CHAPTER NINE
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From the analysis of data and interpretation we have come to the conclusion that the temple of historical past is living in the contemporary time plane without undergoing major changes. It is evident from the discussion that the same person acts as person of historical past and person of contemporary present. How did the service groups emerge has been already discussed in the previous chapters. Now services are there, but they perform their activities in exchange for money. Their services towards the temple in the past were obligatory because they got temple land for habitation as well as for agricultural production. This bond leads to the emergence of interdependent service groups who became socio-economically and religio-economically an inexorable part of the temple. The hierarchical position of each group was determined through the involvement of their product with the temple. The nearer to the temple; the higher the social status. This stratification hardly gets topsy-turvy because the principle of occupational determinism by birth comes into play.

Next let us examine the role of material culture. Past cultural tradition continues up to present time. Once temple as an abode of the deity came into being, it in the form of institution started functioning. Along with this, other material items came into being, each has specific function and role of its own within the given system.
The differential functional involvement of each item of material culture with temple system determines its relative position among themselves. This has its reflection on its producer and manipulator. This results in the formation of various service groups like ĀTHAPARIĀ, SUPAKAR, KOTHBANIĀ, HOMKHARIĀ etc.

The point that I have attempted to elicit out here is that relative importance and functional status of an object is determined by the sacred attribution given to it by the religious code. This is equally applicable to the parsons participating to this system. This starts with production and ends with the final manipulation of the material cultural item through the person concerned.

To understand fully of a material cultural item one has to decipher the non-material aspect or the symbolic counterparts: seen or unseen. This is important as each service/occupational group acts as a repertoire of the symbols (i.e. the typological and technical aspects of the objects produced), he considers it to be his own prerogative which he inherits from his father or forefather through birth. In the same way a priest considers himself to be the inheritor of ‘classical codes’. That’s why we see a MĀLĀKAR produces the MĀLĀS; the Kumar pottery; the GANDHIĀ incense and so forth.

The economic bond between temple and the service/occupational groups became loose when the temple land was brought under the control of the government. Thus the direct economic control of the temple over the service/occupational groups is
lost. But indirect control over them is there. Now the temple has to produce the materials required from the traditional service/occupational groups on payment. Interestingly, the types remain same as before, no major change has taken place as yet. Here also the role of classical code is vital. It takes the rein of economics of production in silent. They cannot deviate as the whole economic system centres round the temple with the active control of classical codes. This has saved the system from being its major deviation or its collapse.

The change has come but the system continues with a little modification. The same service/occupational groups from their relative position underpin the temple even today. Previously there was a service group named JAGĀI who used to awake the deity from night sleep at down no longer exist at the moment. But their function continues. Since symbol exists, it needs be perpetuated. The system here in temple shows flexibility, this function is taken over by the main priest, second priest, ĀṬHAPARIĀ. DUWĀRI, SUPAKAR who work in unison. This is done so that the regular rhythm of work inside the temple does not get a jolt. Similar changes have taken place among the other service/occupational groups also. But this does not create any impasse in the temple system, the material items come to the temple through different newly emerged sellers who come of from the traditional service/occupational groups who were once inexorably interlocked with the temple through their religio-economic or socio-economic bond.
The other temples that exist at Hajo made their beginning at different depths of time. All are located within the jurisdiction of the Hayagriva Madhava temple. Though they operate by forming a religio-economic complex around it, but they are directly or indirectly remain as a part of the Hayagriva Madhava temple. This is evident from the fact that a priest of the Hayagriva Madhava temple have right to worship the Ganesha, Kedar and Kameswar in their temple in specific need only. But the priest of Ganesha, Kameswar and Kedar temple under no cases be allowed to perform worship in the Hayagriva Madhava temple as a substitute for priest of the Hayagriva Madhava temple. It speaks of the fact that here exists a kind of hierarchy among the temples and deities also. The priest of the aforesaid temples become a part of that hierarchy. This hierarchy is maintained in order to ensure the economic viability of the service/occupational group of the respective temple. This mobility is not permitted as this brings a total collapse in the religio-economic system of the temples. Each temple forms an interdependent part of a bigger system that is Hayagriva Madhava based. In fact small and big religious institutions or units feed back one another by maintaining their relative distance and position.

The main purpose of this study is to understand the functioning pattern of the temple of similar nature existed during historical past. When we examine a system of the present, we examine it against its past. Now the question is how does a system survive, is it solely dependent on material or its non-material base. Neither material nor
non-material base can alone underpin the temple and its religio-economic structure. This has already been discussed. No culture grows out of vacuum. It has its symbolic counterpart in the past. The symbols have not undergone major changes; as the same ‘classical codes’ that were active in the past support this system today also. There are reasons enough to extrapolate the present situation to the past to understand or interpret the past structure and function of the temple brought under study.

The temple is simply a body and this body vibrates through the active participation of pilgrims, service/occupational group and this participation is based on their material product. The temple exists and creates a socio-economic and religio-economic complex. Here classical code acts as a regulating force that adds rhythm to the socio-economic and religio-economic system. It harmonises the work and action of the temple with that of the pilgrims and service/occupational groups etc.

The temple of Hajo is a continuation of past to the present. The same socio-economic or socio-religious situation when made role back may help us to understand the function and structure of the similar temple existed here in Assam during past.