CHAPTER-III

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HINDU TEMPLES IN MANIPUR
CHAPTER -III

Historical development of Hindu temples in Manipur.

Construction and establishment of temples and its related building structure were associated with the development of religion. The religion is a system of thought, feeling and action that is shared by a group and that gives the members of that group an object of devotion. For fulfilment of this need they create a separate place which is an edifice or sometimes merely an enclosed area dedicated to the worship of a deity and the enshrinement of holy objects connected with such worship. This kind of sacred placed or temple cannot be separated from religious society. It also contributed for the growth and development of religion in the society. The historical development of the temple in Manipur can be trace back from the early period with the help of archaeological evidence, literary sources, oral traditions etc. The temple constructed in the early period were perishable materials like bamboo, wood, thatch etc. these materials were easily destroyed by natural forces. Thus, those temples constructed in the early period with the help of these perishable materials not able to survive for a long period. Therefore, there is no archaeological evidence of temple before the 16th century A.D. The earliest Manipur literature that mentioned about the construction of temple in the first century A.D. with the help of bamboo, wood and thatch is Poireiton Khunthokpa, the immigration of Poireiton. Poireiton at the time of his migration of Manipur worship supreme god and goddess, to protect his children from disease and
death. in a temple constructed in front of his house with the help of wood and bamboo.\[1\]

Cheitharol kumbaba, the royal chronicle, mentioned the used of bricks and brick factories from the time of king Khagemba.\[2\] The chronicle did not mention any such factories before him. The reign of King Khagemba marked a new era in the field of art and architecture in Manipur. The chronicle also mention about the construction of five and nine storied buildings in his period. The construction of this type of storied building is possible only by brick and stone. King Khagemba (1596-1652), son of king Mungyamba used durable materials such as stone and brick for the construction of places, temple and other monumental structure. His reigned marked a new era of cultural development in the history of Manipur. It was particularly due to the close contact with the south Asia and East Asiatic people through war, invention and migration. King Khagemba invaded the state of Kyang (Kabow Valley) and destroyed in 1602. He capture its chief and other war prisoners included stone masons who were builders of temples.\[3\] A joint kachari Muslim invasion of Manipur under the leadership of Sanongba, brother of king Khagemba took place in 1606.\[4\] The invasion was due to the misunderstanding between the king and his brother about a boat which was broken due to collision during the boat race. The invading forces were defeated and captured a large numbers of invaders including their leaders and they were made settlement in the valley of Manipur. The prisoners were not professional soldiers.

2. C.K., pp. 32, 38.
They were included blacksmith, stone artisans brass makers etc. A new office was established for looking after the Muslims. Later those Musalmans played an important role in the development of art and architecture. They helped to develop the Islamic style of architecture in Manipur in the 18th and 19th century A.D.

The king also invaded a Chinese town named Khagee Khulellei in 1631 A.D.\(^{[1]}\) The town was conquered and captured its chief along with many other Chinese. They were also made settlement in the valley of Manipur. From this event the king changes his name from Ningthouhanba to ‘Khgingamba’ or ‘Khagemba’ the king who defeated the Chinese. These war prisoners were not professional warriors. They were the common people with different professional service like black smiths, artisans, builders, peasants etc. They settled permanently in the valley of Manipur and contributed for the growth of art and culture during the reign of king Khagemba T.C. Hodson mentioned that two brick-built walls called Hogaibi were erected during the reign of Khagemba. Colonel Johnstone attributes the erection of these blocks to Chinese settlers. The art of building architecture also developed due to the Chinese and Kachari-Muslim settlement. Probably the Chinese prisoner might have introduced the art of making bricks in Manipur. They tough the art of brick making to the people.\(^{[2]}\) Brick making was attributed to the reign of Khgemma. And it was learnt from the Chinese. The Chinese name of brick was ‘Check’ which was included in the vocabulary.\(^{[3]}\)

---
The chronicle mentioned that the royal gate was enclosed with brick walls and construction of five stories houses.\(^1\) As a great patron of religion, King Khagemba constructed many temple of brick called *Phura Laiyum* for gods and goddesses in 1617, 1627 and 1629 A.D.\(^2\)

The temple which was built in 1617 A.D at Wangoi regarded as the first evident of the construction of temple in the Royal chronicle. The traditional deity was installed there. Temples were constructed in new styles. Decoration of the eaves of the temples, *Sanayungi* (King post) and royal house known as *Moimityuba* was introduced during his reigned. Temple of ‘Nongshaba’ a sun god was constructed in 1633 A.D.\(^3\) The using of mask as a representation of gods and goddesses were began to use on a large scale in the temples. Thus, with the increase of icon worship as gods and goddesses, a large number of permanents temples began to construct with the help of durable martial from the 17\(^{th}\) century A.D.

King Paikhomba (1666-1697) son of Tonaba and Nephew of King Khunjaoba contributed for the growth of temple by constructing many temples of god and goddesses in Manipur. A temple of ‘*Lai Kasha*’ was constructed and it was installed in 1678 A.D.\(^4\) A temple of god ‘Taibangkhaiba’ also known as god ‘Sanamahi’ was brunt down in 1685.\(^5\) In 1686, a dome roof temple of goddess Panthoibi was

---

1. C.K., pp. 35-36.
2. Ibid., pp. 36-38.
4. C.K., p. 50.
5. Ibid., p. 52.
constructed. The art of making brick was continued in his reigned as an important industry. In 1687 there was continuous brick making by four Panas for three months. These bricks were mainly used for the construction of temples, fortress and other public buildings.

The coming of Hindusim in Manipur opens a new chapter in the history of temple architecture. The Indian civilization and its culture also spread to far of places through North-Eastern states. The land routes lay through Bengal, Manipur and Assam for going to the countries of the South-East Asia and Far East. This expansion of the Indian culture to the North-East part of India and foreign lands was mainly the outcome of the commercial activities of some of the enterprising merchants who carried on commerce with these countries and amassed huge wealth. The ambitious and discontented members of the royal families and nobility who were keen to regain their position also went to foreign countries to acquire necessary help. In addition to these a large number of religious missionaries crossed the natural barriers of the country to spread the spiritual truths revealed by the great seers of India.

