

# Compounding in Meetei Surnames

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## Abstract

This paper mainly concentrates on the formation of Meetei surnames through the process of Compounding. Indigenously no surname is found without the ending phoneme /m/ in Meetei society. Therefore, all the Meetei surnames end with a common identical phoneme /m/. In this paper the classification of compounding process of the Meetei surname is also studied in different ways by applying different formulae.

The paper attempts to discuss not only the indigenous Meetei surnames but also the Meetei Brahmin surnames still existing in Manipur.

## INTRODUCTION

In the past, the offspring of the same family were settled together. After increasing number of the family members, some had separated and made new houses for their needs. The new houses were also made near the old one. Like this, many houses have been gradually extended near the same old ancestor. From that tradition, the Meetei Yumnak (Meitei surname) came into existence. Here, *jum* means 'house' and *nak* means 'near' and become 'jumnak' (R.K., 1970). In the past, *jumnak* indicated both *house* and *owner* or any one of them. For example, someone can ask about a person or of a house whether he/she is known or unknown to him. Such a question can be put as, *kəijum məc<sup>h</sup>əno* or *kəijumno* 'which surname is referred to (you or him)? Later on, it seems to be known as the family of the house. From that point of view, elders used to address an individual by his/her surname. Therefore, the Meetei surnames are perhaps, derived from the nicknames given to the original founder of a family in connection with various activities, namely, for doing something, making something, arranging something, for an individual peculiarity, skill of the person, for having supervisory work, etc. It is believed that all the Meetei surnames were derived from eponyms (i.e., derived from the peculiarity of the individuals). If the name of a thing, a place, and an individual of a society or a group is derived from the name of a person, it is known as Eponym. For example, Rome is an eponym coming from Romulus (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Judy Pearsall, Tenth edition: 480). In Meeteiron, the eponym of Sagolsem surname is sagol senba mi 'person who tends cattle'. Therefore, an eponym is a person after whom a discovery, invention, place etc. is named. Hence the person may have mythical character.

## SURNAME

A surname is considered as a name which is added to the given name. Unlike other languages, the nature of surname prevailing in Meeteiron (Meetei 'Meetei people' + ron~lon 'language') is formed by adding some words before or after or both, to the given name. And

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it is regarded as a part of personal name. In short, the name used to identify the members of the family is known as surname.

## ORIGIN OF MEETEI SURNAMES

In Meetei society, the introduction of surnames took place in the reign of king Sameirang (518-568 A.D.). It was recorded on page 4 of Cheitharol Kumbaba (Lairenmayum and Ningthoukhongjam, 1967).

All the Meetei surnames originated from the seven clans of Meetei. There are altogether 716 surnames in Meetei society (Ayekpam, 1993). These clans have their specified numbers of surnames given below.

1. məŋaŋ	219
2. luwaŋ	77
3. k <sup>h</sup> umən	167
4. əŋom	89
5. moiraŋ	90
6. k <sup>h</sup> aŋanbə	34
7. səlai læisaŋt <sup>h</sup> em (ceŋləi).	40

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*Fig: Seven clans showing the number of surnames contained.*

## FORMATION OF MEETEI SURNAMES

There are two types of word formation in this language. They are a) Affixation and b) Compounding. In Meeteiron, compounding is more prominent in forming words. From the linguistic point of view, surname in Meetei society should be treated as a single word. In Meeteiron, words are formed by adding prefix or suffix to the roots. On the other hand, it may also be that two or more than two roots are used in making a word. Therefore, the words of the first kinds are not used prominently in dealing with compounding of the Meetei surnames. And those kinds of compound words which are created by combining two or more roots will be discussed here for the Meetei surnames.

The formation of the Meetei surnames can be divided into 20 formulae. Those formulae are given as under.

**First Formula: v + n**

Here surnames are formed by adding p<sup>h</sup>əm~b<sup>h</sup>əm ‘place’ to the verb roots as described below.

