CHAPTER-I

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Manipur is situated in the North-East frontier of Indian sub-continent bordering with Myanmar on the North-East, East and South, on the South-West by Mizoram, on the North-West & West by Assam and on the North by Nagaland. It lies in between 23.50° and 25.30° North Latitude, and 93.10° and 94.30° East Longitude, covering an area of about 22,356 square kilometres, of which only one twelfth of the total area is cover by valley. Surface area of Manipur is forming 0.7 P.C of the total land surface of the Indian Union. It has a border of 854 km. of which 352 is international border with Myanmar on the East. The remaining 502 km. long border separates her from the neighbouring states of India.

Physiographically, the valley is the centre surrounded by ranges of hills. The valley is approximately 2639 sq.km. Out of this an area of 550 sq. km. is occupied by lakes, wet lands, barren uplands and hillocks. The valley is about 2600 ft. above the sea level. Loktak Lake is the biggest fresh water lake in the North-East India, which is an area of about 200 sq. km., occupying the southern part of the valley. Imphal is the capital city. It is thickly populated area of Manipur. Present population of Manipur is 25,77,517 according to the 2001 census. Out of this population about two-third live in the valley and the rest in the hills. The state has nine districts, five in the hills and
four in the valley. The land is very fertile, dense forests, numerous rivers, lofty mountain that surrounded the valley. On the North, South, East and West Manipur is enclosed by range of hills as a part of Himalayan ranges. Two river system viz. the Barak-Brahmaputra system and Chindwin-Irrawadi system drain the entire state. The important tributaries of the Imphal rivers are the Iril, the Kongba, the Thoubal, the Heirok, the Sekmai, the Chakpi and the Khuga rivers.

The climate of the state is governed by the relief of land and the rain bearing winds viz. the South-West monsoon in summer and the North-East monsoon and the Mediterranean winds in winter. The temperature ranges between 2°C to 39°C. Annual rainfall is sometimes as high as 975 mm. and sometimes as high as 2646 mm. Average relative humidity is between 36% and 100%. Manipur falls in one of the most seismically active zones of the Trans-Asiatic Earthquake Belt. This earthquake belts is known as the 'Alpine-belt', which reaches Manipur state through the highland of Myanmar and Indonesia.[1]

Manipur have trade relation with neighbouring countries long before the sanskritization. Internal and external trade were carried on both in water and land routes. Manipur was known to the Arabic, Persian, Greek, Roman, Chinese, Burmese and Shan as the international trade route, of the past. According to the Greek historian (Author of Periplus of the Erythrean sea), Manipur has exported Gold, Silk and Teipata (Malabatrum) to Greek in the first century A.D.[2] With the coming of

the British in Manipur formal international trade was established. By the treaty of 1763, signed between Jai Singh, the Raja of Manipur and the British officials, established free trade in Manipur. \[1\] There were land routes through the hills connecting Manipur with Surma valley, the Brahmaputra valley and the Kabow valley. Through this land routes Manipur got contact with the rest of the world. Today these are two main land routes i.e., N.H. No. 39, Imphal-Kohima-Dimapur Road and N.H. No. 53 is Imphal-Cachar Road. N.H. No. 39 touched the Land routes of South-East Asia.

✔ During the historical period the geographical areas has varied from time to time according to the political situation. Its geographical area increased at the time of powerful rulers and sometime decreased on the frontier during the week ruler. Thus, the boundaries of Manipur fluctuated at various time with the fortunes of the Kings of Manipur. The present position of the state was demarcated by a boundary commission under Sir James Johnstone the political agent of Manipur (1881). But the boundary problem continued up to 1891.

Manipur was known by different names at different periods. It was known to the Shans as Cassay and to the Burmese as Kathe, a corruption of the same word; the Ahoms called it Meklee, and Moglie by the Cachares, while the old Assamese name for it is Moglau. \[2\] The terms also they equally applied to the people. The name

\[1\] J.I. Boongohal Singh, Introduction to Manipur, p. 128.
Manipur is a sanskritized name meaning 'land of gems'. It came into use after the coming of Brahmins and adoption of Hinduism as state religion by the rulers, particularly from the beginning of the 18th century A.D.\[1\] Kangleipak or Porei Meitei Leipak was the ancient name. The land also called Meitei Leipak or the broad land of the Meiteis.\[2\]

Manipur is very rich for her flora and fauna wealth. The state has a rich alluvial soil that helps to develop agricultural production. Rice and vegetable crops are principle production. The state has rich mineral resources, water resources and forest resources. Agriculture was the main occupation. Grazing, fishing, hunting was also usual. Weaving sericulture, embroidery, dying, wood work, metal work etc. were small scale industries.

