

CHAPTER -V

TEMPLE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE LAND OF KAMAKHYA

The management of the temples of various Cults mainly depends upon the source of finance, administration and supervising machinery. Though the problems relating to the *Dolai's* power, negligence of duty by the Priests and attendants, land revenue payable to the Government etc. are associated with the temples management but, the amount of annuity so fixed is too small to meet the expenditure of the daily as well as regular worship of the temples. With the acquisition of the temple lands by the Government the Priests and attendants lost all interests in the temple and hence, in most cases, the temple became deserted. So, there is now none to look after them and hence the temple buildings too which are undoubtedly historical monuments are facing ruins.

Management of the Temples and their Rites, Rituals, Fairs, Festivals, etc.

Rites, Rituals, Fairs and Festivals of the deity have prevailed for a long time in the land of Kamakhya. A lots of Rites, Rituals, Fairs and Festivals both calendar cal and occasional are performed. It has a great importance in the temples management system of the land of Kamakhya in different periods. The references to Bhagavata (reverence, holy etc.), *Swamina* (lord) and Balabhadra in the Umacala Rock Inscription¹ indicates that the shrine was dedicated to Balabhadra, a name of Balaram, the elder brother of Krisna and one of the '*Panca-Viras*' of the *Vayu* and some other *Puranas*. The shrine is therefore taken to be a place of Vaisnavite worship. Balabhadra Swami might have been also an anchorite, a religious teacher of the

donor. The inscription belongs to the royal period of Maharajadhiraja Surendra Varman whose identification is yet to be ascertained, though some scholars have tried to identify him with Mahendravarman, the king of Varman family for the reason that both the names stand for Indra. The Barganga Rock Inscription of Bhutivarman records that *Avaguna*, a minister who worshipped *Paramesvara* made the 'religious asylum' (*asrama*) with a view to securing longevity of Sri Bhutivarman, a performer of *Asvamedha* sacrifice.² Of the two religious architectural remains to which references have been made above, we have, however, no further details regarding their scope, material and extent nor regarding their management. However from the clear references made to the worship of Siva and in some cases of Sakti by the kings of Kamrupa, at least since A.D. 7th century, as found in their inscriptions, it appears that in the majority of the temple in ancient Kamrupa Saivite rites and rituals were performed however, in some, *Sakta* and in some other, both *Saiva* and *Sakta* and in a few Vaisnavite rites and rituals were performed with great pomp and ceremony. BhaskaraVarman pays his homage to *Sasisekhharapinakimahadeva* at the beginning of a grant to some Brahmins.³ Most of the ancestors of Bhaskara are described as regular performers of sacrifices.⁴ The Nidhanpur Grant of Bhaskaravarman records that he was born for the proper distribution of the duties of various castes and stages of life (*Varnasramadharm*) which had been lying in a confused state.⁵ It indicates that various Brahmanical rites were observed conforming in all probability to the textual prescriptions at the time of BhaskaraVarman. His predecessor, Balavarman, as recorded in the same epigraph, was the very domain of sacrificial rituals. It is also recorded that an endowment of land was created specially towards *Bali*, *Caru* and *Satra*, the three important rituals of Brahmanical Hinduism.⁶ The Copper plate Inscription of Srikumara, on the other hand, mentions the worship of Indra.⁷ From the

Tezpur grant of Vanamaladeva of the Salastambha dynasty we learn that Mahagauri and Kamesvara Siva were worshipped in a temple on the *Kamakuta* hillock.⁸ The same epigraph mentions that king Vanamaladeva not only rebuilt the big temple of *Hatakasulin Siva* (i.e. *Mahadeva* called *Hataka* or a *linga* image of Siva having a *sula* meaning trident/ *fance* of *hataka* meaning gold) which had fallen down in ruins but also made large endowments of villages, men, elephants and dancing girls to it,⁹ which implies that besides the various sacrifices as well as the regular and daily worships of Siva and his consort Sakti, there had been regular musical performances at the temples, and also that the temples were gradually becoming owners of large landed estates, men and wealth. The Nagaon grant of Balavarman of the same ruling dynasty records that Devadhara, a pious Brahmins performed the Vaitanika rites in an unbewildered manner.¹⁰ The Bargaon Copper Plate grants of Ratnapala of Brahmapala's dynasty indicates that there was a Siva temple of great height in the capital city called Durjaya while the Guwahati and the Guwakuchi Copper Plate grant of his son Indrapala state that Ratnapala "caused the whole world to be crowded with white washed temples of Siva, the dwellings of Brahmins to be stuffed with various types of wealth, the places of sacrifice to be littered with sacrificial posts, the sky to be filled up with the sacrificial smoke". On the other hand, the Gachtal Inscription of Indrapala's son king Gopala informs us that Indrapala "by constructing a clearly white washed temple of Sambhu turned the earth into as if a Kailasa Mountain".

These epigraphically evidences gives us a clear impression that the rites and rituals of Brahmanical Hinduism found a fertile ground in the area of our study at least from the fifth century A.D., if not earlier to the eleventh – twelfth century A.D. And that the various important sacrifices were performed in a grand manner as that " the smoke of the hum enveloped the sky of the temple campus".¹¹ Among other rites and rituals,

taps or ascetic practices formed an important part of the religious life of the Brahmins assigned to the temple.¹² There are references also to Brahmins making pilgrimage to various *tirthas* (sacred places).¹³ Besides the religious establishments recorded in these epigraphs, the *Kalika Purana* gives a long list of *tirthas* and also mentions some of the high and beautiful *prasada* and *saudha* including that of *Candravati* situated in the city of *Candravati* which were bedecked with gold, silver and jewels.¹⁴ It is also recorded in the work that *Naraka*, after his installation on the throne of *Kamarupa*, made proper arrangement for the worship of *Kamakhya*.¹⁵ Fortunately the *Kalika Purana* records the rites and rituals observed at the different *tirthas* in the land of *Kamahi* in ancient period, while the *Yogini Tantra* refers to the ones followed in its contemporary medieval period. As the *Kalika Purana* records it, the *naivedya* (offerings) for *Kamakhya* consisted of various ingredients.¹⁶ The work clearly mentions that *modaka* (sweet meat) should be offered to *Ganapati*, ghee to *Hari*, regular musical performances to *Samkara* and various sacrifices to *Candika*.¹⁷ Such sacrifices included birds, tortoise and animals such as *varaha* (boar), *chagala* (goat), *mahisa* (buffalo), *godha* (donkey), *sasaka* (deer), *camara* (gourd), *krsnasara* (ox), *sarabha* (monkey), *simha* (lion), *matsya* (fish), *sukara* (dog), *manusya* (Human being), *svagotrarudhir* (blood from own race) horse and elephant.¹⁸ Among these, *chagala* was regarded as *Bali*, *sarabha* as *Mahabali* and *manusya* as *Atibali*.¹⁹ Such references indicate that besides the sacrifices of various birds and animals including cow and ox, human beings were also offered at the temple, specially at that of *Kamakhya*.²⁰ The offering of human sacrifice, however, was the royal prerogative enjoyed by king and no one else could do it without his sanction.²¹ In all probability it also might be an old practice on the part of some women in *Kamrupa* to sacrifice their virginity at the shrine of *Kamakhya*.²²

A number of other rites observed in places of worship include *avahan* (invitation), *Sodasopacara* (offering of *sodasopcar*), *japa* (uttering of mantra), *balidan* (offering of sacrifice) *ango* (invocation) and *angadirpuja* (worship and invocation) and exhibition of *mudra* (ring and script).²³ But at the same time pilgrims from outside Kamrupa were allowed to worship in the temples according to the customs, rites and rituals of their own.²⁴ Among the rituals, the detailed description of *Sakroththana* and that of the *Visnuyajna* in the *Kalika Purana* leads us to conclude that these ceremonies were performed long before tenth century A.D.²⁵ The *Sakroththana* ceremony is also described in the *Devipurana* and is supported by a reference to its performance in a Copper Plate grant of Balavarman.²⁶ The *Kalika Purana* mentions several times about the celebration of *Madan Troyadasi* and *Sivacaturdasi*. Besides, some particular days were observed as days for special worship. Thus on the *astami* and *navami tithi* (the eighth and ninth days of the moon), a special *puja* (worship) in the temples was arranged with offerings of cooked food with *Sali* rice (autumn rice) and curry at noon and with an earthen lamp to be lightened with ghee.²⁷ Moreover the *ekadasi* (the eleventh day of each moon) day was observed in the temples, and was also selected for making religious grants. The Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva was made on the *ekadasi* of *Visnuvati* in *vaisakha*.²⁸ The Nagaon Grant of Balavarman, on the other hand, was issued on the *Visuvat* tithi.²⁹ Both these days are still observed in the temples as festival days and are commonly known as Bihu.³⁰ The above rites and rituals both daily and occasional were practiced in the temples up to eighteenth century A.D. and it is well known that king Naranarayana (Malladeva) and his brother Cilarai (Sukladhvaja) after having inaugurated the Kamakhya temple which was then newly built by them offered a number of 3 lakhs of different sacrifices including those of *mahisa* (buffalo), *chagala* (goat), *hamsa* (duck), *matsya* (fish), *paravat* (pigeon),