Examples:

ŋaŋ + b <sup>h</sup> əm	(speak + place)	= ŋaŋbəm
t <sup>h</sup> oŋ + b <sup>h</sup> əm	(cook + place)	= t <sup>h</sup> oŋbəm
taŋ + b <sup>h</sup> əm	(shelter + place)	= taŋbəm
iru + b <sup>h</sup> əm	(bath + place)	= irubəm
sat + p <sup>h</sup> əm	(bloom + place)	= sapəm

It can be noted that verbs- ŋaŋ ‘speak’, t<sup>h</sup>oŋ ‘cook’, taŋ ‘shelter’, iru ‘bath’ and sat ‘bloom’ are followed by **b<sup>h</sup>əm~p<sup>h</sup>əm** ‘place’ to form these surnames- ŋaŋbəm, t<sup>h</sup>oŋbəm, taŋbəm, irubəm and sapəm respectively. Here the aspiration of the word **b<sup>h</sup>əm~p<sup>h</sup>əm** does not appear in these surnames. In fact, the aspirated sounds lose their existence in these final forms of surnames because of their morphophonemic change.

### Second Formula: ə + v + n

In this kind the surnames are formed by adding attributive ə as a prefix and **bəm~pəm** ‘place’ to the verb roots respectively.

Examples:

ə + həi + bəm	(attr + mould + place)	= əhəibəm
ə + t <sup>h</sup> ok + pəm	(attr + come out + place)	= ət <sup>h</sup> okpəm
ə + jek + pəm	(attr + draw + place)	= əjekpəm

It is noticed that all these verb roots- həi ‘mould’, t<sup>h</sup>ok ‘come out’ and jek ‘draw’ are prefixed by the attributive ə and immediately followed by **bəm~pəm** so as to obtain these final surnames.

### Third Formula: ə + adj + n

Such type of the surname is formed by prefixing attributive ə and by adding **bəm~pəm** to the adjective. It is rarely found in this language.

Examples:

ə + nəu + bəm	(attr + new + place)	= ənəubəm
ə + li/ri + bəm	(attr + old + place)	= əribəm
ə + saŋ + bəm	(attr + long + place)	= əsaŋbəm

### Fourth Formula: n + v + n

In this construction of surnames, an NP is added just immediately before the verb root and followed by **bəm-pəm** as described below.

Examples:

lairik + jəŋ + bəm (book + look + place)	= lairikjəŋbəm
cəndon + tək + pəm (santalum + grind + place)	= cəndontəkpəm
cənəm + t <sup>h</sup> a + bəm (garlic + plant + place)	= cənəmt <sup>h</sup> abəm
kəit <sup>h</sup> el + lak + pəm (market + guard + place)	= kəit <sup>h</sup> elakpəm
kəkjen + pai + bəm (fowl + fly + place)	= kəkjenpaibəm
lairen + lak + pəm (python + catch + place)	= lairenlakpəm
lai + səŋ + bəm (God + guard + place)	= laisəŋbəm
ŋoibuŋ + k <sup>h</sup> oŋ + bəm (conch + blow + place)	= moibuŋk <sup>h</sup> oŋbəm
səmcet + sa + bəm (comb + make + place)	= səmcetsabəm
sorok + k <sup>h</sup> ai + bəm (road + cut + place)	= sorok <sup>h</sup> aibəm
ten + su + bəm (bow + make + place)	= tensubəm
hui + ren + bəm (rivet + cut + place)	= huirembəm
kək <sup>h</sup> iŋ + ta + bəm (name of a place + settle + place)	= kək <sup>h</sup> iŋtabəm
k <sup>h</sup> wai + rak + pəm (everyone + control + place)	= k <sup>h</sup> wairakpəm
t <sup>h</sup> aŋ + su + bəm (sword + make + place)	= t <sup>h</sup> aŋsubəm
kəit <sup>h</sup> el + lak + pəm (market + control + place)	= kəit <sup>h</sup> ellakpəm
nau + roi + bəm (young one + rear + place)	= nauroibəm
ŋari + jan + bəm (fermented fish + hang + place)	= ŋarijanbəm

### **Fifth Formula: n + 3pp + n**

Unlike the four formulae analyzed above, the fifth type of surnames does not use any verb form. It is only constructed through the addition of an NP before the third person pronominal prefix and by following another NP.