"Various ethnic groups belonging to southern Mongolid group, the Tibeto-Burmans, the Indo-Aryans and a sizeable section of the Tai (shans) came to Manipur from pre-historic times down to the present day. The present ethnic groups of Manipur, viz., the Meiteis, the Naga tribes, the Kuki-chin tribes and other Indian communities are the descendants of those migrating people".\[3\] The majority of them are of Mongolian origin, who speaks Tibeto-Burman language. The inhabitant of Manipur consisting of the Meiteis, the Meitei-Brahmins, the Lois, the Nagas and Kukis, and the Pangal or Manipuri Muslim. The majority inhabitant of the valley was

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1. O. Bhogeshwor, Sanamahi Laikan, p. 50,
2. T.C. Hodson: The Meiteis, p. 1
the Meiteis. They were also settled in neighbouring states and countries i.e. Assam, West-Bengal, Tripura, Bangladesh and Myanmar etc. The Lois people inhabited in different villages of the valley. The Pangal are to be found mostly on the fertile tracts of land between the Imphal river and the Iril river. The hill areas were settled by the Nagas and Kukis, they were the tribal people. The Lois is the original inhabitant of Manipur. While the Brahmins and Pangal were the immigrant and war captives, settled from 15th century A.D. and 17th century A.D respectively. The language speak by the Meitei is the languafranca of Manipur.

Meiteis are physically well built. Their eyes have a slight fold eyelids and their eye are small. They have a prominent flattened nose and fair complexion ranging from brownish to yellow brown. They have a dark black hair. Their general height is about 5ft 5 inches. "Anthropometrically, the Meiteis and hill men are characterised by short stature, mesorrhine, mesocephalic (or brancy cephalic) and leptoprosopic face. The Pangals on the other hand have long face, mesorrhine dolicho-mesocephalic head forms."[1] According to T.C. Hodson, the name Meitei has been derived from Mi = man and thei = separate. Some people trace the Meitei to the Tai branch of the Moi tribe of South-East Asia. "Dr. George Grierson and S.K. Chatterji hold that Meitei are the Kuki-Chin section of the Tibeto-Burman stock."[2] But the Mongolian feature is predominant in Manipur. Physically structure is more akin with the Mongolian race.

The Meiteis of today are Tibeto-Burman mongoloid with Australoid, Aryan and Thai admixture and still blended with some Negrito and Dravidian elements. The amalgamation of people is a long process either war captive or peaceful emigrants.

Each and every clans and tribes of Manipur have their own culture, tradition, religion, festival, dress, language etc. that represented there identity. The rich culture heritage of Manipur had greatly contributed towards Indian culture. The Meitis are the principle inhabitants of Manipur. They were divided into seven Salies or clans i.e, Mangang or Ningthouja, Luwang, Khuman, Moirang, Angom, Khab-Nganba and Sarang-Leisangthem. In the beginning these seven clans have its independent principality in different regions. The Mangang or Ningthouja, established supremacy over the other clans and absorbed them all. They were commonly known as the Meitei. These seven clans have further divisions into Sagies or Surnames. The head of the clans is called Peba, who is considered to be the chief of the clan. The clan system of Meitei changed to the Gotra of Hindu after the conversion to Hinduism and they also styled themselves as Kshatriya. Amongst them Rajkumar, descendents of Manipuri kings enjoyed more privileged then the other. They performed all the Hindu socio-religious rites from birth to death. The existence of the clans was exogamous and not endogamous as in the Hindu caste system.

The Manipuri’s developed a healthy social life. The members of a family lived in the same house built of wood and reed. The family was patriarchal. But, both men and women equally shared the management of household affairs. Women were held in
great respect. They were honoured in the home and respected outside. There is no evidence to show that women had a subordinate position in the society. In social and religious gathering they occupied a prominent position and enjoyed an equal status with men folk. They are hard working and played an important role in the economic life of the famil. “The women are coarse and masculine and perform all the merchandise of the bazar”. [1] ‘Sati’ and ‘Pardah’ system were unknown. Polygamy is practice but the practice of monogamy is common. Child marriage is absent. Widow-remarriage is permitted. Dowry does not constitute an essential feature in marriage.

