

VALIANT FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF NORTH EAST INDIA.



C. BADRI

PRIME POINT FOUNDATION

**Sansad Ratna Award-winning MPs with Hon'ble President
(Feb 2024)**



**Sansad Ratna Award-winning MPs with Hon'ble
Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister (July 2025)**





सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान मंत्री
Prime Minister

MESSAGE

It is indeed heartening to learn about the 13th edition of Sansad Ratna Awards being held in New Delhi. Greetings and heartiest congratulations to the distinguished Parliamentarians for winning the awards.

As the Mother of Democracy, India's socio-political systems and practices have an ancient tradition of debate, dialogue, spirit of cooperation, transparency and inclusiveness.

Our democracy, Parliament, Parliamentary systems and procedures and the participation of people's representatives have played a crucial role in furthering the nation's glorious journey.

Discussions and debates in Parliament provide a forum to the government and policymakers to fulfil the people's aspirations and take the country's development journey ahead. It is the responsibility of every Parliamentarian to enhance the quality of debates in the House, as also voice the concerns of the people, particularly the poor and marginalised sections of the society.

This year's edition of Sansad Ratna Awards recognise and honour the outstanding contributions of some of our eminent Parliamentarians. I am sure that the Awards will inspire every Member to further enrich Parliamentary proceedings through their vision and wisdom.

Best wishes to everyone associated with Sansad Ratna Awards Committee for their future endeavours.

(Narendra Modi)

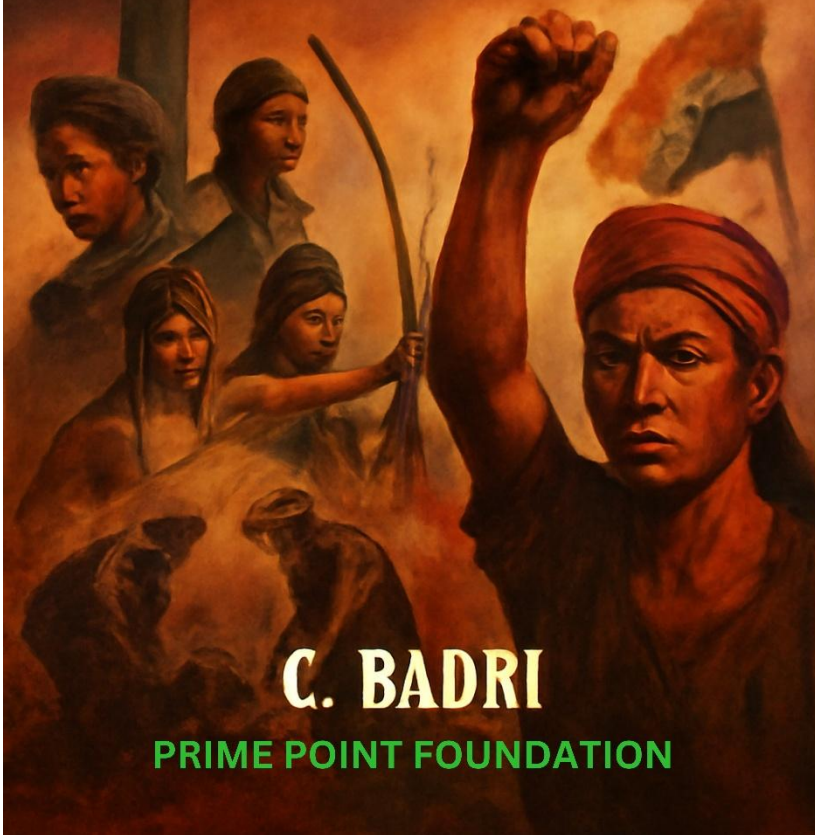
New Delhi

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24th February, 2023

Freedom Fighters of North East India

VALIANT FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF NORTH EAST INDIA.



C. BADRI

PRIME POINT FOUNDATION

Freedom Fighters of North East India

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Freedom Fighters of North East India

Introduction

Dedication



*To **Lord Sri Krishna**, the Almighty, my eternal guide and strength. Like the flute that sings only through His touch, this book flows through His divine will. May it serve as an offering at His feet and illuminate minds with wisdom and purpose.*

🙏 **Jai Shri Krishna!** 🙏

Freedom Fighters of North East India

Foreword From Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam For The PreSense100

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
Former President of India



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New Delhi-110011

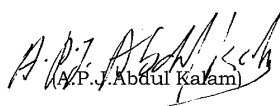
FOREWORD

I am very happy to know that the PreSense monthly ezine published by Prime Point Foundation is bringing out a book based on some of the unique articles, interviews and events published in its editions so far since from March 2006. The 100 issues of the publication have gone through an eventful journey, focusing on knowledge capture and important knowledge dissemination. I recollect my direct association with PreSense in July 2008, when I launched the cartoon character, 'Prince', created exclusively for PreSense.

I see PreSense continuing in its journey under the mentorship of Prime Point Srinivasan, maintaining its status as a must-read ezine, in the fast moving and evolving world of communication, knowledge and connectivity.

I congratulate the Editorial Team of PreSense for bringing out the 100th Edition as a Collector's Digest.

28th May 2015


(A.P.J. Abdul Kalam)

Freedom Fighters of North East India

Foreword from Shri Dilip Saikia MP, Assam

DILIP SAIKIA

Member of Parliament

(Lok Sabha)

Darrang-Udalguri, Assam

MEMBER:
Standing Committee on Petroleum & Natural Gas.
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MESSAGE

It is with immense pride and deep gratitude that I pen this foreword for the remarkable book Valiant Freedom Fighters of North East India. The pages of this book unveil the incredible stories of unsung heroes from the North East, whose courage, sacrifice, and determination remain etched in the annals of India's freedom struggle.

As we celebrate the spirit of independence, it is essential that we pay tribute to those who fought valiantly, often at the cost of their lives, to see our country free from the yoke of British rule. This book, under the able authorship of Shri C. Badri, highlights the sacrifices of lesser-known but equally important figures, who contributed to the freedom movement with unwavering commitment and courage.

One such important fact is the role of the North East in India's struggle for independence. From the bravery of leaders like Rani Gaidinliu of Manipur to the sacrifices of Piyoli Phukan and Maniram Dewan of Assam, the North East has always been a region of immense patriotic fervour. These freedom fighters, many of whom are not as widely known, carried the torch of resistance and ignited a fire of rebellion that spread across the country. Their fight was not just against foreign rule but also to preserve their cultural identity and autonomy.

I commend the efforts of Prime Point Foundation and Shri C. Badri for bringing to light these invaluable stories through this publication. Their tireless efforts in documenting the lesser-known aspects of our freedom movement are praiseworthy. The Prime Point Foundation has always been a pillar of support for initiatives that empower our youth and educate them about the sacrifices that built this great nation.

This book's release, on the occasion of India's 78th Independence Day, is a timely reminder of our debt to the selfless heroes of the past. The event, to be graced by Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, will undoubtedly add to the glory of our freedom fighters' legacies.

As the first recipient of the Sansad Ratna Award in the last fifteen years from North East Region of our nation, I strongly believe that the youth of today must draw inspiration from these extraordinary individuals whose stories need to be told, celebrated, and immortalized.

Let us all pay homage to these valiant heroes whose sacrifices paved the way for the India we cherish today.

Jai Hind !


(Dilip Saikia)

Authors Profile



C. Badri is the Editor-in-Chief of the digital magazine *PreSense*, a platform dedicated to insightful and socially relevant content. A seasoned banker by profession, he brings over four decades of rich experience in the fields of banking and finance. He served with distinction as General Manager at Canara Bank and later as General Manager and Chief Vigilance Officer at Indian Overseas Bank, where he played a pivotal role in strengthening institutional governance and vigilance.

Beyond his professional achievements in banking, C. Badri maintains a strong and ongoing interest in cybersecurity. In this field, he stays actively involved, particularly in raising awareness among senior citizens and the general public.

Equally dear to him is the history of India's freedom movement. He has been a passionate researcher and advocate for documenting the lives and sacrifices of lesser-known freedom fighters from across the country. He strongly believes that their contributions deserve greater recognition and public remembrance, and he has worked tirelessly to bring their stories to light through his writings.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

C. Badri also serves as the President of the Probus Club of Chennai South, a reputed organisation of senior professionals dedicated to lifelong learning, fellowship, and service to society. In this role, he continues to inspire, mentor, and engage with members on matters of civic responsibility, digital awareness, and national heritage.

With a rare combination of professional expertise, social commitment, and intellectual curiosity, C. Badri continues to meaningfully contribute to the public discourse and nation-building.

Prime Point Foundation: 25 Years of Empowering India's Youth



**PRIME POINT
Foundation**

Since 1999, Prime Point Foundation has been helping young Indians become better leaders and communicators. Founded by Shri K Srinivasan, a former banker turned digital journalist, this non-profit organisation has grown into one of India's most respected youth development platforms.

What We Do

The Foundation runs five key programmes that make a real difference:

eMagazine PreSense - Started in 2006 following Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's suggestion, this digital magazine promotes positive journalism. With 220 editions published till June 2025 and recognition from India Book of Records, it includes the popular cartoon character Prince, which Dr Kalam himself launched in 2008.

Sansad Ratna Awards - Since 2010, these prestigious awards honour India's best-performing MPs and Parliamentary Committees. Dr Kalam inaugurated the first ceremony, and over 15 years, 143 Awards have been presented. The India Book of Records acknowledges this as the largest parliamentary award programme run by civil society.

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Next Gen Political Leaders - This programme trains young people who want to enter politics, connecting them with experienced Ministers and MPs through workshops and mentoring sessions.

Education Loan Task Force - Helping students and families understand education loans since 2010. The team has answered over 30,000 questions and helped resolve 5,000 serious complaints with banks.

Digital Journalists Association of India - Training journalists to adapt to the digital age, including AI through workshops and seminars with industry experts.

All programmes are run by passionate volunteers and entirely focus on helping young people to succeed. Prime Point Foundation proves that dedicated efforts can create lasting change in the Indian democracy and society.

Author's Note

This book, *Freedom Fighters of North East India*, is a product of deep passion and years of relentless research. It is with a heart full of gratitude that I pen this note. As I reflect on the journey of bringing this work to fruition, I am overwhelmed by the sense of pride and emotion that accompany the recognition of these unsung heroes, who for far too long have remained in the shadows of history.

It all began with the encouragement and motivation from Shri Dilip Saikia, the Hon'ble Member of Parliament from Assam. His unwavering belief in the importance of sharing the stories of these remarkable individuals was the catalyst that sparked my research and writing. I am deeply indebted to Shri Saikiaji, whose vision has made this book possible. His dedication to preserving the legacies of these heroes and his encouragement to me have inspired this heartfelt tribute.

I must also extend my deepest thanks to the Prime Point Foundation, which has been a constant source of support throughout this endeavour. Their commitment to empowering India's youth, celebrating unsung histories, and their belief in the value of free distribution of knowledge are truly commendable. I am deeply honoured that the Foundation has chosen to publish this book, allowing these

Freedom Fighters of North East India

incredible stories to reach a wider audience and ensuring that the sacrifices of these heroes are never forgotten.

This book is not just a collection of names and dates; it is an emotional journey that takes us through the pain, sacrifice, and undying courage of individuals who fought for our freedom. It is an attempt to bring their stories back into the national consciousness, to remind us all of the price paid for the liberties we enjoy today.

As a writer and researcher, I have been privileged to learn about these extraordinary people and their contributions. In a small way, I hope that their stories will inspire future generations to live with the same bravery, passion, and sense of justice that they did. These heroes may have laid down their lives for a free India, but their spirit continues to live in each of us.

I gratefully acknowledge the support given by Shri Ramesh Sundaram, Joint Managing Editor of PreSense, for editing and proofreading this book. I also thank Advocate Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor of PreSense, for encouraging me to write this book and coordinating with Chief Minister of Assam and Shri Dilip Saikia, Member of Parliament, for the release of this book.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Prime Point Srinivasan, whose insightful vision and gentle encouragement ignited the idea of writing a monthly article

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in every edition of on our forgotten valiant freedom fighters in our eMagazine “PreSense” when our nation began to celebrate Azadi Ki Ka Amrit Mahotsav three years ago. It was his timely nudge that inspired me to shine a light on the remarkable individuals whose sacrifices have shaped our journey to independence, yet who too often remain unsung. His steadfast support and wise guidance have been invaluable to me throughout this endeavour. With every edition, I have felt his encouragement, which has strengthened my resolve to honour the legacy of our freedom fighters and remind us of all of the stories that must never fade into obscurity.

With deepest gratitude,

C Badri

Publisher's Note

As we approach the momentous occasion of India's 78th Independence Day, it is with immense pride and honour that we present the book *Freedom Fighters of North East India*. This book is not merely a compilation of historical accounts, but a tribute to the unsung heroes whose courage, sacrifice, and resilience were instrumental in India's struggle for freedom.

For far too long, the contributions of these brave men and women from the North East have been overshadowed by the more widely recognised figures in the history of India's independence. Today, we strive to change that narrative, to ensure that these warriors, whose names were often silenced by time and circumstance, are finally given the recognition they deserve.

This book, exclusively written by Shri C Badri, Editor-in-Chief of *PreSense*, is a result of years of dedicated research and passion for uncovering the hidden histories of India's freedom fighters. With a deep sense of gratitude, we acknowledge the inspiration and encouragement provided by Shri Dilip Saikiaji, Hon'ble Member of Parliament from Assam. It was on his suggestion that this book was

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conceived, and we are profoundly grateful for his vision in bringing these remarkable stories to light.

The 25 freedom fighters featured in this volume represent diverse communities and regions across the North East, from Manipur to Nagaland, Assam to Meghalaya, each with a story of defiance, struggle, and sacrifice.

These individuals, though often overlooked by mainstream narratives, embody the true spirit of India's fight for independence. Their actions continue to resonate with us today, reminding us of the price of freedom and the enduring spirit of resistance.

Prime Point Foundation takes immense pride in publishing this book. As an organisation that has always stood for the empowerment of India's youth and the promotion of positive journalism, we are committed to ensuring that these stories are not only remembered but celebrated.

This book will be distributed free of cost, as part of our ongoing mission to educate and inspire future generations.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

In this journey of remembering our unsung heroes, we also reaffirm our collective responsibility to honour their legacies. Let their sacrifices continue to inspire us as we uphold the values of justice, dignity, and unity that they so valiantly fought for.

Jai Hind!

Advocate Priyadharshni Rahul
President,
Prime Point Foundation
www.primepointfoundation.in

Freedom Fighters of North East India

Valiant Freedom Fighters of North East India

"I have never been afraid of death. My people have suffered enough. I will continue to fight for my people and their freedom."

-Rani Gaidinliu

Rani Gaidinliu (Manipur)

(Rani Gaidinliu, a Naga spiritual leader, led a revolt against British rule, inspiring rebellion, facing imprisonment, and receiving posthumous recognition for her sacrifices.)



“WE ARE FREE PEOPLE,
THE WHITE MAN SHOULD
NOT RULE

OVER US” proclaimed
the 13-year-old Gaidinliu in
1927. This statement was
issued by Gaidinliu while
giving a clarion call to the
ethnic Nagas of the remote
hills of India’s northeastern
region. During 1937, Pandit
Jawaharlal Nehru met her in
Shillong Jail and gave her

the title “RANI” and thus Gaidinliu became Rani Gaidinliu. She was a Naga spiritual leader who led the revolutionaries to an armed uprising in the Northeast against the British.

India’s glorious history is scripted by historians under the influence of the old imperial school of thought. In the process, sadly many valiant freedom fighters and

Freedom Fighters of North East India

revolutionaries who fought valiantly and incessantly and laid their lives against the British were camouflaged and concealed. Gaidinliu is undoubtedly one of them.

Gaidinliu was born on 26th January 1915 in Luangkao village under Tamenglong District in Manipur. She belonged to the Kabui tribe (also known Rongmei Tribe). Gaidinliu became a revolutionary when she was hardly 13 years old. She joined the “Heraka Movement”, formed by Haipou Jadonang, who happened to be Gaidinliu’s cousin. Jadonang was a spiritual leader of Nagas. Apart from spiritual activities, the Heraka movement was strongly against British rule. Heraka movement got a setback when Jadonang was arrested and hanged after a fake trial in 1931.

After the unexpected passing away of Jadonang, the leadership mantle was taken over by Gaidinliu when she was hardly 16 years old. Gaidinliu preached and followed Gandhian principles and launched an attack against British rule. She gathered Zeliangrong and other Naga tribes to revolt against the British and take recourse to nonpayment of taxes and oppose the other repressive measures taken by the British to contain the revolt. She later resorted to open rebellion by using guerilla warfare in Cachar hills in 1932 and in Hangrum village in March 1932, thus challenging the British. Consequently, the British formed a special team of Assam Rifles to capture Gaidinliu. Capt.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

MacDonald headed the Special Team. In October 1932, Gaidinliu and her associates were captured by the team from their hiding place in Pulomi village. Gaidinliu was charged with murder and attempted murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Jawaharlal Nehru was impressed with Gaidinliu while touring undivided Assam in 1937 in his capacity as the President of the Indian National Congress. He lamented that the rest of the nation was unaware of her sacrifices.