harina (deer) and *kacchapa* (tortoise), opened it for the use of public and donated lavishly for meeting the expenses of the priesthood, daily worship and occasional festivals.³¹ Thereafter the Ahom king Gaurinathsimha following the old custom also on another occasion offered sacrifices numbering three lakhs in the temple in A.D. 1782.³² According to the detailed account of the daily *puja* of the Hayagrivamadhava presented in the text entitled *Manikuta*, the deity was regularly offered worship three times a day. Every day in morning the deity had to be bathed and then clothed in a new dress; then at noon cooked food was to be offered to it and finally there had to be the evening worship (*sandhyarati puja*) accompanied by musical performances. This prescription is supported also by a large number of Copper Plate Grants of the Ahom kings containing information about the rites and rituals of the temples. Some other literary works, to name the more important ones the *Yogini Tantra*, the *Darrang Rajavamsavali* and a number of *Caritputhi* (biographies) of Neo-Vaisnavite preachers including that of Sankardeva and Madhavadeva also help us in this regard. It is noteworthy in this connection that at the invitation of the Ahom king Rudrasimha, Krisnaram Nyayavagisa came to Assam and subsequently was appointed Parvatiya Gossain i.e. the sole in charge of the Kamakhya temple on the Nilacala hill. King *Sivasimha* requested him to prepare the details of the *puja-vidhi* for the use of all temples in the land of Kamrupa. This is an important piece of information for it clearly indicates that discrepancies were suspected between what was prescribed in the ancient texts and what actually were followed in these temples, Krisnaram did accordingly.³³ And following this *puja-vidhi* detailed by Krisnaram, in addition to the customary daily worship and offerings of *bhog* (cooked food offered to the deities at noon and in evening), certain tithes were observed in common through the performance of some rites in all the temples. These *tithi* based ceremonies have been

observed in all the temples, irrespective of sect, the form of some rituals is, however, different from temple to temple.

Besides the regular rituals, some other ceremonies such as the Buddha *puṇima* (birth, attainment of enlighten and death of Lord Buddha), *Ratanti Kalipuḷa* and also the *pañchaparvas* (five festive days in a month), are observed in all the temples.

Control over Temple Property

From the descriptions in the land grant charters of the kings of Kamarupa and consequently of the Ahom kings, the properties of the temples may be divided broadly into two groups viz, movable and immovable. Each temple has its own temple building and huge quantity of land, which comprised the immovable properties. The movable properties include utensils; different images made of metals including gold and silver, boats and traders free from all taxes and punitive measures, cow, buffaloes, elephants and in some cases included cash money. Besides it also included men assigned to various services of the temple.

Servitors to a temple were assigned from all the professional castes of the society to make the daily and regular worship. Some of them were priests, some were to assist the priests and some were to maintain the temple establishments.

In ancient times, a class of people called *Sastrakars* usually lived in the temple complex were assigned to frame laws or code of conduct regarding the management of the temples.³⁴ The Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva made reference to the Brahmin Rajguru Murari, who was probably the priest of a temple.³⁵ Besides, we come across of references to appointing women as dancers and courtesans connected with temple services. Vanamala made gifts of *Vesya* to the temple of Hatakasulin Siva.³⁶ Those

women, dedicated to temple services were usually known as *Nati* or the *Daluhangana* or *Devadasi*.³⁷ Their duty included dancing and singing before the deity and to fan the idol with camera (Tibetan ox tails) and also to prepare garlands. The grant also records that the king made a large endowment of men, elephant, horse, gold, silver and many other valuables.

Srikumara donated a copper bell to a temple of Indra,³⁸ while Vanamala donated an image of Surya to Bhattaravi, which indicates that the done was in charge of a temple and he received the image on behalf of the temple.³⁹ Likewise the same inscription from Deopani⁴⁰ records that Hari donated a Visnu image indicating that the donor also made other donations to the temple. These images in some cases were made of gold and we find mention that the temple where Mahamad-I-bukhtiyar took refuge contained huge image of solid gold weighing one thousand pound.⁴¹ The Guwahati Grant of Indrapala record that the white-washed temples which were built by the kings decorated with wealth of all kinds.⁴²

In regard to the immovable properties, it appears from the descriptions in the land grant charters of the kings of Kamarupa that some lands connected with the temples, usually known as *Bahamadeya* or *Agrahara* are found to have been granted by Bhutivarman as early as 6th century A.D.⁴³ The Guwahati Grant of Indrapala also refers to the land in Pandari area dedicated to the temples of Mahagauri and Kamesvara.⁴⁴ Another reference to land of the Kurmanatha temple is made in the copper plate Inscription of Dharmapala.⁴⁵ Likewise king Madhavadeva “by virtue of the grant of property (*nirbandhana*), obtained from Sri Ananta Dasa, the *Bhumikaranakayastha* (writer of the Land Settlement Department) one hundred partakes of land near (the shrine or god) Sri Kamesvara were released by the king to *virocan*, the Superintendent of the Temple”.⁴⁶ Thus, it appears that a huge amount of

movable and immovable properties were enjoyed by the temples of Kamarupa since long past.

During the medieval period, the Koch king Naranarayana made a large grant with 140 men to the temple of Kamakhya, while his nephew Raghudeva granted land and 700 Paiks to the Hayagrivamadhava temple at Hajo,⁴⁷ during the short period of the Mughal occupation of Kamrupa. Land men and money were received by the priests of the temples of Hayagrivmadhava, Kamakhya, Sukresvara and Umananda from the Mughal Emperors Jahangir and Aurangzeb also.⁴⁸

In the connection it is also noteworthy that a *Brahmottara* grant earlier issued by the Badshah to one Pranapati was confirmed by Rajesvarasimha, a later Ahom king in Saka 1687.⁴⁹ A huge amount of movable and immovable properties were enjoyed by the temples during the Ahom Administration (1682-1825).⁵⁰ But it was not Dihingia Raja, as claimed by some scholars to be the first Ahom king to make grant of land and men to the Pingalesvara temple.⁵¹ Which was due to wrong reading of inscriptions. The credit goes to Gadadharsimha, as the first Ahom king to make grants of land men to any temple in the land of Kamakhya, when he granted 26 men and a certain area of land to Umananda temple in Saka 1617 (1695).⁵² As the Ahom kings came more and more under the influence of Hindu priests, large number of Paiks were removed from their respective *khels* and assigned them to support the temples.⁵³ In fact, movable and immovable properties in the form of men, land and utensils gifted to the temples by Gadadharsimha's successor were huge in both quality and quantity.

An examination of the copper plate Inscriptions shows that three categories of land were enjoyed by temples viz. *Devottara*, *Brahmottara* and *Nankars*. The *Nankar* grants were similar to the *Dharmottara* grants. Usually the grant issued to the deity of

a temple was called *Devottara*. The *Devottara* land and men were of two types, vize. *Bhogdhani* and *Paikan*. The riots of *Bhogdhani* land must supply daily rations (*bhog*) to the temple for each unit of land. The riots of *Paikan* land were required to render certain specific personal services to the temple. Personal grants made to a Brahmin was called *Brahmottara* and receiver of a *Brahmottara* grant was to render some specific services viz. of *Seva-caloa*, *Dolai*, *Bardeori*, *Supkar* and *Pathak* to the temple in which, the Brahmins were assigned. Likewise the rent free lands received by temple servitors belonged to Non-Brahman caste were known as *Nankar*. In return, the receiver of the *Nankar* land was required to render prescribed personal services to the temple. These *Nankar* grants were made for the maintenance of the non Brahman servitors including *Bhandar kayastha*, *Mudiar*, *Baricoa*, *Mali*, *Dhoba*, *Teli* and other Sudra Paiks attached to the temple. Some Bhogdhani Paiks, who also received *Nankar* lands and did not like to do personal service could of course be commuted it in lieu of money.⁵⁴

Further, the *Brahmottara*, *Devottara* and *Nankar* lands were of several classes. The Subhankarapataka grant of Dharmapala mentions of *Go-Pracara-Bhu* (grazing field).⁵⁵ The Nilacalal grant of Madhavadeva issued to the Kamesvara temple mentions⁵⁶ vatic or *Vastubhu* (homestead land), *pokhari-badi* (homestead land with tank), *mundavati* (barren homestead land), *casabhumi* (arable land), and *sac bhumi* (Sali rice growing field). In the epigraphs of the Ahom kings we have different classes of land, vize.⁵⁷ *ropit or rupit* (rice land), *pharingati* (dry rice land), *kathiatali* (land for raising *Sali* seedlings), *baotali* (land for variety of paddy), *bengenatali* (land for raising brinjals), *badi or bari* (elevated land with low land on sides), *bari or bhithi* (homestead land) *habi* (forest land), *dalani* (marshy land with dal grass), *bakari* (open waste land), and *bill* (fishing waters). Some terms like *aja-jangala* , *hacila-jangala* ,

mirnik , *svaminnik ropit* , *tal* , *nil* and *changana* of the inscriptions are difficult to know.