Brahmin performed all the religious rites and rituals. They enjoyed a very high position in Manipur society. Inter-marriage between a Brahmin bride-groom and other castes is allowed provided the marriage is performed in the Gandhara form of marriage but such marriage between a Brahmin bride and bridegroom of other caste is strictly prohibited. [2] The Lois are divided into a number of sections viz, Phayeng, Kameng, Andro, Sugunu, Chakpa etc. Lois was to perform manual works. They also engaged in salt making, silk manufacture and fishing. [3] There are 29 tribes in the state speaking different dialects. These may be broadly divided into Nagas and Kukis. This hill people have their own culture and tradition, religion, economic organisation, political organisation, etc.

1. John M’Coash, Topography of Assam, p. 159.
Manipur was a land of peasant communities. In the society peasant come to occupy very low status, particularly with the growth of landed aristocracy. The aristocracy had grown very fast with their association with the kings since the medieval period. Learning was mostly confined to the traditional priestly class and the Brahmins. The method of instruction was oral and the pupil also received moral and physical training. They studied different subjects such as astronomy, moral instructions, dance, religion, fine arts etc. Girls of higher class and the royal family also got education. However, dance, fine arts, and handicrafts, were the main subjects. Some of the educated women had become distinguished poetesses. In the hill the tribal youth got instructions in practical training in military science, administration, arts, culture, religious and customary laws in their village Morungs or the Dormitories.\[1\]

The modern education came in Manipur in the second half of the 19th century A.D. Many British officials like Captain Gordon, V.F. Nuthal, Sir James Johnstone etc. try to established western education in Manipur. The origin of the organised education in the state dates back to 1903 when Rev. W. Pettigrew a British educationist and philanthropist became the first honorary inspector of schools under the Education Department of Assam.

Liberal religious policy of the rulers of Manipur led to the establishment of different form of religion in Manipur. Majority of the people of Manipur were the followers of Hinduism. Meiteis were the majority of the population of Manipur

\[1\] J. Roy, History of Manipur, p. 167
followed Hinduism as their main religion. It is from the time of Maharaja Garibniwaz that Hinduism was recognised as the state religion of Manipur. Although, they still continued to worship traditional deities side by side with Hindu gods and goddesses. Some of the Meiteis continued to be followers of Meiteism and its traditional belief and practices. They never touch with any other cult. The movements for the revival of Meiteism are rising up today. Christianity is dominated in the hill areas. The tribal people followed Christianity as their main religion. The first ever conversion of Manipuri tribes to Christianity took place at Ukhrul (in the eastern hill) in 1894. They also practice & followed animism and other traditional cult. Jainism is followed among the non-Manipuri particularly by the Marwary traders from the beginning of the 20th century. We have no definite information about the practice of Buddhism except the findings of a few Buddhist relics. The images found in Manipur are portable and could have been brought to Manipur by a section of people. Islamic religion is followed by the Meitei- Pangal, who was settling in different parts of the valley of Manipur since king Khagemba period, 17th century A.D.

Manipur is very rich in archaeological sites and relics. There are hundreds of historical sites, monuments, caves, inscriptions, coins, Rock shelters etc. in the hills and valley of Manipur. This evidence has thrown some light on the history and culture of Manipur since pre-historic periods. Although, excavations and explorations have not yet been adequately done in Manipur.
Archaeological findings have revealed that Manipur was inhabited by prehistoric man. Pre-historic settlements were found in the hill and valley areas. mentioned may be made of Khangkhui caves, Ukhrul District. Tharon caves, Tamenglong District, Nongpok-Keothelmanbi, Senapati District and Sajik-Tampa, Chandel District, Manipur. Discovery of Palaeolithic tools at Khangkhui caves such as stone artefacts, bone tools and faunal remains highlight that the people of that time knew hunting, and tools making technology. Evidences from the findings of the Tharon caves and Nongpok-Keithelmanbi represented Haobinhian culture.\(^1\) Beside these, there are many Neolithic Celts, Microliths and Chalcolithic culture remains discovered from various parts of Manipur.