Examples:

t <sup>h</sup> oŋjau + mə + jum (large bridge + his + house)	= t <sup>h</sup> oŋjauməjum
lairen + mə + jum (python + his + house)	= lairenməjum
t <sup>h</sup> oidiŋ + mə + jum (sesame, <i>Sesamum indicum</i> Linn + his + house)	= t <sup>h</sup> oidiŋməjum
k <sup>h</sup> unuŋ + mə + jum (remote area + his + house)	= k <sup>h</sup> unuŋməjum
niŋt <sup>h</sup> emca + mə + jum (king's son + his + jum)	= niŋt <sup>h</sup> emcaməjum
k <sup>h</sup> unja + mə + jum (large village + his + house)	= k <sup>h</sup> unjauməjum
t <sup>h</sup> əmbal + mə + jum (lotus + his + house)	= t <sup>h</sup> əmbalməjum
waŋk <sup>h</sup> əi + mə + jum (name of a place + his + house)	= waŋk <sup>h</sup> əiməjum
tak <sup>h</sup> el + mə + jum (name of a place + his + house)	= tak <sup>h</sup> elməjum

moiraŋ + mə + jum (name of a place + his + house)  
 = moiraŋməjum  
 k<sup>h</sup>umboŋ + mə + jum (name of a place + his + house)  
 = k<sup>h</sup>umboŋməjum  
 məntri + mə + jum (minister + his + house) = məntriməjum  
 k<sup>h</sup>etri + mə + jum (kshetriya + his + house) = k<sup>h</sup>etriməjum

### Sixth Formula: n + n

Surnames constructed through the sixth formula are very few in number. It is only formed by two NPs as given below.

Examples:

soi + bəm (a kind of fishing net + place) = soibəm  
 i + ləm (thatch + place) = iləm  
 kaŋŋa + bəm (swan + place) = kaŋŋabəm  
 k<sup>h</sup>oi + bəm (bee + place) = k<sup>h</sup>oibəm

### Seventh Formula: n + n + v + n

Seventh kind of surname is formed by deleting the nominalizer **pə~bə** from the verb root.

Examples:

samu + lai + lat + pə + pəm (elephant + God + worship + nZR + place)  
 = samurailatpəm  
 hui + niŋ + lak + pə + pəm (rivet + back + control + nZR + place)  
 = huiniŋlakpəm  
 p<sup>h</sup>əu + kəi + səŋ + bə + pəm (paddy + granary + watch + nZR + place)  
 = p<sup>h</sup>əukəisəŋbəm  
 koŋbə + lai + lat + pə + pəm (name of a place + God + worship + nZR  
 + place) = koŋbrailatpəm

The nominalizer **pə~bə** does not occur at these surnames.

### Eighth Formula: v + bə + n

This kind of surname is formed by adding nominalizer **pə~bə** to the verb root and followed by an NP as given below.

Example:

net + pə + ləm (trample + nɹ + place) = nɛprəm

The verb root net ‘trample’ is suffixed by the nominalizer **pə~bə** and then followed by ləm ‘place’. The NP **ləm** ‘place’ becomes **rəm** when it follows the nominalizer as a morphophonemic change.

### **Ninth formula: n**

Here a noun alone can make a surname as given below.

Examples:

əŋom (name of a clan)

kolom (graft)

In Meetei society there are seven clans. Angom clan is also one of them and it can be both the clan and the surname.

On the other hand the act of grafting something onto something else is a common phenomenon and it is known as *kolom sembə* ‘to make graft’ in Meeteiron.

### **Tenth formula: n + n + adj + nɹ**

These surnames in this language are very few in number. To make an identical ending phoneme /m/ of the Meetei surname the nominalizer **bə/pə** is dropped and the sound /n/ of **nan** is changed to /m/. Such type of changes frequently occurs in this language. Illustrations are given hereunder for making surname.

Examples:

mai + sa + nan + bə (face + body + clean + nɹ) = maisnam

həi + sa + nan + bə (fruit + body + clean + nɹ) = həisnam

### **Eleventh formula: ə + v + nɹ + v + nɹ**

This kind of surname is formed by deleting the nominalizer **bə~pə** and the first sound /c/ of **cən** is changed to /j/ and the final sound /n/ of **cən** is changed to /m/ as illustrated below.

Example:

ə + koi + bə + cən + bə (attr + round + nɹ + make + nɹ)

= əkoijəm

### **Twelfth formula: v + adj**

Surnames consisting of verb and adjective are very few in the occurrence of the Meetei surnames. This type of surname is given below.

Example:

t<sup>h</sup>i + jam (search + many) = t<sup>h</sup>ijam

### **Thirteenth formula: n + adj + n**

It is formed by adding two nouns to the adjective before and after it as follow.

