CHAPTER-II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ART OF TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE: A GENERAL SURVEY
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A General Survey.

Architecture, the art and the technique of building, both religious and secular in character is one of the most important branch of art of the civilized people. The standard of civilization seems to be regulated, amongst other things, by durability, scientific plan, aesthetic construction, and successful finish of buildings, religious, residential or military. This art is more concerned with the enclosure of space for human use. The art of architecture deals with treatment of walls, including window proportions over the basement; the relation of wall-space to window-space, of one story to another; a treatment of the interior and a treatment of the exterior of the building.

✓ The architect used to construct building according to the need of human being and natural environment. He adopted different method to prevent from buckle, crack, collapse and effect of heat, cold, fire, earthquake, flood etc. The methods are: Walls, Post and lintel, Arch, Vault, Dome, Truss-roof and Colour. Beside these there are different methods to make building habitable and comfortable. These methods are not only for the defence and protection but also another kind of expression for the welfare of the people. The sculptures serve as the decorative parts of the buildings namely
walls, ceilings, doorway and lintel etc. In the religious building, sculpture is the silent voice of theology, teaching, and the power of gods.

Architecture has been influenced not only by religious, political, social and economic conditions but also by the climate and available building materials of a region. The materials for the construction of building are namely stone, brick and wood. Stone is one of the most important for the construction of monumental architecture for its durability, adaptability, to sculpture treatment. Brick, which has been used since the 4th century B.C, was the chief building material. Brick is used in construction with mortar. The most popular building material is wood, which is used mainly for window, door, pillar, wall etc.

Each and every groups of the settle society have their own technique in the art of building, which is not only for the defence of natural forces but also the benefits of human environment. Without the art of building people could not express themselves as civilised one. There are different types of architecture according to the needs of the society i.e., Domestic architecture, Government architecture, Recreational architecture, Religious architecture, etc. The history of architecture is more concerned with religious than any other type. Because religious architecture are the most expressive, the most influential and the most permanent building in any community. Thus, one of the most important examples of religious architecture is temple. Temple, a structure made sacred by the presence of a deity or holy symbol, is regarded as place of worship, shelters for the Images, relics and holy areas of the cult.
Art and architecture of each and every community get their inspiration from their respective religion. Ancient Indian people used art as a medium of expression particularly eternal and universal elements in nature and portraying the divinity the various elements of nature. "The fundamental purpose of the building art was to represent in concrete form the prevailing religious consciousness of the people."[1] The artist considered it their religious duty to decorate the place of worship with various types of artistic works. Stauch and devout Hindu rulers with their patronage helped to build a large number of temples in each and every parts of the country. The basis of this temple architecture was religious. The structure is known by such terms a devalaya, shivalaya and devayatana.[2]

As a product of spiritual belief of the people, the worship of the image of gods and goddess greatly increased particularly due to the material interpretation of religious ideals. People began to install an image at a permanent place providing facilities for worship impelled people to erect temples. Later on, image of gods and goddesses never installed without a temple. The need of temple was greatly felt along with the image. The status is the manifestation (arca-avatara) of the duty through a concrete work of art (murti) and the building is its body and house.[3] The whole sanctum became a ‘tirtha’ of Hindu community. Thus the Indian temple is the product and hand made of Indian religion and philosophy.

2 Krishna Deva, Temples of North India, p. 1.
3 Stella Kramr, The Art of India, p. 10.
The ancient Indian guilds of craftsmen Silpins, who are specialised in the science of architecture, played an important role for the growth and development of the art of architecture including sculpture and painting. Among the Silpins, temple construction were carried out by four groups i.e., Sihapati (the architect, master builder), Sutragrahi (the surveyor-draftsman), Vardhaki (builder-painter), Taksaka (carver i.e., sculptor-carpenter). They worship the carpenter of god ‘Visvakarma’ the lord of all creative work, who is the spiritual ancestor of every craftsmen. The Silpins (trained artists or craftsmen) constructed temple building with the advice of the Guru or Acharya (spiritual preceptor) who is the director of all operations in the doctrinal and metaphysical sense.

“The Guru is the spiritual authority upon whom all temporal operations depend: he selects the suitable site and performs the rites, notably the ones which mark the beginning and the end of the construction”.

The scientific knowledge is interlinked with the religious belief regarding the art of building. It helped to develop different kinds of texts on ‘Vastusstra’ and ‘Silpasatra’ such as Aparajita-Praccha, Samarangana Sutradhara, Visvakarma Prakasa of Visvakarman, the heavenly architect, Manasara, Mayamata silpasstra of Gannam-Acharya, the Amsumad-Bheda of Kasyapa, Silpa-sastra of Mandana etc. These texts deal with the methods and principles as well as construction details of all architecture and sculptural objects. There are many literary references of the art of building such as Vedic, Buddhist, Epic, Pauranic, Agamic, historical and even

astronomical literatures. The rules and regulations theological disciplines framed by the priests in the 'Vastasastras' used by the craftsmen as their text-book on the grammar of his art collaborate with the 'Vastuvidyā' the technical aspects of the building craft or the acts of building and formula of construction. The actual architectural plan of many temples followed this text. According to Manasara (the essence of measurement) the science of architecture (vastusastra) and sculpture had come down from Siva, Brahma and Vishnu, through, Indra, Brihaspati, Narada and all other sages, to the seer (rishi) Manasara who systematised it.[1]

The Hindu temples are regarded as permanent abode of a deity. The Brahmans or priests recognised square as Divine chart (Mandala) of the Hindu builders because of its permanent and stability. The square mandala was divided into so many equal squares either 64 or 81 squares. Each and every square has special status or power. The central square 'cella' was occupied by Brahma the creator and other duties posted in the four corners of the Brhma.[2] On the other hand, within the divine chart of square mandala a human figure was enclosed in a Yogic posture. This chart was called the 'Vastupurushmandala' (Divine chart of the architecture of the supreme man). The head of the Vastupuruṣa lies in the east in the site of 64 squares.[3] Over his schematic figure the Hindu temple is 'built. This kind of Divine chart was transformed into an architectural ground plan for a Hindu temple. Each and every square represents different structures of temple like wall, pillar, outer wall, circumambulatory path etc.

1. P.K. Acharya, Indian Architecture, p. 34.
Hindu temples are the product and combination of different kind of symbols. This symbol became an artistic principle of Hindu generally evolve from the 'figure of Man' or 'central image of Man' as a place of co-ordinated function. "The names of the various limbs of the human body from the foot to the hair on the crown of the head are applied in architectural texts to different parts of the temple structure. Terms like feet, legs, thighs, neck and head denote the anatomical position and function of the structure parts corresponding to those of the human body and are often used figuratively to emphasise the concept of organic unity in temple architecture". Thus the human body itself is the vehicle of expression in art and architecture. The different structural parts of the temple were identified with the different limbs of human body. The Vastupurusa mandala is the guiding motif of architectural design.