The rulers of Manipur issued numbers of coins known as ‘Shen’ from the early period. The coins are made of bell-metal, silver and gold, in Archaic Manipuri scripts, Devanagari scripts and Bengali scripts in different shape and size. Manipur has several megalithic monuments in the hills and valley, such as megalithic monuments at Mao, Ukhrul, Tharon, Ningel, Yairipok etc. Megaliths are mostly found in the hill areas. Sculptures of various designs have been discovered in Manipur. These sculptures exhibit many regional characters. The sculptures represent various gods and goddess of Hindu and traditional deities. In Manipur, there are many secondary burial sites. These burial sites revealed important information of the burial customs and their

\(^1\)G.P. Singh, Edt., Souvenir, *North-East India History Association*, XXIst Annual Session-2000, p. 32
social and economic life. The most important secondary urn burial sites are Sekta, 18 Kms. from Imphal, Khamaran, 12 Kms. from Imphal and Khangabok is about 27 Kms. from Imphal belonged to 17th and 18th century A.D. [1]

Epigraphic records were found in different places of Manipur. The inscriptions are found engraved on stones, copper plates and iron plates. Inscriptions are issued as royal orders, decisions regarding social, religious and administrative matters to officials and people in general. The inscriptions were written in Bangali scripts and Manipuri scripts. There are many other historical monuments found scattered in different parts of the valley. These monuments are consisting of ruined palaces, forts, temples, gate-ways, samadhis, coronation hall etc. Majority of these monuments were found in the ancient capital Kangla, Imphal and also in another capital Canchipur, 8 kms., to the south of Imphal. Among the monuments, temples were in good condition that has discussed in the following chapters.

The history of ancient Manipur prior to the age of Ningthouja dynasty can be known chiefly from a few Manuscripts, folk tales and legends. Due to the shortage of historical source materials, the history of ancient Manipur prior to the establishment of Ningthouja dynasty could not be reconstruct systematically in the chronological manner. The valley of Manipur was ruled by seven chiefs as a representative of seven Salais or clans in different regions of Manipur independently. [2] In the hill also several chief of tribes ruled independently. Mangang or Ningthouja clan rose into prominent.

Pakhangba, who founded the Ningthouja dynasty in 33 A.D. was the first known king to the history of Manipur. The Manipuri puranas says that he was divine by day and human by night, the reason being that he administered divine justice like a god in the day and like an ordinary human being, he spent the night with his family members and kith and kin.

After Pakhangba reigned, his successors from 154 A.D. to 1467 A.D. tried to consolidate the power. The most important event in this period was the visit of Samlung, the younger brother of Sukapha, the king of pong during the reign of Naethingkhong. Invasion and rebellion from different place of Manipur took place during this period. Manipur king subdued all the rebellions and also conquered many hill villages. In 1467 A.D. Thamwai Nimthouba become the king of Manipur. The great achievement of the king was the annexation of Kyang, a Shan kingdom in the kabow valley of Burma, with the help of his ally Choupha Khekkhomba, the king of Pong in 1470 and he assumed the title of Kyamba, conqueror of Kyang. They interchange their culture and divided the conquered territories between them. In 1485 he introduced Cheithaba ceremony.

2. M. Kirti Singh: Religious Developments in Manipur in the 18th and 19th centuries., p. 32.
Among the successors of king Kyamba from 1508 to 1709, king Khagemba (1596-1652) and Charairongba (1697-1709) were the most powerful rulers of Manipur. They ruled Manipur with wisdom and skill and solved all the problem of his kingdom whether it was external or internal. They defeated the Muslims, Burmese and Tripurees invaders. They also contributed many things in the field of political, social, cultural and economic life.

King Charairongba was assassinated by Pamheiba alias Garibniwaz as the king of Manipur in 1709. He was a great conqueror and also a great administrator of the 18th century A.D. He invaded Burma in many time and defeated Burmese rulers and captured many important towns.\textsuperscript{[1]} Garibniwaz Maharaja also defeated the Tripurees invaders. He made many social and religious reforms. He himself initiated to \textit{Ramandi Vaishnavism} through a Brahmin priest called Santidas and declared it as state religion of Manipur.\textsuperscript{[2]} Many hindu Brahmins visited and settled in Manipur in his period.\textsuperscript{[3]}

After king Garibniwaz (1709-1748) there followed by fratricidal war among the prince for the throne. Alaungpya, the king of Burma, invaded Manipur in 1758-1759 and defeated the Manipurees. Jayasimha, son of Garibniwaz, was the first Manipuri king who signed an agreement with the British authority to repulse the Burmese. By the terms of the agreement, of 14th Sept. 1762, British government agreed to send British troops to defend Manipur from Burmese.\textsuperscript{[4]}

