CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Bronze icons and statues of Manipur are broadly divisible into three classes according to the forms and figures exhibited on their visual structures. They are (1) anthropomorphic (2) animal figured and (3) mixed up forms of the two former structures. The anthropomorphic icons can be divided again into (i) partial formed or only facial anatomic and (ii) complete human figured icons of which the last one is emphasised in this thesis in avoidance to the difference of religions and religious sects.

To find out the prevalence of the icon worship and the icon themselves in Manipur, the study is started from the land and people of this state and their traditions, customs, conventions and creeds with regards to the religious thoughts and beliefs.

A brief account of religion of the people of Manipur prior to the Hinduisation of the Meitieis, the consolidated people of seven different clans and nine different tribes is produced as simple faiths and beliefs such as animism, nature worship, spirit worship, ancestor worship prior to the advance of the 11th century A.D. These faiths and beliefs were effected with the tides and ebbs of the Tibetan Bonism, Chinese/Tai
confucianism and Taoism, Indian and Myamma Tantrism and Arism at different stages and centuries. As the wheel of the time roles the Meitei religious faiths and beliefs came up to the stages and standards of cults during the first half of the 17th century A.D. By then the introduction of the Meitei nature cults to harmony the mind of the people were started among which the important cults transacted in the Meitei scriptures were - to believe in and to worship (i) the Almighty one, (ii) four direction guarding gods, (iii) nine arbour deities, (iv) Sanamahi, (v) Nongshaba, (vi) Kasa and (vii) Nongpok Ningthou and Apanbi/Panthoibi. Again divine Pakhangba cult was also evolved during the first decade of the 18th century A.D. These cults are appeared to follow the sermons of venerating and revering the gods and goddesses by offering human sacrifice (Charat, very scarcely), four footed animal sacrifice (Korat), fowl and egg sacrifice (Marat) and water flower, fruit, etc. offering (Erat). It is also observed that almost all the activities of private and public life cycle were related and coherented with religious performances and offerings. The ideas of an ever powerful Almighty and His trinity manifestations were developed and Sanamahi and Pakhangba cults become the axial cults among the religious observations and regards of the other native state and local deities. The ethical establishment of the Almighty in the imaginary form and figure as well as habit and nature of a human being and His obeyer gods, the Lord creator, Divine sustainer and furious dissaluter were maintained to guard the prestige, status and standard of being a nation. They also believed in
the soul transmigration such as rebirth and incarnation as well as the manifestations of the gods and goddesses.

To the following chapter the account of the Hinduism in Manipur is described depending upon the facts and findings of the Meitei scriptures relayed in the History of Manipur. This chapter portrays the encroachment of the Hinduism in Manipur, the first initiation of the Meitei King Charairongba (1697-1709 A.D.) into Bengal Saktism sect of the Saiva theological School of Hinduism on the 5th day of the first Meitei lunar month Sajivu in 1704 A.D. and following his example by his eldest son or successor - king, Mayamba/Garibaniwaza (1709-48 A.D.) by baptizing himself into Saktism and changing his religious sect from Saktism to Nimandi Vaisnavite sect in 1717 A.D. and from Nimandi to Ramandi Vaisnavite sect in 1730 A.D. and the introduction of the Hinduism as the state religion of Manipur by Meitei King Garibaniwaza in 1717 A.D. The archeological evidence for adoption of Ramandi or Rama worship sect by His Highness Garibaniwaza is pointing to the existing sculpture and temple of Rama devotee Hanumanji in the arbour of Mongbahanba/Mahabali which were erected by Meitei King Garibaniwaza in 1729 A.D. This chapter also provided that Chingthangkhomba/Bhaigyachandra (1758-62, 1763-98 A.D.) the grandson of Garibaniwaza embraced and introduced the Madhabacharya sect or self surrendering devotional religious sect of Hindu Vaisnavism and the endurance and flourish of this sect is
withnessed by the existing wooden icons of Shri Govindaji, Bijoyanath Govinda, Madanamohanji etc. since 1776 A.D. onward. It is also observed to provide the progress of additions and omissions of many religious aspects in devotional doctrines and processes more than the Kirtana and Sankirtana, religious, festivals observations and performances etc. by the following kings of Manipur uptil 1941.

