CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION OF SCULPTURAL ART
IN THE KAMRUP DISTRICT

The origin of the Indian art can be traced to the religious and cultural background of Indian society. The root of the Indian art lies in the texture of the people of the country and in their manifold racial origins. Art represents the prevailing socio-economic and political condition of the people of a particular period. According to Havell "The origin of Indian art is based on eternal soul which found expression in the Vēdas and Upanishads". The region of Assam, being an integral part of India, also followed the same tradition. Hence, we find that religion played a vital role in the evolution of art forms in Assam also. Apart from the religious art, there are also secular arts in the form of fortifications and habitation settlements, as found in the rest of India. But a study of the sculptural remains found in the Kamrup District reveals that sculptural art tradition in this region developed as a part of temple architecture. The contributory elements in the evolution of art are religion, society, dress and costumes, customs and beliefs, economic conditions, philosophical attitude and mediums of art.

Archaeological evidences in stone, metal, terracotta, wood and ivory as well as literary evidences signify rich architectural activities throughout the Kamrup region of Assam. Though almost none of them survive intact primarily due to natural vagaries like the earthquake, flood and humid climatic condition and also partly human vandalism from time to time, yet the region witnessed development of different phases of architectural activities from the earliest times to the 18th C.E. After intensive study and field survey, it is observed that various types of plastic art developed in different phases of historical development throughout the region of Assam.

As per archaeological evidence, the region of Kamrup has different phases of architectural development or evolution of art from the earliest period. The region has archaeological evidences of temples, fortifications and settlements belonging to different phases of historical development.

The modern city of Guwahati in Kamrup district, which was the ancient capital city of Pragjyotisa-Kāmarūpa kingdom, was strategically well-guarded by fortified walls with gateways on all sides. While discussing the evolution of art, we may look into the evidences of pre-historic and pre-Brahmanical cultural development in this region. We find evidences of non-anthropomorphic worship of pre-Brahmanical culture at Kamakhya in Nilachal Hill, Ugratara Devalaya and Basistha Temple, based on fertility cult and ancestral worship in the form of megalithic culture. It is generally accepted that the concept of linga and yoni is of non-Vedic and pre-Aryan origin.

Aitariya Brahmana (1.3.7) refers to an early contact of the Aryans with the non-Aryans residing in the Kamrup region. Satapatha Brahmana (II,VI, 14-15) indicates infiltration of the Aryan to the east of the Sāḍānira or the Karatoya river as mentioned in Amarakosha. The navagraha or the nine planets on the Chitrachal Hill as well as the massive yonipithas on the parallel Kanvachal Hill, also represents linga and yoni of Pre-Aryan concept, upon which at a latter period, art and architecture developed based on Brahmanical religion. This non-anthropomorphic form of worship is still found to be prevalent among the tribes namely, Garos, Bodos, Rabhas and Karbis living in Silpota, Boko, Digaru and Sonapur i.e. in and around the Kamrup District. During the epic period the coming of the Aryans from the west brought Brahmanical religion based on Vedic rites and rituals with it. Pragjyotisha and its king Naraka are mentioned in the Rāmayana (Kiskindhyā kānda 42.30-2). Pragjyotisha, Naraka, Bhagadātta and Vajradatta are also mentioned in the Mahābhārata. Thus both the epics Rāmayana and Mahābhārata refer to the country as Pragjyotisha in ancient times and the same country was known as Kāmarūpa in medieval times, though the area of the kingdom differed.

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from time to time. The mention of Pragjyotisha and Kamrupa in the Brihat Samhita, Raghuvamsa and Markendya Purana indicates the influence of Brahmanism in the region. Hieun-tsang refers to hundreds of Deva temples in Kamrupa, indicating influence of Brahmanical religion in this region in the first half of the seventh century C.E. Both the epics refer to the extension of the country as far as the sea and as a partly hilly country.

Of the historical period, the famous Allahabad Prasasti of the Gupta king Samudra Gupta (320-380 C.E.) is the first epigraphic record to mention Kamrupa as a kingdom. In this inscription Kamrupa is mentioned as a frontier kingdom along with Samatata, Davaka, Nepala and Kartripura, the kings of which were under the hegemony of the imperial commands of king Samudra Gupta -

"Samatata-davaka-kamrupa-nepala-katripur-adipratyant nrpatibhihi...".

As per archaeological evidence the Umachala Rock Inscription has been accorded as having the first epigraphic record of a Hindu temple in Assam. It appears to be the earliest record of Gupta influence in Kamrup District till date and on paleographic grounds, it may be assigned to 5th C.E. The inscription states -

"Maharajadhiraja sri surendrarmanā Krtan bhagavatah valabhadra svāminām idam guham [11]".