\textsuperscript{[1]} Edward Gait, \textit{A History of Assam}, p. 257.  
\textsuperscript{[2]} O. Bhogeshwor, \textit{Sanamahi Luikan}, p. 52.  
\textsuperscript{[3]} Wangkhemcha Chingtamen Edt., \textit{Bamon Khunthoklon}, p. 9.  
\textsuperscript{[4]} Edward Gait, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 257-258.
However, the British authority could not fulfil the term of the treaty because of their internal problems. Again, the Burmese king Hsinbyushin invaded and defeated Manipuris in 1764-65.\(^1\) Jayasimha fled to Cachar. With the help of Swargadeva Rajeshwar (1751-1769), the Ahom king of Assam, Jayasingh recapture the throne by defeating the puppet king set up by Burmese ruler.\(^2\) King Jayasimha was a great administrator. He established friendly relation with the Ahom king by offering his daughter Kuranganayani to King Rajeshwar Singh.\(^3\) The Ahom king married her and she became the barkuari, the chief queen of the Ahom king.\(^4\)

King Jayasimha was also a great Vaishnava ruler. He invited many Brahmins in his country and allowed them to settle on the valley by giving grants. He declared Gouriya Vaishnavism as the state religion of Manipur. After Raja Jayasimha, Labanyakachandra (1798-1801) Madhuchandra (1801-1804), Chourajit, (1804-1813) and Marjít (1813-1819) ruled the country. During the reign of king Marjít in 1819, the Burmese king Bagyidow (1819-1837) invaded Manipur and seized Imphal.\(^5\) Marjít fled to Cachar. The act of torturing, oppression and genocide continued for seven years till 1826. The Manipuris deserted the valley. This period was known as ‘\textit{Chahi taret khuntakpa}’ or seven years devastation 1819-1826. The country was ruled by a puppet king represented by the Burmese king. During this period, the Manipuris princes such

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as Chourajit, Marjit, and Gambhir singh, ruled Cachar by defeating Govinda Chandra, king of Cachar.\textsuperscript{11} During the Anglo- Burmese war(1824-26), Gambhir Singh son of Jayasimha and his 500 Manipur Levy with the help of British government led the expedition to Manipur in 1825.\textsuperscript{12} The Burmese evacuated the valley of Manipur. The Anglo-Burmese war was concluded by the treaty of Yandaboo signed on February 24, 1826. By this treaty, Gambhir singh was recognised as independent ruler of Manipur both by the Burmese and the British government. A treaty was signed between the British authority and Gambhir singh on 25\textsuperscript{th} January 1834, by this treaty Gambhir Singh handed over the Kabow Valley to the Burmese King and as a compensation for the lost, the Raja of Manipur received 500 Sikka per month from the British government. In 1835 the office of the political agent at Imphal was opened by the British-India government.\textsuperscript{13}

After the death of Raja Gambhir Singh, Chandrakirti Singh (1834-1844), Narasingh (1844-1850) and Devendra Singh (1850) ruled as the King of Manipur. Chandrakriti Singh for the second time ruled from 1850 to 1886. Chandrakriti Singh subdued all the rebellions with the help of British Government. He also supported the British Government by sending Manipuri troops to favour the British Government i.e., in the Sepoy Mutiny 1857, Lusai expedition of 1871-72, the Angami Naga revolt of 1877-79, revolt by the Kukis of Chassed village in 1879, etc.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{1} J. Roy, \textit{History of Manipur}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{2} Edward Gait, \textit{A History of Assam}, p. 273.
\textsuperscript{3} J. Roy, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., pp. 87-91.
For his active cooperation, the British Government of India presented a dress of honour, a sword and a belt to the king. In 1880, he was decorated with K.C.S.I., by the British government.\textsuperscript{11}

After the death of Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh, his eldest son, Surachandra becomes the Maharaja of Manipur in 1886. Some princes of Chandrakirti Singh could not satisfied Surachandra as the Raja of Manipur. The princes were divided into two rival factions. One was lead by Surachandra and another was lead by Kulachandra Singh. The second faction with the support of Tikendrajit Singh revolted at the midnight of September 21, 1890.\textsuperscript{2} Maharaja Surachandra Singh fled away without any resistance. Prince Kulachandra ascended the throne and Tikendrajit was made Yubaraja of Manipur.\textsuperscript{3} The chief commissioner of Assam Mr. Quinton visited Manipur and reached Imphal on March 22, 1891.\textsuperscript{4} Attempts were made by the British forces to capture Yubaraj Tikendrajit and even attacking the Yubaraj palace. The Manipuri soldiers defeated the British army and arrested five British officials including the Chief Commissioner of Assam.\textsuperscript{5} They were sentence to death after a trial for waging war against the ruling prince. The killing of these five British officials was the main cause for the Anglo-Manipuri war of 1891. The Manipuri soldiers fought bravely against the British. Finally, they were defeated by the British at a decisive