The people who carried and spread the Indian culture abroad were motivated by the spiritual ideals. They aimed at the general welfare and salvation of the people. The Indian merchant's, missionaries and adventurous nobles who settled down in the foreign islands introduced the Indian customs, manners philosophy, religious, rituals,

---

1. C.K., p. 52.
2. Ibid., p. 53.
literature and fine arts in those countries. In due course they intermarried with the local women and completely Indianised or sanskritied them. This process of sanskritization started in the 15th century A.D. in Manipur. The local population adopted the civilization and culture of the Indians. The Hindus customs and manners also underwent certain changes as result of contact with the local population. As a result a new culture gradually emerged which contained elements of both the culture. Later, the Indian civilization and culture dominated the society in this kingdom. Among the people who migrated and responsible for this cultural and religious changes were mainly the Brahmins of Hindusim. The immigrants who come from east and west settled in the valley with the approval of the Raja of Manipur since the 15th century A.D. They were granted land by the Raja such as Lairou, a grant of land for the maintenance of some particular temples which was also known as Devadayā land grant, and Lugun Lou, lands given to the Brahmins on the occasion of their taking sacred thread which was also called Brahmadayā land grant.\(^1\) They used to construct temples in the granted land and practiced their own culture, religious belief, philosophy, astronomy and astrology. They contributed for the growth of new styles of temple architecture in Manipur. The immigrants not only practice their own culture, tradition religious belief but also helped the original inhabited people for the conversion to their belief and practice which helped to inrichness of culture, art and architecture and literature of Manipur.

---

Fresh arrivals of Brahmins started in the 15th century A.D particularly during the reign of king Kyamba 1467-1508 A.D. The Brahmins who are migrated in his period were mostly from Takhen. modern Tripura. "A most important event of Kyamba’s reign is the beginning of the worship of Vishnu in this distance kingdom on the eastern frontier of India."[1] Kyamba requisitioned the service of one Brahmin called Bhanu Narayana and began the regular worship of Vishnu from 1470.[2] He received back the Vishnu image as presentation from Khekhomba, the king of pong which was taken away by khekhomba’s predecessor as war trophies.[3] The image was kept in a temple constructed by him at Bishnupur. The image is seen riding Garuda and holding a conch, a Cakra (disc) a mace and a lotus in four hands. The image is covered with gold except on the nick.[4] King Kyamba with the help of pong king Choupha Khekomba conquered Kabow kyang, a Shan kingdom in the Kabow valley in 1470.[5] They interchange their culture and divided the conquered territory between them. The pong king might have presented the Vishnu image at that time.

Many Brahmins were also migrated during Khagemba(1596-1652) reign. Most of them were from Bengal and Tekhao (Modern Assam).[6] They also contributed for the popularity of Vaishnavism in Manipur. The worship of Vishnu also popular and the king were treated as an incarnation of Vishnu in his time. In 1635 A.D.

---

1. R.K. Jhalajit Singh, A Short History of Manipur, p. 94.
king Khagemba introduced a new type of annual boat-race in which god Vishnu was kept on a boat, instead of participating the contest he witnessed the boat race.\[^1\] Thus, the worship of Vishnu began as one of the most important god of Hinduism from the 15\(^{th}\) century A.D. The Manipuris king never initiated Hinduism up to the first half of the 17\(^{th}\) century A.D. They followed their own traditional religion i.e. Meiteism. However, this king followed the liberal policy in religion. They allow to practices other religious sects particularly *vaishnavism* and encourage them by giving settlement and land grant to the immigrants.

The first Manipuri king who formally initiated to Vaishnavism was Charairongba (1697-1709), son of Paikhomba’s younger brother. By a Brahmin named Krishnacharya alias Raivanamali from Orissa, formally converted the king to Vaishnavism.\[^2\] The conversion took place along with a group of his countries in April, 1704 A.D.\[^3\] King Charairongba worship Shri Krishna as the supreme deity. Thus, the reign of Charairongba was a transition period from the 17\(^{th}\) century to the vigorous eighteenth century, a transition from the traditional Meitei social situation to a hinduised Meitei society.\[^4\] Charairongba with an attempt to imposed Hinduism, he himself took the sacred thread. However, he did not neglected the worship of traditional *lai* (God). The king followed the liberal policy in religious matters. As a Vaisnavite ruler he did not attempt to establish Hinduism as the state religion.

\[^1\] C.K., p. 39.
\[^3\] C.K., op. cit., p. 68.
Due to political stability and good condition of peace, low and order, economic prosperity of the people, and coming of new religious cult during the reign of king Charairongba (1697-1709 A.D.), art and architecture and crafts were flourished to a considerable extent. Charairongba reign was a period of peace and therefore it provided good and great impetus to the development of art and architecture. He used art in the propagation of religion. The art of casting bronze images of gods and goddesses were highly developed. The royal chronicle mentioned the casting of some images of goddess Panthoibi and god Sanamahi in the year 1699 and 1700 A.D. respectively during his reign. The image of Panthoibi was the first recorded idol in Cheitharol Kumbaba. They were nicely moulded, chiselled and polished. The perfection which the art of casting and moulding attained during this period, suggests that it had a long period of continuous and steady development. These images were installed in the temples.

King Charairongba was a great builder. He erected many magnificent buildings and other artistic monuments. It is only from Charairongba period till the 19th century that we came across monuments of high quality in a large number. These enable us to form a definite idea about the extent and nature of the Indian art. The building palaces and monuments prior to the Charairongba’s reign have perished as they were mostly made of wood, thatch and bamboo. Probably, after king Paikhomba, brick and stone become the material per-excellence for art and architecture in Manipur. However, the general use of stone and brick dates from the reign of Charairongba.

1. C.K., p. 63.
King Charairongba constructed many temples of traditional gods and goddesses. He constructed temples of goddess Panthoibi and god Laiwahaiba (Sanamahi) and installed in 1700 A.D. and 1704 A.D. respectively.\[1\] This temple of Panthoibi built 1700 A.D. was her last recorded temple in Cheitharol kumbaba. Another temple of god Sanamahi was also constructed in 1709 A.D.\[2\] Under his liberal patronage many temples of Hindu deities were also constructed. Temples of goddess Kali were constructed in 1706 A.D. and 1707 A.D.\[3\] A Krishna temple was also constructed in 1707 A.D.\[4\] The royal chronicle mentioned the construction of three storied temple in 1707 A.D.\[5\] Another temple of goddess Kali was also constructed in 1708 A.D. In that year a brick temple of Kali was collapsed and killing one person and injuring two other people.\[6\] He not only constructed temples but also raised stone inscriptions engraving all the rules and regulations for the maintenance of the deities in front of the temple. The king issued an inscription for the maintenance of the deity at Konthoujam village.\[7\] We do not have any exact evidence about the styles of these temples. Because all these temples were not exists except few monuments. However, from the wording of the entry in the Royal Chronicle and other remains we infer that those temples built in his periods were the product of Bengali and Burmese style of architecture. Many architects and masons were visited from Burma and Bengal during Charairongba’s reign.