Talking of her imprisonment, Nehru wrote in December 1937:

"She dreamt of freedom for her people and the ending of all restrictions they suffered from; she raised the banner of independence and called her people to rally around it. Perhaps, she thought rather prematurely that the British Empire was fading out. But that Empire still functioned effectively and aggressively, and it took vengeance on her and her people. Many villages were burnt and destroyed, and this heroic girl was captured and sentenced to transportation for life. And now she lies in some prison in Assam, wasting her bright young womanhood in dark cells and solitude."



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In 'Gaidalo Ranee', published in the All India Congress Committee Newsletter (and republished in 1938 in the American periodical The Living Age), Nehru writes:

"India does not even know of this brave child of her hills. A day will come when India will remember her and cherish her and bring her out of her prison cell."

Incidentally, Jawaharlal Nehru met Gaidinliu at Shillong Jail in 1937 and promised to pursue her release. He took up her case with the British Member of Parliament, Lady Astor, for her release from jail, but was not successful. It was during this meeting Jawaharlal Nehru conferred on Gaidinliu the title "Rani". She was finally released from Tura jail in 1947 on his orders after India attained Independence, having spent 14 long years in various prisons in Assam. She continued to work for the welfare and betterment of her people after her release from jail. She died on 17th February 1993. Incidentally, it is quite interesting to note that she was born on January 26 which is celebrated as Republic Day in India.

Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Birth Centenary celebrations of the legendary woman freedom fighter Rani Gaidinliu from North-East India. The Government of India issued a commemorative coin of hundred rupees and a circulation coin of five rupees on Rani Gaidinliu on 24th Aug 2015.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

The Hindustan Times published an article on Gaidinliu and described her as the “Daughter of the Hills”. The State Government has developed a park along with statue to commemorate the valiant freedom fighter Rani Gaidinliu. The Government of India also issued a postal stamp in 1996 to celebrate her.



Gaidinliu was awarded the Tamrapatra in 1972, the prestigious Padma Bhushan in 1982, Vivekananda Sewa Summan in 1983, and the Bhagwan Birsa Munda Puraskar (posthumously) in 1996.

Long live the name and fame of this valiant freedom fighter from the North East.

JAI HIND

Maniram Dewan (Assam)

(Maniram Dewan, a prominent freedom fighter from Assam, led a rebellion during the 1857 uprising to restore the Ahom King's rule, sacrificing his life for independence.)



Maniram Dutta Baruah also known as Maniram Dewan was a freedom fighter from Assam, the North Eastern State of India. He boldly opposed the British during the year 1800s. He was popularly known for his participation in the 1857 uprising against the British. India had

been battered and plundered by the invasion of the Gazinis and Ghoris and thereafter by the British. When India came under the British, they systematically weakened the culture, economy, education, agriculture and civilization of the country. However stiff resistance was shown by the patriotic people of India who opposed the British from time to time. When a freedom fighter was suppressed a new crop of

Freedom Fighters of North East India

freedom fighters emerged and valiantly fought against the British. These freedom fighters were from all parts of the country. However, only a few of them have been recognized and glorified in our history and in our textbooks. Their history and the great contributions made by many who sacrificed their life for the freedom of the country had been overshadowed by historians. They remained as unsung heroes and were not celebrated. Maniram was one such forgotten yet valiant freedom fighter from Assam, the North Eastern part of India.

Maniram's ancestors were from Kannauj (Uttar Pradesh) who migrated to Assam during the sixteenth century. Maniram's ancestors held high positions in the Ahom Court. During the Moamoria Rebellion (1769-1805) the Ahom rule considerably weakened. Thereafter the Burmese invasion of Assam during 1817- 1826 took place and during that time Maniram's family sought asylum in West Bengal which was under the British. During the First Anglo Burmese War held between 1824 to 1826 Maniram's family returned to Assam under the protection of the British. Maniram was born on 17th April 1806 in Charing of Sibsagar District. Maniram in his early days served the British and later recognizing their misrule became a freedom fighter to bring India out of the clutches of the British rule.

Maniram initially was a close and loyal follower of the British. He was then appointed as Tehsildar and

Freedom Fighters of North East India

Sheristadar. In those days a Sheristadar was the Chief administrative officer in Indian courts entrusted with the task of receiving and checking court pleas. In fact, it was Maniram who informed the British regarding the Tea plantation which led to the British establishing Tea gardens in Assam. However, over a period Maniram shifted his loyalty to Ahom King Purandar Singha who was holding a purely formal position without any real authority. He resigned from the posts of Tehsildar and Sheristadar. Maniram slowly got dissatisfied with the attitude of the British towards the people. He totally opposed the draconian tax system imposed on the Assam people, exploitation of the local market conditions and introduction of opium cultivation by the British.

Maniram came to Calcutta in 1852 and made a petition at the Sadar Court in Calcutta with a demand that the Ahom king's administration should be restored. This petition was dismissed by the Court. Thereafter he continued to stay in Calcutta itself and maintained communication with all his friends and others who were anti-British. The Sepoy Mutiny started in May 1857. Maniram seized this opportunity to bring back Ahom King's rule. Maniram started a revolution against British rule with the sepoys who were stationed in various parts of Assam. He planned to launch a rebellion against the British, with support from the sepoys deployed in Assam. He also enlisted the support of various leaders

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who supported his plan for revolution. Thus, Maniram visualised a revolt in August 1857 with an intention to restore the Ahom King Kandarpeswar Singha rule and had planned to liberate Sivsagar and Dibrugarh from the British. He enticed the support of Piyali Barua, a compatriot, in executing the plan. Maniram sent letters to the leaders but unfortunately it got intercepted by the British and they found out the plan. Maniram was taken into custody and lodged in a jail in Jorhat along with his accomplice Piyali Barua. The trial was held on 26th February 1858 and Maniram and Piyali Barua were hanged in Public at Central Jail, Jorhat.

After the hanging of Maniram his tea estates at Cinnamara and Senglung were auctioned and handed over to George Williamson who purchased the same for a throwaway price.



Gun of Maniram Dewan

However, this proved to be a disaster for George

Freedom Fighters of North East India

Williamson as the loyal labourers refused to work under the new owners. Sometime later Cinnamara Tea estate was purchased by a local Tea company and presently taken over by Assam Tea Corporation.

After Maniram's death many folk songs in his memory known as the "Maniram Dewanar Geet", were composed by the local people and popularised amongst the locals. The Trade Centre at Gauhati was named "Maniram Dewan Trade Centre" and the Boys Hostel in Dibrugarh has been named "Maniram Dewan Boys" Hostel.

According to Debo Prasad Barooah, former Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University, Maniram Dewan and Piyali (or Peali) Barua became martyrs to the cause of freedom in Assam. Their sacrifice and also the sacrifice of their compatriots made a deep and lasting impression on the minds of the Assamese people, who remembered with pride these heroes of 1857 at every stage of the freedom struggle.

JAI HIND

Matmur Jamoh (Arunachal Pradesh)

(Matmur Jamoh, a courageous Adi tribe warrior from North East, sought revenge against British oppression, assassinated officials in 1911, faced defeat, was sentenced to life, and died in obscurity.)

Matmur Jamoh was one of the earliest patriotic freedom



fighters from the North East of India who fought against the British. As a punishment, he was sentenced to life imprisonment and was lodged in Kalapani, the Cellular Jail in Andaman Islands. He breathed his last there. He was one of the earliest freedom fighters who received the most severe punishment

for fighting against the British.

Around the year 1826, the North East province of India was annexed as a part of the British East India Company. The

Freedom Fighters of North East India

initial resistance to the British rule triggered somewhere around the year 1828-1830 itself. Simultaneously, the tribal communities belonging to the hilly areas showed resistance by fighting several battles against the British to protect their lands and livelihood from the forest areas. In the process, countless tribals laid their lives and made sacrifices for the common cause of freedom of the tribals.

The resistance and the sacrifices made by the freedom fighters were not well documented by the Historians or others for unknown reasons. Not properly documenting the heroic deeds of the freedom fighters from North East of India led to a perception amongst the people that there was no resistance to the British from the North East region of India. In this article, we bring to the fore some of the untold history of the freedom fighters who fought bravely against the British and sowed the seeds for the freedom movement from North East India. Matmur Jamoh of Arunachal Pradesh is one among such valiant freedom fighters from the North East India who opposed the British but remained largely not celebrated.

Adi tribesmen live in Pasighat which is in Arunachal Pradesh's East Siang district located in the eastern foothills of the Himalayas. Pasighat is one of the oldest towns in the North East of India. The British established Pasighat as a gateway to the greater Abor hills and northern Arunachal Pradesh, sometime in 1911. Matmur Jamoh was a warrior

from the Adi tribe and was also the chief of Kebang. Kebang is a self-governing indigenous mechanism of the Adi Tribe. They also administer the day-to-day affairs of the village.

Matmur Jamoh was born in the later part of 1900 to Matdung Jamoh of Yagrung Village which was in the East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. There is no recorded evidence regarding the name of his mother or the exact date of birth. He grew up and became the Gam of his village. Noel Williamson, the then Assistant Political Officer, serving under the British at Sadiya was taking a tour of the Adi (the then Abor) in 1908 and visited Yagrung. Matmur as Gam of the village received Williamson when he arrived at Yagrung with traditional courtesies.

Matmur presented him with numerous presentations, but Noel Williamson not only refused the presents but also insulted and disgraced Matmur in front of the villagers in public. This incident left a deep scar in his heart, and since then Matmur was determined to take revenge on Williamson. Matmur then started planning to take revenge against the British for intruding into the Adi territory.

He persuaded some of the capable tribal warriors like Lotiang Taloh and Popiom Jamoh from Yagrung village, Lomlo Darang, and Bapak Jerang from Kebang and Lunrung Tamuk from Panggi village to revolt against the British.

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In the meantime, the British used the tribals as labourers and coolies to transport their goods without paying any money and thus exploited them. The tribals were made to do menial jobs also. The British tried to show that they were superior to the Adi people and thus insulted them. In March 1911, Noel Williamson along with Dr. J.D. Gregorson and 44 others visited Adi Hills. During that time Matmur along with his accomplices also hatched a plan to assassinate them. They secretly planned and enticed the support of some people from the Rottung and Kebang villages.

On 31st March 1911, Matmur along with his friends Namu Nonang and Lunrung Tamuk killed Williamson and his contingent of coolies. His other acquaintances from Kebang killed Dr. Gregorson and his coolies at the bank of the Sissen River.

Consequently, the British Government sent an army to the Adi Hills to counter Matmur and his accomplices and to capture them. Several battles took place between the two sides viz. between the people of Adi Hills and the British army. Adis ultimately lost the war to the British. By December 1911, after the battle at Kekar Monying and Kebang, Matmur keeping in mind the welfare and safety of his people surrendered to the British. The British Military Court tried him for treachery.

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On 2 April 1912, Matmur was convicted and sentenced to life. He was then shifted to Cellular Jail in Andaman. Details about Matmur's death had not been recorded anywhere in the Cellular Jail records. Matmur, a great brave freedom fighter from the North East, thus died in obscurity.

Long live the name and fame of Matmur Jamoh.

JAI HIND

Helen Lepcha (a) Sabitri Devi (Sikkim)

(Helen Lepcha, a Sikkimese freedom fighter, aided Gandhi's movements, helped Subhas Chandra Bose escape, and contributed to social causes.)

The Indian independence struggle lasted a little over a



century. The heroic sacrifices and courage exhibited during the freedom struggle of India, and it is regrettable that the details of the numerous people who aided one another in the revolution have not been properly documented in Indian History and therefore largely unknown to the people. From Velu Nachiyar, Kuyili, Jhansi Rani Lakshmi

Bai to Madam Bhikhaji Cama, there have been a long history of hundreds of women freedom fighters in India who involved themselves in the independence movement and

have made significant contributions to the country's independence struggle.

This article is of one such brave unsung women freedom fighter, Helen Lepcha (also popularly known as Sabitri Devi) from the hill regions of Sikkim who marched alongside Mahatma Gandhi in the Non-Cooperation movement and helped Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to escape from his house confinement. India has a long history of brave women who have fought for the Indian independence. The struggle for Indian independence lasted over a century. According to Bipin Chandra: "It was a movement that inspired millions of people from all social groups and beliefs to take political action and brought a powerful colonial empire to its knees."

Helen Lepcha hailed from the indigenous Lepcha community, scattered across Sikkim, the Darjeeling Hills, Bhutan, and Nepal's Ilam District. Born on January 14, 1902, to Mr. and Mrs. Achung Lepcha in Sangmu Village, South Sikkim, she was the third of seven children. Her family moved to Kurseong when she was a child, seeking better opportunities in the princely State of Sikkim.

Having dropped out of school, Helen joined the Charkha and Khaddar movements in 1917 inspired by a speech delivered by a Bengali gentleman in Calcutta. Later under

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's granddaughter's guidance she learned the art of spinning and represented Calcutta at the Khadi and Charkha Exhibition in Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

Her selflessness became evident in 1920 when Bihar faced devastating floods. Helen selflessly helped the flood-ravaged people and toured the famine-stricken areas with determination. Helen actively participated in relief efforts and assisted the flood-ravaged people. At that time, she had to meet Mahatma Gandhi, who invited her to Sabarmati Ashram and renamed her Sabitri Devi. She became a leader in the Congress Labour Union, working in parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Joining Gandhi in the Non-cooperation Movement in 1921, Helen led a procession of over 10,000 mine workers in Jharia, protesting tribal labour exploitation. Her popularity drew the British authorities' attention, leading to an arrest warrant. Evading arrest, she lived in hiding at Nehru's residence in Allahabad.

The movement reached the Darjeeling hills, where Helen initiated a door-to-door campaign against foreign goods. Despite a police-imposed curfew, she continued, leading to her arrest on January 29, 1922. After three months in Darjeeling Sadar Jail and three years of house arrest in Kurseong, she became known as Helen Didi.

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In 1932, Helen was elected the first woman commissioner of Kurseong Municipality. During Netaji Subash Chandra Bose's house confinement in Kurseong in 1939-40, she played a crucial role in his escape to Calcutta and eventually to Germany. Helen actively participated in the Quit India Movement in 1942, and later focused on social activism, chairing various associations in Kurseong.

Recognizing her contributions, Helen received the Tamra Patra and a pension for freedom fighters on August 15, 1972, from the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Sikkim honoured her with the title 'Daughter of the Soil'. Despite her mass popularity, she led a simple Gandhian life until she breathed her last on 18th August 1980.

To commemorate Helen Lepcha under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the Culture Department in collaboration with the Directorate of Handlooms & Handicrafts, Government of Sikkim, organized a 5-day workshop on Lepcha Hat Weaving from 14/02/2022 to 18/02/2022. The programme was organized to make the public, especially the youth aware of our ancient traditions and culture. The programme was held at Dzongu, North Sikkim. Despite her humble roots Helen Lepcha's great struggles and sacrifices unfortunately remain largely undocumented in the pages of Indian history. JAI HIND

U Kiang Nangbah (Meghalaya)

(U Kiang Nangbah's 1862 revolt against British oppression, prophesying India's freedom, symbolizes unsung heroes' crucial role in independence.)

“Brothers and Sisters, please look carefully on my face when I die on the gallows. If my face turns towards the east, my country will be free from foreign yoke in the next 100 years and if it turns west, it will be a bondage for good.”



These are the last words of U Kiang Nangbah while he was escorted to the gallows for staging a revolt against the British on the evening of December 30, 1862.

U Kiang Nangbah was born in 1835 to Ka Rimai Nangbah in Tpeppale, Jowai - his father's name and date of birth are not known as it was not properly documented. Jowai was the headquarters of the West Jaintia Hills district in the State of Meghalaya. It is

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home to the Pnar, a sub-tribe of the Khasi people. U Kiang Nangbah emerged as a pivotal figure in the resistance against the British annexation of the Jaintia Kingdom in 1835. He did not get any formal education. He was brought up by his mother as a single child. Being a single child, he was influenced by his mother's patriotism and love for the country. She often explained the dangers of the British occupation and that they would make them slaves. This had a long-lasting effect on U Kiang Nangbah. Despite lacking royal lineage,

U Kiang Nangbah, a common farmer from the Sookpoh clan, was deeply disturbed by British highhandedness. He was greatly inspired by the patriotism and the daring life story of his maternal uncle U Ksan Sajar Nangbah who revolted against the British at Chanmyrsiang.

Ram Singh was ruling the Khasi and Jaintia tribes and kingdoms. Raja Rajendra Singh, who succeeded his uncle Ram Singh, faced a significant challenge when the British demanded he sign a treaty agreeing to pay a tribute of Rs.10,000/-. Refusing to comply with what he considered an unreasonable demand, Rajendra Singh found himself in a precarious situation. In March 1835, Captain Lister issued a sudden proclamation, resulting in the annexation of the Jaintia Hills territory by the British. This annexation

meant that all cultivatable land came under British control, leaving only the less profitable hilly region for Rajendra Singh.

Realizing the financial impracticality of this arrangement, the king voluntarily surrendered the hills to the British. In the aftermath, Rajendra Singh chose to relocate to Sylhet (presently in Bangladesh), where he received a monthly pension of Rs.500/- from the British authorities.