\textsuperscript{1} J. Roy, History of Manipur, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{2} C.K., p. 480.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 480.
\textsuperscript{4} J. Roy, op. cit., p. 119.
\textsuperscript{5} C.K., Loc. cit., p. 485.
battle of Khongjom, Thoubal district, on 25th April 1891. Maharaja Kulachandra Singh, Yubaraja Tikendrajit and Thangal General were arrested. By a trial, Maharaja Kulachandra Singh was made life imprisonment at Andaman Island and Yubaraj Tikendrajit and Thangal General were hanged on Thursday the 13th of August 1891 before the public. After the Anglo-Manipuri war of 1891 the Political Agent took over the charge of the administration and the state became a subject of the British Empire. The throne of Manipur was given to an infant child called Churanchand Singh, son of Chaobiyaima a descendant of Nara Singh, on September 18, 1891.\[1\]

The Raja took over the administration from the political Agent on the 15th May 1907. In the beginning of his reign slavery and Lallup system were abolished instead of its house tax began to collect from every house. The kuki rebellion of 1917-19, Kabui rebellion of 1927-47 and Nupilal (women war) 1904 &1939 were the main important events in his period. During the World War II, the Maharaja extended his liberal support to the British government. Maharaja Churachand Singh K.C.S.I, C.B.E. was succeeded by his eldest son Budhachandra Singh as the Maharaja of Manipur in 1941. During his reign Manipur got independent from the British crown. Manipur joint the Indian union by an agreement known as Merger Agreement signed between the Indian union and Maharaja Budhachandra Singh at Shilong, Meghalaya, on September 21, 1949.\[2\] Since, 15th October 1949 Manipur was merged and become a part ‘C’ state of India.\[3\] It attained its statehood under Indian union on January 21, 1972.

1. C.K., p. 503.
Scope and Methodology

Manipur is well known for its archaeological sites. Number of archaeological sites and monuments found in different parts of the hill and valley that enabled Manipur to include in the map of the archaeological site of India. The history of Indian architecture as a whole remains incomplete without a thorough understanding of the origin and development of the art and architecture of Manipur. The state is closer with the rest of India religiously, politically, and culturally, but the study of this topic appears so far to have remained incomplete. The knowledge of the history of art and architecture of Manipur is meagre among the people. This is because of the shortage of materials and failure in giving proper interpretation to the known facts. The work is an attempt to fill up the incomplete chapter of the history of Indian architecture.

The history of temple and its architectural styles of Manipur offer an almost uninvestigated and unexplored field of study. The scope of this work covered the development of temple architecture, the critical examination of the architectural styles of temple, the role of temple in the social, cultural and economic life of the people from the beginning of the Ningthouja dynasty to the twentieth century A.D. A number of excellent histories of this period have been written in recent years. But none is found to have given importance to the study of temple architecture. Study of the temple architecture of Manipur practically is a virgin field of study. Therefore, the
work is an honest and sincere attempt not only to find new information but also to evaluate the existing facts for the reconstruction of the history of temple architecture.

The architectural history of this period forms one of the most interesting but a little known chapter in the cultural history of Manipur. The aim of this present work is to find out new facts and reconstruction with the help of scientific interpretation of architectural history of Manipur based on the report of field work and original sources. No attempt has so far been made by any scholar to show the architecture relation between Manipur and the rest of India. Other previous work also abstain the stylistic affiliation. Here an attempt has been made after comparison with the original sources and field works.

The period show a new phase, characterised by the growth and consolidation of a new power and sanskritization. It has shown in this work, how the art of architecture was developed, the styles of architecture, to search out the causes responsible for the influence of eastern and western styles of architecture. The period under consideration also mark the development of Hindu temples with royal patronage. This is particularly due to the settlement of Brahmins, craftsmen’s and artisans. Their settlement led to the establishment of different styles of temple in different parts of Manipur. The developments of traditional architecture, the influence of Islamic and eastern style of architecture were also shown in this work.