The epigraphs mention people belonging to different professional castes and records details about their distribution of duties to be rendered to the temple. This will help us to trace out the supervising machinery of the temple managements.

Besides the practice of granting dancing girls known as *nati* continued and it is claimed that a number of *natis* were brought from the Siva temple of Negheriting at Dergaon during the reign of Sivasimha and were assigned to the temple of Hayagrivamadhava and Pariharesvara.⁶⁴ The land allotted to the *natis* of Pariharesvara are still known as the *Vesyar pathar* (area of prostitutes or temple girls).⁶⁵ Thus the number of people assigned to the temples during the Ahom administration was quite large. According to an estimate it was more than 15,000 in 1769.⁶⁶ The Ahom kings and their officers also made gifts in form of different images and utensils. Rudrasimha donated a large number of utensils including water jar, vessel, cups etc. to Hayagrivamadhava temple. His son Sivasimha gifted an image of a bull made of silver to the Umananda temple.⁶⁷ Rajesvarasimha donated a *japi* (a broad trimmers local hat) made of 216 *tolas* of silver to the temple of Dirghesvari.⁶⁸ Gaurinathsimha made endowments of an umbrella and a flower both made of gold and weighing eleven *tolas* and two *tolas* respectively to the Umananda temple.⁶⁹ He also donated a *gacha* (1 lamp stand), a *tekeli* (water jar), a *vedi* (an altar) and a *kalah* (a water jug) all made of brass and weighing five *seers*, two *seers*, three *seers* and four *seers* respectively along with a flower made of silver weighing two *seers*.⁷⁰ Gaurinathsimha donated a silver spittoon weighing 80 *tolas* and a *camara* (Yak's tail) with a handle made of six *tolas* of silver to the Hayagrivamadhava temple. He also donated a yak

tail to the Kedar,⁷¹ all these show that the temples of Kamrupa came to possess huge amount of valuable properties.

Even earlier the Koch king Raghudev made a large endowment of land, men, utensils and cash for the burning of an *akhandapradipa* in the Hayagrivamadhava.⁷² The Ahom king Laksmisimha granted 159 *gots* of paiks including Brahmin for the maintenance of two *akhnandapradip* in the Umananda temple.⁷³ Likewise Gaurinathsimha allotted 727 *puras* of land to keep burning an *akhandapradip* in the Hayagrivamadhava temple.⁷⁴ In the reign of Kamalesvarasimha, Sayani, the wife of Pratapballabha Barphukan donated seven person who were charged with the duty of maintaining *akhandapradip* in the Hayagrivamadhava temple.⁷⁵

According to the *Darrang Rajvamsawali*, the Kamakhya temple received cash amounting to rupees 25,000.⁷⁶ During the Ahom administration, king Pramattasimha gave an amount of rupees 85 which yielded an interest of 10 *gandas* in a month and the money would be spent for a daily *naivedya* in the Hayagrivamadhava temple.⁷⁷ Gaurinathasimha deposited a sum of rupees 90 in the hands of a *paik* which would yield an interest of rupees 22 and *annas* 8 per year. This amount be spent for the *naivedyas* of an *akhandapradip* in the temple of Umananda.⁷⁸

The mentioned of a functionary called *Darmara* in some Copper plate grants to the temples indicate that boats were also an important movable property. The fact is crystallized in a copper plate grant of king Gaurinathsimha,⁷⁹ which records an order of the king, addressed to the *Barduaria* (chief custom officer) and the *Duvarias* (Junior Custom officer) of *Betkuchia, Sonal and Sonapuri Duvara (out-post), the Bhuyans, Kakatis* etc. who dealt with customs, that the said two boats (*nao*) be declared rent free, 2 merchants and two paiks attached to the boats were given some

amount of money as investment of merchandise. The men should pay the profits of their trade and render the accounts to the Hayagrivamadhava temple.

The mention of the servitors '*hathimahut*', '*gorakhia*', '*gowal*' and '*ghanhi*' in some copper plate grants indicate that temples possessed a number of animals like elephant and cows.

Thus it now appears, that besides the temple building, each temple within the limit of our study enjoyed huge property both movable and immovable appropriated to various deities and to Brahmins or other religious men.⁸⁰

The Supervising Machinery: Structure and Constituent Parts

At the present state of our knowledge it is difficult to say if there was any temple in the true sense of the term asking for its management in ancient Kamarupa of the pre-Christian period. The worship of the 'Mother Goddess' and the phallus might have been practiced there even several centuries earlier. If the *Kalika Purana* has any bearing on the history of the land here and there were two popular cults vize. The phallic worshipped and that of the 'Mother Goddess'. The former enjoyed greater patronage and both belong to the fold what is called 'Fertility Cult'. Considering their popularity it may be surmised that the place of worship, i.e. the place where people met in groups with a view to perform the rituals relevant to either of the cults might have been provided with a hut or at least an additional small structure with a shed against heavy rain and scorching sun. As for the role of the priest, the leader of the tribe or at least a person considered as master of sorcery and magical art, from amongst the people was preferred, though there was probably no bar against an ordinary member of the tribe provisionally officiating or performing the worship. Such leaders or sorcerer apparently enjoyed some extra privileges in the society and

exploited the people's fear against divine wrath, and tried to maintain hold over such places of worship evidently for personal gain; and as well as a result, it was these leader priests or magician-priests who for their own interest professed shouldering the responsibility of management of the place of worship. A critical study of the religious life of any present day tribe of a remote area will perhaps show that the premises drawn above about the past are not altogether improbable. With the passage of time and particularly with aryanization of the land, things changed to a great extent.

The *Kalika purana*, incorporating stories about our mythological past, simply puts it that Naraka, a king regularly paid his daily respectful homage to the mother goddess Kamakhya on the top of the Nilachala (the hill called Nila) personally till he fell a prey to the ill-advice of Bana, the *Saiva* ruler of Sonitpura. In referring to the place of Kamakhya, the text used the words "*Devivasa*" which cannot be accepted as a doubtless reference to a constructed temple. Rather, elsewhere in the text the word *guha* has been used many times as substitutes for '*Devivasa*'. The text, however, categorically states that Brahmin and people would observe Vedas and *vedic* rites. In a word Brahmanical rites and rituals and worship of Brahmanical deities were brought in the land of Kamakhya and settled here by Naraka. Nothing is told in the text also about the management of the temple. In Chapters 52-56 detailing the procedures of the regular and occasional worship of the Devi and some other deities, the texts sometimes seem to observe that one of the sacred duties of king was to see that the worship of deities does not stop.

The epigraphs of early Assam constitute the other source of information for our present study particularly regarding the period up to twelfth century A.D. Discussion on epigraphs referring to temples has already been made on a previous occasion. It has also been noticed that ancient kings in the land of Kamakhya donated lavishly to

the temples and Brahmins. The donations to the temples included land and men and wealth in some other forms, while the donation to Brahmins consisted of landed property only, of course rent-free. The accumulated donations to temples by different kings at different times evidently finally made a temple an owner of large estate, But whether an administrator of some sort other than the king and the priest, was there to look after this 'estate', is not mentioned in the epigraphs. The Tezpur Copper Plate Grant of Vanamala informs us that the old temple of *Hatakasulin* collapsed and lay in ruins with the passage of time, and then king Balavarman built it anew and donated land, men, dancing girls, elephants etc. to be used in one or other services required by the temple. The epigraphs thus indicate what as if it was the king who shouldered the responsibility of keeping the temple alive.