Examples:

k<sup>h</sup>un + toŋ + bəm (village + high + place) = k<sup>h</sup>undonbəm

ləubuk + toŋ + bəm (paddy field + high + place) = ləubuktonbəm

ləi + toŋ + bəm (earth + high + place) = ləitonbəm

### **Fourteenth formula: n + v**

It is formed by adding a verb to the noun as follow.

Examples:

noŋmai + t<sup>h</sup>em (name of a community + appease) = noŋmaithem

kəi + sam (tiger + disappear) = kəisam

k<sup>h</sup>oi + k<sup>h</sup>om (bee + collect) = k<sup>h</sup>oik<sup>h</sup>om

lan + t<sup>h</sup>em (war + keep) = lant<sup>h</sup>em

əhən + t<sup>h</sup>em (senior + appease) = əhənthem

ciŋa + k<sup>h</sup>em (name of a hill + end) = ciŋak<sup>h</sup>em

### **Fifteenth formula: n + v + nZR**

It is formed by deleting the nominalizer **bə~pə** from the verb root and the first /c/ sound and final /n/ sound change to /j/ and /m/ sounds respectively to be the Meetei surname as given below.

Examples:

hui + len + bə (rivet + cut + nZR) = huirem

kaŋ + cən + bə (chariot + make + nZR) = kaŋjəm

lairen + cən + bə (python + control + nZR) = lairenjəm

səgol + sen + bə (horse + tend + nZR) = səgolsem

k<sup>h</sup>urai + cən + bə (name of a place + control + nZR) = k<sup>h</sup>urajjəm

niŋt<sup>h</sup>əu + cən + bə (king + make + nZR) = niŋt<sup>h</sup>əujəm

məi + k<sup>h</sup>am + bə (fire + bruise + nZR) = məik<sup>h</sup>am

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hi + cən + bə (boat + make + nɹ)	= hijəm
loŋ + cən + bə (spear + make + nɹ)	= loŋjəm
t <sup>h</sup> aŋ + cən + bə + (knife + make + nɹ)	= t <sup>h</sup> aŋjəm
laŋkon + cən + bə (plough + make + nɹ)	= laŋgoŋjəm
u + səm + bə + (wood + join + nɹ)	= usəm
səna + səm + bə + (gold + join + nɹ)	= sənəsəm
li + səm + bə (cane + join + nɹ)	= lisəm
jum + nan + bə + (house + rub + nɹ)	= jumnam

#### Sixteenth formula: v + nɹ + v + nɹ

Such surnames are formed by two verbs nominalized by the morpheme **pə~bə** but this morpheme is deleted to get these last surnames as given below.

Example:

k <sup>h</sup> ai + bə + tem + bə (cut + nɹ + trim + nɹ)	= k <sup>h</sup> aidem
koi + bə + cən + bə (round + nɹ + make + nɹ)	= koijəm
hai + bə + tem + bə (swing + nɹ + trim + nɹ)	= haidem

#### Seventeenth formula: n + adj

This is formed by combining a noun and an adjective as given below.

Example:

hui + jam (rivet + many)	= huijam
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#### Eighteenth formula: n + adj + v + nɹ

This kind of surname is formed as under.

Example:

sa + nəu + cən + bə (animal + new + make + nɹ)	= sanəujəm
lai + mu + cən + bə (God + black + make + nɹ)	= laimujəm

#### Nineteenth formula: adj + n + nɹ

This surname is formed by deleting the nominalizer **pə~bə** from the noun **ram** as illustrated below.

Example:



kə + lam + bə (excess + eagerness + nɹ) = kəram

### Twentieth formula: n + n + n

This surname is formed by combining three nouns as given below.

Example:

lai + sa + lam (God + body/ animal + place) = laisrəm

laihau + rəm + bəm (champak, *Michelia champaka* + place + place)  
= laihaurəmbəm.

### Classifications and meanings of the Meetei surnames

The Meetei surnames were more or less related to one's place of settlement or geographical location, profession, incident, availability of the things, flora and fauna etc. Therefore, the naming of the Meetei surname can broadly be divided into the followings:

- a) Surnames given depending upon their professions
- b) Surnames given relating to the events
- c) Surnames known after the place of settlement
- d) Surnames known after the availability of things/ flora and fauna
- e) Surnames known after their physical appearance of a person
- f) Surnames known after the seven clans
- g) Surnames given to their habits
- h) Un-clan surnames

### Surnames given depending upon their professions

#### Keithellakpam /kəit<sup>h</sup>ellakpəm/

The surname Keithellakpam was given to a person for controlling the market place. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

kəit<sup>h</sup>el + lak + pəm > kəit<sup>h</sup>ellakpəm  
market control place

It is a surname given to a person for controlling the market place.

