SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present author carried out field investigation into the megalithic cultures of Manipur found among the Naga tribes during five field seasons (since November 1987 to the early part of 1992) in different parts of the state. The work was mainly confined to the four hill districts, namely the Chandel, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul; out of which the most concentration of megalithic site is found in the Senapati district.

Previously, some administrators and scholars located a few megalithic sites in Manipur. But none of them investigated thoroughly the different megalithic fields. Among the previous workers T.C. Hodson (1900) is the first one who gives the idea of further investigation in Manipur. Next to T.C. Hodson, the exploration of another megalithic structure of the same village, Willong by J.H. Hutton (1929) is noteworthy. Among the local scholars, the works of O.K. Singh in the northern part of Senapati district (Mao area) deserve special mention.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to summarise the present work, which has been given in detail in the previous chapters. On the basis of the study, the present author tries to
analyse the various aspects vis. structural, functional and ceremonial in addition to the associated social and religious aspects connected with the erection of megalithic monuments by different tribal communities of the state.

Manipur is a hilly region. Megalithic sites are mostly concentrated in the hilly regions (Fig. no. 7). The important sites are: Songsong Gate, Kalinamei, Rabunamei, Punanamei and Pudunamei of Mao area; the Saranamei, Tungam, Tungjoi, Liyai and Phuba of Poumai area; Maram centre, Maram Khunou, Sidem, Willong, Sangkungmei, New Maram and Maram Khunjao of Maram area; the Puilong, Oklong, Maryram, Oklong Khunou and Rasaimei of Liangmei area; the Longa Koireng, Sadu Koireng, Utonglok, Kamu Koireng and Nurathel of Koireng area, Sadar hills, Senapati district.

The important sites in Ukhrul district are: the Humphun, Ngahui, Chingai, Poi, Huishu, Marem and Kharasom-Lazo of Thangkhul area; the Jessami Khullen and Jessami Christian compound of Chakhesang area.

The important megalithic fields in Chandel district are: the Koijam Maring, Minou, Langol, Machi and Phunal Sambum of Maring area; the Charong ching, Khambathel, Oklu, Anal Khullen, Mombi, Lamphou Charu, Toupokpi and Khobung of Anal inhabited areas.
The Xgairong, Salangthel and Urangphai in Chanmahali district.

The Haochone, Thingra, Mandu, Tamenglong, Nungba, Kambiron and Tamei are the important fields in Menglong district.

The different megalithic types found in Manipur are studied and broadly divided into two groups. The first group constitutes the morphological types, while the second group consists of the functional types.

On the basis of the morphological features, the megalithic remains of Manipur may be classified into seven categories including the miscellaneous types. They are listed below.

1. Flat stones or capstones;
2. Menhirs, alignments and avenues;
3. Cairn (with or without stone circles);
4. Stone circles;
5. Dolmens;
6. Stone seats and
7. Miscellaneous types.
1. **Flat stones**: It consists of a stone slab, either circular or rectangular in shape of varying sizes. It is placed directly upon the pit dug for keeping the skulls of human beings and bones of the hunted heads of wild animals as well as for burying the deceased person along with the offerings. The capstone is invariably made of sandstone blocks of varying colour.

2. **Menhirs, alignments and avenues**:

**Menhirs**: These are monolithic pillars planted vertically into the ground. They may be small or gigantic in height. They are often crudely dressed or unhewn. They are differently known as *Tissum* among the Marams; *Chosotu* among the Naos; *Chenku Tusom* among the Liangmeis; *Zhaosochu* among the Poumais; *Shamboo* and *Bamdon* among the Kabuis; *Na dönba Lao sonbā* among the Thangals; *Maran Lung* among the Tangkhuls; *Tutangkam* among the Anals and *Anhu* among the Chakhesangs. They occur in a number of sites but mostly in Senapati district and less frequently in other places.

**Alignments**: Closely allied to the menhirs are the alignments consisting of a carefully oriented rows or series of standing stones in a square or diagonal plan. This type occurs at Willong, Oklong, Chingai, Naram Bazar, Kalinamei, Laranamei, etc.
Avenues: They consist of two or more parallel rows of megalithic structures commonly termed as alignments. They are found abundantly in Salangthel, Urangphei, Oklong, Willong, Sangkungmei, Funanamei, Pudunamei, Songsong, Kalinamei, Tadubi, Sajouba, Tungam Tungjoi, Saranamei, Oinam Purul, Maiba, Phuba, Liyai, etc.