The British during 1860 levied house tax on the people living in Jaintia. This was a new rule imposed by the British and the people were not accustomed to paying tax on their houses which they owned. They were offering only a goat and a small quantity of rice annually to their king and nothing more. The imposition of house tax came as a rude shock to them. Initially, the British adopted a non-interference policy, but tensions rose when they imposed taxes and interfered with customs and religious practices. U Kiang Nangbah vehemently opposed these actions, notably the House Tax in 1860 in Jaintia Hills.

A police station was established in Jwai in 1855 to check on the Jaintia people. It was established near the cremation ground of the Dhakar clan which was resented as they felt offended by the action of the British. Further, the establishment of a missionary school aggravated the

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feelings of the Jaintia Hill people. Thus, the anti-British movement started when the British tried to impose additional taxes and intrude into religious activities and their customs. However, the British undeterred imposed additional taxes and asserted their authority, exacerbating the discontent among the Jaintia people.

The catalyst for resistance was the confiscation and burning of weapons during the traditional dance at Yalong, further demonstrating British religious intolerance and indulgence. This incident fuelled a mass movement, culminating in a Dorbar of the twelve Dalois, where U Kiang Nangbah emerged as a unanimous leader. Under U Kiang Nangbah's leadership, barricades were erected, weapons were manufactured, and attacks were launched on British establishments.

The rebellion spread across Jaintia Hills, prompting the British to deploy more regiments for a full-scale military operation. Despite falling ill, U Kiang Nangbah continued to resist until his capture on December 27, 1862, due to a betrayal by U Long Sutnga. He faced a mock trial and was swiftly sentenced to death, highlighting the British resolve to crush resistance.

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As U Kiang Nangbah faced the gallows on December 30, 1862, he uttered a prophetic statement. He declared that if his face turned east upon his death, the country would be free from foreign yoke in the next 100 years; if west, it would remain in bondage. U Kiang Nangbah's execution did not deter the eventual independence of India within a century. His struggle mirrored that of indigenous peoples worldwide against the imposition of foreign values.

The anti-British revolutionary spirit that permeated through many of our freedom fighters played a pivotal role in the eventual attainment of our country's independence. Their bold and open resistance against British rule left an indelible mark on the history of our nation.

Despite their significant contributions, the stories of these unsung heroes often remain in the shadows, and we must acknowledge and celebrate their heroic deeds. Regrettably, the narratives of these brave individuals have not received the attention they deserve, and there exists a gap in our collective understanding of the sacrifices and struggles endured by these freedom fighters. To truly honour our history and the quest for independence, it is incumbent upon us to actively seek out and disseminate these lesser-known stories.

By bringing these tales to light, we not only pay homage to the courage and determination of those who fought for our

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freedom but also ensure that future generations are aware of the diverse and inspiring narratives that constitute our national history. Failing to recognize and appreciate the contributions of these unsung heroes would be a disservice to their memory and a missed opportunity to instil a profound sense of pride and gratitude in the hearts of all citizens.

JAI HIND

(January 2024 edition of PreSense)

Ambikagiri Raichoudhury (Assam)

(Ambikagiri Raichoudhury, an influential Assamese poet and freedom fighter, used literature and activism to resist British colonialism and advocate for Assamese culture, justice, and independence.)

Ambikagiri Raichoudhury stands as one of Assam's most



revered sons, a beacon of resistance against British colonial rule in India. Known for his fiery patriotism, literary prowess, and relentless advocacy for the rights of his people, Raichoudhury's life and legacy stretch far beyond the boundaries of Assam, resonating across the vast narrative of India's struggle for independence. To understand the journey

of this freedom fighter is to delve into the heart of Assam's awakening and the broader Indian nationalist movement.

Born on December 18, 1885, in Barpeta, a culturally vibrant town in Assam, Ambikagiri Raichoudhury was shaped by the rich traditions of his homeland and the simmering discontent against colonial subjugation. Raised in a family that valued education and cultural heritage, young Ambikagiri was exposed to traditional Assamese literature and music, which became a lifelong passion and a tool in his fight for India's freedom.

His early education at Barpeta and later at Guwahati brought him in contact with like-minded individuals and the nascent nationalist ideas circulating in British-ruled India. He was deeply inspired by the writings of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and the revolutionary fervour sweeping Bengal, as well as by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, who advocated for nonviolent resistance.

Ambikagiri Raichoudhury's role as a freedom fighter was intricately connected to his identity as a poet, lyricist, and dramatist. He used his pen as a weapon, composing stirring verses that awakened the Assamese populace to the injustices of British rule and the urgent need for self-determination. His poetry, essays, and songs became rallying cries for unity and resistance.

Among his most influential literary contributions was the establishment of the monthly magazine *Assam Bandhu* in 1909, a platform that provided space for nationalist discourse, cultural revival, and critiques of colonial policies. Through his writings, Raichoudhury sought to inspire pride in Assamese identity and mobilise support for the freedom movement. His poetic works, such as “Tumi Dangor Nohou,” “Mukuta,” and collections like *Deka Asomiya*, combined patriotism with lyrical beauty, reinforcing the idea that literature could be a catalyst for revolution.

Ambikagiri Raichoudhury’s activism reached its zenith during the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements of the 1920s and 1930s. He was at the forefront of protests against British policies that marginalised Assamese culture, language, and economy. As an ardent Gandhian, he advocated for *swadeshi*, promoting indigenous industries and boycotting British goods as a form of economic resistance.

His commitment to the cause saw him arrested multiple times. In 1921, during the height of the Non-Cooperation Movement, Raichoudhury was imprisoned for his seditious writings and activities. Unfazed by adversity, he used his time in jail to compose songs and poems that galvanised his fellow prisoners and inspired a new generation of freedom fighters. His leadership extended to organising grassroots movements in rural Assam, mobilising

peasants, students, and intellectuals alike in the fight for justice.

Raichoudhury's patriotism was inseparable from his advocacy for the Assamese people's cultural and economic rights. He was a staunch defender of the Assamese language and worked tirelessly to preserve and promote it as a symbol of regional pride. Alarmed by the cultural erosion caused by colonial policies and the influx of migrants threatening Assamese identity, he championed the cause of indigenous rights and regional autonomy.

As president of the Asam Sahitya Sabha in 1950, he was instrumental in shaping literary and linguistic policies that upheld Assamese culture. He also played a vital role in establishing educational institutions, libraries, and organisations dedicated to the upliftment of Assam's youth.

Beyond nationalism, Raichoudhury was a social reformer. He advocated for the abolition of entrenched social evils and worked to eradicate caste discrimination, promote women's education, and improve the lives of the marginalised. His vision of freedom encompassed not just political independence but also social justice and human dignity.

Ambikagiri Raichoudhury's opposition to British rule was multidimensional. He condemned exploitative economic policies that impoverished Assam and stripped it of natural

resources. He criticised administrative measures that sidelined Assamese participation in governance. Through his impassioned speeches, articles, and activism, he demanded self-rule, equitable development, and respect for indigenous culture.

The colonial authorities viewed Raichoudhury as a persistent threat. Surveillance, censorship, and repeated incarcerations marked his life. Yet, the attempts to silence him only strengthened his resolve. His fearless dissent inspired countless others to join the freedom struggle, making him a central figure in Assam's resistance to imperial domination.

Ambikagiri Raichoudhury passed away on January 2, 1967, but his spirit endures in Assam's cultural and political consciousness. He is remembered as the "Bard of Assam," whose poems and songs remain on the lips of generation after generation. His life's work laid the foundation for the assertion of Assamese identity and the ongoing quest for social and cultural justice.

Institutions, awards, and celebrations in his name—such as the Ambikagiri Raichoudhury Award for literary excellence—testify to his lasting impact. His writings are studied in schools, his songs sung at gatherings, and his example invoked whenever the rights of the Assamese people are at stake.

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Ambikagiri Raichoudhury's life was a symphony of courage, creativity, and unwavering devotion to justice. As a poet, patriot, and reformer, he not only opposed the British in India but also envisioned a society built on equality, dignity, and pride in one's heritage. His story reminds us that the struggle for freedom is both a collective endeavour and a deeply personal journey, etched in the heartbeats of those who dare to dream of a better tomorrow. In celebrating Ambikagiri Raichoudhury, we honour not just a freedom fighter from Assam but a universal champion of the human spirit and resilience.

JAI HIND

Kanaklata Barua (Assam)

(Kanaklata Barua, a young freedom fighter from Assam, led a flag-hoisting procession during the Quit India Movement, sacrificing her life for India's independence.)



In the wide and turbulent landscape of India's struggle for independence, countless stories of courage and self-sacrifice stand as shining beacons across the country. Among these, the name Kanaklata Barua glows with a rare intensity—a young woman from Assam whose defiant spirit and ultimate sacrifice during the Quit India Movement continue to inspire generations. Her story is one of unflinching patriotism, youthful zeal, and a legacy that endures in the heart of Assam and the soul of the nation.

Kanaklata Barua was born on December 22, 1924, in the quiet hamlet of Barangabari village, located in the undivided Darrang district of Assam (present-day Sonitpur district). Her father, Shiva Barua, was a farmer, and her mother, Karneshwari Barua, was a homemaker. The family, though not wealthy, was well-respected in the community for its

uprightness and devotion to the Assamese culture and traditions.

Tragedy struck early in Kanaklata's life. She lost her mother when she was only five years old, and her father passed away not long after, leaving her and her younger siblings as orphans. Despite these hardships, Kanaklata displayed remarkable resilience and maturity. She assumed the role of caretaker for her siblings, all the while nurturing a keen awareness of the world around her, especially the growing anti-British sentiment in Assam and across India.

The early 1940s were a time of great upheaval and awakening in India. The call for independence from British rule had reached a crescendo, culminating in Mahatma Gandhi's Quit India Movement in 1942. Assam, with its unique cultural diversity and strong sense of identity, was touched by the waves of nationalism sweeping the country.

Kanaklata, though barely out of her teens, was deeply influenced by the stories of freedom fighters she heard from elders and local leaders. The injustices perpetrated by the British colonial administration, including the exploitation of Assam's tea gardens, resources, and the suppression of local culture, ignited a passion within her to join the cause for freedom.

With unwavering determination, she joined the Mrityu Bahini, or "Death Squad"—a group of young volunteers

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ready to face even the threat of death for the nation's liberation. Her youth did not deter her; instead, it made her the embodiment of the vibrant, indomitable hope that pulsed through the ranks of the Indian freedom movement.

The Quit India Movement, launched by the Indian National Congress in August 1942, called for the British to leave India at once. In Assam, the movement rapidly gained momentum, with protests, strikes, and acts of civil disobedience organised across towns and villages.

On September 20, 1942, the people of Gohpur where Kanaklata had been actively participating in the freedom struggle organised a procession to hoist the Indian national flag at the local police station. The act was both symbolic and revolutionary; it was a direct challenge to British authority, a declaration that the people of Assam considered themselves free in spirit and action.

Kanaklata, then only 17 years old, was chosen to lead the procession, a testament to her courage and leadership among her peers. Walking at the head of a group of unarmed volunteers, she carried the Tricolour with pride. As the procession approached the heavily guarded police station, the British authorities, fearing an uprising, ordered the group to disperse. When the volunteers refused and continued their forward march, the police opened fire.

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Kanaklata Barua fell to the bullets, still clutching the flag, a martyr in the truest sense. Her sacrifice electrified the local movement and became a rallying cry for the people of Assam.

Kanaklata's martyrdom left an indelible mark on the history of Assam and the Indian independence movement. Her story is not just one of tragic loss but of triumphant spirit—a reminder that the quest for freedom often comes at a heavy price but is worth every sacrifice.

Today, Kanaklata Barua's name is revered not only in Assam but across India. Monuments in her honour stand in Gohpur and other parts of the State. The Indian Coast Guard named a patrol vessel "ICGS Kanaklata Barua" in recognition of her bravery. Her life and sacrifice are taught in Assamese schools, and numerous cultural works—poems, songs, and plays—celebrate her heroism.

What sets Kanaklata apart is her extraordinary courage at such a young age. She became a symbol of the participation and leadership of women and youth in the freedom struggle. Her life is a testament to the idea that patriotism knows no age, gender, or social standing—it is a fire that can be kindled in the heart of anyone who loves their country.

The story of Kanaklata Barua serves as an enduring inspiration for those who dare to dream of a just and free

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society. In a world where the meaning of freedom is constantly being redefined, her sacrifice urges us to remember that liberty is both a privilege and a responsibility. Whether in the classrooms of Assam, the corridors of power, or the hearts of ordinary people, Kanaklata's legacy lives on—a young girl who defied a powerful empire and laid down her life for India's tryst with destiny.

JAI HIND

Piyoli Phukan (Assam)

(Piyoli Phukan, a key figure in Assam's resistance, led a revolt against British rule in 1830, inspiring future generations with his courage and sacrifice)



When the British East India Company set its sights on the scenic land of Assam, it faced not only the challenge of unfamiliar terrain but also the indomitable spirit of its people. Among the earliest and most revered heroes to rise against British oppression was Piyoli Phukan or, as history fondly remembers him, Piyoli Phukan, the Lion of Assam. His life story, interwoven with Assam's broader struggle for

independence, stands as a testament to courage, sacrifice, and an unyielding love for his homeland.

Piyoli Phukan was born in the late 18th century, into the prestigious Phukan family at Jorhat, a city steeped in the traditions of the Ahom dynasty. The Ahom rulers had reigned over Assam for nearly six centuries, fostering a vibrant culture and relatively peaceful existence. Piyoli

inherited a legacy of leadership and patriotism. His father, Sarbananda Phukan, was a prominent noble within the Ahom court, which influenced young Piyoli's worldview and instilled in him a deep sense of duty towards his people.

The British intrusion into Assam began in earnest after their victory over the Burmese in 1826, following the Treaty of Yandabo. The once-sovereign land of the Ahoms came under British suzerainty, and the traditional institutions that sustained Assamese society began to erode. Piyoli Phukan, witnessing the systematic dismantling of his homeland's identity, could not remain a silent spectator.

Piyoli Phukan's opposition to British rule was not merely an emotional reaction but a carefully considered movement. He recognised the dangers posed by the colonial rulers, their exploitative policies, disregard for Assamese customs, and attempts to undermine the region's aristocracy. As the British tightened their grip, extracting revenue and imposing foreign administrative practices, resentment grew among the people and nobility alike.

In this atmosphere of disquiet, Piyoli Phukan emerged as a figure of resistance. He began secretly mobilising disaffected nobles and commoners, forging alliances among those who wished to restore Assam's sovereignty. His charisma, strategic mind, and unwavering commitment to freedom quickly earned him support.

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The year 1830 marked a significant turning point. A conspiracy was hatched among Assamese nobles to overthrow the British authorities and restore native rule. Piyoli Phukan played a central role, meeting with other key figures in clandestine gatherings to plan the revolt. Their aim was clear: to expel the British, reestablish the Ahom monarchy, and preserve the unique culture of Assam.

However, the British intelligence apparatus, by then firmly established, caught wind of the plot. Several conspirators were apprehended. Undeterred, Piyoli Phukan continued his efforts, even as the circle of trust grew narrower and danger loomed ever closer.

In 1830, Piyoli Phukan, along with several others, was arrested by the British. Accused of sedition and conspiring against the Crown, he was subjected to a trial that was more a demonstration of imperial might than a pursuit of justice. Despite the threat of execution, Piyoli Phukan refused to betray his comrades or renounce his ideals. His steadfastness in the face of adversity inspired those around him, and news of his courage spread through the valleys and hills of Assam.

Piyoli Phukan was sentenced to death, and he faced his execution with fearless dignity. His martyrdom in 1830 left a deep imprint on the Assamese psyche. He became a symbol of resistance, remembered in folk songs and stories

as the first martyr from Assam to lay down his life in the fight against British colonial rule.

His selfless sacrifice ignited the flames of nationalism, inspiring generations of Assamese to continue the struggle for independence. The name of Piyoli Phukan would echo through the decades, serving as a rallying cry for those who dreamed of a free and vibrant Assam.

Assam's unique cultural diversity and history of valour forged a freedom movement marked by inclusivity and resilience. From the hills of Karbi Anglong to the riverine plains of the Brahmaputra, the stories of sacrifice and struggle continue to inspire today.

The saga of Piyoli Phukan and his fellow freedom fighters is not just a chapter in Assam's history books—it is a living tradition, celebrated in poetry, music, and annual commemorations. Their struggle reminds us that freedom is neither easily won nor cheaply kept, but is a legacy built on the sacrifices of those who refuse to bow to injustice.

As contemporary Assam moves forward, it draws strength from this proud heritage. The courage of Piyoli Phukan and the other heroes of Assam remains ever relevant beacon of hope, unity, and unyielding resolve for generations to come.

Gomdhar Konwar (Assam)

(Gomdhar Konwar, an early freedom fighter from Assam, led an armed revolt in 1828 against British rule, symbolising Assamese resistance and the struggle for self-determination.)