#### Khundrakpam /k<sup>h</sup>undrakp↔m/

This surname was given to a leader for controlling a particular village. It was first derived from  $k^h\text{und}\leftrightarrow\text{lakp}\leftrightarrow\text{mi}$  “person who controlled of a particular village”. Linguistically it can be discussed as follows:

$k^h\text{un} + d\leftrightarrow + \text{lak} + p\leftrightarrow\text{m} > k^h\text{undrakp}\leftrightarrow\text{m}$   
village loc. control place

A surname given to a person for controlling the particular village.

### **Khuraijam** / $k^h\text{uraj}\leftrightarrow\text{m}$ /

This surname was given to an individual person for having the guard of a particular place. In Khuraijam surname, the final syllable of the word was derived from  $c\leftrightarrow\text{nb}\leftrightarrow$  “to protect”. Here, the final sound /n/ can be replaced by /m/, a nominal suffix. But, before such replacement takes place, the infinitive suffix **bə** or nominalizer should be dropped first. The process of surname may be as follow:

$k^h\text{uraj}\leftrightarrow\text{m}$

$k^h\text{urai} + j\leftrightarrow\text{m} < c\leftrightarrow\text{nb}\leftrightarrow > k^h\text{uraj}\leftrightarrow\text{m}$   
name of a place to guard

A surname given to a person for keeping guard of a particular place.

### **Thongbam** / $t^h\text{oNb}\leftrightarrow\text{m}$ /

This Meetei surname was given to a person for doing the work of cook. Therefore, this Meetei surname was given on the basis of profession. Scientifically it can be described as follows:

$t^h\text{oN} + b\leftrightarrow\text{m} > t^h\text{oNb}\leftrightarrow\text{m}$   
cook place

A surname given to a person whose profession was recognized as a cook.

### **Laishangbam** / $\text{laisaNb}\leftrightarrow\text{m}$ /

This surname was given to a person for watching over god’s image or statue by profession. It can linguistically be described as follows:

$\text{lai} + \text{saN} + b\leftrightarrow\text{m} > \text{laisaNb}\leftrightarrow\text{m}$   
god w  
atch place

A surname given to a person for watching over the statue of god.

**Khwairakpam** /k<sup>h</sup>wairakpəm/

This surname was given to the person for being controlled of the general people of the king. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

k<sup>h</sup>wai + lak + pəm > k<sup>h</sup>wairakpəm  
general people control place

“A surname given to a person whose knowledge was to control the general people”.

**Lairenlakpam** /lairenlakp↔m/

This surname was given to the person for being of the capability of the catching the python by wisdom. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

lairenlakp↔m  
lairen + lak + p↔m > lairenlakp↔m  
python control place

A surname given to a person for controlling python by profession.

**Lairikyengbam** /lairikjeNb↔m/

This surname was given to a non- Manipuri whose work was to write or read the religious book. In those days, most of the people of our society were illiterate. So such kind of work was done by the non-Manipuris who possessed reading and writing skills. The surname process can be described as follows:

lairik + jeN + b↔m > lairikjeNb↔m  
book look place

A surname given to a person for doing the work of writing or reading religious books by profession.

**Lairenjam** /lairenj↔m/

This surname was given to the person who had the skill of controlling or catching python. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

lairen + j↔m <(cənbə)> lairenj↔m  
python to control

A surname given to the person for having the skill of catching python.

**Aheibam** /əhəibəm/

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This Meetei surname was given to a particular person for doing the work of moulding utensils by profession. Structurally it can be described as follows:

ə + həi + bəm > əhəibəm  
attr mould place

A surname which was given to a person whose job was to mould utensils.

### **Kebam** /kebəm/

This Kebam surname was given to a person for residing at the place where the beatification work was done. It can linguistically be described as follows:

ke + bəm > kebəm  
make up/ beatify place

A surname given to a person in connection with the work of beautification was done.

### **Langoljam** /laŋgolj↔m/

This surname was given to a person whose work was to make ploughs by profession. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

Here, the suffix **j↔m** came from **c↔nb↔** ‘to make’ by dropping the infinitive suffix **bə** and replacing the final sound of the word **cən** by **m** sound.

laŋgol + j↔m < cən**b↔** > laŋgolj↔m  
plough to make

A surname given to a person whose work was to make ploughs.