Manipur is the land of multifarious people and races. She presents a very interesting field of study in different subjects: i.e. religion, culture, language, political
history and art & architecture. It became one of the most interesting lines of enquiry for the researchers. Geographically, the state is situated between India and Myanmar (Burma). From the early period the region played an important role in the political history of both the countries. The religion of the Manipuri people has an all-India importance. *Vaishnavism* dominated among the population. However, they never left their original traditional worship. Even the Manipuri King adopted Hinduism and the Hindu way of life, they did not totally abandon their ancestral religious and practice. The temple of *Govindaji* is represented the centre of religion and culture. The country is well known in classical dance i.e., Rasa, a synthesis of sanskritization. Indian dance is incomplete without the classical dance of Manipur. The period shows the rise of *Gauriya Vaishnavism* and the development of the synthesis of culture in Manipur. The study of the role of temple in cultural life of Manipur is totally abstained in the history books. This work is an attempt to fill up the incomplete chapter of the role of temple in cultural life of the people of Manipur.

Temple, the most important religious installation played an important role in the religious and cultural life of Manipur. No proper work has so far been done regarding this topic. This work is also covered the contribution of this institution in social system and religious thought in Manipur. All these features give important to the period under discussion. Study of the role of temple in the cultural life is interesting and difficult problem, which has not been systematically made by any writer. So far no one has attempted to arrange the available sources after proper investigation and assessment. It is for the first time that the work of attempting to highlight the role of temple in social
system and religious thought from the pure original sources and the treatment of the subject also restricted to the latter system.

The various elements contain as the existing evidence in the present system that supply as a very valuable sources of the work. No writers so far attempted to write the role of temples in the economic life. The work is tried not only to find new information but also to evaluate and critically examined the material which is already existed and make an attempt for reconstruction on a reasonable condition of the role of temple in economic life.

Prior to the establishment of Ningthouja dynasty historical document and other reliable records on the history of Manipur are meagre. Nothing definite is known for this period. A few Palaeolithic and Neolithic settlement and bone & stone tools have been found. These remains are helpful for the study of the early people and their culture. From the time of Ningthuoja dynasty we have epigraphic records, scattered literary documents and monuments. However, the record of the earlier periods of the Ningthouja dynasty is also meagre. Numbers of manuscripts were lost during the Burmese invasion and many of them were burnt down during the reign of Maharaja Garibniwaz, 18th century A.D. The history of Manipur is more cleared from the medieval period particularly from the time of Maharaja Garibniwaz, 18th century A.D. The sources may broadly be classified into literary and archaeological sources.

The materials for the history of temple architecture are as meagre as confused. Historical events and some valuable information both secular and religious are
obtained from literary sources. Amongst the literary sources royal chronicle is treated as the most important sources. Chronicles recorded day to day events of the kings and kingdom including socio-economic and political condition. The chronicles are not free from defects. The political condition, religion, culture, facts and fictions were mixed together in this chronicle. The chronicles also never clearly mentioned about the temples and their constructions accept a few temples. Amongst the chronicles, Cheitharol Kumbaba, is regarded as the most important sources for the treatment of this work; but it needs very careful handling. The chronicle Cheitharol Kumbaba, clearly indicated some of the important temples which were constructed under the royal patronage, that was neglected by most writers. The reason is their underestimate in assessing the historical value of the chronicle. The chronicle also give us a very valuable information about the political, religious, social, art and culture including the diplomatic relation with the neighbouring countries i.e., Myanmar, Assam, Tripura etc. This chronicles were compiled in Meitei dialect under the orders of the king. But the records are not detailed. Therefore, a critical examination has been made in the beginning with some relevant observations where found necessary. Information from the royal chronicle Cheitharol Kumbaba has been confirmed by means of scientific methods.

Early manuscripts and other literary sources were also important for the study of the indigenous architecture, religion and the migration and settlement of the people. The literary sources that deal with the migration of people were Bamon khunthoklon, migration of Brahmins; poireiton Khunthokpa, migration of Poireiton; Mayang
Tekhaolon etc. may be mentioned. Beside this, many other archival sources may be treated as important historical records of Manipur of the 18th and 19th centuries. There are some other unpublished manuscripts which are also equally important. Some of them were examined and found useful materials for this work.