When one retraces the footsteps of India's freedom movement, the tapestry is rich and diverse, interwoven with the stories of countless individuals whose courage and vision ignited the spark of resistance across the

subcontinent. Among these early torchbearers, the name Gomdhar Konwar shines as a symbol of Assam's indomitable will to resist foreign rule long before the major uprisings that shaped modern Indian history. Gomdhar Konwar's valour and sacrifice placed him among the earliest freedom fighters of Assam, and his story remains an important, though often overlooked, chapter in India's journey towards independence.

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The early nineteenth century marked a period of great turbulence in Assam. The region, renowned for its lush landscapes and the mighty Brahmaputra River, was ruled by the Ahom dynasty a lineage that had governed Assam for nearly six centuries. However, by the early 1800s, the Ahom kingdom was in decline, weakened by internal strife and external invasions. The Burmese invasions of Assam, known as the "Burmese Years," were particularly brutal and left the land devastated.

In the aftermath of the Burmese invasions, Assam was ceded to the British East India Company as per the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826. The British, eager to consolidate their hold over the region, began implementing new administrative measures, often disregarding the local sentiments and traditional rights of the Assamese people. The transition from the relatively autonomous rule of the Ahoms to the foreign, extractive administration of the British led to widespread discontent. It was amidst this climate of unrest and uncertainty that Gomdhar Konwar emerged as a figure of resistance.

Gomdhar Konwar hailed from the noble Ahom lineage, his family intimately linked with Assam's royal heritage. He was born into an era when the identity, pride, and power of the Assamese people were under threat. As the British began to dismantle the traditional structures of governance,

Gomdhar Konwar witnessed firsthand the erosion of his people's freedoms and the subjugation of their culture.

The British administration's policies, which included the imposition of new taxes, the displacement of local chieftains, and the disregard for established customs, fanned the flames of resentment. For Gomdhar Konwar and many like him, these actions were not just administrative changes but existential threats to the Assamese way of life.

Inspired by a sense of duty to his people and the legacy of the Ahom dynasty, Gomdhar Konwar decided to stand up to British rule. In 1828, barely two years after the British had taken control, Konwar organised one of the earliest known acts of armed resistance in Assam. He, along with a group of loyal followers, sought to restore Ahom sovereignty and challenge the legitimacy of the foreign rulers.

Choosing Jorhat, the former capital of the Ahom kingdom, as the rallying point, Gomdhar Konwar and his compatriots plotted an uprising. The plan was ambitious: to revive the Ahom monarchy and oust the colonial administrators. Accounts suggest that Gomdhar Konwar was even symbolically crowned as the king in a traditional ceremony, seeking to legitimise the rebellion in the eyes of the people.

The rebels, however, faced a formidable adversary. The British, with their superior military organisation and intelligence network, quickly became aware of the brewing

revolt. The authorities responded with swift and decisive action, deploying troops to suppress the insurgency.

The revolt led by Gomdhar Konwar was ultimately unsuccessful in its immediate aim. The British forces managed to quell the uprising; Konwar, along with several of his supporters, was captured. He was brought before a colonial court and, despite the courage and conviction he displayed, sentenced to imprisonment. The British, wary of further unrest, dealt harshly with the rebels to serve as a warning to others who might challenge their rule.

Though the rebellion failed to restore the Ahom dynasty or drive out the colonisers, its significance lies in the fact that it represented one of the earliest organised expressions of resistance to British imperialism in Assam. Gomdhar Konwar, through his bold actions, became the embodiment of Assamese pride and the unbroken spirit of resistance that would, in the decades to come, fuel larger and more widespread movements for freedom.

Today, Gomdhar Konwar stands as a symbol of courage and conviction in the annals of Assam's history. His rebellion, though small in scale compared to the later national movements, set a precedent for defiance against injustice and foreign oppression. In a land renowned for its unique culture and language, Konwar's actions reaffirmed the importance of self-determination and the necessity of standing up against tyranny.

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For modern India, remembering figures like Gomdhar Konwar is not merely an act of paying tribute; it is a reminder that the struggle for freedom was fought on many fronts, by countless individuals whose names may not always feature in the national mainstream but whose contributions were vital in shaping the destiny of their people.

Gomdhar Konwar's story is woven into the larger narrative of India's freedom struggle, a testament to how resistance can begin with one determined soul and inspire generations to come. His legacy survives in the collective memory of Assam, honoured in local histories and commemorated by those who refuse to let the sacrifices of their ancestors fade into obscurity.

As we celebrate the progress of our nation and the freedoms we now enjoy, it is vital to look back at the stories of pioneers like Gomdhar Konwar. Their courage in the face of overwhelming odds continues to inspire, reminding us that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance and that every act of resistance, no matter how early or isolated, is a precious thread in the fabric of freedom.

Gopinath Bordoloi (Assam)

(Gopinath Bordoloi was a freedom fighter and a key leader from Assam. He was uncompromising in his commitment to freedom, and democracy. He championed preservation of Assam's unique identity and boldly defied British rule).



Gopinath Bordoloi's name resonates deeply in the heart of Assam and throughout India as a symbol of unwavering commitment to freedom, democracy, and the preservation of Assam's unique identity. A key leader who defied British colonial rule and later helped shape a free India, Bordoloi's legacy is

woven into the very fabric of Assamese and Indian history. His efforts to protect Assam from external threats, uphold the rights of its people, and foster a spirit of unity and justice continue to inspire generations.

Born on June 6, 1890, in Raha, Nagaon district of Assam, Gopinath Bordoloi came from a middle-class family. His

father, Budheswar Bordoloi, was a medical practitioner, and his mother, Praneswari Devi, provided a nurturing home environment. Bordoloi's early life was marked by modesty and discipline, qualities that would later define his political career. He pursued his initial education in Nagaon and then moved to Kolkata (now known as Calcutta) to attend Presidency College, where he earned his undergraduate degree. Later, he completed his law degree from the University of Calcutta.

This academic grounding not only broadened his horizons but also exposed him to the intellectual ferment and spirit of nationalism that was sweeping across India.

Gopinath Bordoloi's journey into the political arena began in the early 1920s. He was deeply influenced by the teachings and methods of Mahatma Gandhi, especially the ideals of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience.

Bordoloi joined the Indian National Congress and became actively involved in the Non-Cooperation Movement of the early 1920s, urging his fellow Assamese to boycott British institutions and goods.

His leadership and principled approach quickly won him respect among the masses. As a practising lawyer, Bordoloi utilised his legal acumen to advocate for the underprivileged and challenge the unjust policies of the colonial government.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

Bordoloi's opposition to British rule was steadfast and courageous. He played a pivotal role in organising protests, mobilising public opinion, and encouraging civil disobedience throughout Assam.

He was particularly known for his advocacy of peace and communal harmony at a time when divisive forces threatened to tear apart the social fabric.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-1934), Bordoloi led several demonstrations and was imprisoned multiple times by the British authorities for his participation in anti-colonial protests. Despite facing incarceration and repression, he remained resolute in his belief in nonviolence and constitutional methods.

One of the most significant aspects of Gopinath Bordoloi's political life was his tireless work to protect Assam's territorial and cultural integrity. In the late 1940s, as India approached independence, Assam's future was thrown into uncertainty.

The Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 proposed grouping Assam with Bengal, which many feared would undermine Assam's autonomy and threaten its demographic and cultural identity.

Bordoloi emerged as the foremost voice opposing this plan. He mobilised people across Assam, organised mass protests, and presented the matter to the Constituent

Assembly. His diplomatic skills and steadfast resistance ultimately ensured that Assam retained its distinct status and was not merged with Bengal. This singular achievement is credited with preserving Assam's ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity and safeguarding the rights of its people.

With the dawn of independence in 1947, Gopinath Bordoloi became the first Chief Minister of Assam. In this role, he continued his commitment to the welfare of his people. Bordoloi's tenure as Chief Minister was marked by several progressive reforms, including land reforms, educational development, and policies aimed at protecting the rights of indigenous communities.

He worked assiduously to rehabilitate refugees who had fled to Assam from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) during the tumultuous period of Partition. Bordoloi's inclusive vision and emphasis on communal harmony helped Assam navigate the challenges of post-independence transformation.

A deeply secular leader, Bordoloi was committed to maintaining peace among Assam's diverse communities. His leadership during times of communal tension was instrumental in preventing violence and fostering an atmosphere of trust. His governance was driven by the principles of justice, equality, and respect for all communities, regardless of religion or ethnicity.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

Gopinath Bordoloi's contributions were not limited to his lifetime. His vision and ideals continue to shape Assam and India's democratic ethos. For his extraordinary service to the nation, Bordoloi was posthumously honoured with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, in 1999. He remains the only person from Northeast India to have received this honour.

Institutions such as the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati and the Gopinath Bordoloi Institute of Mental Health stand as living tributes to his enduring legacy. Throughout Assam and India, his birth and death anniversaries are commemorated by leaders, students, and citizens who remember his sacrifices and contributions.

Gopinath Bordoloi's life is a testament to the power of principled leadership, sacrifice, and a deep love for one's land and people. He not only played a crucial role in opposing British colonial rule but also laid the foundations for modern Assam.

His efforts to defend Assam's autonomy, promote social justice, and foster unity among diverse communities place him among the giants of India's freedom struggle.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

As Assam and India continue to move forward, the ideals exemplified by Gopinath Bordoloi—of service, nonviolence, and unwavering commitment to justice—remain more relevant than ever. His story urges us to remember that the true freedom of a people is not just the absence of foreign rule, but the presence of justice, harmony, and opportunity for all.

JAI HIND

Mangri Orang (Assam)

(Mangri Orang, a courageous freedom fighter from Assam, led resistance against British rule, mobilised women, and fought for indigenous rights, inspiring generations with her determination.)



India's freedom movement was shaped by a mosaic of voices—some thunderous, some quiet, but all resolute in their desire for liberty. While the deeds of many celebrated leaders echo in history books, countless stories of

unsung heroes remain in the shadows. Among these is the inspiring tale of Smt Mangri Orang, a fierce female freedom fighter from Assam, whose courage and sacrifice stand as a testament to the indomitable spirit of India's daughters. In a time when the might of the British Empire seemed unassailable, Mangri Orang's valour became a symbol of resistance, especially for the marginalised communities she hailed from.

Mangri Orang was born in the early 20th century into the Orang community in Assam, a region rich in ethnic diversity

and cultural heritage. The Orang, one of the many indigenous tribes of Assam, had historically endured social exclusion and economic hardship. Despite the challenges posed by her socio-economic background, Mangri grew up imbued with a strong sense of justice and a deep love for her land and people.

From an early age, Mangri Orang witnessed the exploitation of her community under the colonial revenue system, forced labour, and loss of traditional rights. The British administration's policies often exacerbated the hardships of indigenous communities, leading to widespread resentment. In this crucible of suffering and resistance, Mangri's resolve to fight injustice was forged.

The winds of change began to sweep through Assam as the freedom movement gathered momentum across India. Influential leaders visited the Northeast to support and integrate the region into the national struggle. For marginalised communities like the Orangs, the idea of freedom was not just political, it was intimately linked to dignity, equality, and the right to self-determination.

Mangri Orang's awakening to the cause was gradual but profound. Inspired by the stories of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and local Assamese activists, she became involved in grassroots organising. She encouraged her fellow villagers to participate in protests, to challenge exploitative practices, and to refuse cooperation with colonial

authorities. Her courage was infectious, inspiring women long relegated to the domestic sphere to step out and claim their place in the movement.

The Civil Disobedience Movement of the 1930s marked a significant turning point in Assam's participation in the freedom struggle. The call for 'Swaraj' (self-rule) resonated deeply with Mangri Orang. She played a key role in mobilising the tea garden workers and tribal communities, many of whom were subjected to harsh working conditions and denied basic rights under British rule.

Mangri led protests demanding an end to unfair taxes and the restoration of land rights to the indigenous people. These demonstrations were often met with severe repression; colonial authorities used force to quell dissent, and leaders were frequently arrested or harassed. Undeterred, Mangri Orang continued her efforts, organising secret meetings, distributing pamphlets, and acting as a conduit between local leaders and the broader national movement.

A defining feature of her activism was her insistence on the inclusion of women in the struggle. She challenged social taboos and patriarchal norms, urging women to participate in marches, picketing, and boycott campaigns. Her efforts helped lay the groundwork for greater gender equality within the Assamese independence movement.

Mangri Orang's opposition to the British was marked by a boldness that belied her humble origins. On many occasions, she stood at the forefront of processions, facing down armed police and colonial officials with nothing but her conviction as her shield. Her leadership was not limited to public demonstrations; she also provided sanctuary to activists on the run, risking her safety and that of her family.

One of the most notable episodes in her life was her role during the Quit India Movement of 1942. The movement, launched by Mahatma Gandhi, called for an immediate end to British rule. Throughout Assam, protests erupted, and Mangri Orang became a central figure in mobilising villagers, especially women, to defy colonial orders and sabotage British interests.

Her involvement did not go unnoticed. The colonial authorities, threatened by her influence, sought to suppress her activities. She was arrested on more than one occasion, enduring imprisonment and harsh treatment. Yet, Mangri remained steadfast, refusing to betray her comrades or abandon the cause.

The story of Smt Mangri Orang is both inspiring and poignant. Despite her invaluable contributions, her legacy has not received the recognition it deserves in mainstream historiography. For many years, her name was known primarily within local oral traditions, passed down in stories and songs sung by her community.

In recent times, however, efforts have been made to reclaim and honour her legacy. Local historians and activists have worked to document her story, ensuring that future generations will remember her courage. Educational institutions in Assam have begun to incorporate her story into their curriculum, and cultural organisations often commemorate her sacrifices during regional celebrations.

Mangri Orang's impact extends beyond her lifetime. Her fearless advocacy for the marginalised and her insistence on women's participation in public life have inspired countless others. She stands as a beacon of hope and a reminder that the struggle for freedom was fought—and won—not just by famous leaders, but by ordinary men and women willing to risk everything for justice.

Mangri Orang's story is a testament to the power of resilience, community, and an unyielding commitment to justice. In the annals of India's freedom movement, her life reminds us that the mightiest empires can be challenged when ordinary people rise in unity. As we celebrate the heroes who shaped India's destiny, may we never forget the courageous women like Mangri Orang who, through their quiet determination and fearless action, changed the course of history. Their stories ignite the flame of freedom in all of us, urging us to stand up against injustice, wherever and whenever it may arise.

Hem Barua (Assam)

(Hem Barua, honoured as "Tyagbir," was a prominent Assamese freedom fighter, organiser, and social reformer, advocating for independence, agrarian rights, and cultural preservation.)

India's independence movement drew strength from



countless men and women who, driven by unwavering courage and conviction, devoted their lives to the cause of freedom.

Among these heroes, Hem Barua,

affectionately honoured with the title "Tyagbir,"

meaning "brave sacrificer," stands

out as a legendary figure in Assam's

history. His unyielding commitment to the struggle against British rule, his sacrifices for the people of Assam, and his contribution to the shaping of modern India have ensured

him a place of reverence in the chronicles of India's freedom movement.

Hem Barua was born in 1893 in the undivided Dibrugarh district, which now lies in the northeastern Indian state of Assam. Raised in a humble family, his early life was marked by a deep exposure to the socio-political realities of the colonial Assam era, defined by injustice, economic exploitation, and cultural suppression at the hands of British authorities.

From a young age, Barua demonstrated remarkable intellectual curiosity and a keen sense of justice. He pursued his education with diligence, recognising that knowledge would be crucial in challenging colonial domination. The socio-economic conditions of Assam, where the Indigenous population was subjected to oppression and the exploitation of resources by the British, deeply influenced his worldview and set the stage for his entry into the freedom movement.

Hem Barua's initiation into the freedom movement coincided with the nationwide surge of resistance following Mahatma Gandhi's call for non-cooperation. Inspired by Gandhi's principles of Satyagraha and non-violence, Barua dedicated himself to mobilising the people of Assam for mass participation in the struggle for independence.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

A powerful orator and a persuasive organiser, Barua travelled across Assam, exhorting people to rise against colonial oppression. He played a crucial role in spreading the message of self-reliance, promoting indigenous industries, and boycotting British goods—a core tenet of the Swadeshi movement. His commitment to the freedom struggle soon earned him the epithet “Tyagbir,” acknowledging his selfless dedication and willingness to sacrifice personal comfort for the collective good.

Barua’s activism did not go unnoticed by the colonial authorities. His organising efforts, speeches, and participation in protest marches made him a target for British repression. He was repeatedly arrested and subjected to imprisonment, a fate that many freedom fighters endured as the price for their convictions.

Despite harsh conditions in jail, Barua remained steadfast. His imprisonments became a source of inspiration for thousands, as stories of his endurance and refusal to compromise spread throughout Assam. He believed that personal suffering was a small price to pay if it could awaken others to the urgency of the freedom struggle. He used his time in jail to reflect, write, and deepen his understanding of the Indian plight, emerging each time more resolute and determined.

Hem Barua’s vision for Assam extended beyond political liberation. He was acutely aware of the social and economic

challenges faced by the region's people, particularly by peasants and the working class. Barua became a vocal advocate for agrarian reforms, upliftment of the marginalised, and the preservation of the unique cultural identity of Assam.