In this the body of man was transfigured into the massive gigantic proportion of the ground plan and elevation of the temple. The centre was the nabhi, the garbhagrha and the sikhara or the vimana rose to the amalaka as the head. The lowest plinth, which represents the feet (pad or paduka), could be a plain platform or have various kinds of profiles or mouldings. The jungha was the vertical wall sometimes called bhitti. There was the bandhana or waist belt round the thighs. Finally, there were the skandha or griva (neck) respectively. These constituted the various angas of the temple and become the common vocabulary of Indian temple architecture. "To return thus to purusa, the figure of man, the Agnipurana (perhaps one of the earliest texts) speaks of the door of the temple as its mouth, the platform terminating the trunk of the

superstructure as the soldiers (skanda) of the purusa, the bhadra or projection the arms, and the jungha and the lowermost moulding as the feet (paduka)."\(^1\)

Temples are generally constructed on the bank of a river, on seashores, hill tops etc. The temples of public worship are located within the town and villages where a large number of inhabitants can be reached. The selection of a site within the village or town is compulsory. Outside boundary of the village and corner sites was avoided. But some temples are found outside the town and village. The temples of fearful deities such as Chamunda, are also placed outside the boundary of village or town.\(^2\)

The selection of site (Bhumi-samgraha) and examination of soil (Bhu-pariksha), is conducted before the construction of the building. The level of the ground as well as the characteristic vegetation of the site is also minutely examined. Before starting the construction of a temple with the advice of the priests, the site was cleaned, ploughed, levelled and removed all the remains like old bricks, bones, roots of trees, tiles, skin, etc. and tested the purity of the soil. After the selection of a site, the ground is divided into different numbers of squares according to the sizes of the plot. Sixty-four squares and eighty-one squares are being the most popular.\(^3\) Each of these squares is assigned to its presiding deity. Some deities however are lords of more than one square. The lord of the central square is always Brahma; and Charagi, Vidarika, Putana and Rakshasi are the presiding deities of the four corners.\(^4\) Presiding deities of the sites (Vastu-purusha), who is described as hump-backed and of crooked-shape, is said to

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occupy the habitated area (*Vastu*) in such a manner that his limbs cover the several squares or groups of squares which are assigned to and named after various deities.\[^1\] The middle part of his body occupies the central portion of the plot, which is assigned to Brahma. After preparation of the ground plan of the site different kinds of offerings (*bali*) are made for the various presiding deities.\[^2\] A tree within the precincts of a temple was not allowed to cut down for securing wood for the house.

The general character of the Hindu temple is shrine or *cella* called the *Garbhagriha*, in which deity is installed or kept. The *Garbhagriha* was prepared on a raised platform or basement called *Adhisthana*, either square, circle or rectangular that supported walls and pillars. The square plan was common to Hindu temples as basic motif derived from the vedic sacrificial alter.\[^3\] The dept of the excavation of the foundation is equal of the height of the basement. The four corners and sides, built of brick or stone, are equal. The pillars (*Stambha*) are of different shapes i.e., square, octagonal, circular, pentagonal and hexagonal. According to the *Manasara*, the height of a pillar is twice, one-and- a- half times or one-and-a-quarter time that of its base.\[^4\] These shapes are stated to be uniform from bottom to top. Stone, brick and wood were used for making different parts of a pillar. The sanctum is a dark chamber enclosed by massive walls in which offering were made individually by each devotee. The eastern side of the *Garbhagriha* was generally opened as doorway and other remaining sides are enclosed by massive wall. In front of the doorway there was a *mandapa* or hall for congregation of worshippers and devotees.

\[^2\] Ibid., p. 38.
\[^3\] Krishna Deva, *Temples of North India*, p.2.
The term *mandapa* generally means a temple, pavilion, bower, shed or open hall. In the early period there was no *mandapa*, later on additions were made as a part of temple. There are several classes of *mandapas* such as *ardha-mandapa*, pillared hall immediately in front of the principal shrine; *maha-mandap*, pillared hall immediately in front of the *ardha-mandapa*; *alankara-mandapa*, hall for decoration of deity, etc. Originally *mandapas* were opened all round. As a tradition, shrine and pillared hall are separate structure like the shore temple at Mahabalipuram, Madras, Tamil Nadu.[11] Later on the two structures joined together by a vestibule or an intermediate chamber, the *antarala*. There is a circumambulatory path round the *garbhagriha* called the *pradakshina* Path or court for clockwise perambulation, to move round the *cella* by the worshipper as symbols of perambulation of the universe itself. The Hindu devotee traditionally circumambulates the inner sanctum instead of approaching it directly, so as to encounter the numerous edifices and iconographical representations that occur in the 'interspaces'; they serve as his supports to facilitate the transition from the gross, which is left behind, to the formless, which is not yet encountered.[2] The roof of the *garbhagriha* is the spire-shaped *sikhara* or tower. The tower is the different designs of roof, which represent mountain the meeting place of gods and human being. It is either curvilinear or pyramidal form of tower protected *cella*. The evolution of the *sikhara* may be traced back from the early pre-Christian era. The spire-shaped of tower *sikhara* is more similar with the Aryan hut roof and Toda church of central India, which may have inspired the builders to create the form of the *sikhara*. “In the *vedic* village huts

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were of the beehive pattern made of a circular wall of bamboo’s held together with bands of withes and covered either with a domical roof of leaves or thatched with grass”. It is curvilinear shape also strongly suggested its derivation from a bamboo construction most likely that of four bamboo’s rising from a square base, held together at any appropriate height directly above the middle of the square. The sikhara of the Northern Indian types of temple may have developed out of the curvilinear roof of the Buddhist dagoba or Aryan huts around the 6th century A.D. particularly from the Gupta period. The supreme point of finial of sikhara is called stupi, represents the moment of ‘Release into Nirvana’. There are different designed of finial which crowned over the top of the sikhara. The finial of Vishnu temple is a disk or amalaka (Indian gooseberry fruit, phyllanthus emblica) and the finial of Shiva temple is a trident. Most of the Northern Indian temple finials are disk or wheel. These are figuratively described to be as high as the Kailasa Mountain or as reaching the sky. The gate is situated facing with the cella, separating the secular space from sacred space.

The whole sanctuary or shrine from base to finial (upana to stupi) is called Vimana in south India and Prasada in North and central India. Unlike Vimana, Prasada of North India is applied in both religious and secular building. The walls and pillars of temples are decorated with different gods and goddess, animals, human beings on the temple facades. The temples of the attendant deities (Parivara) are built around the courts (Prakara).

