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Meetei Mayek True-Type font.
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The *Meetei Mayek* Font, and this Site created by

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Meetei Mayek font was created using the [Font Creator Program](#)

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History of *Meetei Mayek*

It is indeed difficult to trace the exact period of the origin of the *Meetei Mayek*. The burning of vital historical documents or the *Puyas* of Kangleipak (Manipur) written in *Meetei Mayek* during the reign of King **Pamheiba** in the early 18th century, made the effort all the more difficult. However, *Meetei Mayek* experts and authorities say the script dates back as early as 3900 years ago. (*Kanglei Eeyek Wari*, Kangjia, 1996).

According to the very few *Puyas* that survived, such as, *Wakoklon Thilel Salai Singkak*, *Wakoklol Thilel Salai Amailon*, *Meetei Mayek* comprised of 18 alphabets. Even during the reign of King Pamheiba (1709-1748), all documents were written in these 18 alphabets. Pamheiba embraced Hinduism in 1717. Few years after this, he ordered the destruction of pre-Hindu places of worship and the burning of all the *Puyas* of the *Kangleichas* or the citizens of *Kangleipak*. After the massive destruction of the pre-Hinduism records of *Meetei* philosophy, literature and history, the king and his descendents tried taking total control over the cultural, literary and religious affairs of the people. But the official effort of the *Konung* or the Royal Palace to impose a concoction of Bengali, Devnagri and Gurumukhi script on the people was not welcomed by one and all. Between 1709 to 1941, Bengali script replaced *Meetei Mayek* and subsequently became the official script of the *Konung*. During this phase, there were many voices of dissent.

The most strident voice of dissent came from a *Meetei* scholar, Laininghan Naoria Phullo (Naorem Phumdrei). Naoria started the movement to revive *Kanglei* or *Meetei* tradition in 1930 from a village called Jaribon, Laishramkhul in Cachar in Assam. He developed a script and named it after him. The *Naoria Mayek* challenged the script imposed and propagated by the *Konung* in *Kangleipak* (Manipur). It had 24 alphabets. The voice of revivalism and the new script soon spread to the entire *Kangleipak*.

An organization called the *Meetei Marup* was formed in 1947 in *Kangleipak* to propagate the *Naoria Mayek*. Serious debates on the script began in 1950. A state level committee called the *Mayek Lupteen* Committee (MLC) was formed in 1958 to conduct a study. A sub-committee of the same group concluded that there are only 18 alphabets in the *Meetei Mayek*. Though the effort of Naoria Phullo was appreciated, another conference on *Mayek* in 1969 discovered that some of the alphabets of the *Naoria Mayek* were Bengali and Devnagri. The same conference also found out that not a single ancient *Meetei Puya* was written in *Naoria Mayek*. After a thorough study of an original *Puya* called "*Wakoklon Thilel Salai Amailon Pukok*" the participating judges recommended that the actual genuine *Meetei Mayek* had only 18 alphabets.



















The most significant development in the history of the *Meetei Mayek* happened in 1976. During the "Writers Conference" in the same year, all the groups working towards the development of *Meetei Mayek* officially endorsed the 18 alphabets and urged the government of Manipur to popularize the script. The supporters of the *Naoria Mayek* did not oppose the move. Thus the present *Meetei Mayek* re-emerged with new vigor. The nine letters called the *Lom Eeyek*, which are derivatives of the previous 18 were added so as to incorporate additional phonetic sounds present in *Meeteilon* as a result of historical changes. On the 19th of January, 1983, the Education Department of the Government of Manipur, prescribed "*Meetei Mayek Tamnaba Mapi Lairik*" as text book for students of class VI.

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Meetei Mayek: The Script

Interestingly, the letters in Meetei Mayek are named after parts of human body. Meanings of these names are indicated with the letters below. Sounds which the letters denote are indicated within brackets.









Eeyek Eepee (Original Letters)

					
kok (<i>ka</i>) head	sam (<i>sa</i>) hair	lai (<i>la</i>) forehead	mit (<i>ma</i>) eye	pa (<i>pa</i>) eyelash	na (<i>na</i>) ear
					
chil (<i>cha</i>) lips	til (<i>ta</i>) saliva	khou (<i>kha</i>) throat	ngou (<i>nga</i>) pharynx	thou (<i>tha</i>) chest	wai (<i>wa</i>) navel
					
yang (<i>ya</i>) backbone	huk (<i>ha</i>) lower spine	un (<i>u</i>) skin	ee (<i>ee</i>) blood	pham (<i>pha</i>) placenta	atiya (<i>a</i>) sky

Lom Eeyek (Additional Letters)


		
gok (<i>ga</i>)	jham (<i>jha</i>)	rai (<i>ra</i>)
		
ba (<i>ba</i>)	jil (<i>ja</i>)	dil (<i>da</i>)
		
ghou (<i>gha</i>)	dhou (<i>dha</i>)	bham (<i>bha</i>)


Lonsum Eeyek (Letters with short ending)


			
kok (<i>k</i>)	lai (<i>l</i>)	mit (<i>m</i>)	pa (<i>p</i>)
			


na (*n*)til (*t*)ngou (*ng*)ee (*ee*)


Cheitap Eeyek (Vowel Signs)



 atap (*aa*)


 inap (*i*)



 unap (*u*)


 sounap (*ou*)


 yetnap (*e*)


 otnap (*o*)


 cheinap (*ei*)


 nung (*ng*)

Cheising Eeyek (Digits)


 0


 1


 2


 3


 4


 5



 6


 7


 8


 9

Khutam Eeyek (Punctuation Marks)


 "joining" underline


 question mark


 comma


 fullstop

References:

1. *Meetei Mayek Tamnaba Mapi Lairik* by Ng. Kangjia
2. *Kanglei Eeyekki Wari* (History of Kanglei Eeyeks) by Ng. Kangjia