The *Kalika Purana* is supposed to be a work composed between 7th and 10th centuries A.D. and completed somewhere in the western part of ancient Kamrupa, for it is popularly followed since long in both Eastern Bengal and Assam. The *Kalika Purana* as it is noticed, details the procedures and paraphernalia relating to worship of different deities particularly the Devi; these procedures and paraphernalia must have been those which were age-honoured. In other words daily and occasional worships were being performed regularly in great details in many temples in ancient land of Kamakhya since at least from 6th – 7th century AD. But it is equally true that nothing is explicitly told in any indigenous source about the management of these establishments except that kings donated lavishly to these temples to facilitate the services and that the Brahmins who were encouraged to settle here might have in some way rendered service to these temples, though their exact role besides that of a priest cannot be ascertained at the present state of our knowledge. On the basis of the available evidence only a hypothetical picture may be drawn.

But we have reason to believe that the king shouldered the responsibility of keeping the temple alive in full strength and showing not merely for religious gains but also for gains materials. The reason behind the lavish endowments made to the temples and Brahmins was that even a fairly Hinduized court in a tribal or partly Hinduized surrounding, was depend to a great extent on the support and loyalty of the tribes. Royal patronage of autochthonous deities seems to have been an essential presupposition for the consolidation and legitimating of political power in the Hindu-tribal zones.⁸¹ As the ancient treatises put it, a share of income that the temples daily incurred in the form and shape of daily offerings including even gold and precious jewels from the devotees to the deity, had to go to the royal treasury. And the bigger the number of festivals the bigger the amount of revenue,⁸² from these points discussed above, it appears that the king was the first person to look after both the temples and their establishments. Other temples, as of other parts of India were under the management of the community and those who lived in their vicinity.⁸³ Thus perhaps the community as a whole was responsible for the management of the temple. This custom seems to have come down even to the days of king Visvasimha who founded the royal house of Koch Bihar although it is simultaneously seen that in the later days the Brahmins came to usurp the power and prestige of the priesthood at the patronization of the kings.⁸⁴

The temples and their endowments were, apparently under the priests and supervised by the state. However it is not known whether in the ancient period there was existed a department to look after the religious institutions. In the Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, a reference has been made to a Brahmin Rajaguru Murari.⁸⁵ But whether he was the chief religious officer of the state cannot be said with any certainty, though his close association with the king and his importance in the ceremonies must have

naturally given him a prominent place. From this it appears that the concept of the society completely changed and on the basis of both epigraph and literature, it appears that since the beginning of at least the 6th century A.D. it was systematic policy of the rulers to create *Agraharas* for the Brahmins. From the Nidhanpur plates of Bhaskaravarman it appears that the grant of land to the Brahmins and endowments to temples was very rigidly acted upon after the Sastra,⁸⁶ the *Sastrakaras* usually lived in the temple complex or closely connected with the temples. No doubt, the king's orders were supreme in the management of the temples as he was the *danda* incarnate, still power to frame laws or code of conduct regarding the management of the temples was left to the *Sastrakaras*. In other words kings had to follow the *Sastras* in their daily administration for the good of the people for which he was responsible for making endowments to the temples, and in return the priests and all connected with management of the temples had to perform regular worship for the well being of the king and the kingdom.⁸⁷ Brahmins attained a position of adviser (*Rajaguru*) of the king and the temples were used as the local agency of the sovereign's administrations. The mention of an officer of the Brahmin Adhikary in the grant of Harjaravarman may suggest that religious institutions were in some way controlled by state officials.⁸⁸

Evidences of the direct involvement of the state in the management of the temples are, however, found since the days of the Koch king Naranarayana. The *Darrang Rajvamsavali* states that Koch kings Naranarayana and Raghudeva built new temple at Kamakhya on the Nilachal near Guwahati and Hayagrivamadhava temple on *Manikuta* at Hajo respectively and that they also made large endowments of land, men and articles to the respective temples for their smooth functioning. It is further stated

that *bhog* and *nirmali* should be sent to the king. No more details are available about the management of temples in the land of Kamakhya under the Koch rule.

During their temporary occupation of Kamrupa, the Muslim rulers maintained the old order regarding the management of the temples for which the Emperor Aurangzib simply allowed the continuous occupation on certain area of land by Kamdev and Sudaman, the two priests of the Umananda temple on condition as laid down by 'previous ruler'⁸⁹ of the land, that a certain amount of revenue yielded from the land of the '*sanad*' were to be spent for the maintenance of the '*holy low and high hills*' (i.e. the maintenance of the shrine of Umananda).

The grant of lavish endowment of lands, men and utensils by the Ahom kings to the temples in the land of Kamakhya since the reign of Gadadharsimha made it necessary on their part to keep a royal officer for the supervision of the temples and their establishments. As has been discussed earlier, the Ahom king Sivasimha placed Krisnaram Nyayabagis in charge of Kamakhya, who was also authorized to compile a *vidhi* for worship of the deities in the land of Kamakhya. The Barphukan was entrusted on the entire administration in the land of Kamakhya for which it appears that the temples were under direct control of the Barphukan. It was he who issued royal ordinances to the temples on behalf of the king including the grants of land and men. A large number of grants were issued by the Barphukan which record a number of functionaries assigned to the temples. A study of these inscriptions regarding power, prestige and functions of these temple servitors may help to trace out a tentative form of the machinery responsible for the management of the temple establishments.

The King: The king built or rebuilt temples on sacred sites and made endowments of land, men and utensils. It was the king who declared a temple as a public place. The Copper Plate inscriptions record the ordinances of the king regarding fairs and festivals to be observed at the temples, the endowments made by the king, the budget of income and record that the priests of the temple should offer the daily *bhog* to the deities for the well being of the king and his kingdom. The practice of offering *bhog* in the name of the donor king was continued up to 1961 in most of the temples. In Umananda, Sukresvara and pariharesvara, all offerings in three Bihus are being made in the name of king Sivasimha even today. Occasionally the king visited the temples, when he was received by the officials connected with the temples like the Barphukan, the *Seva-caloa*, the *Dolai* and others. King Rajesvarasimha visited almost all the temples in the land of Kamakhya in *Saka* 1678 (A.D. 1756). During his visit he donated to the Hayagrivamadhava temple a dish, a pot and three umbrellas all made of gold.⁹⁰ A huge crowd of people from nearby villages assembled to receive the king, who on his part made lavish gift to them including some temple servitors like priests and dancing girls, four hundred *tolas* of gold and twenty boxes (*peras*) of garments.⁹¹ Then he came to the temple of Kamakhya on the Nilachala on 6th *Phalguna* in *Saka* 1678, where he was received at the door of the temple by the then Barphukan Dasaratha Duvara and a huge amount of present to the king and his family members and even to the officers accompanied him were also given.⁹² King Rajesvarasimha visited also the temples of Asvakranta, where he made special worship by offering gold flower (*kanakanjali*). Then he visited the temple of Janardan, Ugratara, Navagraha, Vasistha and Gopesvara. At the time of his visit to Dirghesvari temple, the king donated a *japi* (a kind of hat) made of silver weighing two hundred and

sixteen *tolas*, the king thus made a large endowments of land and men to all the temples he visited.⁹⁴

The Barphukan: The *Barphukan* was instrumental in implementing the wishes of the crown in all respects. Thus, the temples were built or rebuilt by the *Barphukan* at the order of the king; subsequently he issued all the grants to the temples. It appears that the *Barphukan* recommended the name of a Brahmin to the post of the *Sevacaloo*.⁹⁵ probably all necessary investigations before issuing a grant to the temples were made by him. It will be seen in the following pages how the *Barphukan* acted as the chief justice in settling the disputes relating to the temple land and the subjects. All the Copper Plate grants mention the assignment of a number of *likcau* for the use of the *Barphukan*, which may suggest that he had constantly supervised the temples and their establishments and received secret information through his *likcaus*. From a British record, it is known that the *Barphukan* received *bhog* and *nirmali* from the temples on behalf of the king and then sent these to the king.⁹⁶ Towards the later part of the Ahom rule it seems that the *Barphukan* also issued grant of land and men to the temples in his personal capacity and in one or two cases even by his wife. Thus Pratapballabha Barphukan's wife Sayani made a separate endowment of land and men to the temple of Hayagrivamadhava.⁹⁷