1. C.K... pp. 63,68.
2. Ibid., p. 72.
3. Ibid., p. 70.
4. Ibid., p. 70.
5. Ibid., p. 71.
6. Ibid., p. 71.
This artisans and architects were employed in the construction of temples and other structure. They contributed for the growth of art and architecture particularly temples and other monumental structure in Manipur. The royal chronicle mentioned that Burmese architects and masons were visited in 1706 and returned in 1708 after staying two and half years in the capital.\textsuperscript{11} "The Burmese word for temple was Kyong and it was adopted to means the temple structure".\textsuperscript{12} Probably, those who visited from eastern India might have introduced the hut type temple in Manipur. The basic form of Bengal hut type temple may go back to time immemorial. But the earliest dated hut type temple in Bengal is the temple of Simhavahini at Ghatal (Midnapore) built in Jaishtha 1412, Sakabda (1490 A.D.).\textsuperscript{13}

During the reign of Garibaniwaz Pamheiba (1709-1748), son of king Charairongba, Hinduism attained its zenith of perfection and become the state religion of Manipur. Garibaniwaz followed the religious policy of his father in the beginning. He initiated to Vaishnavism through a Brahmin called Guru Gopal Das in 1717.\textsuperscript{14} He worshiped Shri Krishna as supreme deity. From 1729 the king worships Rama as supreme deity instead of Shri Krishna. The king initiated to Ramandi Vaishnavism with the help of a Brahmin priest name Santidas from Sylhat.\textsuperscript{15} After a long conversation between Swamiji Shantidas Mahanta Bairaga and king Garibaniwas, the

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] C.K., pp. 70,71.
\item[3.] David, J. McCuchion, *Late Medieval Temple of Bengal*, p. 5.
\item[5.] Yendrembhum Manan Meitei, *Bamon Khonthokion*, p. 9; O. Bhogeshwar Singh, *Samwahi Laikan*, p. 52
\end{itemize}
king was finally initiated to Ramandi Vaishnavism.\[1] The king take the sacred thread with the help of guru Santidas on Wednesday, Wakching/December-January, 1729.\[2]

From that time the king changes his name as Manipureshwar and his wife as Gomati.\[3]

Seven clan of Meiteis were known in different Gotras and most of the Meitei festivals were change to Hindu festival.\[4] It was during the time of Garibaniwas made a serious attempt to impose Hinduism upon the people as a whole. He even adopted repressive policy to become Hinduism as the official religion of the state. “Religious dissent was treated with the same ruthless severity as was meted out to political opponents and wholesale banishment and execution drove the people into acceptance of the tenants of Hinduism”.\[5] “The conversion of the people was not filly voluntary. Even in his raids of upper Burma, as recorded by ‘Ningthourol Lambuba’, he destroyed a number of Buddhist Pagodas and looting of these Pagodas and a number of gilted images of the Buddha. Admits these invasions, he was accompanied by his preceptor, Shanta das who of course failed to convert the Burmese into his religion”.\[6] This new cult not able to suppressed the previous religious belief and practices of Manipur. It was continued to practice side by side with Vaishnavism. King Garibniwas even ordered the Manipuri Brahmins to worship some traditional deities ie, Sanamahi, Yumthai Lai,
Panthoibi and Nongshaba.\textsuperscript{11} The king erected a small brick temple in Tolong Yumpham (modern areas of the first battalion of Manipur rifles) in the first half of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century and installed the images of Sanamahi and laimarel which he had prepared.\textsuperscript{12}

Garibaniwaz was the most brilliant figure in medieval history of Manipur and his reign marked a new epoch in political and cultural history of Manipur. The economic prosperity of the country was at high level and many arts, crafts and occupations developed well. The art and architecture were flourished well and employed hundreds of people through Lallup system. As a great Vaishnavite ruler he also used art in the propaganda of religion. He erected magnificent building and other artistic monuments, some of which have survived till today. They are the expression of the cultured, sophisticated and fully developed art that had generations of artistic effort. They deserved to be included among the finest specimens of medieval art. These specimens testify a long precious history when conscious and organised attempts were made in the realm of art. The few which have survived to this day testify the excellence of the architecture of the times. Amongst the temples of he period which have survived mentioned may be made of Krishna temple at Brahmapur Guru Aribam Leikai, Temple of Hanuman etc. The temple is well designed and the architecture is an improved version of the hut type of Bengal.

\textsuperscript{1} C.K., p. 84.  
\textsuperscript{2} M. Kirti Singh, \textit{Religious Developments in Manipur in the 18\textsuperscript{th} & 19\textsuperscript{th} Century A.D.}, p. 136.
Garibaniwaz alias Gopal Singh or Mayamba ruled about 39 years (1709-1748 A.D.). King Garibaniwaz period is a great landmark in the history of art and architecture in Manipur. He was a marvellous builder. From 1709-1722 he followed the liberal policy in religion. During this period he constructed many temples of traditional deities and also built temples of Hindu deities and also excavated tanks. The Royal chronicle mentioned construction of temples in different places. In the month of January 1710 A.D. king Garibaniwaz erected a stone edict of God Laiwahaiba at Leishangkhong.\footnote{1} On Thursday, January of 1715 the king constructed Kalika temple and the same was inaugurated in March 1716.\footnote{2} The king established separate department called Laipham Loishang, department of the abode of deities, for the well administration of the temples in 1715.\footnote{3} The king appointed one officer called Laipham Lakpa to look after the abode of deities or temple. He was one of the Ningthou Pongba Tara, council of Ten Ministers. Laipham lakpa as in charge of the abode of deities was also the head in religious matters but next to the king. The Laipham Lakpa was also one of the permanent members of the chief court Cheirap.\footnote{4} This court administered the laws and customs of the country. The king built many temples of traditional deities particularly God Laiwa Haiba also called Sanamahi. In March 1719, he built a temple of god Laiwa Haiba and another dom roof temple of