### **Khaidem** /k<sup>h</sup>aidem/

This surname was given to the person whose work was to cut or to trim something with an instrument like cutter or spade. The ending **dem** was derived from **tembə** meaning ‘to trim or to level surface of earth’. Before such replacement took place, i.e. **tem** should change to **dem**, the nominalizer **bə** was dropped first. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

k<sup>h</sup>ai < k<sup>h</sup>aibə + tem < tembə > k<sup>h</sup>aidem  
to cut to trim

A surname given to a person for having the skill of cutting and trimming something else.

### **Khairom** /k<sup>h</sup>airom/

This surname was given to the person whose work was dexterous in cutting and making handicraft products. The ending **rom** in k<sup>h</sup>airom surname was derived from **lonbə** ‘to weave’. Linguistically, it can be discussed as follow:

k<sup>h</sup>airom

k<sup>h</sup>ai + rom < lonbə > k<sup>h</sup>airom  
cut to weave/interlace

A surname given to a person for being dexterous skill of cutting and weaving of something else.

**Kangjam** /kaŋjəm/

This surname was given to the person whose work was to make chariot. In those days the Meeteis used to start to play the game by making chariot. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

kaN + j↔m < cənb↔ > kaNj↔m  
chariot to make

A surname given to a person for making chariot.

**Kanghujam** /kaNhu↔m/

This surname was given to the person whose work was to make the hockey sticks (bamboo). From the time immemorial the people of the Meetei had been using the hockey sticks as an instrument of the game. It can be described as follows:

kaNhu + j↔m < c↔nb↔ > kaNhu↔m  
hockey stick to make

A surname given to a person for being done the work of making hockey stick.

**Landham** /landam/

This surname was given to the person whose work was to look after a particular area, as a protection work from the enemies. Scientifically it can be described as follows:

lan + dam < t<sup>h</sup>amb↔ > landam  
war to keep

A surname given to a person for watching a particular area as a protection work from the enemies.

**Kolom** /kolom/

This surname was given to the person for having the knowledge of grafting small plants by profession. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

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kolom  
graft

A surname given to a person for having the knowledge of grafting.

**Koijam** /koijəm/

This surname was given to the person whose job was to make pond around with bricks. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

koi + jəm < cənbə > koijəm

A surname given to a person for making a pond around with bricks.

**Surnames given relating to the events**

**Kongkham** /koNk<sup>h</sup>am/

This surname was given to a person whose capability was to compromise on quarrel for the payment of fine. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

koN + k<sup>h</sup>am > koNk<sup>h</sup>am  
fine compromise

A surname given to a person who could compromise on quarrel for the payment of fine.

**Surnames known after the place of settlement**

**Keithelchangbam** /kəit<sup>h</sup>elcəŋbəm/

The surname Keithelchangbam was given to a family whose residence was the gate way of the market place. Later on the person who was settled at that place came to be known as Keithelchangbam. The process of formation of this surname can be described as follows:

kəit<sup>h</sup>el + cəŋ + bəm > kəit<sup>h</sup>elcəŋbəm  
market enter place

A surname given to a person for residing his family near the entrance area of the market.

**Khongbantabam** /k<sup>h</sup>oNbantab↔m/

This surname was given to the person whose residence was on the bank of a ditch or canal. Scientifically it can be described as follows:

k<sup>h</sup>oNban + ta + b↔m > k<sup>h</sup>oNbantab↔m  
ditch settle place

A surname given to a person who settled on bank of the ditch.

**Khundongbam** /k<sup>h</sup>undoNb↔m/

This surname was given to the person for being settled at the high area of the village. Structurally it can be described as follows:

k<sup>h</sup>un + toN + b↔m > k<sup>h</sup>undoNb↔m  
village high place

A surname given to a person who settles at the high place of the village.

**Khunjaomayum** /k<sup>h</sup>unʃauməjum/

This surname was given to the person whose residence was at the large village. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

k<sup>h</sup>un + ʃau + mə + jum > k<sup>h</sup>unʃauməjum  
village large 3pp house

A surname given to a person whose house was in a large village.