Sevacaloo: Next to the *Barphukan* was the *Seva-caloo* for the management of temple. It is not known with any certainty as to when the post was first created. But we have reason to believe that Krisnaram Nyayabagis who took over the charge of the management of the Kamakhya temple during the reign of Sivasimha was, in all probability, the first incumbent of the office of the *Seva-caloo*. He was appointed by the king and was responsible directly to the *Barphukan*. This necessitated that the *Seva-caloo* to be well conversant with the character and intricacies of the religious

performances, and thus he was one of the well versed person amongst the *Brahmans*. In some cases, it was the religious preceptor of the king who was appointed as *Seva-caloa*. The *Seva-caloa* confirmed the selection of the *Dolai* from amongst the *Bardeoris* of a temple. He had a general control over the temple affairs and functionaries. The Copper Plate grants of the Ahom kings record that a number of *likcsau* were provided to him in every temple. As his remuneration, the *Seva-caloa* received grant of *Brahmottara* land. Krisnaram Nyayabagis was assigned a considerable area of land in the land of Kamakhya as *Brahmottara* grant from king Sivasimha and Pramattasimha.⁹⁸ Likewise Nati gossain was appointed the *Seva-caloa* in the Pandunath temple, and the two sons among the three of the Na-gossain were appointed as *Seva-caola* of the Banesvara temple in Guwahati and of the Candrasekhar temple at Umananda. The office of the *Seva-caloa* was continued till the early part of the British occupation of Assam when it was abolished in 1842 A.D.⁹⁹

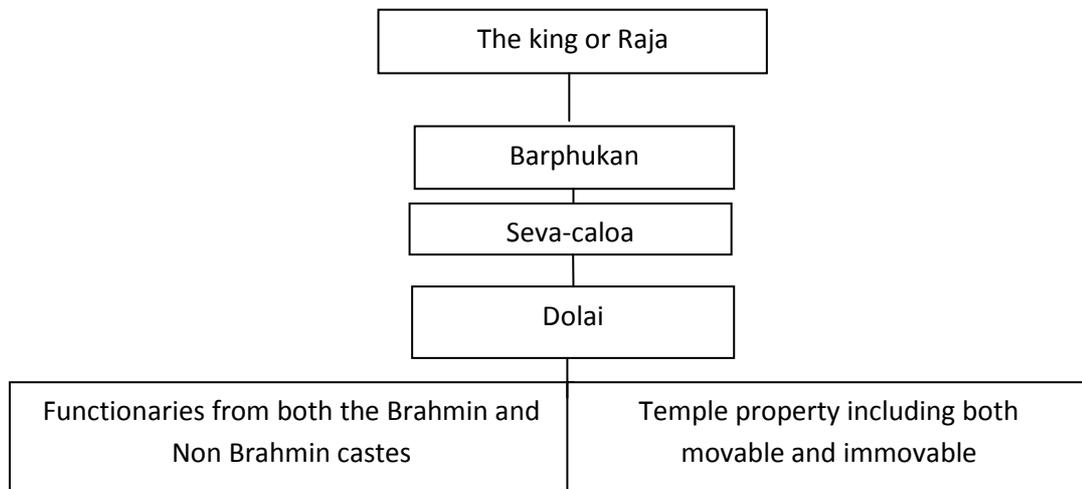
Dolai : The *Dolai* managed the affairs of the Bardeoris.¹⁰⁰ The word *Dolai* seems to have been derived from the Sanskrit word *Dol* meaning the temple or a holy shrine and the word *Dolai* means the chief officer of the Hindu temple in the land of Kamakhya .¹⁰¹ It is not known why this honorific chief officer of a Hindu temple in the land of Kamakhya was called *Dolai*, whereas in other parts of Assam, they are known as Barthakur.¹⁰² The Copper Plate grants of the Ahom kings made to different temples record the function and duty of a *Dolai*. He was to collect the rent of land donated to the temple and to utilize it for the maintenance of temples. The *Dolai* also received land, men and other property out of grants made to temple. The Copper Plate grant issued in *Saka* 1750 by Gaurinathasimha to the Hayagrivmadhava temple mentions that the *Dolai* of the temple would receive certain articles from three *paiks*

attached to the temple.¹⁰³ Another inscription of Pramattasimha (A.D. 1744-51) records that one Madhavdah athparia was placed in charge of keeping the light burning (*akhandapradip*) in the said temple for which he was granted 50 *puras* of land. The *Dolai* of the temple was entrusted with the duty to watch the *Athparia* and his duty.¹⁰⁴ In another copper plate issued by king Candrakantasimha in *Saka* 1743 for the performance of *Hari-Kirtana* in the Hayagrivamadhava temple, it is recorded that the *Dolai* was charged with the duty of managing the festivals in consultation with the *Mel-Caloa, Rajkhoa, Meteri and Mena*.¹⁰⁵ It appears that in the land of Kamakhya all the civil and revenue matters of temples were managed by the *Dolai*.¹⁰⁶ Being the custodian of all the properties-movable and immovable and the receiver of all the donations either from the royal house or from the devotees, the *Dolai* had to work under the instruction of the *Seva-caloa*. From the discussion as has been made in another connection regarding the duties of different functionaries of a temple, it appears that the *Dolai* was assisted by the *Bardeoris* and other functionaries like *Bhandarkayastha, Mazumdar, Mudiar, Mena, Meteri, Melcaloa and Thakuria etc.*

It thus appears that during the Ahom rule, the temples in the land of Kamakhya were treated as Government institutions and officers of the state took direct part in the management of the temple establishments.

A tentative diagram of the machinery responsible for the management of temple may be drawn as follows.

DIAGRAM II: SUPERVISING MACHINERY OF THE TEMPLES IN THE LAND OF KAMAKHYA



Temples in the land of Kamakhya

Conflict over issues of access and control

Regarding disputes that had occurred in the temples and settlements of such disputes in the ancient and early medieval period are extremely limited. Simply it appears that all cases of disputes relating to the temples and their establishments were settled according to Hindu *Sastras*. In all probability the priests of the temple officiated as judges, but the king interfered in cases when one of contending parties approached him with a second appeal. Although the intervention of the king in judicial matters may be decisive, it brought no new element to interpretation. In settling disputes relating to a temple, the king merely discharged his duty to secure order and peace in his kingdom following the prescription of the classical Indian treatises that the distinctive function of the king is to provide protection to his subject' (*prajanam paripalanam*). No more details regarding the disputes and settlements in this period could be said at the present state of our knowledge.

Fortunately we have some evidences about disputes involving temple functionaries and land and men during the Ahom administration. These disputes were of two types (a) internal and (b) external. By internal dispute we mean the disputes which arose among the functionaries of the temple and other establishments. In all such cases the *Dolai* acted as the chief justice. And examination of the Copper Plate inscriptions of the late medieval period shows that the *Dolai* being the representative and leader of the *Bardeori* enjoyed the control over all men and properties of the temple. It appears that in the land of Kamakhya all the civil and revenue matter as relating to a temple were managed by the *Dolai*,¹²⁸ and being the custodian of all the properties, movable and immovable, as well as the receiver of all the donations either from the royal house or from the devotees, he was charged with the duty of managing the temple affairs in all respects in co-operation with other officials viz. *Melcaloa*, *Rajkhoa*, *Mena*, *Meteri* and others.¹²⁹

Sometimes there had been disputes between two or more temples or the priests and other functionaries of one temple with those of another. Such type of disputes, we call external disputes. In such cases the *Dolais* of the temples involved in the disputes brought the matter before the *Barphukan* through the *Seva-caloa*, the *Barphukan* then decided the disputes in his court. He was assisted by a number of assessors such as *Kakatis*, *Ganak* and *pundits* by whose opinion, he was usually guided.¹³⁰ A dispute between *Sukresvara* and *Barkshetri* temple on one side and *Billvesvara* temple on the other relating to *paiks* and land was settled by Pratapballabh Barphukan and the proceeding of the judgment was recorded in a document called *jitaripatra*.¹³¹ According to this document, the case was presented before the *Barphukan* in his *Tamulicora* (council Hall) in the evening session by *Katha Jogo Bara* on 13th *Asadha* in *Saka* 1730. The *Brahmottara* land as well as 6 *paiks* named Tamradhaj,