1. Percy Brown, Indian Architecture, (Buddhist and Hindu Period), p.3.
3. James Ferguson, Archaeology in India, p. 69.
The classification of Indian temple architecture is generally based on regional variation and the shape or stylistic differences as Nagara, Dravida and Vesara styles. The Nagara style is distinguished by its quadrangular shape, the Vesara by its round shape and the Dravida by its octagonal or hexagonal shape.\[1\] These distinguished features are noticed generally at the upper part of a building. According to Agama, the buildings of the Nagara style are quadrangular from the base to the top; those of the Dravida style are octagonal from the neck to the top; and those of the Vesara style are round from the neck to the top.\[2\] Apparently the lower part of the buildings of the two latter styles is quadrangular. These three classes existed long before the sixth or seventh-century. A.D.\[3\]

Dravidian styles were peculiar and confined to the South while Nagara or Indo-Aryan style found in the Northern India. The Vesara was not confined to any particular geographical area. It is included in both the zonal styles of Nagara and Dravida such as Nakul Sahadeva rath at Mahaballipuram (c. 630 – 668 A.D) south India Chandreha temple (10th century) Madhya Pradesh, central India and Vaithal Deul temple, Bhubanesvare, North India.\[4\] Availability of raw materials, climatic conditions religious revivalism and contacts with neighbouring countries responsible for these stylistic differences of temple architecture. “Stylistic differences naturally occurred when the rock was hard and crystalline, or soft and sedimentary or rather friable and schistose”.\[5\]

The *Nagara* type has a four sided, square or oblong pyramidal curvilinear tower or *sikhara* which is pointed. The top of the *sikhara* is surmounted by a single or double *amalaka* followed by a *kalasa* and *stupi*. From about the 7th century, a multi-spired *sikhara* of *Nagara* was evolved from the temple with a single spire called *Latina*.\(^1\) *Nagara* temple plan is always a square with a number of graduated projections in the middle of each side. This curvilinear tower began to appear in the 6th century A.D. such as the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh (Uttarpradesh) and the brick temple at Bhitargaon (Uttarpradesh).\(^2\) *Nagara* style was prevalent in the region between the Himalayas and the Vindyas. The *Dravidian* type, on the other hand, has a hexagonal or octagonal *sikhara*, a square plan and a pyramidal *vimana* or sanctuary, peculiar between the river Krishna and cape Kanyakumari. The roof formed by a succession of gradually receding storeys. Originally southern Indian temple divided into the *adhishthana* (basement), *pada* (pillar), *prastara* (entablature), *griva* (neck), *Sikhara* (tower) and *stupi* (finial), while northern Indian temples have three parts the *jagati* (Plinth), *kati* (wall) and *manjari* (tower).\(^3\) Later on many sub-parts joined in these two zonal styles such as *mandapa*, *Pradakshinapath*, *gopura*, *torana*, *prakara*, etc.

Referring to the shape of the *Sikhara* of *Nagara* and *Dravida* are square and octagonal respectively, while *Vesara* has a ‘circular, elliptical or apsidal *sikhara*’. which is round from the *griva* upwards or round *vimana* from base to finial.\(^4\)

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2. K.V. Soundara Rajan, *Indian temple styles*, p.44.
3. Ibid., p.17.
4. Lal Mani Dubey, *Some observation on the Vesara School of Hindu Architecture*, Quoted from 'Mayamata' (Southern Silpasastra); Indian History Congress; Vol.II; P.1000.
According to *Manasara silpasastras*, the *vesara* style has two branches such as the *kalinga* and the *Andhra*. The *Vesara* style also known as *Chalukyan*, is a hybrid one, borrowing elements and features both from the *Nagara* and the *Dravida* which is largely restricted to western India and Deccan. Origin of *vesara* shape may be traced back to the circular *vedic* altra or oval and horseshoe type of *vedic* huts. It is also believed that the builders or *Silpins* may have borrowed the *vesara* type of *sikhara* from the surmounting superstructure circular dome of the Kushan palace or Buddhist *stupas*. Kushan built their palace on the principle of the corbelled arch i.e; the Kushan palace at Kausambi 1st and 2nd century A.D.

Similarly, a *stupa* is a solid domical structure of brick or stone on a round base. On the other hand, temples of apsidal in shape probably modelled on the thatched huts of the Toda church. It is probable that these temples were also modelled on the earliest *Chaitya* shrines of the Buddhists. The Buddhist might have got the idea from a Toda like hut, such huts are still being built by villagers of Bihar. Thus, circular, apsidal *sikhara* and round *vimana* from base to finial or round from *griva* upward is termed *vesara*. Temple of Vijayalayacholisvaram at Nattamalai (Madras), which is circular in section from top to bottom is *vesara* temple.

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These three categories of temples are generally constructed with perishable materials like bricks and timbers in the early period. The Hindus used thatch, mud and wood as building materials. They used stone and brick as a foundation or basement but not the whole structure. Particularly the Buddhist introduced stones during the Mauryan period in the religious architecture.\textsuperscript{11} Ashoka for the first time used stone in architecture structural building, probably he may has learned this art from the Bactrian Greeks.\textsuperscript{12} However, the Hindu \textit{silpins} began to use stone from the 6\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. by producing many rock-cut cave temple and monolithic temple. Finally, they give more emphasis on stone medium and built many temples of stone, particularly in South India. In south India stone are easily available, more permanent, can carve out different designs and protective from natural forces. Thus, the Hindu preferred wood to stone for their erections of structural temple. They need a small cella and a tower, which could be easily constructed in stone then in wood. “The use of stone introduced the idea of the monumental style and this was given increasing emphasis in Hindu architecture”.\textsuperscript{13}

The Hindu temple architecture was essentially an external style of architecture as that of the Buddhist was an internal one. The principal ornamentation of the Hindu temple was on the exterior while for the Buddhist was on the interior. Instead of perishable material they used stone and brick which helped to survive long. With the

\textsuperscript{1} Benjamin Rowland, \textit{The Art and Architecture of India}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{2} James Fergusson \textit{Archaeology in India}, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{3} Romila Thapar, \textit{A History of India}, Vol.-I, p. 157.
development of skill of the craftsmen, erected their monument in permanent materials such as bricks and stones particularly from the Gupta period such as the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh of stone and temple at Bhitargaon of Bricks (Uttar Pradesh).

