

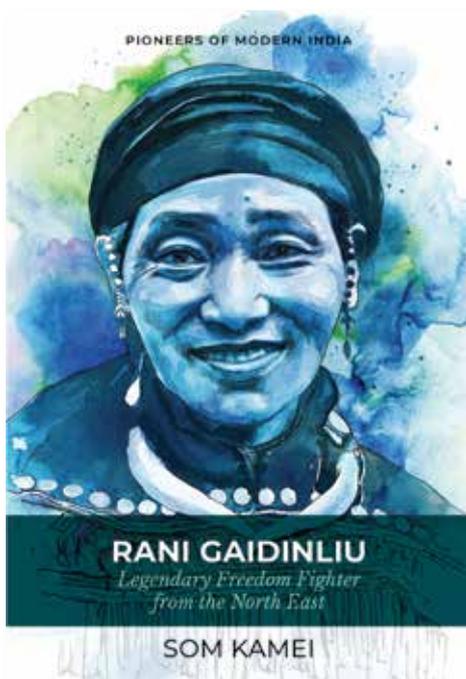
PIONEERS
OF
MODERN INDIA

Rani Gaidinliu

Legendary Freedom Fighter from the North East

Som Kamei

The story of a fearless Naga freedom fighter
and a spiritual leader



Rani Gaidinliu was a legendary freedom fighter from North East India. As a teenager, she bravely stood up to the might of the British Empire, and fought for justice and freedom from colonial repression of her community, the Zeliangrong Nagas. After Independence, the Zeliangrong people pushed for a 'Homeland Movement' under her charismatic leadership. She was also a fearless Naga spiritual leader who fought for the preservation of her indigenous tribal way of life by reforming the ancient Zeliangrong religion.

This monograph is a fascinating account of Rani Gaidinliu, narrating her journey as a young girl when she joined Haipou Jadonang's movement for Makam Gwangdi or 'Naga Raj', and subsequently took charge of the movement after Jadonang was arrested and hanged by the British. It recounts how Gaidinliu later came to be known as 'Rani Gaidinliu', a name made famous by Jawaharlal Nehru who was touched by her stories of revolt and imprisonment during his travels in the north east before Indian Independence.

This work shows how Rani Gaidinliu rose as a new hope and became a symbol of resistance for her community, the Zeliangrong Nagas, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's call for freedom.

JULY 2022

IMPRINT: PAPER MISSILE

BIOGRAPHY | MONOGRAPH
₹299

ISBN: 978-93-91125-62-2

Size: 190mm x 130mm; 236pp

Book Print Paper

Black and white, 7 photographs

Paperback

E-book available 



Som Kamei is a member of the Indian Postal Services. Born in Imphal, Manipur, he is an alumnus of Hindu College, Delhi University, and did his Masters and MPhil in Sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University. He is currently based in Dimapur, Nagaland, where he lives with his wife and three children.

A sports enthusiast, he also enjoys travelling and reading. His interests include tribal studies and ethnic movements and he writes on cultural and social issues of North East India. This is his first book.

EXTRACT:

After Jadonang's execution, Gaidinliu took up the leadership of the movement for social justice and independence. The British had let loose a reign of terror in the hills. They imposed collective fines on the rebel villages and all guns were confiscated. The British rule was arbitrary and oppressive. Gaidinliu told her followers, 'We are a free people. The white men should not rule over us. We will not pay house tax to the government. We will not obey their unjust laws like forced labour and compulsory porter subscription.' The response of the British government was very heavy handed. It passed laws for arbitrary arrests of people who were Gaidinliu's sympathisers and imposed heavy fines on villages giving shelter to the movement. Thus the socio-religious reform movement of Jadonang and Gaidinliu was forced to transform itself into a political one due to the oppressive rule of the British in their area of influence.

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