Rampani, Haliram, and Durgaram. Sivanath and Sahadev who were *Tithikar* (astrologer) attached to Billesvara temple was claimed by the *Dollais* of Sukresvara and Barkhetri also. The court examined the records of the *paiks* in *perakakaz* (Record Book) of the previous year and found the claim of Billvesvara valid and therefore the *paiks* were assigned to Billvesvara. It also mentioned that the *Dolai* of Sukresvara and Barkshetri were punished,¹³² the boundary of the land in question was demarcated by putting stone pillar. Later on, on assuming the office of the *Choudhury*, *Dhani Bhandari* in league with the *Dolai* of Barkshetri temple removed the pillars of the said land. The *Doali* of Billesvara temple brought the case before the *Barphukan* through the *Katha-Jogoa-Bora*. The claim of the *Dolai* of Barkshetri was supported by the *Khataniar* and one *Phaguna Thakuria*. On examination of the records (*Para-kakaz*), the *Barphukan* found the 6 *paiks* and their lands belonging to Billesvara and statement of *Khataniar* and the *Thakuria* false. The *paiks* were allowed to Billesvara temple and the lands in question were again demarcated. The *Khataniar* and the *Thakuria* were punished by whipping cabuk 40 times each.¹³³ Another dispute took place between one Bisnu Adhikary and one Kalia Mahajan (*Khatanair*) on one side and one Purnadev Medhi on the other regarding a village named *Bhitarkhana*. The *Medhi* claimed that the village was granted to him, and accordingly *nirmali* was regularly sent to the king on three *Bihus*. The *Barphukan* then asked the *Medhi* to substantiate his claim. As the *Medhi* could not do so, he first fled away, but afterwards arrested. The case was settled on 14 *Agrahayana* in *Saka* 1636 in favour of the *Adhikary* and the *Thakuria*.¹³⁴ Another Copper Plate inscription records that one Bhagavat Candra Dolai was the respondent and Dhaneswar Choudhury of *Paragana Pachimpar* was the appellant in a litigation heard on 7th *Asadha* in *Saka* 1737 (1815 A.D.). According to the records, the *Katha-Jogoa Bora* presented the report of the dispute before the

Barphukan in his *Cangcora* (council house) in the evening. The case was that two villages named Barigog and Baghmara measuring an area of 249 *puras* of land together with 60 *gots* of *paiks* were given to Bhagavat Chandra Dolai as *Dharmottara* by Tamulijana Barphukan, after having purchased in the local *Choudhury* now complained that the *Dolai* had no right over the place. The *Choudhury* further complained that the *phalli* (copper plate) which recorded the land and men as produced by the *Dolai* were a false one. According to his complaint the *Doali* was occupying this land by force. The *Barphukan* then asked for an explanation from the *Dolai*, who then replied that the motive of the *phalli* was not known to him as it was granted by the Tamulijana Barphukan and the *phalli* was inscribed by Haricaran Mazumdar. In support of this claim another plate inscribed by Ratnamala Bujarbarua, Kama kayastha and Namchandra Barkayastha was also produced. The *Barphukan* therefore brought all the concerning *parakakaz* to his court and after examination of all these, he found the statement of *Dolai* true. The *Choudhury* was accused of committing atrocities on Brahmin, but he tried to defend himself stating that 60 *paiks* shifted their place of residence, and during the tenure of Sandikai Barphukan he purchased these 60 *puras* of land (allotted to the 60 *paiks*) and the Bora and *kakati* duly handed over occupation to him. One Gauri Bora supported this statement stating that the Copper Plate which the *Dolai* produced was a false one. This was also found to be false and the *Choudhury* was punished. The land was reissued to the *Dolai*.

The above instances clearly establish the point that the *Barphukan* was the chief justice to settle disputes between the functionaries of a temple with outsiders. The disputes were presented at the court by *Kathajogoa* Bora. The *Barphukan* then heard the statements of the defendant and witnesses of both the parties. The old records were examined, if and when necessary, and the judgment was made which was issued

in a *jataripatra*.¹³⁵ In some cases, he sent his *takela* (peon) to the *Barkayastha* to take deposition of the *raij* (people in general) for which the *Barkayastha* called the *paraganiyas* and took deposition. Very often they had to swear touching copper, “The Hindu law, as expounded by the Brahmins seems to have been generally followed in later times, at an earlier period the judge decided according to the custom of the country and his own standard of right and wrong.”¹³⁶ A second appeal could be made to the sovereign. Such appeals were dealt with, on his behalf, by the *Nyayasodhaphukan*. It also appears that the authoritative settlements of temple dispute, the *siddhanta* (decision) was not royal legislation, but were administrative commands. It may suggest that “collective regulations” as has been explained earlier, sanctioned by the Ahom kings were administrative in the sense that they were addressed to specific group and individuals.¹³⁷ In respect of settlement of temple disputes in the land of Kamakhya, the central feature of the royal function was the responsibility of the king to maintain peace and order in this part of his kingdom. The maintenance of the *siddhants* as recorded in the *jitaripatras* was the responsibility of authoritative local groups like *Barua*, *Barkayastha*, *Choudhury*, *Patowary*, *Thakuria* and others. Moreover we find in the bulk of the inscriptions from temples in between seventeenth to these inscription, whereby the protection of the *siddhanata* was probably entrusted to local sectarian group for which the inscriptions begins with the name of the respective presiding deity of a temple.¹³⁸

Notes and Reference:

1. Sarma, M. M. (ed.): *Inscriptions of Ancient Assam*, Gauhati University, 1978, plate No. 1 & Sarma, D. (ed.): *Kamrup Sasanavali*, Guwahati, 1981, plate No.1.

2. Bhattacharya, N.K. (ed.): *Vol. XXVII. 1947-48, pp. 18-23; JARS, Vol. VII, No. 4 pp. 138-39, Sircar, D.C(ed.) : Vol. XXX, Part II, 1953, pp. 62 ff., Sarma ,M. M: op. cit., p. 4 & Sarma ,D:op.cit, p. 231.*
3. *Dubi Copper Plate, VI, Sarma,M.M:op.cit.*
4. *Op.cit, VV. 4, 5, 16 and 23.*
5. *Nidhanpur Copper Plate, V. 26, Sarma ,M.M:op.cit.*
6. *Op.cit, V. 133, Bali is the offering of scent, flowers and uncooked food before an idol; Caru is the oblation of rice, milk and sugar boiled together; Satra is the distribution of food to the guests and the poor; vide A Tri-Lingual Dictionary, Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series, 1996, pp. 141, 273 and 401.*
7. Sarma, M. M: *op. cit,* p. 4.
8. Sarma, D: *op. cit.,* p. 231.
9. Bhattacharya, N.K: *Select Inscriptions, Vol. 1, pp. 384 f, Sarma ,M.M: Op.cit.*
10. *Tezpur Copper Plate of Vanamala lines 13-14, Sarma ,M.M: Op.cit.*
11. *Tezpur Copper Plate of Balavarman, V. 24, Sarma ,M.M: Op.cit.*
12. *Nagaon Copper Plate of Balavarman, V. 2, Sarma, M.M: Op.cit.*
13. *Guwahati Copper Plate of Indrapala, V. 10, Sarma, M.M: Op.cit.*
14. *Nagaon Copper Plate of Balavarman, V. 2, Sarma, M.M: Op.cit.*

15. *Kamauli Copper Plate of Vaidyadeva*, V. 26, Sarma, M.M :*op.cit.*
16. Acharya,T. P: *Kalika Puranam*, Calcutta, 1384, B.S. 63. 136-138.
17. *Op.cit*, Ch. 38, Vs. 97, 98, 124, 125 and 126.
18. *The ingredients are gandha, puspa, dipa, payasa, modaka sarkara, gur, dodhi, khir, ghrta, various fruits including nagrang, kusmanda, haritaki and coconut, red flower, suvarne and rahata, vide Kalika Purana, 54, 18-21 and 67, 3-5.*
19. Acharya ,T.P :*op.cit*, 55. 1-2.
20. *Op. cit*, 55. 3-5.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *The Yogini Tantra however prohibits the sacrifice of a cow and human being in the kaliage.*
23. Acharya ,T.P: *op.cit*, 67. 123-24. *In this context we may also refer to Gait when he writes “there was in Kamrupa a class of persons called Bhogis, who were voluntary victims of a goddess named Ai, who dwelt in a cave. From the time when they announced that the Goddess had called them they were treated as privileged persons, they were allowed to do whatever they liked and every woman was at their command, but when the annual festival came round they were killed.” Vide Gait,E.A: A History of Assam, P. 58.*