**Khunungmayum** /k<sup>h</sup>unuŋməjum/

This surname was given to the person whose house was at the rural area since the concept of Khunung was a rural area to the Meetei society. The composite meaning of Khunungmayum is the house of rural/remote area. It can be described scientifically as follows:

k<sup>h</sup>unuŋ + mə + jum > k<sup>h</sup>unuŋməjum  
remote 3pp house

A surname given to a person whose residence was at the remote area.

**Khundangbam** /k<sup>h</sup>undaŋbəm/

This surname was given to the person who took shelter to another village.

k<sup>h</sup>un + taŋ + bəm > k<sup>h</sup>undaŋbəm  
village shelter place

A surname given to a person who took shelter to another village.

**Surnames known after the availability of things, flora and fauna etc.**

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### **Kangabam** /kaŋabəm/

This surname or family name was given to a person for being settled at the place where the bird goose stayed. Linguistically it can be discussed as follows:

kaŋa + bəm > kaŋabəm  
goose place

A surname which was given to person residing at the place where a goose stayed.

### **Keisham** /kəisam/

The surname Keisham was given to a person for settling at the place where a tiger disappeared. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

kəi + sam > kəisam  
tiger disappear

A surname given to a person who settled at the place where a tiger disappeared.

### **Laishram** /laisrəm/

This surname was given to the person for residing at the place of god's image or chapel. To the knowledge of the Meetei, in olden days, it was taken that there were many sacred altars in Manipur. So, one of the persons who settled in such a chapel came to be known as Laisaram. Linguistically, it can be described as follows.

lai + sa + ləm > laisrəm  
god statue/body place

A surname given to a person residing at the place where a god's statue is located in standing posture.

### **Khoibam** /k<sup>h</sup>oibəm/

This surname was given to the person for settling at the place where plenty of bees were available. Scientifically it can be discussed as follow:

k<sup>h</sup>oi + bəm > k<sup>h</sup>oibəm  
bee place

“A surname given to a person for being resided at the bee keeping place”.

### **Khoikhom** /k<sup>h</sup>oik<sup>h</sup>om/



This surname was given to a person for doing the work of bee keeping by profession. Structurally it can be discussed as follow:

$k^h oi + k^h om > k^h oik^h om$   
bee collect

A surname given to a person for doing beekeeping works.

**Laiphangbam** /laip<sup>h</sup>↔Nb↔m/

This surname was given to the person settled at the place where any form of god's statue was available. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

lai + p<sup>h</sup>↔N + b↔m > laip<sup>h</sup>↔Nb↔m  
god find place

A surname given to a person settled at the place where the statue of god was available.

### **Surnames known after their physical appearance of a person**

**Ashangbam** /↔saNb↔m/

This surname was given after the physical appearance of the person whose height was very tall. Such surnames are few. Structurally it can be described as follows:

↔ + saN + b↔m > ↔saNb↔m  
attr long place

This surname was given to a person who is very tall in appearance.

**Khagokpam** /k<sup>h</sup>agokp↔m/

This surname was given to the person whose head seems to be a h↔rik<sup>h</sup>agok (scientific name 'Aegel marmelos'). Linguistically it can be described as follows:

k<sup>h</sup>agok + p↔m > k<sup>h</sup>agokp↔m  
Aegel marmelos place

This surname was given to a person who had a big head and looked like a h↔rik<sup>h</sup>agok".

### **Surnames known after the seven clans**

**Khumanthem** /k<sup>h</sup>um↔nt<sup>h</sup>em/

This surname was given to a group of people who came from Khuman area. It is assumed that the ending **them** was derived from **then** meaning ‘to display ‘or ‘to exhibit’, ‘*t<sup>h</sup>en*’ became ‘*t<sup>h</sup>em*’ as a process of making identical ending sound of the Meetei surname (Namoijam, 1997).

It can structurally be described as follows:

$k^h\text{um}\leftrightarrow n$  +  $t^h\text{em} < t^h\text{enb}\leftrightarrow >$   $k^h\text{um}\leftrightarrow nt^h\text{em}$   
 name of a clan to display

This surname was given to a group who came from the place where Khuman clan settled.

### **Surname given based on the habits**

#### **Karam** /kəram/

This Meetei surname was given to a person with excessive eagerness character. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

$kə$  +  $ram$  +  $bə$  >  $kəram$   
 excess eagerness nzi

This surname was first given to a person for feeling of greedy over one’s wealth.

#### **Khadangbam** /κH↔δαNβ↔μ/

This family name or surname was given to a person relating to a place where a talkative person resided. In Meetei society, a talkative person has been considered as Khadangi mi “man of talk”.