The history of Hindu temple architecture can be traced back to the Proto-historic (Chalcolithic) period particularly from the Period of the Harappan civilization. There is no evident of complete structure of temple in Harappan civilization except the carefully designed layout of the city in a uniform pattern with the citadel at a prominent place. However the cult figurines executed in terracotta seal, fireplace, tank and associated with the black and red-ware help in understanding the religious belief and practice of Harappan civilization. Being absent of the evident of temple structure a study of the contents of the enclosures or fire-altar, Great Bath and female figurine indicate that the people had quite an advanced type of religious faith. They may have used all these structure as their sacred-place or temples. Thus, the chalcolithic people belief spirits and gods, and worshipped river, tank, stone which constitute a class of ‘Hypaethral temples’ that is temple open to the air and devoid of a roof over the object of worship.¹¹

In the vedic periods anthropomorphic representation of the deities and iconography or elaborate offering to icons was not existent. Therefore, they did not execute images or constructed temple for the worshipping of these gods. However to please the various gods the people offered prayers in the form of hymns and sacrifices

as central features of their religious life. “The only architectural device required for such sacrifices was an open altar, the size and shape of which was determined by elaborate astronomical and mathematical calculation”.[11]

_Vedic_ literature makes no reference to temple, but there is description of sacrificial alters which were used to be raised in the open air. The sacrificial alters were erected by the Brahman of different shape and sizes such as square, circle and rectangular, according to the rules and to the accompaniment of an elaborate ritual. The building of the fire-altar symbolised the reconstruction of the universe in the shape of _Prajapati_ (the creator). The fire-altars were the most important sacred place of the _vedic_ people because sacrifice become the all important thing in worship. The _vedic_ altar made of piled up bricks is the earliest known sacred monument of the Indian architecture. The construction of these alters, which were required for the great Soma sacrifice, seem to have been based on sound scientific principles and was probably the beginning of religious architecture (temple-building) in India.[21] “The origin of the Hindu temple can be traced to the sacrifice, common to all traditions involving the use of the sacrificial alter (_Vedi_) upon which the offerings were burnt in the sacrificial fire (_Agni_).”[13] In course of time with the development of Image worship and the materials interpretation of the religion and strong challenge from the Protestant movement that is Jainism and Buddhism pressured the Hindus to change the mode of worship. With the recognition of the image, the ritual offerings become more and more elaborate and

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complex, images were carved of gold and other precious metals. "This period coincided with the transitions from the unstable, light timber to the more stable, solid, stone and the once open temple become gradually more enclosed with stone walls until the only communication of the sanctum with the external world consisted of a single door only". Later additional structures were constructed. The new movement is, therefore, particularly concerned with the construction of structural temples. The direct sacrificial fire in open alter has been replaced by the indirect sacrificial offering (*puja*) to the enshrined image. The structural temples are required for the proper enshrinement of the deity. They may have converted the fire-altar into a ‘Cella’ or ‘Womb house’ (*Garbhagriha*) of the Gods and Goddesses. It enclosed by a wall and roofed over the *adhisthana* by separating the secular place. The whole structure became a sanctuary or temple in which people made offering. Thus, the ground plinth of the Hindu temples either square or circle most probably derived from the fire-altar of the vedic civilisation.

In the early period the structure was simple and worship open and the main elements of a religious edifice seem to have been a basement (containing probably an alter or seat of the object of worship), columns, beams and roofing. In these times the building material was timber and due to the unstable character of this material no evidence of this early structures remains except for isolated instances. The earliest architectural sacred places of Hindus were built upon the line of the Buddhist rock-cut
excavation Chaitya and Vihara. The rock-cut excavation cave temples failed to give the need of Brahmanical worship. "Cave excavations are ill suited to the ritualistic needs connected with the worship of images and structural temples are required for the proper enshrinement of the deity".\[1\]

With the introduction and growing popularity of images, the styles of the chaityas votive shrine followed by the Hindu gradually went out of use. This type of art was not suitable for sacrifices and ceremony, which is essential part of Hinduism. The ritualistic worship possible only if the temple structure is free-standing, which led to the erection of many free-standing structural Hindu temples. "The free standing temple became necessary with the growth of image worship, since the image lad to be appropriately housed and a cave was not adequate for this purpose".\[2\] The excavated cave temple at Udayagiri (Madhya Pradesh) of 5th century A.D, partly rock-cut and partly stone-built with a shallow pillared portico added in front of the cells, is suggestive of the transition from the pure rock-cut cave architecture to the completely structural temple. The earliest known structural temples belongs to Mauryan period has been discovered at Bairat (Jaipur, Rajasthan) c.3rd century B.C. made of brick and wood and stone temple at Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh) of circular and an apsidal plan respectively.\[3\]

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3. Krishna Deva, Temples of North India, pp. 5-6.
The Gupta period marked the beginning, formative and creative period of Hindu temple architecture. The peace and prosperity of the people, the revival of Hinduism and the enlightened patronage of the kings helped to create and maturity and balance of expression in the art of architecture, sculpture, painting and terracotta. The Gupta temples testify the excellence of the architecture of the time. This period marked the beginning of a new style of Indian temple architecture known as Indo-Aryan temple. Other prominent structural temples in northern and eastern India were Orissan temples, the Khajuraho group of temples, the Osian temples etc. The development and perfection of the Dravidian styles of temple architecture was mainly due to the patronage of the Pallavas, the Chalukyas, the Rastrakutas, the Cholas and Hoysalas.

From early period to 6th century A.D marked the beginning of the Indo-Aryan temple and Dravidian temple. There was a regular progress in the evolution of the temple architecture between 6th to 9th century A.D. and from 9th century A.D to 13th century A.D the temple architecture was characterised by abundance of ornamentation. In later period Indian temple architecture followed the same style of Nagara, Dravida and Vesara with slight modifications of structure to meet their ritualistic needs. In north-east India the temple architecture made remarkable progress under the patronage of Hindu rulers of Assam, Manipur and Tripura from 15th Century A.D. to 20th century A.D.

The temple was called 'Laishang' the house of god (Lai means god and Shang means house or hut) by the Manipuri’s. The place without any building structure is
called ‘Laipham’ the place of god. The Laishangs were generally constructed within the complex of ‘Laipham’.

The Manipuri’s have their own styles of building architecture from the early period. There are many ancient manuscripts which deals with about the evolution of dwelling place or house. The “Yumsharol Puya” one of the ancient manuscripts, which is a short of treatise on the gradual evolution of the Meitei house structure and its related architecture. ‘Yumsharol Puya’, mention the invention of house for the first time with the advice of ‘Atiya Guru Sidaba’, the lord of universe. The legends of the invention of house in this text is that after creation of the earth and human being (man was created to take after the shadow of the lord). Atiya Guru Sidaba, the Lord of universe entrusted God Konjin Tuthokpa (the immortal sky-god) with the task of making house for the residing place of the human beings.\(^1\) Under the instructions of the lord of the universe, God Konjin Tuthokpa, constructed the house. This was the beginning of the construction of house for human beings as dwelling place.