\footnote{1}{C.K., p. 73.}  
\footnote{2}{Ibid., pp. 76,78.}  
\footnote{3}{Ibid., p. 76.}  
\footnote{4}{T.C. Hodson, The Meithei, p. 91.}
god Laiwa Haiba was also inaugurated in July 1721.\textsuperscript{11} A tank of god Nongshaba was excavated at Sangai proud in 1721.\textsuperscript{12} Beside these temples of traditional deities, he also built the temples of some prominent Hindu deities before his conversion to Ramandi cult. In May 1722, the king constructed a Krishna temple and this temple was inaugurated in August of the same year.\textsuperscript{13}

From 1723 King Garibaniwaz followed the policy of destruction of temples of traditional deities and construction of Hindu temples in one side. In September, 1723 nine temples of Umanglais (sylvian deities) and two temples of Lammabi were destroyed at the instigation of the reformer Santidas of Ramandi cult.\textsuperscript{14} The Brahmins are employed for the management of the worship of royal deities such as god Nongshaba, Yumthailai, Panthoibi and Taibang Khaiba instead of the traditional priests of the Meities. In 1726 images of nine Umanglais were destroyed and buried at Mongba hanba, Mahabali forest, Imphal east.\textsuperscript{15} In July of the same year images of Lainingthou, panthoibi, Laiwa Haiba, two Lammapi, Soraren, seven Hoidompokpi

\textsuperscript{1} C.K., pp. 81, 82.  
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 82.  
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 83.  
\textsuperscript{4} C.K., pp. 83-84.  
\textsuperscript{5} C.K., p. 87.
were destroyed and buried. The king also pulled down most of the temple of goddess Panthoibi and broke her idols. These repressive policies of religion against some of the traditional deities led to the decline of their popularity.

The king also made many image of Hindu gods and goddess including Lord Rama, Krishna and Kalika. They were mostly kept near the tank excavated by him. The image of Rama and Sita founded by him is still worshiped in a temple near the Royal pond known as Ningthem pukhri, Imphal. In 1726 images of god Krishna and kalika were keep near the tank. He also carve out the image of lord Hanuman on a big stone slab bringing from the Sana Keithel, the main market at the capital, in June 1729. This stone image is still worshipped in a temple at Mongbahanba where the images of traditional deities were buried. This hanuman temple is inaugurated by the Maharaja in November 1729. The image of Lord Hanuman and the temple is still in good condition. The temple is Bengali hut type structure.

King Garibaniwaz did not reject totally the traditional cult. The king recognised some of traditional deities as one of the most important gods. The maharaja restored the image of Laiwahaiba (Sanamahi). In June 1731 and May 1732 he constructed temples of god Sanamahi.

1. C.K., p. 87.
2. Ibid., p. 87; O.Bhogeshwar Singh, Sanamahi Laikan, p. 111.
5. Ibid., p. 92.
The reign of Garibniwaz was followed by patricidal war and war among the princess for the throne. Domestic troubles lead to the decline of political and military strength which was established by king Garibniwaz. There was no progress in development work. The invasion of Burmese in 1758 A.D., 1764 and 1770 A.D. led to the destruction and exploitation of Manipur.\textsuperscript{11} King Chingthangkhomba fled to Assam in 1764 to sought help from the British and Ahom king Swargadeo Rajeshwar Singh to expel the Burmese from Manipur but in vain.

After recaptured the valley of Manipur in 1782 the king Chingthangkhomba followed the policy of consolidation of power, construction and reformation. One of the most important events in his reign was religious reformation. "His own hard struggle for the freedom of his country from the oppressive Burmese, his personal sufferings, the hostage of his son at the court of the enemy, his own experience in facing dangers and test of his dignity and life in Ahom court made him a great devotee of Lord Krishna".\textsuperscript{2} At the time of Burmese invasion the king visited Dacca Dakshin, the ancestral home of Shri Chaitanya in Sylhet. There, he meets one Ram Narayan Siromani, a descended of Upendra Sharma, grandfather of Shri Chaitanya.\textsuperscript{3} Jai Simha was very much impressed by his exposition of the ideal of Shri Chaitanya. The king was formally initiated to Gouriya Vaishnavism by Rup Parmananda Thakur.\textsuperscript{4}

---

1. M. Kirti Singh, Religious Developments in Manipur in the 18\textsuperscript{th} & 19\textsuperscript{th} Century A.D., p.139.
2. Ibid., p. 1148.
3. Ibid., p. 149.
Many Brahmins were also visited in Manipur and they preached the ideal of Gouriya Vaishnavism. There were also some followers of Nimbarka’s school of Vaishnavism and Ramanda’s school of Vaishnavism. As a great Gouriya Vaishnavite ruler, the king did not neglected indigenous gods and goddess. Sanamahi, the house hold deities, continued to be worshipped and to play an important part in the cultic life of king and people. Casting the image of traditional lais (deities) were continue including Sanamahi. His image was erected in 1778.\textsuperscript{1}

Maharaja Bhaigyachandra took various steps for the popularization of Gouriya vaishnavism in Manipur by constructing temple and carving image of the gods and goddesses. One of the most important contributions of the king was the installation of the image of Shri Govindaji. People generally believed that Lord Krishna revealed in his dream for making an image of Shri Govindaji. With the order of the Maharaja, the image of Shri Govindaji was made by the sculptor Pandit Gopiram Singh of Wangkhei on Friday the 12\textsuperscript{th} Hiyanggei / October-November of the year 1776 A.D.\textsuperscript{2} The image of the god made out of the jackfruit tree from Kaina, about 7 miles to the South-East of Imphal.\textsuperscript{3} Even today this place is regarded as one of the most important sacred place. Out of this jackfruit tree images of Shri Bijoy Govinda, Shri Advaita, Shri Gopinath and Madanmohon were also made. These were worshipped at different places. On Friday the 11\textsuperscript{th} Hiyanggei about November in 1779 the ritual installation ceremony of the god Shri Govindajee was held at his new capital Canchipur.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1} C.K., p. 131.
\textsuperscript{2} C.K., p. 130; R.K. Jhalajit Singh, A Short History of Manipur, p. 193.
\textsuperscript{3} Saryu Doshi, The Dances of Manipur, pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{4} C.K., p. 133.
On that day Ras dance was dedicated to Govindaji. The king with the help of his
daughter Bhimbavati Manjuri (Shija Laiobi) formulated the Ras dance. Shri Vijoy
Govindaji was worshipped by Anantashai, the uncle of the king, at Mantri Mayum
Leikai, Sagolband Imphal. Shri Advaita was worshipped at the second palace at
Bishnupur about 17 miles in the South-West of Imphal and Shri Gopinath was
worshipped by Shri Krittidhwaja also known as Kala Raja at Ningthoukhong about 21
miles in the South-West of Imphal.\textsuperscript{[1]} Another image Madanmohon was given to
Hangoibam Chura Sharma at his own request. His descendent worship the image at a
place about three miles to the East of Imphal.\textsuperscript{[2]} On Friday, Phairen / January-February
11, 1794, the king also founded an image of Nityananda which is presented to his
daughter.\textsuperscript{[3]}