Beside the indigenous sources, literary materials of the neighbouring state were also very helpful for the construction of the history of Manipur culture. The chronicles of Assam give a very valuables information. This account also furnished us with valuable information on the diplomatic relation with Assam and Manipur. Ahom Buranji, Tungkhungia Buranji, which has been translated into English, edited and published. This source supplies information on different aspect of contemporary history of Manipur and diplomatic relation with neighbouring states.

A number of British writers had also made valuable contribution in the history of Manipur. The most pioneering works in this respect were those if T.C. Hodson's, 'The Meitheis', Dr. Brown's, 'Statistical Account of Manipur', captain R.B. Pemberton's 'Report on the eastern frontier of British India' and Sir James Johnstone's, 'My experiences in Manipur and Naga Hill'. This work is also considered a store house of information relating to social, religious life, art & architecture and political conditions of the people of Manipur. Attempts have been made here to interpret those literary sources in the light of the information gathered from the inscription, coins, fields work and to compare and bring them together.
The compilation of the history of Manipur is incomplete without the information from the archaeological sources. Such as Epigraphic records, Numismatics, Monuments and other ancient relics. Inscriptions refer not only to the religion of the state but also furnished us with some detail of the state administration, royal declaration, donation of land etc. The inscriptions are mostly engraved on stones and copper plates in archaic Manipuri scripts and Bengali scripts. Inscriptions are found to be most reliable and trustworthy. Therefore, a critical examination of this inscription has been made in the beginning with some relevant observation. It makes a comparative and comprehensive study of both the inscriptions as well as the chronicles in order to make a complete survey for this work.

Numismatic, the study of coins, brought to light the chronology of different kings, territory of the empire, economic condition, and socio-religious lives of the people. There are three types of coins issued by different kings. They were bell-metal coins called 'Shen', Silver coins as 'Lupa Tanga', and Gold coins as 'Sana Tanga'. These coins were issued by their respective kings as commemoratives of their important happenings. Coins were issued in Archaic Manipuri scripts, Devanagari scripts and Bengali scripts in different periods.

The land is very riches of archaeological monuments. The monuments are found scattered throughout the valley of different periods. Many of them exist in its complete form. They are still preserved by the Department of archaeology, government of Manipur. Temples of the historical period are found scattered
throughout the land. It has made an effort to determine the time of construction of some temples of unknown date by comparing their architectural features with temples of known date. Study of this remained are useful not only for their artistic value but also they threw on the social, religious and economic conditions of the people of the period. A detail critical study in this topic has not been adequately undertaken. On the historical archaeology of Manipur, very little work has been done. Regarding the temple architecture of Manipur no scholar has carried out any research work applying modern scientific method. For this work, the architectural styles are completely depend on field work. The sites were explored systematically and studied the materials to finalise the facts. Emphasis has also been laid on the study of the general lay-out, ground-plan and vertical features of the temple structure. The field work has brought to light some important new information’s. With a view to presenting a complete picture of stylistic affiliation, a comparative study also made.

Besides, we have utilised other materials as valuable sources such as periodical journals, bulletins, contributed by many scholars to the history of Manipur. Important information also cited by organising committee and eldest family members of the clan, who took the charge of management of the temple, during the field work. They give valuable information about the temple in respect of religion, economic condition and its contribution in the society. References have been made to the temples regarding the religious condition and festivals that still showing their association with various festivals and rituals. It enables to present a comparative picture of the observation in a
historical perspective. It is a completely original contribution in our handling of the history of temple architecture in Manipur.

The work has been divided into six chapters. Chapter I, deals with the geographical background, people, political history, archaeology of Manipur and scope and methodology of the work as introduction; Chaptre II, is discussed about the origin and development of the art of the temple architecture; Chapter III, highlighted the historical background and development of Hindu temples; Chapter IV, deals with a critical discussion of the architectural styles of temple; Chaptre V, analyses about the role of temple in socio-cultural and economic life of the Manipuri people and chapter VI, is the last concluding chapter, which gives summary and assessment of the previous chapters.

The objective of this work is to trace the missing history of temple and its contribution in the history of Indian architecture. Another objective of the present work is to describe the architectural styles of temples, historical development and the role of temple in the cultural life of the people. The study is mainly based on primary sources and field survey with the support from the secondary sources. In describing many of the facts, it has made interpretations and reached conclusions different from those made by eminent scholars of the subject. It also attempted never to deviate from the high ideal of historical truth and in judging men and things to place truth above all.
 PLATE-1 MAP OF MANIPUR