“There are some other versions, which throw light on the origin and antiquity of an architectural art in Manipur. Laisana, the consort of Nongda Lairel Pakhangba is described as poirei manung oidaringei tourang khangpcksha, chana ihounana, poirei hanna manung oirakpi Meitei Leima Laisana-o toua koi-e, means she was entitled as Meitei queen Laisana, who introduced the architecture of hut of weeds and reeds with the roof of thatch, when the Poirei were not known to the art of these architecture”.\(^2\)

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One of the oldest Manipuri literature “Leithak Leikharon” of Heavens and Netherworlds, mention that goddess ‘Mansharik’ introduced for the first time the art of making house.\textsuperscript{[1]} Another story narrates the legends of how seven gods and seven goddesses built dwelling house for the first time. The seven goddesses who came with the Guru were then given in marriage with those seven gods.\textsuperscript{[2]} Those seven gods also came to Manipur in mortal forms. Each of these gods became the founder of Angom clan, Mangang (Ningthouja) clan, Luang clan, Khuman clan, Moirang clan, Chenglei clan, and Khaba & Nganba clan respectively. “Chingu Laipungthou Mapalga Khoimom Lainura taretka kouduna sintha pera maral tammo mongba yum saro haiduna Laipungthou mapalna yum tamle Lainura taretan-e-kuple”.\textsuperscript{[3]} Thus, with the advice of the Lord of the Universe, the seven gods and seven goddesses built a house called “pongshang” and this is regarded as first dwelling of house of human being in the history of building architecture of Meiteis.\textsuperscript{[4]} The house is very simple fleet roof of thatch and reeds support by four bamboo pillars and thatch, reeds and bamboo splits again covered in the four side as wall of the house. Gradually the Meitei craftsmen changed the style of dwelling architecture from ‘Pongshang’ to the ‘Yum Laikhal Tabak’ or a house with foundation. The house is faces the east and built on an oblong structure under one roof, with different sections. It has conical and diagonal cross design architecture. The style of slopping roof from the vertex to the basement was

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Shri Bhaiga Singh Yongkhoba, (Ed.), Leithak Leikharon, p. 87.
\item \textsuperscript{2} J. Roy, History of Manipur, p.10.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Naorem Indramani, Meitei Yunsharol, p. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p. 9.
\end{itemize}
emitted from rainbow.\textsuperscript{1} Traditionally, palace building at kangla were constructed more than four rooms but the common people were not allowed to build beyond four rooms.\textsuperscript{2} The \textit{Yum Laikhal Taba} have four rooms or sections.

King Naokhamba (411-428 A.D) is said to have introduced the dwelling houses in the valley of Manipur and King Naophangba (428-518 A.D) laid the foundation of the Kangla palace in the architectural history of Manipur.\textsuperscript{3}

The \textit{Poireiton Khunthokpa}, immigration of Poireiton, one of the ancient manuscript mentioned that houses with foundations were in use by the second century A.D. and that they were constructed with bamboo, covered with thatch and had walls made from a mixture of earth and straw chips.\textsuperscript{4} But it did not mentioned on the exact historical period in which these change took place. A typical Bengal square hut type of thatch and bamboo was first built during the reign of kiyamba (1467-1508 A.D) after the end of his expedition to kyang, Kabow valley.\textsuperscript{5}

T.C. Hodson says that the style of house was introduced by a mythical King named Khooi Ningon, but in the reign of Khagemba changes were made.\textsuperscript{6} It was during the reign of king Khagemba (1596-1652 A.D.) adopted new architectural styles known as \textit{Sana Sanggai} (golden house/House of king; King and member of the royal

\textsuperscript{1} L. Kunjeswori Devi, \textit{Evolution of Temple Architecture in Manipur}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{3} L. Kunjeswori Devi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 2
\textsuperscript{4} Mutua Bahadur, \textit{Cane and Bamboo Crafts of Manipur}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{5} L. Kunjeswori Devi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 3.
family were address as Sana), which open a new era in the history of building architecture. These architectural changes were particularly due to contact with the people of other Asiatic countries in his period. He begun to used bricks and stone for the construction of house and palace. These materials were mainly used in the foundation as ‘prop’ of the pillars for the structure. Khagemba introduced a new style of pillars called ‘Sana Yumbi’ (king post).\[1\] This king post is decorated for beautification which show a stylistic change and development of dwelling architecture. Later, with the development of new experiment, contact with foreign craftsmen & invention of new instrument, craftsmen used different materials and new styles of architecture for beautification and also to save from natural forces or calamities.

Regarding the symbolism of Meitei architecture, the house of the Meitei used to construct by imitating the design of human body. It is believed that Man was created by God and he became alive only by the divine power which worked within him as the soul or the life essence. To the Meitei the human body is a place of divine habitation. Thus, the human body is regarded as a temple or divine place and different deities seated in different part of the body, which the soul manifests itself. Along with the supreme deity Lainingthou, the deities who are seated themselves in the five parts of the body i.e., koubru, in the cortex, Marching, in the heart, Apanba (Pakhangba) in the naval, Thangjing, below the naval and wangpurel, in the sex glands as five souls of the body.\[2\] The physical structure of the human body as kneeling down and touch

the forehead in the ground by facing the east is correspondent with the structure of house.\textsuperscript{[1]} In this position different organs and limbs of human body represented as different parts of the house. Like the human body the Meitei house is not only the dwelling place but also regarded as the adobe of gods. Within this house worshipped household deities in different corner as soul of the house.

Wood, Cane and Bamboo were used by every household as an integral part in the valley and in the hills of Manipur since time immemorial. Poireiton Khunthokpa also mention about the used of cane and bamboo before the Ningthouja dynasty.\textsuperscript{[2]} A variety of products were produced with the help of these materials in different designs and patterns by the craftsmen. It is believed that a family living in a house built without any bamboo can never be a happy one. These materials are readily available in the valley and in the hills. Thus, bamboo, wood and cane are utilized in various ways and for various purposes covering almost everything required in a simple living, such as, several household articles, dwelling house and temple. Bamboo, wood, thatch, cane and reeds form an integral part of the architectural material. Later brick and stone assisted these materials for the erection of permanent house and temple. Woods and bamboos were generally used for the pillar of a structure which supported the roof. The roof is made of thatch, reeds and bamboo splits.

\textsuperscript{1} Naorem Indramani, \textit{Meitei Yumsharol}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{2} Khumanlambam Yaima Singh (Ed.), \textit{Poireiton Khunthokpa}, p. 17.
There are different type of woods which are not use for the construction of temple or house such as tree destroyed by lightning and wind, partly burnt woods, tree growing inside the cremation ground, tree as residing place of birds and tree worship as god.\(^1\)

Peoples believed that Gods and Goddesses and demons of all kind inhabited in the hills and other parts of the valley. Therefore, they selected lucky days and date and also selected suitable place and right direction for construction of house or temple in order to protect their life from evil sprit, epidemic disease and seismic disorders. If someone constructed temple or house without much discussion as selection of good days and direction was regarded as bad omen. Early Meitei kept separate places in their house as residing place of the household deities. Therefore, they constructed their dwelling house as sacret place of the deities with care and precaution measures. As a precaution measures the family members generally consulted pandits or Maibas (priest) and Maibles (priestess). From ancient time the pandit Loisang, the college or institution of the priests, was in charge of the worship of the traditional ‘Lai’ or god of Meiteism.