3. Cairns: It consists of a heap of stones or rubbles of smaller but somewhat regular slabs either enclosed within a circle of small or considerable size boulders or freely raised on the ground by pilling up the stones one above the other without any enclosure. There are different types of cairns having similar or different names according to their structure raised by different tribes.

4. Stone circles: Though they are the most ubiquitous of the megalithic monuments in India and are observed to enclose various forms of megalithic remains, they are restricted to some districts in Manipur. In this category the present writer (author) has included only stone circles, which may or may not contain some form of burial pit(s).

5. Dolmens: This type of megalithic monument consists of a flatstone resting on three or four smaller vertical or piled-up stones. They are found either singly or in cluster. They are mostly found concentrated in Senapati district only.
6. **Stone seats**: This type of megalithic structures consist of a number of flattish boulders placed at regular intervals either in the form of rectangular or roughly circular or oval shape. They are of varying shapes and sizes. Some of them have a centre-stone, like a centre table, while others have larger slabs within or roughly circular or rectangular structure to serve as the special seat for the head of the clan or village chief. The stone seats are placed either directly on the ground or rested on some supporting stones.

7. **Miscellaneous Types:**

A. **Sheifuns**: It consists of a small dolmen along with a standing menhir. It is called Sheifuns among the Koirengs. The sizes of the dolmens and menhirs varies from site to site or even within the same site.

B. **Maran Tarungs**: It is a raised wooden post either forked or cylindrical. It is found inside the village particularly in front of the house of the merit-seeker. It is always found in cluster, constituted by either five or ten such posts and always found in association with one or two menhirs.

C. **Lamal Bam**: This type consists of a small collection of stones with a short wooden post and some branches of a special kind of tree along with six Y-posts.
D. **Ariza**: It is a wooden statue, consists of a log of wood which is roughly carved out to form a human figure without limbs, both upper and lower. It is found inside the village habitational area. It is called Ariza among the Chakhesangs.

E. **Avicho**: It is an elongated, slender but small plain stones planted in the form of alignments. It is always found very far from the habitational area.

F. **Village Gate**: This type is constituted by piling up a number of stone slabs of various sizes leaving a gate for entrance and exit of the villagers along with a huge stone slab or a wooden door to shut the gate.

The social and religious significance of the megalithic monuments found in different districts and among different Naga tribes of Manipur have been described in Chapter five. In order to explain the significance of various megaliths of Manipur, the rude stone monuments are divided into two groups: (a) Memorials and commemorative or Menhirs of social statue and (b) Funerary and ritualistic Megaliths.

In other parts of the world Megalithism is a prehistoric and dead cultural phenomenon as such the process of erecting the megaliths cannot be observed. But in North-east
India, mainly among the Naga tribes of Manipur (particularly among the Poumais, Koirengs and Analas) this prehistoric and dead cultural phenomenon could be observed as a living culture.

Megalithic types found in Manipur are smaller than the megaliths of neighbouring state particularly of Meghalaya. The megalithic monuments found among the Mao-Maram and Poumai areas are larger in comparison with those of Kabuis, Koirengs, Tangkhuls and Thangals. Such monuments are still preserved in the hilly regions of Chandel, Bishenpur, Churachandpur, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul districts. Various types of megaliths are found in every locality. Of them the finest structures are concentrated in Liangmei, Mao, Maram and Poumai areas. The dominant structure are the menhirs, alignments, avenues and cairn types. Next to it the dolmens form a constituent part of a megalithic field in the Senapati district. Stone circles with cairn filling have been located in two sites of different district (one is at Salangthel and the other is at Puilong).

The megaliths of Manipur have definite common features, which make all of them representative one common cultural tradition. The common feature in the Indian context consists of the use of iron-implement, which at least at one site, viz., Brahmagiri was an intrusion into the earlier stone
axe culture which ultimately supplemented, the wheel-turn Black- and Red Ware and post-excarination fragmentary and collective burials. Even the urn burials of Adichanallur are associated with megalithic culture by these common features though they do not have the megalithic appendages of either circle or dolmenoid cist. It has not been yet possible to assess fully the point of time when this distinctive culture first emerged upon the Indian soil, nor when it died away, as even today this mode of burial is practised in parts of India in a symbolic and conventional form by many primitive tribes.

In Manipur, among the different tribal communities having different megalithic practices, there is a common feature. The common feature is the feast of merit or series of feasts of merit given by a performer, the merit seeker or in honour of a deceased person.

The investigation into the megalithic culture in Manipur by the present author has established that all the types of megalithic structures appear to have belonged to a wide spread cultural area covering south east Asia and Indonesia.