Linguistically it can be described as follows:

$\kappa H\leftrightarrow\delta\alpha N$  +  $\beta\leftrightarrow\mu$  >  $\kappa H\leftrightarrow\delta\alpha N\beta\leftrightarrow\mu$   
 talkative place

A surname given to a talkative person.

#### **Kiyam** /kijam/

This surname was given to a soldier for being timid in war. In the society of the Meetei, in those days, there was a lot of fighting amongst one principality (country) over another. During the war, in the battlefield, the timid soldier did not fight strongly. When the war was over and when he came back home, Kiyam surname was given to the timid person after his character. Structurally it can be described as follows:

$ki$  +  $jam$  >  $kijam$

fear very

A surname given to a person whose role was very fearful character in war.

**Ngangbam** /NaNb↔m/

This surname was given to a spokesman in connection with his residence. The person might be the spokesman of the king. It can linguistically be described as follows:

NaN + b↔m > NaNb↔m

speak place

A surname given to a person who was the spokesman of king.

### Non-clan surnames

All the Bramin surnames of Manipur are included in this group:

**Kshetrimayum** /k<sup>h</sup>etrim↔jum/

This surname was given to the descendants of Kshetriyas, coming from outside Manipur and is related to Sanskrit Kshatriya who first started settling down here during the reign of king Chalamba (1545 to 1562 A.D.). Scientifically it can be described as follows:

k<sup>h</sup>etri + m↔ + jum > k<sup>h</sup>etrim↔jum

name of a community 3pp house

A surname given to a person who came from the house of the Khetri.

**Lairenmayum** /lairenm↔jum/

This surname was given to the person who settled at the place where python resided or was found. Structurally it can be described as follows:

lairen + m↔ + jum > lairenm↔jum

python 3pp house

A surname given to a person for residing at the place of python.

**Loubuktongbam** /ləbuktoNb↔m/

This Brahmin surname was given to a person who came from outside Manipur and settled at the mound of the paddy fields. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

ləbuk + toN + b↔m > ləbuktoNb↔m

paddy field high/mound place

A surname given to a person for settling at the elevated area of the paddy field”.

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### **Laimayum** /laim↔jum/

This surname was given to the person who settled at the chapel. It can structurally be described as follows:

lai + m↔ + jum > laim↔jum  
god 3pp house

A surname given to the person who settled near the chapel.

### **Kongbrailatpam** /koNbrailatp↔m/

This Brahmin surname was given to the worshipper of god who came from outside and settled on the bank of Kongba river. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

koNba + lai + lat + p↔m > koNbrailatp↔m  
name of a place god worship place

A surname given to a person relating to a place where the god of Kongba was worshipped.

### **Samurailatpam** /səmurailatpəm/

This surname was given to a Brahmin family which worshipped the lord Ganesh. To the knowledge of the Meetei, in those days, it was taken that the statue of Ganesh was an elephant. So the name was given to them.

samu + lai + lat + pəm > səmurailatpəm  
elephant god worship place

A Meetei-Brahmin surname which was given to a person in a place where the elephant was worshipped.

### **Guruaribam** /guruəribəm/

This surname was given to a Meetei-Brahmin who could advise and teach the king. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

guru + ə + li + bəm > guruəribəm  
teacher Att old place

A Brahmin surname which is given to a person for being an old learned teacher of the king.

### **Laipubam** /laipub↔m/

This surname was given to a person whose profession was to carry the god's statue. Then the place where that person resided came to be known as Laipubam. Linguistically it can be described as follows:

lai + pu + b↔m > laipub↔m  
god carry place

A surname given to a person whose profession was to serve and to carry god's statue (image).

## CONCLUSION

There are also some surnames which are not included in the above forms. In modern days many new surnames have been created because of the need to live independently in Meetei society. Certain surnames show the alertness exhibited in a profession, some relate to absconding, settling in the individual's wife's house, searching for personal profit, etc. From this situation, a surname may have many clans, for instance, *Ayekpam* is included in *Luwang, Mangang and Kha-nganba* clans. The surname *Usam* is also included in *Mangang, Luwang, Moirang and Angom* clans.

## Abbreviations

v	-	verb
n	-	noun
3pp	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> person pronominal prefix
attr	-	attributive
nzr	-	nominalizer
adj	-	adjective
+	-	combined with
=	-	equal

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