24. Basu ,N. N: *Social History of Kamrupa*, (3 vols), New Delhi,1986,Vol. I, p.70.
25. Acharya ,T.P: *op.cit*, 64. 65-66. *Details in this regard may be found in the Kalika Puranam chs. 52-58.*
26. *Op.cit*: 64. 33-36.
27. *A full Chapter No. 87 and No. 88 entitled 'Sakroththana' and 'Visnuyajna' respectively have been dedicated in the Kalika Puranam.*
28. *Howraghat Inscription of Balavarman V. 30*, Sarma,M.M: *op.cit*.
29. Acharya ,T.P: *op.cit*, 55. 61 and 55. 73.
30. Sarma ,D. (ed.) : *op,cit*, p. 87.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Barua, B. K., '*Bohag Bihu and its probable relation with fire festivals*', *JARS, IX 1939, pp. 73 ff.*
33. Sarma, N. (ed.): *Darrangrajvamsavali*, Guwahati, 1975, VV. 547-51. *They however did not sacrifice any human being.*
34. Neog ,M. (ed.) : *Prachya Sasanavali*,Guwahati,1975, plate No. 142.
35. Bhuyan, S. K: *Svargadeo Rajesvarasimha*, p. 21 *Sarma, D*, gives a vivid description of almost all the religious fairs and festivals of Assam in *JARS, o. XVIII, 1988, vide pp. 22-45. Here, he tries to trace the Aryan and non-Aryan elements in these rites and rituals.*

36. Sarma, D. (ed.): *op.cit*, p. 102.
37. *Kamauli Copper Plate of Vaidyadeva*, VV. 33-34, Sarma,M.M: *op.cit*.
38. Barua ,B.K: *Cultural History of Assam*,Guwahati,1969, p. 65.
39. *Tezpur Grant of Vanamala*, V. 24, Sarma,M.M: *Op.cit*.
40. Chaudhury, P.C: *The History of Civilization of the People of Assam*, Guwahati, 1987 p. 326; Kakati B.K and Barua, B. K: *A Cultural History of Assam*, Guwahai, 1969, p. 226. *A critical discussion has been made on Natis in JARS, Vol. XXXI (new series), No. 1-2, 1989-90, pp. 55-59. Here J.P. Singh demurs with Kakati, B.K. and Barua,B.K: when he says that the word Daluhangana used in the Tezpur Grant does not refer to the temple women. He, however, admits that 'the reference to the donation of Vesyas to the temple of Hatukasulin actually refers to the gift of Vesyas for their quality of dancing and singing. Pillai, P. C, in his right of Temple Entry (pp. 21-23) makes his convincing agreements that the Brahmins who were assigned for performing puja in a temple in ancient India became degraded and out casted and hence they were not allowed to marry a Brahmin girl. The kings of the territory wherein the temple stood therefore provided the temples with some women to satisfy the biological urges of these out casted Brahmins as well as to attract more and more people to the temples, in disguise of devadasis or dancing girls some women were donated. On the other hand*

the religious treatises state another theory of the origin and development of the practice of dancing girls, or devadasis. According to this theory the temple building is the earthly representation of the Supreme being, at the same time it is the dwelling house of God, for which the Supreme being is to be surrounded with beautiful natural elements through the rhythms of their dancing and singing at the time of worship of the president deities.

41. Sarma, D: *'The Copper Bell Inscription of Srikumaara'*, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
42. Sarma, D: *'Inscription on the Surya image from Kaki'*, *Ibid.* p. 179.
43. *Op.cit: p. 180.*
44. Samad ,A (trans.) : *Riyas-us-Salatin*, p. 67 *cited in Adhikary, G: History of Temples of Kamarupa and Their Management, Guwahati, 2001, p.136.*
45. Sarma, D. (ed.): *op. cit.*, p. 200. *The details of the valuables are of course not given in the inscription.*
46. *The Nidhanpur Grant of Bhaskaravarman records that the grant was reissued by Bhaskaravarmana to make confirm the land grant of Bhutivarman.*
47. *Guwahati Grant of Indrapala, line 47. Although no ruins of an ancient temple is found in the vicinity, the pandari area is even now traceable with the Pandari Mauza in Rangia area, please see Kamarupa Sasanavali edited by D. Sarma: p. 61.*

48. *Subhankarapataka copper plate Grant of Dharmapala, V. 22, Sarma, M.M: Op.cit.*
49. *The Nilacala Copper plate Inscription of Madhavadeva, a king of Kamrupa in Prachya Sasanavali. Edited by Neog, M: plate No. 198 and notes.*
50. Sarma, N.C. (ed.): *op.cit*, VV 546-52 and 682-83. In this context Gait, E.A. was not correct when he said that 140 people were sacrificed by Naranarayana on the opening ceremony of Kamakhya temple (vide HA, p. 58). These people were infecting attached to the temple for different services.
51. Goswami, S. C: 'Land Grant to the temple of Umananda at Guwahati by badshah Ghazi Aurangazeb Salar Khan, JARS, 1942, Vol. IX, Nos. 1-2, new series, 1942, pp. 1-12; S. K. Bhuyan, *Annals of Delhi Badshate*, pp. 16-29; Neog, M: *Religion of the North-east*, p. 34.
52. Neog, M. (ed.): *op,cit*, plate No. 75.
53. *It was a principle that both the land and the subjects were the property of the state under the Ahoms, vide Mali, D.D: Revenue Administration in Assam, p.5.*
54. Chaudhury, P.C: 'Anchaeological Remains of Pingalesvara Devalaya', JARS, Vol. XXIII, 1974, pp. 49-52; Goswami, S.K: *A History of Revenue*

Administration in Assam, p. 211. This has now been proved to belong to a later king.

55. Gait, E.A: *A History of Assam*, Guwahati, 1962, p. 170; Neog, M. (ed.): *op,cit, plate No. 13.*
56. Gait, E.A: *op. cit., p. 239.*
57. *Annual Revenue Report, 1874-75, pp. 4-5. The paiks of the grant of Pramattasimha to Hayagrivamadhava temple (vide plate No. 64 in the PS), were asked to pay half a rupee as tax for per pura of land, thus yielding an annual revenue of rupees 26 and annas 8. This amount was to provide oil for 6 lamps and for offerings to the deity. In this connection references may also be made to plate No. 80 and 81 reproduced in the PS. References to the Bhogdhani paiks are made in other CP grants also.*
58. Bhattacharya, P.N. (ed.):*op,cit, part I, p. 35.*
59. Neog ,M. (ed.) :*op,cit, plate No. 108.*
60. *The numbers in brackets indicate the select numbers as reproduced in the Prachya Sasanavali.*
61. *The numbers in the bracket indicate the inscriptions reproduced in the Prachya Sasanavali and the number prefixed with M stands for the inscription number.*
62. Hunter, W.W: *A Statistical Account of Assam*, London, 1879, Vol. I, p. 37.

63. Barua, H. C: *Hemakosa*, Guwahati, 4th edition 1965, p. 393; Phukan, H.D: *Assam Buranji*, p. 60.
64. Neog, M: *op, cit*, p. 157.
65. *Op.cit*: p. 158.
66. Sarma, H. C, Sarma, M.N& Choudhury, S. C (ed.): *Dubi Pariharesvara devalayar Itivritta*, Pathsala, 1995, p. 37.
67. *Op.cit*: p. 27.
68. Hamilton, B: *An Account of Assam*, Guwahati, 1981, p. 38.
69. Sarma, D. K: *Kamakhya Tirtha*, Guwahati, 1980, p. 103.
70. Kataki, S: '*Maharaj Rajesvarsimhar rupar japidan*', *Avahan, Baisakha, Saka*, Jorhat, 1856, pp. 78-80.
71. Kataki, S: '*Sadiyar silar phalli aru Umanandar vighraha lipi*', Cetana, Guwahati, 1910, pp. 444-46; Choudhury, S: '*Umananda devalaya*', Milan, Guwahati, 1922, p. 106.
72. *Copper Plate Collected by Adhikary, G: from the temple treasury and now preserved in the office of the Revenue Circle Office, Guwahati.*
73. Neog, M. (ed.): *op,cit*, plate No. 143.
74. Sarma, N. (ed.): *op,cit*, V. 683.
75. Gait,E.A: *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam*,Shillong,1897, p. 15.