The following chapter tries to display the influence of Buddhism in many aspects in the study circle of Manipur so far withnessed in the scripturally literary sources, customary traditions and archaeological findings. Here, the similarities and dissimilarities of the Buddhist sermons, principles etc. and those of the Meiteis, the origin of the Buddhist elements in Manipur from the point of the fusion and contact method, the Meiteis mood of localization in the adoption of the import elements and observations of the Buddhist elements in some religious aspects of Manipur such as the iconographic elements, shrine architectural elements even though they were actually brought in Manipur by Hinduism in imitation of the Buddhism in the universal concept, Buddhistic decorative fixtures and furnitures, worship offerings, social aspect of Buddhistic fashions, Buddhist sculptures etc. are described vividly with living examples. This chapter produces, the ethnological attitude in social and traditional costumes, institutions and their structures and disposal of dead in accordance with the coincidence of the Buddhist traditions and further displays the archaeological sites such
as Sekta, Thumkhong lok ching, Lamboiching, Sekta village grave yard mould, Keibi Heikakching burial site, Meitei Kangla complex are in the Buddhistic style. The engraved stone footprints of Manipur coincides with the symbol of Buddhas presence. As the Hindu vaisnavite temples built in Buddhist style such as Mahabali Hanuman temple and Shri Krishna/Madanmohan temple at the heart of Imphal and Shri Vishnu temple at Bishenpur endured against the shaking hands of the Myamma invasions, it is observed that the Buddhist elements are visually found in Manipur before procuring the present knowledge of archaeological findings of the above cited sites in Manipur,

The following chapter IV deals with the study of development history of bronze sculptures. Bronze is suitable for casting sculptures of idols and images. It displays five periodic sculptures of India as 1) Early period, 2) Gupta-Vakataka period, 3) Early medieval period, 4) Medieval period and 5) Later period. During these long periods the sculptural art evolved from simple to complex forms. Divine, semi-divine and supernatural human being have only a pair of limbs and organs and wearer of turbans during the early period. But additional limbs and organs, crown instead of turban, use of drapery ornaments, image of Semi human, Semi animal, half male and half femal and terrific and erotic structures are evoluted during the medieval period. The later sculptural arts are the continuation of the medieval period.

This chapter further studied in sculptural history of Manipur with
its periodied divisions as (i) Pre-Hindu and (ii) Hindu periodical sculptures and in the former, the literary accounts of sculptures so far transacted in the scriptures of Manipur numbering 17 metal/bronze casted icons of human facial and skull anatomic structures are described and in the latter, the literary evidences as well as the archaeological evidences of non existed and existing sculptures in public and privatecustodies are described with their religious theme and texture divisions. From above facts and finding of the living icons the technical and typological differeness of the local and foreign art style of Manipur are observed. Further this chapter described a study of varities of bronze images so far concerned by the living sculptures of Manipur and it gives the details of locations and description of 38 (thirty eight) different icons and statues.