It indicates the construction of a cave temple by Maharajadhiraja Sri Surendravarmana But at present there is no archaeological evidence of a temple establishment. There exist, only two stone blocks facing each other with an inscription inscribed on the northern face of the rock. Dr. P.C. Sarma, in his book ‘Architecture of Assam’ states that the Umachala Rock Inscription has similarity with the cave temples

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of Udaigiri near Vidisa which are the earliest temple establishments of the Gupta rulers of the 4th-5th C.E. The king was devoted to *Bhagavata balabhadrasvamin*, a Vaisnavite deity, variously called Balabhadra, Balarama etc., an incarnation of Vishnu, the Brahmanical God. The Balabhadra cult as an independent cult was prevalent till the 2nd century A.D. in North and West India.\(^{14}\)

It is to be observed that though the period of study has been taken up from 5th C.E., it is relevant to be mentioned that with the findings of archaeological evidences of terracotta art of 1st-2nd century B.C.E. at Ambari having stylistic similarity with the art form of Sunga-Kushana period, the art activities in Kamrup District may be dated back as early as 1st-2nd century B.C.E. Then is found the impact of the Gupta architecture during the region of the Varmana dynasty from 4th-5th C.E. continued throughout the rule of the Salastambha Dynasty, who ruled from 7th-10th C.E. and attained its excellence under the royal patronage of the Palas of Assam during 11th-12th C.E. But though the art activities in this region was stylistically influenced by the Gupta classical art form, it is imbued at places with local and regional character, which found expression in facial and physiognomical characteristic of the sculptures of different historical periods. After the fall of the Pala dynasty in the second quarter of the 12th century A.D., the art activities in this region also suffered a setback due to political disturbances from the west.\(^{15}\) From the beginning of the 13th century A.D. up to 15th century A.D., we do not find any significant artistic development due to lack of royal patronage. However, with the extension of the Ahom kingdom from the east throughout the entire Brahmaputra valley, the region witnessed some artistic development under royal patronage. This development was in the form of reconstruction of most of the early medieval stone temples, which had collapsed either due to natural calamities or other reasons, by using bricks on the stone temple plinth and also using earlier stone temple components along with it. In the 16th-17th C.E. with the coming of the Mughals from the west, we find mixed architectural development under the royal patronage of the Koch kingdom in Kamrup District.

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On stylistic ground, the period of evolution of art in this region can be divided into three distinct phases -

(1) Early period, 5th - 8th C.E.
(2) Early medieval period, 9th - 12th C.E.
(3) Late medieval period, 13th - 18th C.E.

Since very few dated sculptures of early period are found, the sculptural development can be studied on the basis of stylistic growth and comparison of the art of the region with the contemporary Indian art form. Moreover, as stated earlier, the majority of the sculptures form parts of temple architecture which developed on parallel lines with that of Eastern India where we find dated inscriptions on the temples, thus helping us to accurately date the sculptures.

(1) Early period (5th - 8th C.E.)

The earliest sculptural remains under study are found at Kamakhya Hill, where exists two stone relics bearing the famous scroll design (Plate - I), which is found in almost all the Gupta temples in India. The scroll or the creeper motif flowing like a ribbon from the hands of a dwarf human figure is similar to the scroll motif on the door panel of Dasavatara temple at Deogarh,16 the Chandimau temple of Bihar and Dhamekh stupa at Varanasi, all of which may be datable to 6th C.E.17 The vegetal motif is one of the important characteristics of the Gupta sculptures of later period. During this period naturalistic approach to art gave way to the human form as a divine image.18 Vegetation and abstract motifs recede to the panels or border of the sculptural figurers during this period.19 It may be noted that art activities of this period though imbued by the art form of Sarnath, is also imbued with emotional and sensuousness of Eastern India. It is more human and earthy in expression. The evolution of plastic art either in stone or metal as

17 Dutta, Manoranjjan Sculptures of Assam p.46. Agam Kala Prakashan,Delhi,1990
found in Eastern India covers the area from Bihar in the west to Assam in the east, and this region is known as Prachya or Purva-deśa in Ancient Indian literature.20

As found from the archaeological evidence, it is from the Gupta period onwards that the old kingdom of Kāmarūpa witnessed a vital phase of architectural and sculptural development.

During the seventh century C.E., the influence of Gupta classical art lost its earlier grandeur and grace.21 But we find lingering of the classical style of modelling and transparent drapery in art form.22 Earlier tenderness and linearism gives way to regional and ethnic tradition. It is characterized by simplicity in appearance with broad shoulders and round face with full lips having little ornamentation. During this period art become more close to day-to-day life of narrative art based on socio-religious condition, though less elegant and spiritual than earlier.23 It can be traced at Nilachala Hill, where some of the sculptures and panels are stylistically datable to 7th century C.E. One of the sculptures is of a human figure blowing on a sankha (conch) and another one depicted as playing the flute24. This apart, there are panels of dancing Gandharvas, (divine musicians) a mother and child, a fat man eating something and a female offering water to a tired seated male, a man seated crossed legged (plate-2,3,4.). All these sculptures are dressed in the transparent drapery of the Gandhara art style25. The simple ornamentation, simplicity and flowing contours, elongated torso signifies lingering of the classical style. The conical headdress and knee length lower garment of the Krisna Benugopala appears to be a dhoti, a feature of Assamese dress or costume in Assamese Bhaona26 (Vaisnavite drama). Another important feature in the panel depicting a female figure pouring water to a man is that she had covered her head with the upper paridhana of the body, which again is a typical feature of the present Assamese society. In the panel of mother and child, the hair knot of the figure of mother is also another typical hairstyle Khupa (a type of knotted hair) of Assamese