The maibas and maibles prescribe the right days and date for the erection of house or temple. These maibas and maibles also prescribe architectural rule of Meitei yumsharol regarding the erection of house and it related architecture. “First the house must be commenced on a lucky day, and that day having been fixed by the astrologer; on it (it makes no difference whether the other materials are ready or not) the first post

\(^1\) Naorem Indramani, *Meitei Yumsharol*, p. 145.
called ‘Jatra’ is erected. The post is bound towards the top with a band of cloth, over which is tied a wreath of leaves and flowers. Milk, juice of the sugarcane and ghee are poured in the lower extremity, and into the hole, in the ground in which it is to be fixed are put a little gold and silver. The number bamboos forming the body of the frame for the thatch must not be equal on the south and north sides. If they were so, misfortune, they consider, would overtake the family”.[1]

The first post or the main pillar is known as ‘Uhou Urep’ or ‘Jatra’, which is regarded as the most secret pillar. First, this ‘Uhou Urep’ is erected before the erection of other pillars. Every architectural structure like house, temple & Mandapa has ‘Uhou Urep’ which is place in different direction according to style of the structure building. One cannot erect or remove it without the consultation of Priest or Pandit. Some of the early manuscript like Kangla Houbia and royal chronicle Cheitharol Kumbaba describes the trouble which happened at the erection of the Kangla or royal enclosure of the coronation Hall.

Kangla was not only the royal palace but also regarded as the abode of the Serpent or Pakhangba, which is called ‘Taoroinai’. It was also believed that the God Pakhangba lived as a snake beneath the soil of Kangla coiled up in his characteristic coils known as ‘Paphal’ in Manipur. For the construction of house, palace or temple at Kangla, it was necessary for the architect (Yumsharoi) to know the location of the coils of the Lord Pakhangba. According to the advice of a pandit who came to Manipur

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during the reign of King Naophangba. Holes were dug for erecting the post of the residence of the king. Bad omen had appeared at Kangla because all the holes were touched the coils of Pakhangba. A Meitei pandit named Laiba pointed out the mistakes to the king that the holes were all at wrong points.

According to the advice of the Meitei pandit Laiba, after identification of the site, holes were again dug which did not touch the coils and constructed the residence of the king. All the bad omen had disappeared at Kangla thus saved the kingdom. The royal chronicle *Cheitharol Kumbaba*, also mentioned the trouble which faced at the erection of the Kangla or Royal enclosure of the coronation hall in the wrong site and place during the reign of Maharaja Narasingh (1844-1850 A.D.) in October 1849. It shows the exact care and anxiety with which all building operations were carried on. It also believed that seismic disorders, earthquake, scarcity of foods, epidemics, death of important persons, attack by neighbouring tribes are the work of some deities (divine power) if someone constructed building either religious or secular in the wrong site and place.

The local priests or Pandits took the responsibilities for the identification of the best site and the best days and month to start the construction of temple or house. The lands were growing grass, medicine plant, tree and plain and fertile areas were regarded as the best site for the construction of temple and house. Before the construction the *Yumsharoi* (craftsmen) cleaned and removed all the objects found in the construction site. To encounter old bricks and stones while digging is a good omen.

However, if charcoals, partly burned woods, piece of bones and snakes found in that area was believed as bad omen.\textsuperscript{11}

Coming of Hinduism in Manipur open a new chapter in the history of architecture. The Meiteis have their own highly developed architectural rules. With the coming of Hinduism Hindu *Vastu Sastra* / *Silpa Sastra* mixed to the traditional Meitei architectural ruled which widened the scope of architectural rule of Meitei. The hybrid of the Meitei *Yumsharol* rules and Hindu Vastu Sastra led to the development of new styles of architecture. These styles also have the influence of South-Asian architectural styles particularly in temple and house. The Meitei yumsharol puya mentioned nine types of building architectural i.e, *Yum Laikhan Taba* (Shangbi Shanggai), *Guru Shangsha* (Jagamohon), *Mandapa, Laishang, Taoat, Tamang, Makha Shanggoi, Mamang Shanggoi* and *Hojang*.\textsuperscript{2} These types have different architectural styles and also used in different purpose.

Temple are generally constructed during the month of ‘Wakching’ (January), *Kalen* (April-May), *Thawan* (August-September), *Langban* (September-October). Other months are auspicious. The best day for the beginning of construction of temple are *Ningthoukaba* (Monday), *Yumshakeisha* (Wednesday), *Sagolsen* (Thursday), and *Erai* (Friday) of the following ‘*Thaban*’ or date i.e. 1, 11, 15, 16, and 27 of the said month.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} Naorem Indramani, *Meitei Yumsharol*, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 34.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 85.
Installation ceremonies were generally held after the end of the construction of the temple. The priest and priestess select the right days and date for installation ceremonies to free from collapse. This ceremony held during the month of January, April-May, August-September and September-October. Solar and lunar eclipse, earth quake, display comets in the sky were regarded as omens. If this evident have occurred, the installation ceremonies were held after seven days.\footnote{Naorem Indramani, \textit{Meitei Yumsharol}, p. 78.}

The main pillar or divine pillar which is called ‘Uhou Urep’ is erected first before the erection of other pillar with the advice of astrologer or pandit in the best days and month. It is essential for every structural building to erect this main pillar. For temple this \textit{Uhou Urep} is erected in the right side of the temple closed to the entrance door and facing with the god. While for Mandapa, which is constructed in front of the temple, its \textit{Uhou Urep} is erected in the eastern side of the Mandapa if the temple is facing towards the east. The \textit{Uhou Urep} of dwelling house is erected in the right side of the house. All the dwelling-house faces the eastward having a large open Verendah. Its \textit{Uhou Urep} is erected in the south eastern side of the house. Religious ceremonies and other ceremonies of live and death generally held at Mandapa. This mandapa is known as ‘Marongbashang’ or ‘Sonnapung’. The Meiteis have their own styles of Mandapa before the coming of Hinduism. ‘Pakhangba Laihui’, one of the ancient manuscript of Meitei mentioned about the coronation ceremony of the first king of the Ningthouja dynasty, Nongda Lairel Pakhangba, held at Kangla under a
Marongbashang (mandapa) in 33 A.D.\textsuperscript{1} It shows that since the first century A.D. the Meiteis began to use mandapa for religious and other social gathering functions. The base of the mandapas are always square, flat roof or pyramidal roof of thatch supported by nine bamboo pillars i.e. one in the middle as main pillar and other eight pillars are post in the four sides. All the pillars of mandapa were divine character. In Gauriya Vaishnavism, the main pillar in the middle is regarded as Lord ‘Krishna’ and other eight pillars are his ‘Gopies’ regarding traditional Meiteism the main pillar in the middle is ‘Taibang Mapu Sidaba’, Lord of the Universe.\textsuperscript{2}

Mandapas also constructed without any pillars in the middle. This type of mandapa was mainly constructed in front of a temple. The main pillar of this mandapa is erected one of the four sides according to the direction of the temple. Temples in Manipur are always facing East and south. It had only one room as abode of deity and a Verendah in front. Temples are generally constructed in front of a house but in the North Eastern corner within the boundary of the house or village.