The above chapter is followed by the studies of metal casting in Manipur and displays the international origin of metal casting and its spread at every corner of the globe, its introduction in Manipur as foreign importation with the processes and procedures of modelling, moulding, casting and finishing as flourished in the South and South-east Asia, the typology of the Meitei nature metal casting as that of the south-east Asiatic or Myamma casting complex and the technology of the same as the universal technique of the Cire-perdue or lost wax technique which was / is endured so long in the neighbouring countries of Manipur. This chapter also describes the casting of full anthro-
pomorphich icons more than the facial and skull anatomic icons in bronze with the role of time and the advance of art from crude sculpture to finer ones are observed in due course. Moreover this chapter is dealing in the conservation, preservation and restoration of the bronze objects so that it may provide a facility to fresh and renew the loveliness and caress of the objects. It describes the scientific methods of conservations by cleaning the corrosions according to their types. Cleaning methods usually applied universally as by (i) Chemicals, (ii) by reductions methody and (iii) mechanical cleanings and treating cleaning Chemicals like Sodium sesquicarbonate, Silver oxide, Benzotriazole and Sodium Hexametaphosphate (Calgon) are used. Regarding the methods of preservation and restoration, this chapter accounted to all the treated objects after the cleaning operation, applied preserving chemicals like polyvinyl acetate, Benzotriazole etc. for preservation and to deposite the object in a clean and dry atmosphere for restoration.

The above described paras are the chapter wise summery of this thesis for which the important points of conclusion as extracted in succession of the chapters are laid here as belows :-

(i) The Meitei prior to the adoption of Hinduism are polytheist with an Almighty God whose intentions and orders are observed and carried out into actions by a Lord creator, a Lord sustainer and a Lord dissaluter and many other gods and goddesses who are functioning
and acting their allotted duties for bearing and maintaining the wheel of deeds and dones of human being under the above mention three superior deities in the Meitei universe.

(ii) The Meitei was first baptized into Hinduism in 1704 A.D. and the first embraced Hindu religious sect was Saktism, a sectary of Hindu Saivism branch of south Indian school.

(iii) The most popular Meitei religious cults are Sanamahi cult and Pakhangba cult among others.

(iv) The first Meitei who adopted to Hindu Vaisnavite sect was Meitei king Garibaniwaza (1709-48 A.D.) and he made the country a Hindu kingdom in 1717 A.D.

(v) Meitei King Bhagyachandra (1763-98 A.D.) initiated and introduced the Vaisnavite self surrendering love of the almighty probably in 1776 A.D. in Manipur.

(vi) Following Meitei kings of Manipur added and omitted many aspects of devotional doctrines, religious processes, festivals etc. so as to built Manipur a modern state.

(vii) The Buddhist elements in Manipur are not only evidenced by the customary and traditional objects and conventions but also by the modern and new archaeological finds scattered elsewhere in the Manipur valley.
(viii) The Meiteis as their indigenous principle of undisplaying the unseen Almighty in the Visual aspect, the modelling of statues of their divinities was introduced at the beginning of the 18th century A.D. and established good relation between statue and religious belief.

(ix) The sculptural development of India leads to the sculptural History of Manipur and the Meitei sculptures and sculptural arts have strong elements of both the Bengal (India) and Myanmar (South-east Asia).

(x) As the Meitei religious concept "no unseen is to be made seen" provided no indigenous origin and evolution theory is permissible but contact and exchange theory regarding the origin of Meitei sculptural art is intended.

(xi) Almost all the bronze images were brought in Manipur from the neighbouring countries prior to the event of Devine Panthoibi casting in 1699 A.D.

(xii) Metal casting arrived in Manipur c.1628 A.D. and the typology of metal icon casting is of the Bengal industrial complex while the technology is of lost wax technique (cire-perdure).

(xiii) The processes and procedure of the Meitei native casting follow the universal principle of modelling, moulding casting and finishing with using the local texture and materials so far found in the
local hills and valley.

(xiv) The conservation, preservation and restoration of the bronze objects are presented with universal principles, fundamentals and materials. The private and N.G.O. s possessed icons are appeared not to observe the modern scientific ways and means of the conservation, preservation and restoration and these institutes followed the native and centuries old ways and means.

As Manipur is a poor state of India in natural resources and her people belong to the intellectually, educationally and economically backward class, their bronze icons are also suffering the same fate. So to try set aside the sufferings the people must be tried to have their conciousness and awareness of the archaeology in the modern trend because to same an antigue is to save the history of the state and her people.