He was closely associated with the historic Assam Peasant Movements, which protested against oppressive taxes and the exploitative practices of British land revenue policies. Barua's ability to connect with the rural masses and articulate their grievances played a key role in mobilising grassroots support for the independence movement. He championed the rights of tea garden workers and indigenous communities, highlighting their exploitation both in British courts and national forums.

Hem Barua recognised that true freedom required not only political independence but also a cultural renaissance. He actively promoted Assamese language, literature, and heritage, encouraging the people to take pride in their identity. Barua believed that education was a powerful tool in nation-building and worked tirelessly to improve access to schooling for the underprivileged.

He inspired a generation of writers, poets, and thinkers in Assam, laying the foundation for a vibrant intellectual tradition in the state. His efforts in the spheres of education and cultural upliftment cemented his legacy as both a freedom fighter and a social reformer.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

Post-independence, Hem Barua's memory has been kept alive in Assam and across India. His life and sacrifices are commemorated annually, especially on Martyrs' Day, and in countless educational institutions and public forums. Statues and memorials in his honour stand as reminders of his dedication.

The title "Tyagbir" continues to resonate, symbolising the highest ideals of self-sacrifice, unflinching courage, and love for the homeland. Barua's life offers rich lessons for contemporary society, emphasising the importance of standing up for justice, nurturing local culture, and serving the people with humility and dedication.

Hem Barua's journey from the banks of the Brahmaputra to the forefront of India's fight for freedom testifies to the power of individual resolve in shaping collective destiny. As Tyagbir, he remains a beacon for those who value justice, equality, and selfless service. Assam's story of resistance is incomplete without honouring Hem Barua, whose sacrifices and vision not only helped break the shackles of colonial rule but also continue to inspire generations to strive for a more just and equitable world.

JAI HIND

Chandraprabha Saikiani (Assam)

(Chandraprabha Saikiani, a pioneering freedom fighter and social reformer, advocated for women's rights, education, and national independence, inspiring generations with her courage and activism.)



Chandraprabha Saikiani stands as one of Assam's most remarkable figures, whose life and actions embodied the spirit of India's freedom struggle and the quest for social reform. She was not only a nationalist who stood against the British Raj, but also a relentless crusader for women's rights, education, and social justice. Her journey from the lush villages of Assam to the echelons of India's

independence movement is a testament to extraordinary courage, resilience, and an unyielding passion for equality.

Born on 16th March 1901 in the remote village of Doisingari, Kamrup district, Assam, Chandraprabha Saikiani was raised in a progressive family that valued education. Her father, Ratneswar Saikia, served as a school inspector and

ensured that both Chandraprabha and her sister Rajaniprabha received an education, a rarity for girls in early 20th-century Assam. This background laid the foundation for her lifelong pursuit of knowledge, social justice, and activism.

From a young age, Chandraprabha experienced firsthand the rigid social restrictions placed upon girls and women. Despite having to travel miles barefoot through forests and fields to attend the Barambari LP School, she remained undeterred, her determination only growing stronger with each obstacle. These early experiences forged not just her commitment to education but also her empathy for the marginalised and her resolve to challenge societal norms.

Chandraprabha's pursuit of higher education was groundbreaking. After her primary schooling, she gained admission to Nagaon Mission School—the only girl among boys. Facing discrimination and mockery, she displayed composure that would become her hallmark, excelling academically and rising as a leader among her peers. The challenges she faced in accessing education made her acutely aware of the need for reforms in the status and rights of women, particularly in the realms of literacy and empowerment.

Her activism began early. At just 13, Chandraprabha delivered her first public speech, championing the cause of women's education and social equality. Inspired by the

teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and the rising nationalist sentiments across India, she recognised the intertwined nature of social and political liberation. For Chandraprabha, the fight against the British was inseparable from the struggle against social evils like child marriage, dowry, and the oppressive caste system.

In 1918, she co-founded the Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti, the first women's organisation of its kind in Assam, which became a powerful platform for mobilising women in the state. Through the Samiti, Chandraprabha led campaigns against child marriage, polygamy, and the use of opium, striving to lift women out of social bondage and urging them to join the movement for national freedom.

As the national movement gained momentum, Chandraprabha Saikiani became a prominent face in Assam's anti-British activities. She actively participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22) led by Mahatma Gandhi, braving police repression and imprisonment. Her speeches inspired hundreds of Assamese men and women to join the cause, and she was unafraid to confront authorities directly.

Chandraprabha's activism placed her under the constant glare of the British administration, yet she pressed on. During the Civil Disobedience Movement, she organised protests, picketed liquor shops, and encouraged women to boycott foreign goods and weave khadi, the handspun cloth

symbolic of India's resistance to colonial economic exploitation. She was arrested several times and endured harsh treatment in British jails, but never wavered in her convictions.

Beyond her political activism, Chandrababha Saikiani was committed to the advancement of women. The Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti, under her guidance, set up schools and ashrams for destitute women and children. She fiercely advocated women's participation in public life, urging them to speak out at meetings and assemblies, and breaking the barriers of purdah and patriarchal silencing.

Her efforts were not limited to urban centers. Chandrababha travelled through rural Assam, often by foot or boat, holding meetings in villages to raise awareness about the importance of women's education and the evils of superstitions. She was instrumental in establishing schools for girls in remote areas, understanding that education was the key to self-reliance and empowerment.

Chandrababha Saikiani was not only a campaigner but also a prolific writer. Her essays, poems, and short stories in Assamese literature carried the message of reform and emancipation. Through her writings, she dissected the problems plaguing Assamese society, calling for rational thought, compassion, and action. Her works continue to inspire generations, serving as vital texts in Assam's cultural and feminist discourse.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

After India attained independence, Chandraprabha continued her crusade for social reform, refusing to rest on past laurels. She worked tirelessly for the upliftment of women and the underprivileged and remained a guiding force in Assamese public life. Her death on 16th March 1972 marked the end of an era, but the seeds she sowed continue to flourish.

Today, Chandraprabha Saikiani's name is synonymous with courage, compassion, and the relentless pursuit of justice. Schools, awards, and social organisations in Assam bear her name, keeping alive the legacy of a woman who refused to accept the status quo.

Chandraprabha Saikiani's life is a luminous chapter in the history of Assam and India's freedom movement. As a fearless freedom fighter, visionary reformer, and pioneering writer, she transformed the lives of countless women and inspired generations to dream of a just and equitable society. Her legacy invites us to remember that the struggle for freedom is not only about breaking the chains of colonialism but also about liberating minds, empowering the marginalised, and forging a more humane world.

Kushal Konwar (Assam)

(Kushal Konwar, a Gandhian freedom fighter from Assam, was wrongfully sentenced to death for his activism in the Quit India Movement, embodying courage and non-violence.)



In the vast tapestry of India's freedom struggle, countless unsung heroes illuminated the path toward independence. Among the most courageous and steadfast was Kushal Konwar, a freedom fighter from Assam whose life, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to the principles of justice and non-violence stand as an enduring symbol of

resistance against colonial oppression. Revered as a martyr and remembered with deep reverence in Assam and beyond, Kushal Konwar's story deserves to be told and cherished by generations.

Kushal Konwar was born on March 21, 1905, in the humble village of Balijan in the Sarupathar area of the undivided

Sivasagar district, now falling under the Golaghat district in Assam. Born into a family known for its piety and moral values, young Kushal imbibed a deep sense of ethics, responsibility, and spiritual leaning from his parents. The lush landscapes of Assam, with their rolling tea gardens and vibrant river valleys, formed the backdrop of his formative years.

Education played a crucial role in shaping Kushal's worldview. He attended the local primary school and later moved to the Bezbaruah Middle English School at Golaghat. Beyond formal education, he was deeply influenced by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, especially the ideals of satyagraha (truth-force) and ahimsa (non-violence). Even as a young man, Kushal was known for his honesty, discipline, and compassion—traits that would define his role in India's freedom struggle.

The early decades of the 20th century witnessed a surge in nationalist fervour across India. Assam, with its unique cultural identity and traditions, was no exception to the stirring winds of change. The non-cooperation movement and other Gandhian campaigns found eager participants among the Assamese youth. It was during this time that Kushal Konwar stepped onto the political stage.

Kushal joined the Indian National Congress and became an active participant in several campaigns for self-rule. He believed firmly in Gandhian principles, advocating peaceful

resistance and social reforms. In his village and surrounding areas, he worked tirelessly to spread awareness about the evils of British colonial rule and the need for unity across caste, creed, and community. He organised meetings, led processions, and inspired others to join the movement for Swaraj.

His home became a center for political activity, where villagers gathered to discuss the unfolding events and strategies for collective action. Despite facing threats and intimidation from colonial authorities, Kushal remained steadfast in his commitment. His personal life reflected his ideals—he led a simple existence as a farmer, practised vegetarianism, and shunned material luxuries, embodying the spirit of self-reliance.

The Quit India Movement, launched by Mahatma Gandhi on August 8, 1942, was a watershed moment in India's history. The call for immediate British withdrawal reverberated across the country, igniting the passions of millions. Assam, too, witnessed widespread protests, strikes, and acts of civil disobedience.

In this tumult, a tragic incident occurred near the Sarupathar railway station in Golaghat district. On the night of October 10, 1942, a train carrying British soldiers was derailed, resulting in the deaths of several personnel. The British administration responded with a brutal crackdown,

arresting scores of Congress activists and suspected sympathisers.

Although there was no direct evidence linking Kushal Konwar to the act of sabotage, his prominent role in the local Congress and his reputation as a leader of the movement made him a target. Despite his innocence and repeated assertions of non-involvement, Kushal was arrested and charged with conspiracy.

The trial of Kushal Konwar was a mockery of justice. The colonial authorities, desperate for a scapegoat to quell the rising tide of resistance, orchestrated a summary trial with little regard for evidence or due process. Throughout the proceedings, Kushal maintained his innocence, reiterating his commitment to non-violence and his abhorrence of bloodshed.

Nevertheless, he was convicted and sentenced to death by hanging. In the face of imminent death, Kushal displayed remarkable courage and composure. He spent his days in solitary confinement, engaged in prayer and meditation, drawing strength from his unshakable faith. He wrote moving letters to his family, urging them to forgive his persecutors and to continue the struggle for freedom with dignity and peace.

Bhogeswari Phukanani (Assam)

(Bhogeswari Phukanani, a fearless Assamese activist, led protests during the Quit India Movement and sacrificed her life defending the national flag, symbolising women's role in India's independence.)



In the annals of India's freedom movement, countless names shine brightly, their sacrifices illuminating the path to independence. Among these, Bhogeswari Phukanani stands as an embodiment of courage and resilience, a woman whose gallant actions during British rule have made her an enduring symbol of Assam's

unwavering spirit. Though less known on the national stage, her legacy continues to inspire generations in Assam and beyond, reminding us of the price of freedom and the vital role played by women in shaping the destiny of a nation.

Born in 1885 in the quaint village of Nagaon in Assam, Bhogeswari Phukanani belonged to a modest family rooted

in traditional Assamese values. Married to Bhogeswar Phukan, she was a mother to eight children, balancing the responsibilities of a homemaker with the simmering desire to contribute to her motherland's quest for liberty. The turn of the 20th century saw Assam, like much of the subcontinent, reeling under the oppressive policies of British colonialism. The exploitative land policies, economic drain, and disregard for local customs and languages had left deep scars on the Assamese psyche.

The Indian National Movement found fertile ground in Assam in the early decades of the twentieth century. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violent resistance, the people of Assam organised satyagraha, protests, and civil disobedience campaigns. Women, too, were not mere bystanders. They participated in picketing, boycotting British goods, and spreading awareness among the masses. It was in this charged atmosphere that Bhogeswari Phukanani emerged as a fearless activist.

Despite her domestic duties, Bhogeswari Phukanani was deeply moved by the suffering inflicted by colonial rule. She joined the Indian National Congress and became actively involved in organising protests and mobilising local women. Her home became a hub for freedom fighters, a place where strategies were discussed and support was extended to those in need. She encouraged her children to

participate in the movement, reinforcing her belief that freedom was a cause worth every sacrifice.

Phukanani's participation was not limited to the background. She led processions, addressed gatherings, and braved the lathi charges and arrests that were so common during the period. Her leadership and moral strength inspired many women of Assam to step out of their traditional confines and take part in the struggle for independence.

The Quit India Movement of 1942, a clarion call for a mass uprising against the British, reverberated across the nation, reaching even the remotest corners of Assam. The movement saw a surge of mass protests, with people from all walks of life demanding an end to British rule. Bhogeswari Phukanani, despite being in her late fifties, was at the forefront of these demonstrations.

In September 1942, the British authorities intensified their crackdown on freedom fighters in Assam. Police began routinely targeting leaders, using force to break up crowds, and seizing property. But Phukanani was undeterred. Her resolve only grew stronger, and she continued to lead from the front, her courage emboldening even the most hesitant of hearts.

The defining moment of Bhogeswari Phukanani's life—and ultimate sacrifice—came on 18th September 1942 in the

town of Barhampur, Nagaon. On that fateful day, the British had arrested several Congress leaders and hoisted the Union Jack atop the local police station, an act meant to assert their dominance and demoralise the protesters.

On September 18, 1942, during the Quit India Movement, the people recaptured a Congress Office and celebrated the event with a feast. While the gathering was underway, a British military party arrived. Pratap Chandra Sarma, a respected leader present at the occasion, approached V.H. Ruse, ICS, the Special Magistrate, and explained that the crowd was peaceful and would disperse after receiving the prasad. Ruse initially seemed agreeable, but shortly afterwards, Sarma and eleven others were unexpectedly arrested and taken away in a military vehicle.

When chaos followed, the soldiers began assaulting civilians and desecrating the sacred prasad by trampling it under their boots. Outraged by this act, the crowd rose in protest, chanting "Bande Mataram." To pacify the unrest, Sarma was brought back. Meanwhile, more villagers arrived, led by Srimati Ratnabala Phukan, who carried a Congress flag. Her mother, Bhogeswari Phukanani, joined the march, also shouting "Bande Mataram."

As the procession advanced, the military blocked their path. Captain Finish tried to seize the flag from Ratnabala, but she resisted fiercely. Declaring she would not let the national flag be dishonoured, Ratnabala stood her ground.

Freedom Fighters of North East India

In response, Captains Finish and Montgomery drew their revolvers and fired indiscriminately into the crowd. Tragically, Bhogeswari Phukanani was killed in the firing, sacrificing her life for the dignity of the nation's flag and the cause of freedom. Her valiant act remains a powerful symbol of Assam's contribution to India's independence movement and the indomitable spirit of its women fighters.

After India achieved independence in 1947, both a hospital and an indoor stadium were named in her honour. The hospital, originally established in 1854 at Nagaon, Assam, by the American Baptist missionary Miles Bronson, was later renamed Bhogeswari Phukanani Civil Hospital. Additionally, an indoor stadium bearing her name is located in Guwahati, Assam.

JAI HIND

Tileswari Baruah (Assam)

(Tileswari Baruah, a courageous Assamese freedom fighter, sacrificed her life during the Quit India Movement in 1942, symbolising defiance and inspiring future generations.)



In the tapestry of India's long and arduous struggle for independence, the stories of countless unsung heroes are woven each thread representing sacrifice, resilience, and an unwavering yearning for liberty. Among these remarkable individuals stands Tileswari Baruah, a courageous freedom fighter from Assam whose valour and

dedication played a significant role in the fight against British colonial rule. Though her name may not find frequent mention in the mainstream chronicles, her actions and

legacy are etched in the spirit of resistance that swept through Assam and the rest of India.

Tileswari Baruah was born in the early 20th century in Rangagarah, a small village in the undivided district of Darrang, Assam. She belonged to a humble family whose values revolved around hard work, integrity, and a profound love for the motherland. Growing up in colonial India, Tileswari witnessed firsthand the injustices and hardships imposed by the British Raj. The oppressive policies of the colonial regime, the exploitation of local resources, and the curtailment of civil liberties were stark realities that shaped her consciousness from a young age.

Education was a privilege, especially for girls in rural Assam during that era. However, Tileswari's family encouraged her to learn and stay informed. She imbibed the stories of national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, drawing inspiration from their sacrifices and philosophies. The growing wave of the Indian freedom movement, with its call for non-violent resistance and mass mobilisation, resonated deeply with her.

The 1940s marked a period of intense political upheaval across India, as the Quit India Movement swept through towns and villages, igniting a collective spirit of dissent. Assam was no exception. The British, wary of the growing unrest, responded with repressive measures, arrests,

violence, and widespread intimidation. Yet, these actions only strengthened the resolve of the people.

Tileswari Baruah became actively involved in the freedom struggle during this critical phase. She joined local groups mobilising for the Quit India Movement and became the face of resistance in her region. Her commitment was not confined to rhetoric; she was a woman of action, organising protests, motivating women and youth, and acting as a bridge between the movement's leaders and the grassroots.

Tileswari's most defining moment came during the historic protest at Barangabari in December 1942. The Quit India Movement had reached its crescendo, and the people of Assam, emboldened by calls for "Do or Die," rose in unison against British rule. The British administration, alarmed by the swelling tide of protests, targeted villages suspected of sheltering freedom fighters and supporters.