As a great Vaishnavite ruler the king Bhaigyachandra was also a great builder.
The royal chronicle Cheitharol Kumbaba mentioned the construction of temple in
several occasion by the king. On Wednesday of the month Wakching/ January 1787
installed the brick temple of Ananta Shai, the uncle of the king.\textsuperscript{[4]} In 1790 of the month
Fairen/February constructed the temple of Shri Govindaji.\textsuperscript{[5]} On Wednesday the 17\textsuperscript{th}
Kalen/May of the year 1795 began for the construction of 19 buildings including the
temple of Lord Shri Govindaji in his new capital.\textsuperscript{[6]} After the end of the construction

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Gangmumei Kamei, \textit{History of Manipur}, Vol-1 p. 267.
\item M. Kirti Singh, \textit{Religious Developments in Manipur}, pp. 147-148
\item Ibid., p. 150
\item C.K., p. 150.
\item Ibid., p. 157.
\item Ibid., p. 167.
\end{enumerate}
\end{flushleft}
of the temple, he assumed the titled of Rajashri Bhaigyachandra. In the same year of
the month Mera/October on Tuesday, the temple was installed.\footnote{1} On Sunday
Sajibu/April of 1796 he also constructed another temple of Lord Govindaji.\footnote{2} On
Monday Enga/June of 1796, Mandapa of Shri Govindaji was caught fire.\footnote{3} In the same
year on Friday of the month Fairen/February again constructed mandapa and temple of
Shri Govindaji which were installed in 1797.\footnote{4} The king abdicated the throne in favour
of his son Labanyachandra in 1798 for the pilgrimage to Brindaban. On his way to
Brindaban he also constructed a temple at Bishnupur. “On the way he reached Sripat
Ksetra (Gambhilapat) in Murshidabad where he dedicated a temple to Radha-Govindaji”.\footnote{5} His name is inscribed in the temple. But the inscription does not
mention the date and year of the construction of the temple by the king.

The successors of Rajashri Bhaigyachandra followed his footsteps in religious
matters. Madhuchandra who ascended the throne in 1801 constructed a temple of Shri
Govindaji and a mandapa of the temple at Kangla. The temple and the mandapa were
inaugurated on Monday, Sajibu/April of the year 1801.\footnote{6} In the same year he founded
an image of Chaitanya and sent it to Bishnupur for worship.\footnote{7} Maharaja Chourjit, the
fifth son of Jai Singh, was a great Vaishnava ruler, who ascended the throne in 1804.

2. Ibid., p. 168.
3. Ibid., p. 169.
4. Ibid., p. 171.
He celebrated the formal coronation ceremony with Hindu system of religious rite and rituals. He encourages the Brahmans and Vaisnavas in religious matters and made many presents including land grant. Like his father, he also recognised Shri Krishna as the supreme deity of Hinduism. King Chourjit encourages the Manipuris to visit at Nabadwep, Puri and Brindaban for pilgrimage. He gives financial assistance to the Vaisnavas of Nabadwep and Brindabana.\textsuperscript{111} He also gives financial assistance to meet the expenses of the temple of Anuprabhu at Nabadwep. This temple was established by his elder sister Bhimbabati Manjari. As a great Vaisnava ruler the king respected other cult including traditional cult by providing all help and facilities to the people for worshipping them. As a vaisnava ruler, the king was also a great builder. He dug tanks, constructed palace, coronation hall and also constructed temples which were dedicated to Hindu deities. On Thursday 17\textsuperscript{th} Lamda/March of the year 1805 A.D. a temple of Shri Govindaji was constructed at Kangla. In the next year a mandapa of the temple was also built. The temple and the mandapa were surrounded by a brick wall. The temple and mandapa of Shri Govindaji were inaugurated on Sunday 3\textsuperscript{rd} of Kalen/May in 1807.\textsuperscript{12} The unique contribution of king Chourajit was the construction of Navaratna temple. The Ratna or pinnacled designed has a rectangular box with carved cornice, but the roof is more or less flat following the curvature of the cornice and is surmounted by one or more towers or pinnacles called Ratna (Jewel), such as

\textsuperscript{1} M. Kirti Singh, Religious Developments in Manipur in the 18\textsuperscript{th} & 19\textsuperscript{th} Century A.D., p.163.
\textsuperscript{2} C.K.,p. 201.

Panchavimsatiratna (twenty-five jewels), etc. The Nava-ratna temple is originated and developed in Bengal. The Ratna system seems to emerge in the 16th century, although we have no extant examples from before the 17th century in Bengal. “The earliest Nava-Ratna temple in west Bengal may be the ruined core at Maliara (Bankura dist.), which family tradition (not invariably reliable) puts in the early 17th century” \[1\]

The pinnacle or Ratna style of temple was introduced in Manipur for the first time in the early 19th century A.D. particularly due to the closed contact with the people of Bengal who were settled in Manipur with the consent of the raja of Manipur and many Manipuri’s also went in Bengal as pilgrims. They contributed for the growth of temple particularly Chala (hut styles) and the Ratna style in Manipur. King Chourajit constructed the Nava-ratna temple on Thursday 26th Lamda/March of 1803 and the same was inaugurated on Friday 3rd of Sajibu/April in 1804.\[2\] Today there is no concrete evidence of this temple. Perhaps it was destroyed by the Burmese during the seven year devastation in 1819-1826 A.D.

The Burmese dominated and exploited the valley of Manipur from 1819 to 1826, which was known as Chahi-taret Khuntakpa, the seven year devastation, in the history of Manipur. The Burmese not only occupied Manipur but also her suzerainty and domination was felt all over North-East India. At the time of Burmese invasion all the princess of Manipur flight to Cachar.