76. Neog, M. (ed.): *op, cit, plate No. 88.*
77. Neog, M. (ed.): *Op.cit, plate No. 144.*
78. Sarma, N. (ed.): *Op.cit, V. 551.*
79. *The Copper plate grant of Pramattasimha has been collected from Girin Sarma of Hajo, who is a Bardeori of the Hayagrivamadhava temple. The charter was collected by Adhikary, G. and is now preserved in the office of the Circle officer, Guwahati.*
80. Neog, M. (ed.): *op.cit, plate No. 144.*
81. Hamilton, B: *op,cit, p. 29.*
82. Kulke, H: '*Royal Temple policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdom*', CJRTO, New Delhi, 1978, p. 129.
83. Pillai, P. C: *The Right of Temple Entry*, University of California, 1933, pp. 12-18.
84. Altekar, A.S: *State and Government in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1984, pp. 23839.
85. Basu, N.N:, *op,cit, Vol. I* pp 66-68.
86. *Kamauli Copper Plate of Vaidyadeva, V. 33. We have come across a reference of a minister called purodha or pandita under the Gupta administration, "who had to discharge functions similar to those of the Dharmamahamatras of Asoka, viz., regulation of public morals, supervision*

of charity and temples and promotion of education.”, (vide A.S. Altekar: p. 344). In our case, it cannot be said with any certainty if the Brahamana Rajaguru murari belonged to that status and was responsible for such functions.

87. Sarma, D. (ed.): *op.cit*, p. 102.
88. *Ibid.*
89. Choudhury, P.C: *op.cit* p. 280.
90. Goswami, S.C: ‘*Land Grant to the Temple of Umananda at Guwahati by Badsshah Ghazi Auranzeb Salar Khan*’, JARS, 1942, Vol. IX No. 1-2, 1942, pp. 1-12.
91. Bhuyan, S. K: *op.cit*, p. 73.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*
95. *Paper Book in Appeal from original Decree No. 80, Assam Valley Districts, 1909; sarma ,M, Kamakhya, A town of Assam, New Delhi, Appendix, p. 65.*
96. *Ibid.*
97. Neog ,M. (ed.): *op.cit*, plate No. 150.
98. *A Hand book to the Old Record of Assam, Series V. letters issued to the Board of Revenue for Lower Provinces, Vol. No. Nil, 1856-57, No. 118 on the appeal of Krisnananda Bhattacharya Paravatiya Gossai, p. 280.*

99. *Letter from the Governor-General, No. 100, 1842.* Sarma, M. M: *op. cit.* p. 68.
100. Chakravarty, S.K: *A Report on the Administration of the Temples of Assam and Their Lands, Guwahati, 1954, p. I.*
101. Barua, H. C: *op.cit.* p. 953; Kakati ,B and Barua B. K. *op.cit, appendix, p.* 228.
102. Chakravarty, S.K: *op. cit.*
103. Neog M. (ed.): *Op.cit, plate No. 143.*
104. *Op.cit,plate No. 84.*
105. *Op.cit, plate No. 103.*
106. Goswami, S. K: *A History of Revenue Administration of Assam, Guwahati, 1986, P. 216.*
107. *In this connection we may recall that the Allahabad pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, where Kamrupa is mentioned as a frontier kingdom (pratyanta desa) and itinerary of the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang where detail account of Bhaskaravarman and Harshavardhan is recorded indicating the impulsion gained through the classical North Indian Hindu Empire. vide Altekar, A.S. op, cit, p. 345.*
108. *This theory of 'nuclear area' has been widely accepted by the scholars. Details of these 'nuclear areas' are discussed in 'Royal Temple policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu kingdom' by Kulke, H. K. in CJRTO, pp. 125 ff, also in the South Indian Temples, edited by Burton stein. The theory is explained by Burton Stein as follows. "nuclear areas, most abstractly conceived are ecological systems, that is consisting of relatively intensively organized and inter related human activities and biological and physical*

processes, more correctly the nuclear areas were localities comprising a set of natural and social elements which represented the most advance level of early south Indian life". This theory is seemed to be relevant to a great extent in respect of the growth and development of the temples of Kamarupa also. For details one may consult, Adhikary , G: "The concept of Nuclear area and the temples of Kamarupa" proceeding of the NEIHA Dibrugarh. Session, 1999, pp. 69-79.

109. Sarma, M. M. (ed.): *op,cit*, pp. 122-23.
110. *The inscriptions mention different classes of land and quantity of their production of Sali rice. Details in this respect have already been dealt in 'Temple Property'. For details of the economy of ancient Assam mainly based on rice cultivation, one may consult, Lahiri ,N: The Pre-Ahom Asam, Delhi,1990,pp. 104-05.*
111. *The Dubi Copper Plate Grant of Bhaskaravarman alone records Agrahara to 205 families of Brahmana from different gotras, Sarma M.M: op, cit.*
112. *Tezpur and Paratiya Copper Plate Grants of Vanamala; Samkara-Narayana stone- image inscription in Inscription of Ancient Assam, pp. 95-144, and 310-11 ,Sarma, M.M: op, cit.*
113. Chaudhury, P.C: *op.cit*, pp. 223-224.
114. Nath, R.M: *The Background of Assamese Culture, Guwahati, 1948, p. 36.*
115. *The Nidhanpur Copper Plate Grant of Bhaskaravarman records that Bhaskaravarman, "caused the light of the aryadharm to appear again, after having dispelled the darkness of the kaliage with an equal distribution of revenue", and "has surpassed the whole ring of his feudatories by the strength of his arm who is adorned with a wonderful ornament of splendid*

fame made by the flower in the form of various words of praise composed by hundreds of kings vanquished by him in battle” (IAA, p. 52). The Tezpur Copper Plate Grant grant of Vanamala, records that “out of fear for his (vanamala’s) prowess sme of even those king who have themselves defeated many enemies ran away to various quarters and others took the path to the sky (V. 21). And those among the other kings who used to shoot sharp arrows in the battle field left their own land at long distance out of fear for him (V. 22). Those kings, who for a display of their velour used to arrange excited elephant against their enemies, had to salute him with folded palms.” (V. 23, Vide IAA)

116. *This is conspicuous when the king ascribed them as second Visnu, Cakrapani, Indra, Rama, Krsna, Purusottama and Janardana in their inscription. Thus we have the reason to believe that Brahmanas proapagated the ideal for the tribes reside in Aryan kingdom that they should serve their king, dig wells, give waters to thirsty travelers and should make donation as much as they could to the Brahmins (Mahabharata, santi parvam. Lxv).*
117. Pillai ,P. C: *op,cit, pp. 12-18.*
118. Stein ,B. (ed.) :*The South Indian Temple,Delhi,1978, p. 48; Kulke, H: “Royal Temple Policy and the structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdom”, CJRTO, p. 132. These propositions bear a great relevance in the growth and development of the temples of Kamrupa also.*
119. Muss, M: *The gift, London, 1954, p. 53-59; Dikshit, V.V.R. Hindu Administrative Institutions, pp. 102-04.*
120. Kulke, H: *op. cit., p. 132.*

121. Kosambi, D.D: '*Social and Economic Aspects of the Bhagavad-Gita*', in the *Myth and Reality*, Bombay, 1983, pp. 12-41.
122. Gait. E. A: *op.cit*, p. 82.
123. *Op.cit*: p. 121.
124. *Op.cit*: p. 170.
125. *In this regard we may recall that in the temples of Umananda, Pariharesvara and Sukresvara, some offerings in the three Bihus are offered in the name of king Sivasimha even to-day.*
126. *It is for this reason that when the deity of a temple was brought out in procession on some festive occasions such as Bihu and Phakua, the deity was adorned with the royal insignias like danda, catra, camara etc. from the days of Sivasimha.*
127. Lingat ,R: *The Classical Law of India*, Oxford University ,1998, p. 229, fn. 54 as quoted by Appadurai ,A: '*Kings, Sects and Temples in South India*' in *South Indian temple*, p. 50.
128. Hunter, W.W: *op,cit*, p. 35.
129. Neog M. (ed.): *op.cit* Plate No. 103.
130. Gait, E.A: *op.cit*: pp. 240-41.
131. Neog, M. (ed.): *op.cit*, *Introduction*, p. 121-23, *we could not identify the Barkhsetri temple.*
132. *Nothing is recorded about the nature and details of punishment in the document.*
133. Neog, M. (ed.): *op.cit*, *Introduction*. P. 123.
134. Neog, M: *op.cit*.
135. Neog, M:*op.cit*. p. 122.

136. Gait, E.A: *op.cit*, pp. 240-41.
137. *In all the Copper Plate inscriptions, the Ahom kings addressed like “Kamrup desar barua, barkayastha, choudhury, patowari, thakuria, anosakale sabadhane janiba” (let it be known by all the barua, barkayastha, chaudhury, patowari, thakuria and others of Desa Kamrup)*
138. *For example in the inscriptions of Kamakhya and the Umananda, the stylized formula is “Sri Sri Kamakhya” and “Sri Sri Umananda Dosain” respectively.*