Barangabari, a quiet village in Darrang, became a site of fervent resistance. When British police attempted to seize the national flag, an act meant to crush the morale of the protestors, Tileswari Baruah emerged as a symbol of defiance. Barely a teenager at the time, she led the villagers in hoisting the tricolour flag in the face of armed colonial police. Undeterred by threats and violence, she stood tall, her voice ringing with the demand for freedom.

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The British police, seeking to quell the uprising, opened fire on the protestors. Tileswari Baruah was struck down by bullets, sacrificing her life for the cause of independence. Her martyrdom electrified the movement in Assam; her courage inspired men, women, and children alike to continue the fight with renewed determination.

Tileswari Baruah's sacrifice became a rallying point in Assam's freedom struggle. Although her young life was cut short, her story reverberated across the region, galvanising others to join the movement. She was immortalised in folk songs, poems, and local lore, her name whispered with reverence in the corridors of Assam's villages and towns.

Despite her profound contribution, Tileswari's story remains largely absent from national histories. Yet, in Assam, her legacy endures. Every year, on the anniversary of her martyrdom, local communities organised commemorations and flag-raising ceremonies in her honour. Educational institutions and organisations strive to keep her memory alive, ensuring that new generations learn of her valour and ideals.

Tileswari Baruah was not an isolated figure; rather, she represented the indomitable spirit of Assamese women who participated in the freedom struggle. Women from diverse backgrounds broke social constraints and risked their lives, whether by leading processions, sheltering activists, or confronting British authorities head-on. The narrative of

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Tileswari is woven into a larger tapestry of female resistance, which deserves greater recognition in the annals of Indian history.

Tileswari's actions underscored the critical role of women and youth in movements for social justice. She proved that courage knows no age or gender, and that the quest for freedom is a collective endeavour.

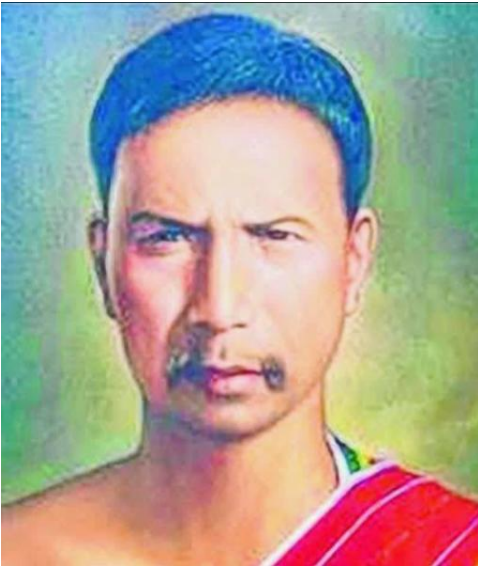
Tileswari Baruah's life and sacrifice stand as a testament to the undying spirit of India's freedom struggle. She was a beacon of hope and defiance—an ordinary village girl who became an extraordinary symbol of resistance. Her story reminds us that the fight for justice and dignity is not the preserve of a few but the birthright and responsibility of every individual.

Today, as we celebrate India's independence, it is imperative to remember and honour the sacrifices of heroes like Tileswari Baruah. Let her legacy inspire us to uphold the values of liberty, equality, and courage in the face of adversity. The tricolour flag she defended with her life continues to flutter in free India's skies as a living tribute to her and countless others who dared to dream of freedom.

JAI HIND

Haipou Jadonang (Nagaland)

(Haipou Jadonang, a spiritual and political leader, led the Heraka movement, inspiring Naga resistance against British rule, ultimately sacrificing his life for Naga sovereignty.)



Nestled in the verdant hills of the present-day Northeast India lies a tale of resistance, faith, and vision. The story of Haipou Jadonang, a revered leader among the Zeliangrong Nagas, is one of courage and conviction in the face of the oppressive tides of British colonial rule. While many freedom fighters are celebrated

across the Indian subcontinent, Jadonang's legacy is often overlooked, despite his profound impact on the political and spiritual awakening of the Nagas. His struggle was not just a fight for political independence but also a crusade to reclaim the cultural and spiritual heritage of his people.

Haipou Jadonang was born in 1905 in the small hill village of Kambiron, now in the Tamenglong district of Manipur. He belonged to the Zeliangrong community, an amalgamation of three Naga tribes: Zeme, Liangmei, and Rongmei. Growing up, Jadonang displayed remarkable intelligence, spiritual sensitivity, and a deep connection to his land and people. From a young age, he was drawn to the oral traditions, rituals, and folk songs that formed the tapestry of Naga life.

Jadonang was raised in an environment where colonial influence was rapidly eroding traditional practices. The British, through their policies and Christian missionaries, sought to reshape Naga society, often undermining indigenous faiths and customs. Witnessing these changes, Jadonang felt a calling to defend and revitalise the spiritual life of his community. He began to spend long periods in meditation and prayer, claiming to have visions that guided his path. These spiritual experiences would later become central to both his leadership and the movement he inspired.

The early 20th century was a period of profound transformation for the Nagas. The British Raj, intent on consolidating power over the Northeast, introduced new taxes, land regulations, and administrative structures. Traditional chieftainships were weakened, and local autonomy was undermined. The imposition of forced

labour, called 'potang,' and other exploitative practices led to widespread resentment. The Zeliangrong Nagas, fiercely independent and proud of their customs, were particularly affected.

The British administration, unfamiliar with Naga lifeways and often dismissive of their institutions, created a climate of suspicion and unrest. The influx of Christian missionaries further threatened traditional belief systems, as conversions increased and customary laws were replaced by foreign norms.

Against this backdrop, Jadonang emerged as both a spiritual and political leader. With his reputation for healing, prophecy, and wisdom, he attracted a devoted following among the Zeliangrong people. Jadonang's vision went beyond spiritual renewal; he aspired to unite the Nagas and restore their sovereignty. He preached about the imminent end of British rule and the coming of 'Makam Gwangdi'—a promised land of freedom and justice for the Nagas.

His teachings combined traditional Naga beliefs with elements of resistance. He called for the rejection of colonial taxes, the boycott of forced labor, and the restoration of village autonomy. Jadonang drew inspiration from Naga mythology, prophesizing that the British would soon be driven out. His followers began to see him as a messianic figure, a deliverer who would lead them to liberation.

Central to Jadonang's campaign was the revival of the Heraka faith, an indigenous religion that emphasized faith in Tingkao Ragwang, the supreme god. The Heraka movement sought to purify Naga practices, eliminating what were seen as superstitious elements while preserving core rituals and values. Jadonang's religious reforms were both a form of spiritual renewal and a vehicle for political mobilisation.

The Heraka movement rapidly gained momentum, with thousands of Zeliangrong Nagas gathering at Jadonang's headquarters in Kambiron. His followers constructed temples, organised mass prayers, and openly denounced colonial authority. The growth of this movement unsettled the British, who saw in it the seeds of a wider anti-colonial uprising.

Alarmed by Jadonang's popularity and the Heraka movement's challenge to their authority, the British authorities began to crack down. They accused Jadonang of inciting rebellion, defying colonial laws, and conspiring against the state. In 1931, Jadonang was arrested on charges of sedition and murder—charges widely believed to have been fabricated.

Despite the lack of concrete evidence, Jadonang was tried by a colonial court and found guilty. On August 29, 1931, he was executed by hanging in Imphal, an event that sent shockwaves throughout the region. His death, however, did

not crush the movement he had inspired. Instead, it became a rallying point for Naga resistance.

Haipou Jadonang's martyrdom marked a pivotal moment in the history of the Nagas. His vision of unity, self-respect, and freedom lived in the hearts of his followers. The mantle of leadership soon passed to his disciple, Rani Gaidinliu, a young woman who would continue the Heraka movement and the struggle for Naga rights.

Jadonang's legacy remains profound. He is remembered not just as a freedom fighter, but as a spiritual guide and visionary who challenged the twin oppressions of colonial rule and cultural erasure. His life and message have inspired generations of Nagas to assert their identity and fight for justice. Today, monuments, folk songs, and annual commemorations in Manipur, Nagaland, and Assam keep his memory alive.

To speak of Haipou Jadonang is to invoke the spirit of resistance and renewal that defines the Northeast's struggle against colonialism. Guided by faith and fired by a dream of justice, he united his people and gave them hope in a time of darkness.

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In the annals of India's freedom movement, Jadonang stands as a beacon—a visionary whose fight for the soul of his land deserves to be remembered and celebrated.

As the hills of Nagaland echo his name, the message endures: freedom is both a right and a sacred duty, and the legacy of Haipou Jadonang continues to light the path for generations yet to come.

JAI HIND

Khuangchera (Mizoram)

(Khuangchera, a Mizo freedom fighter, led resistance against British colonialism, using guerrilla tactics to defend his people's autonomy, becoming a symbol of courage and self-determination.)



Mizoram, a lush and hilly state in the northeast of India, is often celebrated for its scenic beauty, vibrant traditions, and unique cultural tapestry. Yet, amidst tales of song and festivity, another story reverberates, one written in the ink of struggle and sacrifice: the story of Khuangchera, a freedom fighter who stood bravely against the might of the British Empire. His legacy, though sometimes overshadowed by the broader canvas of India's freedom movement, remains a source of pride and inspiration for the Mizo people.

In the late 19th century, the British Empire, having entrenched itself across much of India, turned its gaze towards the northeast, an area comprising various

indigenous tribes and independent chieftaincies. The area known today as Mizoram was then inhabited by the Mizo tribes, whose societal structure was anchored in village autonomy under hereditary chiefs. This region, with its high mountains and dense forests, posed both a geographical and administrative challenge to colonial ambitions.

The British incursion into the Mizo Hills began in earnest after a series of raids by Mizo warriors into neighbouring Manipur and Assam, which the British saw as threats to their control and trade in those regions. The British launched punitive expeditions, the most significant being the Lushai Expedition of 1871-72. It was during this turbulent period, at the turn of the 20th century, that Khuangchera's life and legend would take shape.

Khuangchera was born into a time of immense change and uncertainty. Traditional Mizo society was resilient, fiercely independent, and deeply attached to its land. From a young age, Khuangchera was exposed to the values of courage, loyalty, and community responsibility. While the details of his childhood are scarce—lost in the oral traditions and fragmentary records common to that era—it is widely held that he grew up in a village in western Mizoram. There, he imbibed the stories of ancestral valour and the importance of standing up against injustice.

As British influence crept deeper into the Mizo Hills, it brought in new laws, taxes, and an inevitable disruption of

traditional ways of life. The British sought to undermine the authority of the local chiefs, replacing indigenous systems with direct colonial administration. This sparked resentment and resistance among the Mizo people.

Khuangchera emerged as a courageous leader during this period. Unlike many who chose to accommodate or negotiate with the British, Khuangchera believed in the right of his people to govern themselves and protect their customs. He organised his fellow villagers and neighbouring tribes, galvanising them to resist the encroaching colonial forces. His leadership was rooted in the conviction that the land and its people could not be bought or subdued without a fight.

Though lacking modern weaponry or formal military training, Khuangchera and his followers employed guerrilla tactics, using their intimate knowledge of the terrain to stage ambushes and disrupt British expeditions. Their resistance was not merely military; it was a battle to preserve identity, dignity, and autonomy. Khuangchera's charisma and unwavering commitment inspired others to join his cause, spreading the flame of resistance across the hills.

The confrontation between Khuangchera's band of warriors and the British army reached its climax in a series of skirmishes, the most notable taking place near his village. Despite being heavily outnumbered and outgunned, Khuangchera and his compatriots fought valiantly. Oral

histories recount tales of his bravery—how he would lead charges, shield his fellow fighters, and refuse to retreat even in the face of overwhelming odds.

Ultimately, it was in one such confrontation that Khuangchera met his end. His death, far from being a defeat, became a rallying point for the Mizo resistance. The British, though victorious in battle, could not extinguish the spirit he had kindled among his people. News of his valour and sacrifice spread quickly through the hills, cementing his place in the collective memory of Mizoram.

Khuangchera's legacy is woven into the very fabric of Mizo identity. He is remembered not just as a warrior, but as a symbol of resistance and self-determination. Songs, ballads, and oral narratives celebrate his life and martyrdom, ensuring that his story continues to inspire new generations.

In post-independence India, efforts have been made to formally recognise Khuangchera's contributions to the broader struggle against colonial rule. Statues and memorials in his honour have been erected in Mizoram, and his story is taught in schools as a testament to the courage and resilience of the Mizo people.

Today, Khuangchera stands alongside other unsung heroes of India's freedom movement—those whose sacrifices were local but whose impact was profound. His

resistance illustrates the diversity of India's struggle for independence, which was not only waged in major cities but also in the remote hills and valleys where indigenous peoples fought to preserve their way of life.

For the people of Mizoram, Khuangchera represents a link between past and present—a reminder of the price of freedom and the importance of defending one's heritage. Annual commemorations and cultural events are held in his memory, drawing crowds from far and wide, and serving as an occasion for reflection and renewed commitment to the values he cherished.

In an age where the narratives of smaller communities often risk being subsumed by those of larger, more dominant cultures, the story of Khuangchera assumes even greater significance. It is a reminder that the fight for dignity and self-determination is universal, transcending geography and ethnicity.

Khuangchera's defiance against the British colonial regime teaches us about the power of conviction, the necessity of community solidarity, and the enduring value of cultural identity. As Mizoram continues to navigate the challenges of modernity, migration, and political change, the legacy of Khuangchera provides both a touchstone and a beacon.

The saga of Khuangchera is not merely a footnote in the annals of Indian history. It is a testament to the courage of

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a people who, though small in number, proved indomitable in spirit. His life exemplifies the broader truth that freedom is not a gift easily won, but a right that must be asserted and defended, sometimes at great personal cost.

As we remember Khuangchera today, we affirm the value of every struggle for justice, no matter how remote or seemingly isolated. His story is Mizoram's gift to the world—a call to honour the sacrifices of those who came before, and to remain ever vigilant in the defence of freedom, dignity, and hope.

JAI HIND

Tripura Chandra Sen (Tripura)

(Tripura Chandra Sen, a freedom fighter from Tripura, led resistance against British rule, promoting unity, education, and social justice, leaving a lasting legacy in his state.)



For generations, the story of India's struggle for independence has been told through the gallant deeds of towering figures and iconic revolutionaries. Yet, woven through the country's tapestry of freedom are countless unsung heroes, whose acts of courage and sacrifice remain known only to a few. Tripura Chandra Sen, a valiant freedom fighter from Tripura, stands among these overlooked champions. His relentless resistance against British colonial rule, his commitment to the cause of freedom, and his enduring legacy in the northeastern State of Tripura deserve a place in the annals of Indian history.

Tripura Chandra Sen was born in the lush, green valleys of Tripura, a region then ruled as a princely state under the suzerainty of the British Crown. The son of a modest family, Sen grew up amidst the complexities of a region that, despite its relative isolation, was not immune to the winds of change that were sweeping across the country. In the early decades of the twentieth century, colonial policies and

the princely administration had created a social order marked by economic hardship, lack of education, and limited political voice for the common people.

Sen's formative years were shaped by these hardships and by the stories of resistance that swept across British India. He was deeply influenced by the tales of revolutionaries from Bengal and Assam, neighbouring regions that were hotbeds of nationalist activity. The spirit of self-determination and the desire for justice took root in his heart, and as he watched the world around him struggle under the weight of colonial oppression, Sen resolved to dedicate his life to the cause of freedom.

Although Tripura was not directly administered by the British, the reach and influence of colonial power were unmistakable. The state's autonomy was, in practice, circumscribed by British agents and the wider architecture of imperial control. Tripura Chandra Sen was quick to recognise that the cause of Tripura's emancipation was inextricably linked with the larger struggle for Indian independence.

In his youth, Sen became involved in the burgeoning nationalist movements that had begun to find their way into Tripura. Inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose, and other stalwarts, he started organising meetings, protests, and discussions among the youth of Agartala and other towns. He was instrumental in fostering

a spirit of unity among the people, cutting across ethnic, tribal, and religious lines—a remarkable feat in a region known for its diversity.

Sen's activism was not merely rhetorical. He established covert connections with underground networks of revolutionaries operating in the northeast, ensuring the flow of information, resources, and inspiration. He used his knowledge of the local languages and terrain to aid compatriots fleeing the British crackdown, offering shelter and safe passage through the forests and hills of Tripura. In this way, he turned Tripura from a sleepy outpost into a vital link in the chain of resistance that spanned the subcontinent.

Tripura Chandra Sen's increasing involvement in anti-colonial activities did not go unnoticed. British intelligence, alarmed by the growing unrest in the northeast, began to monitor the movements of suspected agitators. Sen was repeatedly harassed and interrogated by agents of the British Raj, who sought to break his will through intimidation, threats, and even imprisonment.

But Sen remained undeterred. He deepened his engagement with non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements. When the Quit India Movement was launched in 1942, Sen mobilised volunteers in Tripura to join strikes, boycott British goods, and disrupt colonial administration. Under his leadership, crowds gathered to publicly burn

foreign cloth and reject colonial taxes, acts that invited violent reprisals. Sen was injured on multiple occasions, but his resolve only hardened.