---

1. David J. McCutchion, Late Medieval Temples Of Bengal, p. 10.
The first Anglo-Burmese war (1824-1826) was concluded by the treaty of Yandaboo, on 24th February 1826. According to article 2 of the treaty, the king of Burma recognised Gambhir Singh as the raja of Manipur. After recaptured the valley of Manipur with the help of the British authority, Gambhir Singh formally become the king of Manipur for the second time in June 1825 and started the reconstruction and modernisation of the ruined country. The king shifted his capital at the Langthabal on Sunday 10th Mera/October in 1827, which is situated about 8 kilometers south from Imphal. The image of Shri Govindaji was brought to Canchipur (Langthabal) there he constructed a brick temple of the god. The work of construction began on 13th Thursday Lamda/March in 1827.[1] The king himself involved in renovation the Hanuman temple at Mahabali on 27th Poinu/December Friday 1828.[2] One of the most important achievements of the king in religion was the construction of the image of Jagannath. On Sunday 20th of Kalen/May in 1832 began the construction of the image of Jagannath with the help of the Brahmin Pandas (Priests), they were coming from Jagannath Kshetra, Puri(Orissa).[3] The image is resemblance to the image of Jaganath temple of Puri. The image was investiture on Engen/july1832 and started Ratha-yatra festival in the same year. The image of Subhadra and Balabhadra were also carved. Thus, he introduced the worshipped of Lord Jagannath in Manipur.

1.C.K., p. 231.
2. Ibid., p. 233.
Maharaja Nara Singh, who ascended the throne in February 1844 (1844-1850), whose reign was marked with the revival of religious activities including construction and renovation of temple particularly for Vaishnavism after the Burmese war. The king shifted his capital to Kangla, Imphal from Canchipur on Monday 6th May 1844.[1] Construction of temples, mandapas and re-installation of various images were done by him in his new capital. During the regency period of Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh, he also built a temple and a mandapa of Ramchandra Prabhu at Khwairamband Bazar and reinstalled the image of Ramchandra Prabhu on Friday 20th of Hiyangei/November in 1841. The image was brought from Narasingtilla.[2] The worship of Lord Mahadeva was also popular. The temples of Lord Mahadeva were constructed in 1844 and 1848 respectively at Imphal.[3] The most important contribution of Maharaja Nara Singh was the construction of brick temple of Shri Govindaji at kangla. The construction of this brick temple began on Friday, Wakching/January, 19th in 1845.[4] The temple was inaugurated on Saturday, Lamda/March 10, in 1845. He also built a mandapa of the temple.

Maharaja Nara Singh was a great patron of kirtan (Nepa-Palla) and introduced many reforms in Sankritan. As a Vaishnava ruler his reign was also marked the revival of religious festivals. He introduced religious festivals which were still practice even today such as Jalakeli festival of Radha-Krishna, etc. These festivals were mostly celebrated in front of the temples with dance, music and devotional songs.

2. C.K., p. 259.
3. Ibid., pp. 267,288.
4. Ibid., p. 274.
Chandrakirti Singh son of Maharaja Gambhir Singh ascended the throne for the second time on 13th July 1850 by defeating Nara Singh’s brother Devendra Singh. The British authority recognised Chandrakirti Singh as the Maharaja of Manipur in February 1851.\textsuperscript{1} Due to good relation with the British government, on the 20\textsuperscript{th} February 1880, the chief commissioner of Assam, Sir Staurt Bayley confer on him the title of the “Knight Commander of the Star of India”(K.C.S.I.).\textsuperscript{2} With the help of British authority “he made all round improvement of the state up to date. He was one of the best, strongest and most intelligent Indian princes of his time”.\textsuperscript{3} In his period people were happy and prosperous. Life was a synthetic whole in which religion and materialism were happily and successfully blended together. It witnesses the flourishing of the Hindu genies and the \textit{Vaishnavite} culture reached its watermark. However, unlike Maharaja Garibaniwaz, Chandrakirti Singh reign is conspicuously free from any trace of religious tyranny, intolerance and persecution. He never forced to any community to follow his religion. The king was assisted in religious matters by many Brahmins. These Brahmins were assigned land and appointed in the court particularly for the maintenance of temples. The chronicle says that he constructed temples and setup many images which were distributed to different centres. He made images of Rama, Krishna and Gopaladeva and installed on Ingen / June-July 5, 1868.\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{enumerate}
\item R. Brown, \textit{Statistical Account of Manipur}, p. 69.
\item J. Roy, \textit{History of Manipur}, p. 92.
\item L. Iboongohal Singh, \textit{Introduction to Manipur}, p. 194.
\item C.K., p 360.
\end{enumerate}
On Friday Enga/June, 22. 1865 constructed an image of Bangshibodon and the same was presented to the chief of Moirang to worship it by the king mother Kumudini Devi. Some of the images installed by the king were still very popular to this day. The image of Ramachandra Prabhu was shifted from Khwairamband Bazar, the main market at Imphal, to the original abode at Ningthempukhri, Wangkhei, Imphal East, on Wednesday, Sajibu/April, 7, 1857.

The king was also a great builder. Beside the construction of roads, cannels, bridges, he himself engages in the construction of temples, mandapas of hindu gods and goddesses and traditional deities. All the four pannas were engages for the collection of building materials through lallup system. They were also engaged for the making of bricks in 1854. A mandapa, congregation hall, of Shri Govindaji was constructed in Poinu/December, 1856. On Friday, Langban/September, 2, 1861, brick temple of Brindaban Chandra was collapsed. The causes of the collapsed and the architectural structure of the temple is difficult to identified due to lack of concrete evidence. Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh constructed a Bheithob of brick in his capital. The Bheithob was dedicated to Lord Govindaji. The Chronicle Cheithorol Kumbaba also mentioned the construction of brick Bheithob on Friday Inga / June 20, 1864. Sanskrititan and other religious ceremonies were performed in this Beithob.

---

2. C.K., p. 333.
3. Ibid., p. 326.
4. Ibid., p. 332.
5. Ibid., p. 347.
6. Ibid., p. 356.
The great earthquake, which was occurred on Sunday 10th January, 1869 A.D. damaged some part of the Bheithob.\textsuperscript{[1]} Many brick buildings including brick building of the king, brick wall of the palace compound and temples were damaged. The earthquake also destroyed the roof of the Shri Govindaji temple and the limb of Shri Govindaji was also broken. In which three persons were known to die and one was wounded from the falling of bricks.\textsuperscript{[2]} The temple and the image of Shri Govindaji were again reconstructed by the Maharaja. After the installation of Shri Govindaji the king dedicated two bells to Shri Govindaji, weight about 8 mound and 17 mound in 1876 and 1877 respectively.\textsuperscript{[3]} He set up images of Hanuman and Garuda and kept them as gate-keepers in the temple of Shri Govindaji. The Maharaja also encourages the worship of other hindu gods and goddesses by constructing many temples. He himself visited to different pilgrim places. The king went to the Nongmaiching hills, Senapati District, for the worship of Lord Shiva.\textsuperscript{[4]} The abode of the Lord Shiva was situated at the top of the hills, six miles to the east of Imphal. Originally it was the abode of Lord Nongpokningthou, the traditional deity of Meiteism. Later, God Nongpokningthou was identified as Lord Shiva by the Manipuri hindus. The king introduced the Baruni festival. The main feature of the Baruni festival is the worship of the phallic aspect of Lord Shiva on the top of the Nongmaiching hills once in a year.

