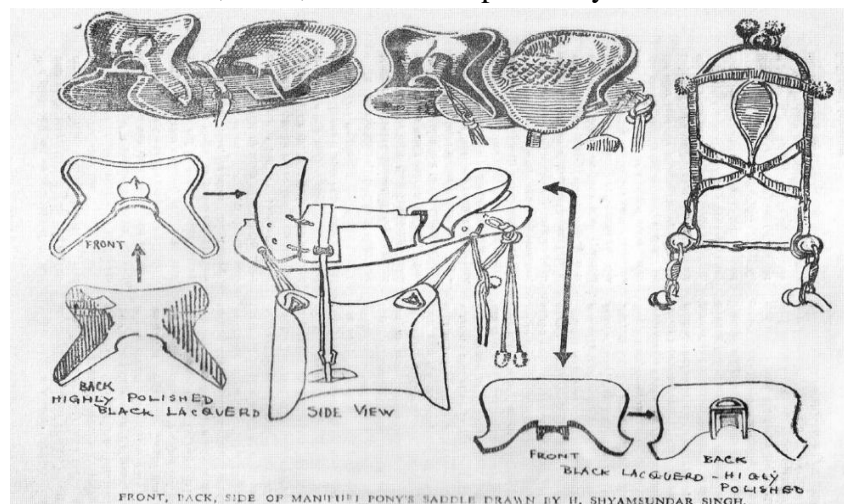
Rule no. 11: Equipment for players

- a. All players should wear a white dhoti without borders, but it does not go below the knee.
- b. On his head he wears a big white turban held by a khadangchet i.e. chin strap.
- c. He also wears a cotton jacket with short sleeves. The jacket and khadangchet are in distinctive color of the particular team.
- d. Since no footwear is usually worn, the player covers his ankles with khunningkhang which is a piece of leather or cloth held by straps. Above khunningkhang, to protect the calves, he wears a padded khongyom which is also held by straps.
- e. On his left hand, the player holds a lash made of thick leather pleated together, together with a pair of reins which are attached to the bit. On his right hand, he holds the kanghu i.e. the mallet which is about four and a half feet long. At the upper end of the stick it is covered with cloth for about one and a half feet. The player usually holds the stick leaving about one foot to the upper end.
- f. The polo stick is fixed to the polo head, which is about 8 to 10 inches long, at an angle of 45 degrees. The stick is made of seasoned cane.

Rule no. 12: Equipment for ponies

- a. The Manipuri saddle looks outwardly too big for the small ponies. Huge uncured buffalo or mithun skins called nakthing are suspended from the saddle on both sides of the pony. Its ends, fore and aft, are curled to protect the whole leg of the player.
- b. Big round balls of soft cotton are also usually suspended from the heads and backs of the ponies to serve as ornaments and to protect them from blows.

Fig. 2
Front, Back, Side of Manipuri Pony's Saddle



Courtesy: H. Shyamshunder Singh

Source: (Manipur Facts and Files. Imphal: A.M.C.T.A., 2001)

Rule no. 13: Final Authority to settle dispute

- a. If a Polo match is to be played, there should be someone whom the people respect and who could decide when there is any dispute during the match. That very respectable person should be the "Kangburel", final authority of the particular match. Usually, Pana matches are played before the Ruler so as to solve any dispute.

Rule no. 14: Polo Season

- a. The game of Polo is interwoven with the ancient cult of Manipuris. Some ritual meanings are attached to it. There is certain period in a year when the Polo game is forbidden to play. It cannot be played in the period of 'Laicheppa' (June or July) to 'Lai Lenghatpa' (September or October) in a year. Thus, the Manipuri Polo season starts from October and ends in the month of June of the next year which covers eight months in a Polo season.

Birth Of Manipur Horse Riding And Polo Association

Manipur Horse Riding and Polo Association was established in 1977. The objectives of the Association was to promote the popular game (Polo) to its original standard by raising the professional level, to ensure the survival of the original polo pony-the Manipuri Pony and to educate the young Manipuris the need of preserving this game as a sport and take it up as a profession. The Association is purely a voluntary Organization. The expenses of the association are met through contributions from its members and non members, material and non material services rendered by other sport loving Organisations and direct resource mobilization through charities, meals etc. The Association is an affiliated of the India Polo Association. Polo Clubs are affiliated to this Association. The dedicated effort of the Association has led to a large scale proliferation of polo Clubs and players in the state. The Associations has been instrumental in

providing jobs to these players in the state govt. departments and also is the Indian Army. The Association played a pivotal role in the construction of the oldest Polo ground in the world, the Mapal Kangjeibung at Imphal.

Importance Of International Polo Tournament

Attraction of tourist in the state through the game of polo as an international platform is vital in progress of the state, which has been affected by remoteness, backwardness and insurgency. In view of the Union Government's policy to develop the north-eastern region, the "act east policy", the department of tourism government of Manipur is hosting 10 days festival under the banner of Manipur Sangai Festival annually. The festival has major impact on the development of cultural tourism to the host communities. The festival organisers are now using the historical and cultural themes to develop the annual events to attract visitors and creating cultural image in the host cities by holding festivals in the community settings. The desire for festival and event is not specifically designed to address the needs for any one particular group. The hosting of events is often developed because of the tourism and economic opportunities addition to social and cultural benefits. As a part of this festival, Manipur Horse Riding and Polo Association also organizing International Polo tournament during this festival. In this festival, many of the foreign country increasingly coming to participated in the tournament. Moreover, on the Statehood Day of Manipur, Statehood Day International Women's Polo Tournament is also being organized since 2016. It is the only international women's polo tournament in India which is organized as an initiative to save the endangered Manipuri Pony under theme to promote Polo Tourism in the state. In this special tournament, team like Kenya, Australia and USA are participating with their full enthusiasm and interest. Therefore, on promotion of Manipur as an important destination of the tourists, it should be noticed by the authorities that there is an immediate need for developing infrastructure and facilities.

Conclusion

Sagol Kangjei was never a game of the kings in Manipur; it was king of the games played by ordinary people. But unplanned land-use and urbanisation during the last 50 years have robbed the Manipur pony of its natural habitat and the polo teams of their playing grounds. A time has come when local support is just not enough. It is in this context that a definitive research into and documentation on Sagol Kangjei and its substantial contribution to modern polo, will be of immense significance. Institutions, organizations or individuals interest towards the preservation and protection of pony in particular is very much required. Besides, the promotion of the game polo in the state is also similarly having a great importance for the upliftment of the game as well as to attract visitors and tourist as a whole.

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"Let other people play at other things; The King of Games is still the Game of kings"

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