The princely authorities, under pressure from British representatives, attempted to suppress his influence by targeting his associates and supporters. Many were arrested, some were forced into exile. Yet, Sen's underground network managed to keep the flame of resistance alive, even as the crackdown intensified.

While he was a fierce opponent of colonial rule, Tripura Chandra Sen also recognised the importance of uplifting his community. He worked tirelessly to promote education among the tribal and rural populations of Tripura, believing that true freedom could only be achieved through empowerment and enlightenment. He opened night schools, organised literacy drives, and advocated for the rights of peasants and workers mistreated by the feudal system.

Sen's activism reflected his belief in inclusive nationalism—one that sought not only political independence but also social justice and economic dignity for all. He was a vocal critic of the rigid hierarchies that plagued traditional society, and he encouraged young people, especially women, to participate in the freedom struggle as equals. His progressive ideals laid the groundwork for social reform in

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Tripura, and his legacy endures in the state's commitment to education and unity.

With the dawn of independence in 1947, Tripura Chandra Sen's efforts bore fruit, though not without personal cost. He had endured years of surveillance, deprivation, and exile from his family.

Yet, as India emerged free from British rule, Sen dedicated his post-independence years to public service. He continued to work for the betterment of Tripura, championing causes of social welfare, education, and communal harmony.

Despite his contributions, Sen's name has often been overshadowed by more prominent leaders from larger regions. However, in Tripura, his memory is honoured with reverence. Schools, streets, and public institutions bear his name, and his life continues to inspire new generations to value freedom, justice, and the courage to speak truth to power.

Tripura Chandra Sen's life is a testament to the power of conviction and the impact that one determined individual can have on their world. Though the forces arrayed against him were formidable, he never doubted the righteousness of his cause or the strength of his people.

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In remembering Sen, we recall the countless men and women whose sacrifices built the foundation of our modern nation. His story reminds us that the freedom we enjoy was won not only in the halls of great cities but in the unseen struggles of distant valleys, where the spirit of resistance burns ever bright.

JAI HIND

Ropuilians (Mizoram)

(Ropuilians, the first Mizo Queen, led resistance against British rule in Mizoram, defending her people's autonomy with courage, diplomacy, and unwavering resolve.)



Throughout the annals of India's colonial past, the stories of resistance are often dominated by names from the mainland. However, the remote and forested Lushai Hills—today's Mizoram witnessed its saga of valour, etched into history by the indomitable Ropuilians

(1828–1895). As the first known Mizo Queen, Ropuilians' courage and defiance against British rule stand as a testament to the strength and agency of women in the struggle for self-determination. This article delves into her life, the context of her reign, and her indelible legacy.

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In the early 19th century, the Lushai Hills were inhabited by diverse Mizo tribes, each governed by chieftains or local rulers. Life revolved around jhum cultivation, clan loyalty, and intricate social customs. The British East India Company, having consolidated much of northeastern India, set its sights on the region, urging expansion for strategic and economic interests.

Colonial incursions began in earnest following a series of Mizo raids into the British-administered plains of Assam and Bengal. The British responded with punitive expeditions, aiming to curb local resistance and bring the hills under their administration. It was against this turbulent backdrop that Ropuiliani emerged as a leader.

Ropuiliani was born in 1828 into the royal family of the Lushai Hills, a lineage marked by both privilege and responsibility. Details of her early years are veiled in oral tradition, but she is remembered as a woman of intelligence, compassion, and steadfast resolve. Her marriage to a powerful local chief elevated her status, but it was the untimely death of her husband that thrust her into the unaccustomed role of regent and, eventually, ruler.

At a time when leadership was predominantly a male prerogative, Ropuiliani's rise to power was exceptional. Assuming authority as the guardian of her minor son's chieftainship, she adeptly manoeuvred through court intrigues and external pressures. Her ability to negotiate,

inspire loyalty, and command respect cemented her place as the first known Mizo Queen.

The British viewed the Lushai Hills as both a threat and an opportunity. The region's strategic position, coupled with its proximity to Burma and the tea-rich Brahmaputra Valley, made its pacification a colonial imperative. British officials, unfamiliar with the complex web of local allegiances, often resorted to coercion.

Ropuiliani, however, refused to submit meekly to British overlordship. She saw the encroachment not only as a threat to her own authority but also to the identity and autonomy of her people. By rallying local chiefs and warriors, she orchestrated a campaign of calculated resistance. Her leadership was marked by both diplomacy and defiance—she sent envoys to negotiate but refused to pay excessive tributes or accept the erasure of Mizo customs.

Unlike many rulers who capitulated in the face of overwhelming force, Ropuiliani personified a spirit of “tlawmngaihna”, the Mizo ethic of selfless service and courage. She encouraged her people to unite, fortify their defences, and reject colonial dictates that sought to undermine their way of life.

Ropuiliani's resistance was not merely military; she wielded the tools of persuasion and diplomacy. She fostered

alliances among neighbouring chiefs, creating a formidable network that frustrated British attempts at divide-and-rule. Her court became a rallying point for opposition, a symbol of hope in a time of uncertainty.

Colonial records, though often biased, acknowledge the difficulty posed by Ropuiliani's opposition. When the British intensified their campaigns in the late 19th century, she stood firm. Skirmishes erupted as local warriors, under her influence, resisted British patrols and punitive forays into the hills.

Unable to win her submission through negotiation or intimidation, the British eventually resorted to a direct show of force. In a fateful encounter, Ropuiliani was captured by British troops. Even in captivity, she refused to compromise her dignity or betray her people's cause. Her steadfastness earned the grudging admiration of both friends and foes.

On January 3, 1895, Ropuiliani passed away, her death shrouded in the sorrow of a people who had lost their Queen but not her spirit. Though the colonial machinery would eventually subsume the Lushai Hills into the British Empire, Ropuiliani's legacy of resistance endured.

Ropuiliani's story is more than a footnote in the chronicles of resistance; it is a beacon of female leadership and indigenous agency. In an age when women rulers were rare, her assertiveness challenged not only colonial power

but also patriarchal norms within Mizo society. She is remembered in folktales and songs, her name invoked as a symbol of courage and integrity.

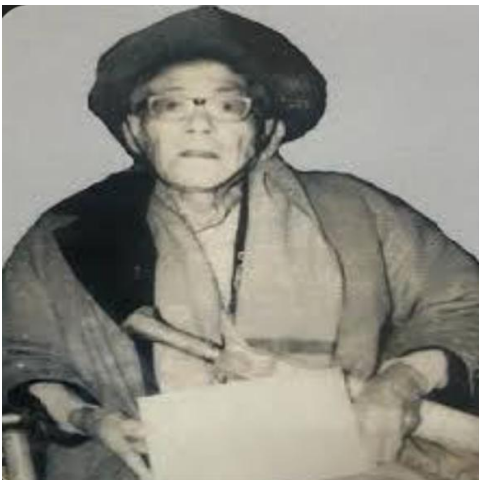
Today, Ropuiliani occupies a cherished place in the collective memory of the Mizos. Statues, commemorative events, and literary works celebrate her life and sacrifice. Her legacy continues to inspire current movements for justice, equality, and self-determination, highlighting the cost of freedom and the importance of principled resistance.

The saga of Ropuiliani, the first known Mizo Queen, stands as a stirring chapter in the history of India's Northeast. Her defiance against British colonialism illuminated the path for future generations, proving that true leadership transcends gender and circumstance. As the hills she once ruled echo with the songs of her valour, Ropuiliani's story continues to inspire, a lasting tribute to the power of one woman's unwavering resolve in the face of empire.

JAI HIND

Moje Riba (Arunachal Pradesh)

(Moje Riba, a freedom fighter from Arunachal Pradesh, led resistance against British rule, inspiring local communities and hoisting the national flag in defiance in 1947.)



India's struggle for independence is replete with stories of valour and sacrifice, but many of its heroes remain unsung outside their native regions. One such freedom fighter is Moje Riba, a relentless patriot from Arunachal Pradesh, whose courage against

British colonial rule illuminated the remote North-East with hope and resilience. His efforts, while lesser known on the national stage, were instrumental in kindling the spirit of freedom among his people and integrating the region into the national movement for independence.

Born in 1911 in the Daring village of present-day Arunachal Pradesh, Moje Riba was raised in a time when the region

was known as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). The area was marked by its isolation, distinct tribal cultures, and a largely self-sufficient agrarian lifestyle. British presence was felt through indirect rule, administrative posts, and attempts to extend their influence over the land and its people. For the indigenous Adi community to which Moje Riba belonged, the encroachments of the colonial authorities were seen as both an affront to their autonomy and a threat to their way of life.

Moje Riba grew up deeply connected to his people's traditions and the lush, rugged landscape of Northeastern India. He imbibed the values of community service, self-reliance, and the fierce defence of his homeland from external domination. These early lessons would become the bedrock of his activism in the years ahead.

The late 1930s and early 1940s were a period of mounting unrest in many parts of India, as the Quit India Movement gained momentum under Mahatma Gandhi's call for nonviolent resistance. News of the growing freedom movement reached the secluded corners of NEFA, inspiring a handful of enlightened individuals like Moje Riba. He realised that the struggle for independence was not just a matter for the distant cities but was equally relevant to the hills and valleys of Arunachal Pradesh.

Moje Riba took it upon himself to awaken political consciousness among the Adi people. At a time when

communication was severely limited and the risk of arrest was high, he began to gather villagers in secret, sharing the ideals of freedom and self-rule. He encouraged his people to resist British taxes, boycott foreign goods, and assert their rights as Indians.

The British colonial administration had established outposts and rest houses in select areas of NEFA, maintaining a network of informants and sending punitive expeditions when challenged. Despite these risks, Moje Riba, undaunted, became a leading figure in the local movement against British rule.

His activism reached a climax in 1947, when he hoisted the Indian tricolour flag at Dipa, a village in the present-day Lower Siang district. This act of open defiance was both unprecedented and perilous. The hoisting of the Indian national flag in the region then under direct British control was a bold declaration that the people of Arunachal Pradesh sought to join the rest of India in her march toward independence.

Riba's visible involvement in the freedom movement soon drew the ire of the colonial authorities. He was arrested by the British for his activities and spent several months in jail. During his imprisonment, Moje Riba endured harsh conditions. Yet, his spirit remained unbroken, and his resolve only strengthened. News of his incarceration

spread through the villages, further galvanising the local population and drawing more people to the cause.

Even as the British tried to intimidate and suppress the movement, Moje Riba's example acted as a beacon. His courage inspired many in his tribe and neighbouring communities to resist colonial policies and assert their identity as free Indians.

With India's independence in August 1947, Moje Riba's dreams began to take shape. The withdrawal of British authorities from NEFA brought new challenges: the integration of the region into the Indian Union and fostering a sense of national unity among diverse and isolated tribes.

Moje Riba continued to serve his people in the years following independence. He advocated for education, social reforms, and economic development in Arunachal Pradesh. His experience in the freedom movement made him a respected leader, and he encouraged continued engagement with the new democratic government of India.

Despite his pivotal role, Moje Riba's contribution remained relatively unacknowledged at the national level for decades. However, within Arunachal Pradesh and among the Adi community, he is revered as a hero who risked everything for the dignity and freedom of his people.

In recent years, efforts have been made to bring attention to his story. The government of Arunachal Pradesh

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honoured him posthumously with tributes and public commemorations. Educational institutions and public forums increasingly teach his legacy, ensuring that his story inspires new generations.

The story of Moje Riba is woven into the broader tapestry of India's fight for independence, highlighting that the struggle was not confined to the well-known centres of resistance but flourished even in the remotest corners. Through his courage, vision, and quiet determination, Moje Riba demonstrated that the spirit of freedom transcends geography, language, and culture.

His life is a testament to the power of individual will and the enduring hope that even the smallest, most isolated voices can echo across the mountains and valleys of history. As India continues to celebrate its unity in diversity, remembering heroes like Moje Riba ensures that the silent flames of resistance are never forgotten, lighting the path for all who cherish liberty and justice.

JAI HIND

Trilochan Pokhrel (Sikkim)

(Trilochan Pokhrel, a freedom fighter from Sikkim, led nonviolent resistance, advocated for land rights, and linked Sikkim's struggle to India's broader independence movement.)



The Indian freedom struggle is often remembered through the lens of towering national figures Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, and countless others whose voices and actions shook the very foundations of British colonial rule. Yet, woven into the grand tapestry of India's quest for independence are the stories of unsung heroes from the remotest corners of the subcontinent. Among these, the name of Trilochan Pokhrel from Sikkim stands as a testament to quiet resilience and steadfast patriotism. A freedom fighter who dared to defy the British in the shadow of the Himalayas, Pokhrel played a vital role in sowing the

seeds of resistance in a region scarcely represented in mainstream historical narratives.

Born in the late 19th century in Tareythang, East Sikkim, Trilochan Pokhrel belonged to a humble Nepali-Bhutia family. At a time when Sikkim was a princely state under indirect British control, Pokhrel grew up witnessing the marginalisation of his people and the imposition of colonial policies that upended traditional lifestyles. Educated in the local schools, he was deeply influenced by the values of self-reliance, justice, and the quest for personal and collective dignity.

Sikkim, with its unique geopolitical position at the crossroads of India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Tibet, had its own social and political dynamics. However, the winds of change blowing across India in the early 20th century, especially the rise of Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement, found their way into the hills of Sikkim. Pokhrel, inspired by these developments, became determined to contribute to the fight for independence, even as the larger world remained largely unaware of his efforts.

Trilochan Pokhrel's activism was rooted in the Gandhian ethos of Satyagraha, nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience. At a time when the concept of challenging British and feudal authority was virtually unheard of in Sikkim, Pokhrel began mobilising villagers, peasants, and youth to demand basic rights and resist exploitative

policies. He advocated for the boycott of foreign goods, encouraged the spinning of Khadi, and organised meetings to spread awareness about the broader freedom movement sweeping the subcontinent.

Pokhrel's efforts were not without significant risk. The British, wary of any signs of unrest in the strategically crucial Himalayan belt, kept a close watch on political activities. Local authorities are often loyal to the colonial administration, seek to suppress dissident voices. Despite intimidation and threats, Pokhrel persisted, travelling from village to village and gathering support for the cause of independence. His steadfastness inspired many in Sikkim to identify with the broader Indian identity and to imagine a future free from foreign domination.

Trilochan Pokhrel's defiance took many forms, both subtle and overt. While he never courted the limelight, his organisational abilities and commitment to justice made him a rallying point for local resistance. He took measures to guarantee that the poor and marginalised rural communities, who were most affected by oppressive policies, had an avenue to express their concerns.

Pokhrel's activism particularly focused on land rights and the abolition of exploitative practices like forced labour and excessive taxation. He led campaigns demanding fair treatment for peasants and labourers, challenging the authority of landlords and officials allied with the British. In

doing so, he not only defied colonial authority but also sought to empower his fellow Sikkimese, fostering a sense of unity and purpose that transcended traditional divisions.

One of Pokhrel's lasting contributions was his effort to connect Sikkim's unique challenges with the wider Indian freedom movement. He corresponded with leaders in neighbouring Bengal and Assam, exchanging ideas and learning from their experiences. Through his work, Sikkim became more closely linked to the nationalistic aspirations of the subcontinent, even as it maintained its distinct cultural identity.

Trilochan Pokhrel's efforts also led to greater awareness of issues such as education, health, and social reform among his people. He believed that freedom from colonial domination would be incomplete without the upliftment of society as a whole. With this holistic vision, he encouraged the establishment of schools, promoted women's rights, and worked towards eradicating social evils that had long plagued the region.

Like many grassroots revolutionaries, Trilochan Pokhrel endured hardship, harassment, and long periods of obscurity. His work was often unheralded, his sacrifices unrecognised by mainstream accounts. Yet, his unwavering dedication to the principles of justice and freedom left an indelible mark on the psyche of Sikkim.

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After India's independence in 1947 and Sikkim's eventual integration into the Indian Union in 1975, Pokhrel remained a respected elder and a source of inspiration for subsequent generations. His selfless contributions have gradually come to light, earning him recognition as an important figure in Sikkim's political and social history.

Trilochan Pokhrel may not occupy the pages of every textbook. Still, his life stands as a powerful reminder that the struggle for freedom was and remains the work of countless individuals in every corner of the land. His courage, vision, and commitment to justice helped plant the seeds of independence in the Himalayan hills, ensuring that Sikkim's story is forever intertwined with the destiny of India. Today, as the country reflects on its hard-won freedom, remembering heroes like Pokhrel is essential not only to honour their legacy but to inspire future generations to stand up for justice, equality, and the enduring spirit of freedom.

JAI HIND

Trikendrajit Singh (Manipur)

(Trikendrajit Singh, the “Lion of Manipur,” led resistance against British colonial rule in the Anglo-Manipur War, sacrificing his life for Manipur’s sovereignty and independence.)



In the tapestry of India’s struggle for independence, woven with tales of sacrifice and courage, the name of Trikendrajit Singh of Manipur shines with a resolute brilliance. Known as the “Lion of Manipur,” Trikendrajit Singh’s story is one of extraordinary valour, uncompromising defiance against colonial authority, and an enduring legacy that continues to inspire generations in Manipur and far beyond.