The shrine of Lord Shiva at which worship is offered was constructed on the order of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item C.K., pp. 374,375.
\item M. Kirti Singh, Religious Developments in Manipur in the 18th & 19th Century A.D., p. 171.
\item C.K., op. cit., pp. 429,434.
\item Ibid., p. 322.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
king Chandrakirti by one Yumnam Keirungba.\footnote{1} Beside the worship of Shiva, the worship of Devi and Kali were also popular in his reign. On Friday Sajibu/April 13th, 1869, he constructed a brick temple of Devi(Durga) at jirì Thanna, Imphal East.\footnote{2} In 1870, a temple of Lakhi Thourani was constructed in his capital.\footnote{3} The roof of this temple is covered with gold coated tin. Another Durga temple was also constructed and installed in November 1871.\footnote{4} The worship of Shiva and Durga were first appeared during king Khongtekha Yoiremba(763-773) period from the Phayeng copperplate. But, these deities were given strong royal patronage by Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh by constructing temples and thus attained more widespread popularity. Thus, Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh was the great builder of Ningthouja dynasty. Many wooden and brick buildings including temples constructed in his period have been tumbled down and perished due to earthquake and other natural forces. For example a Radha-Govinda temple of wood constructed on Monday 21 of Hiyanggei/November, 1874, has been perished.\footnote{5} However, some of the temples built in his period were still survived to this day mentioned may be made of Leimapokpa keirungba at Yaisku, Imphal and temple of Thangal General, new palace compound Imphal. The temple of Leimapokpam Keirungba was built in 1875 A.D by Leimapokpam Dev Singh (Leipok Keirungba) and worshipped Radha-Binodata.\footnote{6}

\footnote{1}{S.N. Parratt, \textit{The religion of Manipur}, p. 43.}
\footnote{2}{C.K., p. 376.}
\footnote{3}{Ibid., p. 388.}
\footnote{4}{Ibid., p. 395.}
\footnote{5}{Ibid., p. 424.}
\footnote{6}{Mutua Museum, Vol. 3, p. 17.}
The temple of Thangal General was built by Thangal General alise Kangabam Chitananda Singh in 1879 A.D.\textsuperscript{1} Thangal General was the son of Kangabam Khetri Singh of Angom Leikai, "He was a piba (eldest male issue of the eldest surviving line of a family) of Chingamakha Taba Kangabam family of Ningthouja Salai of the Meiteis. He was a descendant of Meidingu Yaraba who ruled in Manipur (799-821 A.D) and was the 18\textsuperscript{th} line of descent from Meidingu Yaraba".\textsuperscript{2} "He was a devout vaishnavite. Inspite of his hectic engagements in both civil and military matters he found time to train and groom himself as a lead performer in Nat Sanskritan in which role he often performed matching up with other dignitaries who shared the interest".\textsuperscript{3}

He constructed a brick temple popularly known as temple of Thangal General during the reign of Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh, K.C.S.I in 1879 A.D. Thangal Genral dedicated the temple to Radha-Kriahna on Thursday the 24\textsuperscript{th} April 1879 A.D at modern palace compound, wangkhei, Imphal East. The temple is still preserved at the good condition without deities. This deity is worship and maintained by Kangabam Gojindro Singh Nahabam Leikai Brahmaipur Imphal. The temple is only the finest example of Panchayatana style (four shrines at the corners around the central one) of temple architecture in Manipur.

\footnotesize{1. \textit{Archaeology of Manipur}, Vol.III, p. 12.  
3. Ibid., p. 43.}
The period from 1886 to 1891 was a great landmark in the history of Manipur. It witnessed two important events, i.e., the palace revolt of 1890 and the Anglo-Manipuri war of 1891. The war was due to the mutual jealousy, dissension, distress and discord among the princes of Manipur. In the war of 1891 the Manipuri's loss their sovereignty and independent by establishing British rule in Manipur. During the short period from 1886 to 1891 Maharaja Surchandra and Kulachandra sons of Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh, ruled one after another. Due to political crises they not able to give more concentration for development work and construction. As orthodox Hindus, they followed the same religious policy of his father. However, they did not neglect the worship of traditional household deities like Lord Sanamahi and Pakhangba. A temple of Sanamahi was built by Maharaja Kulacnahdra in 1891.\footnote{C.K., p. 494.} The temple is located at the campus of 1st Bn. Manipur rifles, Imphal. The site is popularly known as Haying Khongbal; originally it was known as Tolong Yumpham. The unique feature of the temple is octagonal sanctum cube and gothic type roof. This external feature of the temple is developed only in the late 19th century in Manipur particularly due to the contact with the British. The British introduced European architecture in the building construction from the early 18th century. "The peculiarity of the temple is marked by an amalgamation of European conception of architecture highlighted by the Gothic tower appearance of the temple and the \textit{Nagara} style of medieval Indian architecture."\footnote{Archeology of Manipur, Vol. III, p. 16.}
Another temple built before the Anglo-Manipur war of 1891 was the temple of Brindabanchandra also known as Birtikendrajit Temple, is attributed to Jubaraj Tikendrajit. The temple is believed to have been built in late 19th century. Jubaraj Tikendrajit was the son of the third queen of Mahajaja Chandrakirti Singh K.C.S.I (1850-1886). He was hanged along with Thangal General for rebellion against the British on 13th August 1891, after Anglo-Manipur war of 1891. The temple is built of well-brunt bricks, located at the north-western part of the Kangla fort, Imphal. Jubaraj Tikendrajit is said to have worshipped Brindabanchandra here at this temple. From the architectural features; it appears that the temple is not only the worshipping place but also the resting place and hiding place for the Jubaraj.