Another feature of temples in Manipur was its association with totems. These totems were always associated with a temple and erected within the courtyard of the temple or Laipham (abode of deities). “Totems in the form of tall bamboo poles decorated with three or nine circular bamboo rings, draped with cloth cut in geometrical shapes, are a marked feature of the Meitei society. The bamboo poles have to be straight ones, and of the biggest variety. The rings are of uneven sizes, with the

\textsuperscript{1} Naorem Indramani, Meitei Yumsharol, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 151.
smallest ring adorning the tip of the poles. The biggest ring comes last. These totems are known as ‘Shattras’. They are considered a must for various rituals and ceremonies. Shattras are offered and used as a secret item for festivals honouring the Umanglai (sylvan deities). These totems were erected in the courtyard of the temples to appear or to honour the deities. The totems also represent the gods and goddess as the almighty power in the Universe.

Construction and establishment of temples and other buildings are mainly responsible to the ruling dynasty of the state. The Raja of Manipur, belongs to Ningthouja Clan, was the head of the seven clans, the chief priest and head of Executive and Judiciary took the responsibilities for construction. With the establishment of the large kingdom in the 1st century A.D. the need for an elaborate and efficient administrative system was naturally felt. The king not able to manage every affairs of the state therefore, we come across a number of officers who advice the king. The king was assisted by a number of officials or council of ministers called the ‘Ningthou Pongba Tara’ (Ningthou = King, Pongba = Minister, Tara = Ten). This Ningthou pongba tara was composed by Nongthonba, Pukhranba, Wankhei lakpa, Khwai lakpa, Yaiskul lakpa, Khurailakpa, Khabamlakpa, Laipham lakpa, Naharup lakpa and Ahallup lakpa.

1. Mutua Bahadur, Cane and Bamboo Crafts of Manipur, p. 98.
The Kangla Hauba text (Manipuri Puya), have mention the following officials with whose help and co-operation the king ruled, they are: (i) Nongthonba, (ii) Pukhranba, (iii) Wangkheilakpa, (iv) Yaiskullakpa, (v) Khurailakpa, (vi) two Shanglenlakpa, (vii) two Sangkhuba Shanglakpas.\textsuperscript{11} The most prominent amongst them was Nongthonba. The official of the Nongthonba was one of great respect and prestige. He was the chief adviser of the king and also acted as the representative of the Raja. The Nongthonba was responsible, as chief executive engineer for the construction, repairs and maintenance of the public building place and temples in the state. However, Sanglenlakpa, the supervisor of all Shangs (Departments) also responsible for the construction of the palace, temples and other public buildings. The Shanglenlakpa was also the head of the Shangsharoi loishop (Department of builder), one of the 16th departments exists during the period of 1709 to 1707.\textsuperscript{2}

The Shangsharoi Loishang was concerned with building and repairing of houses, palace, temples and huts. This department also provided building materials such as thatch, bamboos, woods etc. The Shanglenlakpa prepared bills for the construction of temporary or permanent building and sent them up to the Nongthonba, the head of the royal treasury.

\textsuperscript{1} N. Ibobi Singh, \textit{The Manipur Administration} (1709-1907), p. 63.  
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 105.
During the reign of king Loiyumba in 1074 A.D. the valley of Manipur was divided into six Panna or Lup (division), they are Ahalup, Naharup, Khabam, Laipham, Hidakphanbam and Potsangbam.\textsuperscript{1} Later it reduced to four Pannas. Each Pana sent a team of worker to work for the state as ‘Lallup’. All the adult male member of the kingdom were to serve the king by attending the Loishang (office) in the palace ten days in every fourteen days which was commonly known as lallup.

The Pannas again subdivided for efficient working of Lallup system. Each subdivisions headed by one Lallup Chingba (puller of Lallup), “who seems to have been the active intermediary between the officers at the capital and the men in the villages”.\textsuperscript{2} This Lallupchingba recruited men from the village for efficient working of the Lallup. They are engaged either in war or civil and economic purpose. Primarily Lallup was a military organisation later it become a part in the economic of the country. The men liable to lallup were above 16 years of age.

During the time of war the male member of the family who is liable to Lallup engage as Lalmi (soldiers) and during the peace they performed any work in their respective lines. However, their chief duty during the peace is to make houses, bridge and temple for which they cut and bring the materials. “If a man did not come to his Lallup, he forfeited one rupee and for this sum a substitute was hired”.\textsuperscript{3} On the one hand if a person not able to attain his Lallup in the case of illness, he has to provide a substitute.

\textsuperscript{1} L. Iboongohal Singh, Introduction to Manipur, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{2} T.C. Hodson, The Meitei, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 62.
This *Lallup* system was first introduced during the reign of Pakhangba and it has undergone little change since.[1] During the reign of Pamheiba the *Lallup* system was effectively organised. But it was totally abolished at the time of the coronation of Maharaja Churachand Singh.[2] This *Lallup* assisted the Shanglenlakpa as a part of Shangsharoi(builders) regarding the construction of palace, temple and other public building and road.

The Manipuris have their own separate religion before the coming of Hinduism. The religious belief of Manipuris from the early period till the end of the 17th century A.D was the traditional old orders of animistic system. However, from the 1st half of the 18th century A.D. the Meitei began to recognise Hinduism as state religion but traditional religion continued to practice side by side with Hinduism. The *Maiba’s*, the Doctor and priest, of the traditional religion continued to practice their religious duties and medical treatment as strong opposition to the Brahmin of new faith. In traditional old orders of animistic system the Meitei worshipped different gods and goddesses. These deities can be divided into *Imunglai* (household deities), *Lamlai* (gods of the countryside), tribal ancestors and *Umanglai* (god of the forest). The worships of all these gods and goddesses were aniconic in the early period. The Meitei deities have no specific forms because they are believed to belong to the original being, which is formless and boundless. So, they never created any images as gods and goddess in the early period. They worshipped only the visible things and did not create any icons as

god, and goddesses. "Fire was worshipped by burning fire wood and the Sun was worshipped by worshipping the visible orb of the sun. no icon were necessary".¹ Sometimes these deities were representing by a pair of coins, earthen pot containing water and fire etc. This type of worshipping gods and goddesses does not necessary to built Laishang (temple). Probably they did not built temple also in early time. The concepts of temple developed only when people began to recognised icons of the gods and goddesses. This structure was mainly to protect the deity from other secular areas and centre of group of worship by a particular community. The ancient Manipuris because of the abstained of image they used to kept a separate area instead of temple as Laipham or abode for the worship of their gods and goddesses. They regularly clean the secrete place and worshipped by offering foods and by burning incense and lamp to propitiate the deities.