Trikendrajit Singh was born into the royal family of Manipur, a princely state nestled amidst the lush hills and valleys of India’s Northeast. As the younger brother of Maharaja

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Surchandra Singh, Trikendrajit was raised in an environment steeped in tradition, responsibility, and a profound sense of duty towards his people. From a young age, he displayed a keen intellect, remarkable leadership skills, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

Manipur, with its strategic location bordering Burma (now Myanmar), had long maintained a unique cultural and political identity, resisting external pressures with resilience. As British colonial ambitions expanded across the Indian subcontinent, Manipur's sovereignty became a target, setting the stage for confrontation.

In the late 19th century, the British Empire had established its dominance over most of India, but the fiercely independent kingdoms of the Northeast remained outside direct colonial control. Manipur, while maintaining nominal relations with the British, was governed by its own monarch and administrative council. The Manipuri court, with Trikendrajit Singh as one of its key members, was keenly aware of the growing threat posed by imperial designs.

Tensions simmered as the British sought to interfere in Manipur's succession and internal affairs, often under the pretext of maintaining "order" and "good governance." The Manipuri princes, led by Trikendrajit, resisted these encroachments, cherishing their autonomy and the right to self-determination.

The seeds of confrontation were sown with the death of Maharaja Chandrakriti Singh in 1886. A succession dispute erupted, as the British Resident and political agents began to interfere in royal matters, supporting their candidates for the throne. The Manipuri princes, with Trikendrajit as the Senapati (Commander), viewed this as an intolerable breach of their sovereignty.

In 1890, the British backed the deposition of Maharaja Surchandra Singh, replacing him with Kulachandra Singh, Trikendrajit's elder brother. Trikendrajit was appointed as the Senapati, a position that placed him at the forefront of Manipur's military and political affairs. The British, however, continued to pressure the court, demanding greater control and seeking to curb the influence of the Senapati.

The simmering tensions erupted dramatically in March 1891, when British officials, including Chief Commissioner J.W. Quinton, arrived in Imphal to arrest Trikendrajit Singh and assert their authority. The Manipuri people, fiercely loyal to their leaders, rallied in defence of their sovereignty. A confrontation outside the Kangla Palace escalated, resulting in violence that saw several British officers killed.

The British, stunned and enraged by what they saw as a direct affront to imperial authority, declared war on Manipur. The Anglo-Manipur War had begun a brief but fiercely contested conflict that would become a landmark in the annals of India's resistance against colonial rule.

Trikendrajit, as Senapati, led his troops with unmatched courage and strategic acumen. The Manipuri forces, though vastly outnumbered and outgunned, mounted a spirited defence of their homeland. The hills and valleys of Manipur became a battleground where the resolve of a small kingdom faced the might of the British Empire.

Despite their valiant resistance, the Manipuris were eventually overwhelmed by the superior firepower and resources of the British. Imphal fell, and Trikendrajit Singh, along with other leaders, was captured. The British sought to make an example of Manipur's defiance; Trikendrajit and his compatriot Thangal General were put on trial and found guilty of waging war against the Crown.

On August 13, 1891, in full public view on the western ramparts of the Kangla Palace, Trikendrajit Singh and Thangal General were executed by hanging. Even in his final moments, Trikendrajit displayed extraordinary composure and courage, refusing to kneel before colonial power. His martyrdom sent shockwaves across Manipur and the broader Indian subcontinent, becoming a rallying cry for future generations of freedom fighters.

The sacrifice of Trikendrajit Singh occupies a place of honour in the collective memory of Manipur and India. He is remembered not only as a warrior and a prince, but also as a symbol of resistance against injustice and imperial domination. The Anglo-Manipur War, though a military

defeat, was a moral victory that exposed the brutality of colonialism and the indomitable spirit of those who resisted it.

In Manipur, the anniversary of his execution is observed as Patriots' Day, a solemn occasion marked by tributes, processions, and cultural events. The Kangla Fort, where Trikendrajit and his comrades made their last stand, stands as a monument to their valour. Statues and memorials commemorate his sacrifice, inspiring pride and a sense of identity among the people of Manipur.

For many years, the tales of resistance from India's Northeast remained on the periphery of mainstream national narratives. In recent times, however, historians and scholars have sought to give Trikendrajit Singh and the Anglo-Manipur War their rightful place in the story of India's freedom.

Trikendrajit's resistance exemplifies the diversity and depth of India's anti-colonial struggle. He fought not only for the sovereignty of Manipur but for the principle that every community, regardless of size or distance from the heart of the empire, had the right to liberty and self-determination.

The life and sacrifice of Trikendrajit Singh resonate with timeless lessons. His defiance was not just an act of rebellion; it was a principled stand for dignity, honour, and the right to determine one's destiny. The story of the Lion of

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Manipur reminds us that the quest for freedom is universal, that courage knows no boundaries, and that the legacy of those who dare to resist injustice endures through the ages.

In remembering Trikendrajit Singh, we honour not only a hero of Manipur but a stalwart of India's long and arduous journey to freedom. His name, echoing through the hills of the Northeast, calls us to cherish and protect the hard-won liberty that generations of brave souls fought to achieve.

JAI HIND

U Tirot Sing (Meghalaya)

(U Tirot Sing, the Khasi leader, led a brave resistance against British colonial rule, symbolising courage, defiance, and the struggle for freedom in Meghalaya.)



U Tirot Sing is a name that resonates with quiet determination and an indomitable spirit across the hills of Meghalaya and beyond. Revered as one of the earliest freedom fighters of North East India, he led his people, the Khasi tribe, in a brave and sustained

resistance against British colonial expansion in the early 19th century. His struggle is not only a chapter of local pride but a testament to the universal yearning for self-determination, justice, and dignity.

Born in 1802 in the Khasi Hills, Tirot Sing Syiem, also known as U Tirot Sing, was a hereditary chief (Syiem) of the Nongkhlaw kingdom, one of the ancient Khasi states. The Khasis, with their matrilineal heritage, distinctive language,

and unique customs, had long maintained their independence and autonomy in the face of changing tides in the Indian subcontinent.

Young Tirot Sing grew up in a society deeply connected to the land and fiercely protective of its traditions. As Syiem, he was not only a political leader but also a custodian of the spiritual and social welfare of his people. His authority came with the consent of a council of elders, reflecting the democratic ethos of Khasi society.

The early 19th century was a period of rapid British expansion in India. The East India Company, after consolidating its power in Bengal and Assam, turned its attention to the hill tracts of North East India. Their interests were both strategic and economic: the control of communication routes between the Brahmaputra and Surma valleys, and the exploitation of the region's natural resources.

In 1826, the British, having defeated the Burmese in the First Anglo-Burmese War, were eager to build a road to connect their newly acquired territories in the Brahmaputra valley with Sylhet. This road would pass through the Khasi Hills, including the domain of Tirot Sing. The proposal was presented to the Khasi chiefs as a means of development and opportunity, with promises of autonomy and respect for local authority.

Tirot Sing, ever cautious but open to progress for his people, initially agreed to the construction of the road, provided the British respected the sovereignty of the Khasi chieftaincies. However, suspicions soon arose as British behaviour grew increasingly overbearing. British officials interfered in local matters, stationed troops without consent, and began to treat the chiefs as mere dependents rather than equals.

Matters came to a head when the British, without consulting the Khasi rulers, planned to take over key passes and outposts. Tirot Sing's authority and the freedom of his people were at stake. In a grand durbar, he consulted the council and the people to the democratic traditions of the Khasis before making a momentous decision: to resist the British encroachment by force if necessary.

On 4th April 1829, Tirot Sing and his warriors launched a sudden and daring attack on the British garrison at Nongkhlaw. This marked the beginning of the Khasi uprising, a prolonged and courageous struggle. The conflict was characterised by guerrilla warfare: small bands of Khasi fighters, armed with traditional weapons and unmatched knowledge of the rugged hills, struck at British detachments and supply lines with remarkable tenacity.

The Khasis, though outnumbered and outgunned, utilised the challenging terrain to their advantage. The war dragged on for years, as the British found it difficult to subdue the

hills and pacify the determined resistance. The struggle inspired other chiefs and tribes in the region to rise against colonial rule, though unity remained elusive amid the diversity of the hill societies.

Despite their fierce resistance, the Khasis were hampered by a lack of modern weaponry and the overwhelming resources of the British. The British employed tactics of negotiation, subterfuge, and ultimately, betrayal. In 1833, after years of fighting and sustaining heavy losses, Tirot Sing was forced into hiding.

He was eventually betrayed by informers, captured by the British, and deported to Dacca (now Dhaka in Bangladesh), far from the hills that had been his home and fortress. Isolated from his people, he was imprisoned in conditions that sapped his health but not his spirit.

On 17th July 1835, U Tirot Sing died in captivity in Dacca. He was only in his early thirties, but his legacy had already been etched into the consciousness of the Khasi people. To them, he was and remains a symbol of resistance, courage, and the undying quest for freedom.

His memory is honoured every year on 17th July Tirot Sing Day when people across Meghalaya pay tribute to his sacrifice through songs, dances, and solemn remembrance. His story is taught in schools, celebrated in

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folklore, and enshrined in the annals of India's freedom movement.

U Tirot Sing's uprising, though ultimately unsuccessful in military terms, marked a turning point in the history of the Khasi Hills and North East India. It was one of the earliest organised resistances against British colonialism, predating the more widely known rebellions in other parts of India.

His fight demonstrated the power of indigenous leadership, the strength of community resolve, and the value of principled defiance in the face of oppression. It also underscored the importance of unity and strategic vision in resisting imperial power.

Today, the story of U Tirot Sing continues to inspire not only in Meghalaya but across India as a reminder that the struggle for justice is a continuous journey. His life encourages new generations to value their heritage, defend their rights, and stand up for the dignity of their communities.

The hills he once traversed remain a testament to his courage, echoing, even now, with the songs of freedom he inspired. Statues, memorials, and cultural events ensure that his name is not forgotten, and his fight lives on as a beacon for all who cherish independence and justice.

U Tirot Sing Syiem was more than just a freedom fighter; he was a leader who embodied the spirit of his people. In

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facing the might of the British Empire, he chose the hard path—one that demanded sacrifice, resilience, and unwavering hope. His life and legacy are woven into the story of India's struggle for freedom, standing tall as a reminder that even the smallest voice, when lifted by righteousness, can challenge the most powerful empire.

May his story continue to inspire courage and unity, reminding us that the quest for freedom is both a privilege and a responsibility that each generation must carry forward.

JAI HIND

Jamthang Haokip (Manipur)

(Jamthang Haokip led the Kuki Rebellion (1917-1919) in Manipur against British colonial rule, fighting for autonomy and justice, inspiring future generations of freedom fighters.)



Jamthang Haokip, a figure whose name resonates with the spirit of resistance, is a lesser-known but significant freedom fighter from Manipur, a state nestled in the far northeast of India. His life and legacy are emblematic of the indomitable will of the hill tribes and the collective desire for self-determination during the British colonial era. As one of the leaders who dared to stand up to foreign rule, Jamthang Haokip's contributions are a testament to the vibrant freedom movement that emerged not only in the heart of India but also in its remote frontiers.

Jamthang Haokip was born into the Kuki community, one of the major indigenous tribes inhabiting the hills of Manipur and surrounding areas. The Kuki people, known for their fierce independence and deep connection to their land, had their traditional way of governance and community

organisation long before the British set foot in the region. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the British Empire, in its quest to consolidate the Indian subcontinent, sought to bring the northeastern frontier under direct colonial administration.

The British policy of expansion and annexation was met with suspicion and resistance by the local tribes. The imposition of taxes, curtailment of traditional rights, and disregard for local customs bred widespread discontent. The hill tribes, including the Kukis, saw these measures as a direct assault on their autonomy and ancestral way of life. This climate of unrest set the stage for a series of confrontations, known collectively as the Kuki Rebellion (1917–1919) or the Anglo-Kuki War.

The Kuki Rebellion was not merely a local uprising; it was a coordinated series of resistance efforts against British attempts at forced labour (the “Lalup” system), increased taxation, and the suppression of traditional chieftainships. Jamthang Haokip emerged as one of the prominent leaders of the movement. His leadership was marked by a profound sense of justice and a willingness to challenge a vastly superior colonial power.

The rebellion began in 1917, when the British authorities attempted to recruit forced labour from the tribal communities for the First World War. The Kukis, under the leadership of chieftains like Jamthang Haokip, refused to

comply, arguing that such demands were tantamount to slavery and violated their fundamental rights. The resistance soon escalated into armed confrontation, with the Kukis organising themselves into guerrilla bands and launching attacks on British outposts.

Jamthang Haokip's leadership during the rebellion was marked by both strategic acumen and personal valour. He mobilised his community, forging alliances with other tribal leaders and ensuring that the resistance was united and effective. The Kukis, although poorly armed compared to the British, made use of their intimate knowledge of the rugged terrain to launch ambushes, disrupt supply lines, and evade capture.

Under Jamthang Haokip's guidance, the rebels adopted hit-and-run tactics, which frustrated the British forces and led to protracted engagements in the hills. The insurgency spread across a wide area, making it one of the most significant challenges faced by the colonial administration in the region. The Kukis' determination and resilience, bolstered by leaders like Haokip, kept the flame of resistance alive for nearly two years.

The British, determined to quash the rebellion, deployed thousands of troops and resorted to scorched earth tactics, destroying villages and crops in an attempt to starve the rebels into submission. Despite the eventual suppression of the uprising in 1919, the Kuki Rebellion under leaders such

as Jamthang Haokip left a lasting legacy. The rebellion drew attention to the grievances of the hill tribes and exposed the brutality of colonial rule in the northeast.

Many leaders, including Jamthang Haokip, faced severe reprisals—imprisonment, exile, and, in some cases, execution. However, their sacrifices were not in vain. When his secret service was on the books of the British, he was arrested and jailed for six months. One of his daughters said that he was kept in Kohima jail. After the completion of his jail tenure, he was set free and walked home as a hero. In 1944, he took 25 men who were under his leadership to drop off the Japanese in Burma. As a lover of freedom and a great freedom fighter from the hills, the Government of India had granted him a pension in 1973 and awarded him Tamrapatra. He contested the first-ever Manipur election in 1948 on a Kuki National Assembly (KNA) ticket. His attachment to the INA was so strong that in 1984, Jamthang published a book in vernacular called "Manipur a Gospel leh Kuki ho Thusim. He dedicated one chapter in the book to the INA. He was also active until his last breath in 1998 at his residence in Hill Town, Churachandpur.

Despite the significance of the Kuki Rebellion and the role of leaders like Jamthang Haokip, mainstream Indian historiography has often marginalised or overlooked their contributions. In recent years, however, there has been a growing movement among the Kuki community and

scholars to recognise and honour these unsung heroes. Memorials have been erected, and annual commemorations are held in Manipur and neighbouring states to pay tribute to the courage and sacrifice of Jamthang Haokip and his compatriots.

Jamthang Haokip's legacy extends beyond his role as a freedom fighter. He embodies the universal quest for justice, autonomy, and dignity in the face of oppression. His life is a powerful reminder that the fight for freedom is not the exclusive domain of great empires or well-known leaders, but also of ordinary people in distant hills, whose courage and resilience ripple through history.

While Jamthang Haokip may not have been a formal member of the Indian National Army, his life and leadership were profoundly shaped by the same historical currents that gave rise to the INA. He exemplified the spirit of resistance, the quest for dignity, and the desire for self-determination that animate both the INA's story and the broader saga of India's freedom movement.

Today, as India continues to celebrate its independence and diversity, the story of Jamthang Haokip and the Kuki Rebellion serves as an inspiration to safeguard the rights of marginalised communities and to honour the sacrifices made by countless unsung heroes.

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The tale of Jamthang Haokip is not just a chapter in the history of Manipur or the Kuki people; it is a testament to the enduring spirit of resistance that defines the human experience. In celebrating his memory, we reaffirm the values of freedom, justice, and unity, ensuring that the flame he kindled continues to light the path for generations to come.

JAI HIND

Freedom Fighters of North East India

Our Publications



Some of our Publications



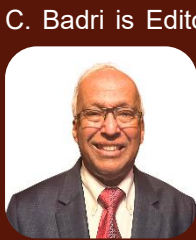
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About this book

This book tells the stories of 25 freedom fighters from North East India. Each chapter highlights their bravery, sacrifices, and struggles against British rule. The fighters came from diverse communities and backgrounds. Their actions inspired many during India's independence movement. The book honours their legacy. It aims to educate readers and keep these heroic stories alive for future generations.

About the Author



C. Badri is Editor-in-Chief of digital magazine *PreSense* and brings over four decades of distinguished banking experience, having served as General Manager at Canara Bank and General Manager/Chief Vigilance Officer at Indian Overseas Bank. Beyond banking, he actively promotes cybersecurity awareness, particularly among senior citizens.

A passionate researcher of India's freedom movement, Badri dedicates himself to documenting the stories of lesser-known freedom fighters, believing their sacrifices deserve greater recognition. He serves as President of the Probus Club of Chennai South, inspiring fellow professionals in civic responsibility and digital awareness.

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