After the end of the Anglo-Manipur war of 1891 Churachand Singh, son of Chaobiyaima Singh and great-grandson of Maharaja Nara Singh was appointed as the Raja of Manipur by the British government. Sir Churachand Singh was a great patron of Vishnavism and worship Shri Govindaji as the supreme deity. He established religious institution and established worshipping place to popularised Vaishnavism in Manipur. A cultural and religious organisation called ‘Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha’ was formed in 1934, to look after the needs of all Manipur Hindus. Renovation of temples, mandapa and reconstruction of secular places were post-war development work of Sir Churachand Singh. A summer palace complex was constructed at the top of the Canchipur hillock in 1907, three miles to the South of Imphal.\[1\] A temple, which was dedicated to Radha Ramon, was also constructed within the palace complex.

The summer palace was installed on Wednesday poinu/December 7, 1907. On Friday, 4th of Fairen/February 1918, a mandapa was also built there. The mandapa was dedicated to Radharamon by Maharaja Churachand Singh (KCSI, CBE). The most important achievement of Maharaja Churachand Singh was the construction of new palace and Govindaji temple at Imphal. The temple was constructed under the supervision of the British Engineers. The palace was occupied in November 1908. The temple was dedicated to Shri Govindaji, the royal deity. The image of Shri Govindaji was installed in this temple in November 1910. The Manipuris Vaishnavite recognised this temple as the most important worshipping place in Manipur. He appointed his family priest for the service of royal temple Govindaji and dismissed the Brahmin priests who were in the service of the royal family before him. The architectural style of the temple is resembles of Islamic architecture prevalent in the Indian sub-continent during 17th and 18th century A.D. Senapati Raja Dhumbra Singh eldest brother of Sir Churachand Singh dedicated a temple to Brindabonchandra in 18th of November 1915 at Rajbari, near the modern palace. The deity was worshipped by Jubaraj Tikendrajit at Kangla before the Anglo-Manipur war of 1891.

1. C.K., p. 557.
2. Ibid., p. 584.
There are many historical monuments built by the Manipuris in the neighbouring state of Manipur. From the early period the Manipuri princess use these places as the springboard to capture the throne of Manipur. Some of them settled permanently in that place. They built their palace and temple of Hindu deities and traditional deities. Some of them are still found at Sylhet district, Bangladesh. Beside these many other temples also built under the patronage of the rules of Manipur. There are many other historical monuments in Sylhet district of the modern Bangladesh built by the Manipuri princess. At the time of Burmese invasion in 1819 the Manipuri princes such as Gambhir Singh, Chourjit and Marjit fled from Manipur for about seven years. During the seven year devastation, their royal deities was taken to Cachar District and then to Sylhet (Bangladesh) by the princes. With the permission of British authority they built place and temples in Sylhet district, Bangladesh. Gambhir Singh built a residence known as Manipuri Rajbari of Lama Bazar, Sylhet and Marjit also built another residential building called Manipuri Rajbari at Bhalughat, Southern part of Sylhet, Bangladesh. Near the palace, Maharaja Gambhir Singh built three temples of traditional deities such as temples of Pakhangba, temple of Yumjao Lai:mbi and temple of Nongshaba. These temples are situated just to the opposite side of the Madan Mohan Collage, Sylhet Bazar.

---

These three temples were built over a rise common platform and have similar architectural style. The temple of Pakhangba is bigger than the temple of Yumjao lairembi and the temple of Nongshaba. The Unique feature of the temple Pakhangba is the depiction of peacock, solar symbol, bulls, and horses and paphal of Pakhangba in the southern and Eastern side walls respectively.\footnote{The Bulletin of the Mutua Museum, No. III, pp. 41,42.} Mahraja Gambhir Singh also joined the reconstruction of Brindaban and the village of Radha-Kunda by giving financial assistance.\footnote{R.K. Jhalajit Singh, A Short History of Manipur, p. 251.} He also sent his official to look after it. Raja Nara Singh also built a temple and a mandapa at Nara Singh Tilla, in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh.\footnote{The Bulletin of the Mutua Museum, No. III, p. 43.} The temple and the mandapa were dedicated to Lord Jaganath.

The rulers of Ningthouja dynasty were powerful but not rich due to political and economic condition of the state. As a result of this they not able to build temple, palace and other secular buildings with bricks and stone on a large scale. Most of the buildings prior to the introduction of bricks were made of readily available materials like bamboo, wood and thatch etc. Many of them have been perished. As a result of this, we have no definite information about the details of temple architecture of the early period. Non availability of monuments of Pre-Hindu period in Manipur are due to the frequent devastating invasions by the Burmese, the religious bigotry of king Garibniwaz and moist climatic condition of Manipur.
The art of sculpture is inseparable from temple architecture. The sculpture work is continued from the early period. The chronicle mentioned the installation of many traditional deities i.e., Panthoibi & Sanamahi before the coming of Hinduism by the Manipur kings. However, the earliest record available for casting of images as deity in Manipur is that of Panthoibi and Sanamahi in the early 17th century A.D. With the introduction of Vaishnavism the art of sculpture is highly developed. The craftsmen mainly engaged for the making of stone inscriptions and images for the temples. The image of Hanuman was carved out of stone in 1729 A.D. The Manipur kings encouraged the craftsmen for making Hindu deities by granting land and money. Sculptors used Metal, Stone, wood, Ivory and Clay as their raw materials for making sculpture. Among the traditional deities bronze images of Lord Sanamahi is one of the important contributions of Manipuri sculpture.

Metal images like Salagram, Gopaldev, were also worshipped as one of the fine products of Meitei sculptors. Some of the images of Lord Siva and Hanuman are depicted in stone which are found in Ingourok and Mahabali. Manipuri sculptors used wood as their most favourite materials for making sculptures of krishna and his incarnations. In present days every local temple wood sculpture of Lord Krishna and Radha are shown. Apart from that we also found the wood images of Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabadhra in the temple.

The worshipped of lord Jagannath through Ratha Jatra festivals was attributed to Raja Gambhir Singh. During the reign of Raja Gambhir Singh in 1832, in the month of kalen/May-June, a Panda Brahmin from Jagannath Kshetra, made the image of Lord Jagannath and installed the image to the Govindaji temple.1 The finest example of sculpture of wood is the images of Sri. Govindaji, the royal deity. The images were prepared along with other images of Vijoy Gobindaji, Madan Mohan and Gopinath from the jock-fruit true found in the Kaina Hill, 18 miles from Imphal via Thoubal by King Bhaigyachandra.