Imunglai, the house-hold deities, lords of the lives, the births and death of individuals consisted of three gods; they are Phungalairu, Sanamahi and Laimaren. The Phungalairu was represented by a fire altar and a hole near the altar located at the centre of the house. Sometime god Sanamahi was represented by an ancient bell-metal coin called ‘sel’ which is placed on a shelf made of bamboo in the Sanamahi Kachin, south-western corner of the house. The goddess Laimaren was represented by an earthen pot contained water, as residing place of the deity, located near the centre of the Northern wall, just to the direct north of Phunga or fire altar. Thus, these deities were never represented by an image or icon. For these deities they also did not

constructed a separate structure as temple for worship. They worship it under the roof of the house in which they lived and so the Meitei recognised the dwelling house as one of the secret place. They properly clean these imageless secrete place regularly and worshipped by offering foods and by burning incense and lamp. These deities of the dwelling house were still worshipped by every home privately in their respective houses.

The worship of other remaining deities such as Lamlai, gods of the countryside, tribal ancestor, was also aniconic. These deities were also termed as Umangloai, God of the forest. The Meitei did not installed an images as gods and goddesses and also never erect as temple of these deities. They used to keep a sacred place as abode of deities at the most suitable places. There are various places in Manipur which are regarded as sacred and residing place of deities like hills, lakes, forest, river etc. these places are associated with a particular deity called Lamlai or gods of the countryside. These Lamlais are the spirits of the lake, river, mountain etc. Some of the places are name after the deities. Sometime the names of the deity were given to the hills such as Koubruching, Thangjing, Marjing, Laiching, Nongmaiching etc. Offerings were made such as food, cloth, fish to propitiate the deities during the festival of each deity by the Raja or the head of the clan ‘Piba’ and the common people. The Raja and the common people also worshipped annually in order to avoid famine, flood and other natural calamities by offering food and sometime sacrifice goats, ship etc. It is believed that all the hilltops were regarded as the most secret place. The raja or Piba, the head of the clan kept a separate place in the topmost part of the hill as Laipham, abode of the gods
instead of temple structure. The Raja or the common people used to go there and
worshipped to propitiate the deity in an open space. The decree of Loiyumba (1074-
1122) also deals with the assignment of the works of maintenance of the abode of
deities to priest and priestress (Maibas and Maibis). Forty-five families were assigned
to look after forty-five abodes of deities (Umanglais).\textsuperscript{1} They worship these deities
through Laivarouba (merrymaking the god or the rejoicing of the god) festival and
Chaklonkatpa, or offering food. At the time of festival they never erected permanent
structure or temple but kept a separate area as abode of the deity and represented the
‘Ihaifu’ an earthen pot contain water as residing place of the soul of the deity instead
of image. Tree growing inside the sacred place were preserved. It is the also belief that
after the end of the Laivaroba festival the spirits of deities selected the trees as their
residing place.

From the 15\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. traditional deities were represented in different
forms through image. As a result of this, numbers of temporary structure as temple
began to build with thatch, wood and bamboo to protect the image. After 1470 A.D.
they made bell metal icons of their gods and goddesses and built temple to some
prominent deities.\textsuperscript{2} “The Lai itself is represented in several different ways but never
by an image. The original representation of Lai was by a pair of bamboo tubes, which
may have contained relics. At a later stage of development the Lai came to be
represented by brass or wooden masks, with cloths placed below and above as though

\textsuperscript{1} Ganguime Kamei, \textit{History of Manipur}, Vol.1, p. 127.
they were dressed. The simplicity of representing the gods has not been compromised, however. For in recent times a piece of wood or iron was used and today coins and bamboo tubes are still used, for cultic purposes. The absence of images indicates that Hindu iconography has not influenced Meitei worship at all at the time when this rite received its present form.\footnote{1} During the medieval period many of the rulers were great patron of their respective religion. So, they try to popularise some of the deities by creating image and established temples. For example ‘the Sanamahi become popular in the reign of Khagemb (1597-1652) who founded his idol for the first time and worshipped it’.\footnote{2} The earliest record available for casting of images in Manipur is that of traditional deities in the early 17\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

The used of the masks back to the time of khagamba in the early 17\textsuperscript{th} century.\footnote{3} The masks were particularly used during the Laiharaoba festivals. The image or the mask of the Umanglais displayed only during the festival. The Piba or the head of the clan who take care all the materials including the deities bring them out only during the Laiharaoba and put away again after the end of the festival. Therefore, the importance of temple is only during the festival. The masks were carved to represent human features. The masks were not identified with the \textit{Lai}, they simply represented it.\footnote{4}
The representation of *Umanglais* and Hindu gods in human forms is mostly found in the 17th century. However, image came to be used more during the period of king Garibaniwaz. Thus people began to express their religious beliefs, ideas and felling through the medium of mask or images of gods and goddesses. In some instances, for the worship of traditional deities the god is represented by an image, but often there is no such representation, and a place is merely prepared in which he is supposed to be during the worship.\[^{11}\]

The Meitei do not constructed any permanent temples of the *Umanglais* because of the abstained of permanent image. They used to build temple for temporary with the help of readily available materials for a particular occasion or festivals. The roof of the temples of traditional deities is inverted ‘V’ shape to drain off water quickly. The temple is only one room made of thatch, bamboo and wood, constructed for each village. The temple is erected on a square ground plan. The cross shaped sign called Cheirong, it is fixed on the front end top of the roof. This Cheirong represent self identity of each tribe. Nowadays each and every village have a temple of *Umanglais*. The temple has no image but on the occasion of the festival they kept the bronze mask that represented gods and goddesses. There is no important of temple after the end of the festivals or religious ceremonies because the image or mask simply represented as residing place of god or goddess during the occasion. On the one hand before the coming of Hinduism the Meitei have no tradition of temple going for group worship. They used to worship god and goddesses in their own home regularly. It does

not necessary to built permanent temple. Therefore, they burnt down the temple after the end of the religious ceremonies or festivals. With the introduction of bricks, religious and other secular buildings were constructed for permanent. Permanent structure of temple is essential to protect the image or deity which is worship in the sense of almighty power.

The monuments which are still survived to this day were made of non-perishable materials like brick, stone and iron etc. After the end of the 1st Anglo Burmese war, the rulers of Manipur started using plastering materials on a large scale in the construction of temples. Many of them were mostly of Hindu temple. This temples were the best example of architectural designed and development in Manipur. The architectural structure of these temples shows that the temples of Manipur have the influences of Bengali, South-east Asian, European and Islamic architecture. Royal chronicle *Cheitharol Kumbaba*, mentioned the visit of Burmese masons in many occasion. It also mentioned the word ‘*Phura*’ and its construction at many instance. “Their influence is so well-marked in the architecture that the work ‘*Phura*’ (temple of stone or brick erected for god) is derived from the Burmese word ‘*Phaya*’. Most masonry work of the old buildings was done under the direction of Burmese experts”.[11] Like the Islamic architecture sculpture of human being or deities is never represented in the temple wall. However, flower and leave design appeared in the temples. Arch, vault and dome represented in the temples are the characteristics of Islamic architecture. This architectural structure shows skilful craftsmanship.

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