22 Manoranjan Dutta, Sculptures Of Assam p.49. Published by Agam Kala Prakashan,Delhi,1990
culture. All these features represent stylistic growth of classical art imbued with local tradition and motifs.\textsuperscript{27}

The human figure is the pivot of early medieval sculptural art in the form of Gods and Goddesses and their attendants\textsuperscript{28}. Icons of Gods and Goddesses were made according to the mathematical proportions, balance and myths, legends and ideologies imbued with the artists' inner spirituality and placed on the walls of the garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) of the temple\textsuperscript{29}. But during eight century C.E., it lost earlier inner spirituality of the artist due to the increasing demands for the divine images. Hence majority of the sculptures lost high degree of excellence. This transitional phase may be regarded as a final phase of classical Indian art tradition. The facial and physiognomic type is based on classical art form.

Bold composition and tenderness in heavy bodily form characterized this phase of evolution of sculptural art form\textsuperscript{30}. Along with earlier features of scanty jewellery, elongated torso, flowing contours, roundness of the body and life-size figures of divine images are some of the important features of 8\textsuperscript{th} C.E. Sculptures of this period are found in Kamakhya at Nilachala Hill. The Kamakhya temple, though reconstructed several times, was originally based on North Indian art style in plan with ratha projections.\textsuperscript{31} The life-size sculptures in dvibhaga postures on lotus pedestals of various deities like Vishnu, Sūrya, Siva and Agni etc, as well as panels of sociocultural life in between pilasters may be stylistically datable to 8\textsuperscript{th} C.E. (plate-5) The Hayagriva Madhava temple at Hajo, which is a shrine, both of Hindu and Buddhist, has beautiful and graceful carvings of sculptures of 8\textsuperscript{th} C.E.\textsuperscript{32} Here the plinth of the garbhagriha of the temple has panel of rows of ornamented elephants or gajathara numbering 145, which is similar to the row of elephants of the Kailasha temple of Ellora (plate- 6.\textsuperscript{33}) However it may be noted that the gajathara of Kailasha temple is


\textsuperscript{29} Majumdar ,R.C.,(ed), \textit{The Struggle for Empire}, fourth edition 1989, p642.


\textsuperscript{33} Calambur. Sivaramamurthi, \textit{The Art of India}, Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, Publishers, New York, 1977, p 394, Figure. 549.
unadorned unlike the *gajathara* of Hayagriva Madhava temple. There are panels of
dancing and musical scenes in between pilasters. *Dwarpalas* of both male and female
figures with floral motif flute players are some of the sculptures (now fixed in the
*batchora* or entrance gateway), stylistically datable to 8th C.E. (plate-6). The latter
phase of the 8th C.E. marked the end of the classical period and beginning of the early
medieval period in sculptural art form based on classical art. During this period, eastern
India was affected by lawlessness and confusion due to political disintegration. But the
rise of the Palas in Bengal (765-1175 A.D.) also influenced the art activity of Kamrup
region. A notable sculpture of this period is the panel of Hari-Hara in *tribhāga*
posture, with Durga on the right side as the consort of Siva and the figure of Lakshmi,
as the consort of Vishnu on the left side. (Plate-7). All the figures are of equal height.
The flowing contours and roundness of the sculptures, scanty jewellery and plain
border of the panel indicates that the sculptural panel is datable to 8th C.E. Another
sculpture of this period is found at the *maṇḍapa* of the Basistha temple. The deity is in
*samapada-sthānaka* posture with four faces facing four directions and may be
identified with Brahma. The figure is devoid of stella and rounded and wears folded
lower garments *‘dhoti’*. The roundness of the form and without stella as well as simple
ornamentation of the sculpture appears to placed the figure in 8th C.E. (Plate-9).

(2) Early Medieval Period (9th – 12th C.E.)

The rise of the Palas of Bengal and Bihar in 9th C.E. gave great impetus to the
art in Eastern India. It led to the great improvement in the plastic art of this region
including the Kāmarūpa kingdom of easternmost part of India. It led to the growth of a
new school of art with lingering of the Gupta art traits. It lasted till the end of the 12th
C.E. when the Muhammadans interrupted in the fertile valley of Bengal, Bihar and
Assam. During the ninth century C.E., in Bengal, the early Pala rulers were followers
of Vajrayana form of Buddhism which influenced the art of Bengal during that period.
Thus there was intermingling of Brahmanism and Buddhism which found expression in
the art form of Bengal. It also influenced the art of adjacent Kamrup region. The 9th
C.E. art form exhibits soft fleshiness within definite outlines, an inheritance of the art

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34 Deepi rekha Kouli, A Note on Pre-Ahom Sculptures of Vasistha temple. Guwahati. Cited in Kala,
35 F. Banerji, R.D., *Eastern Indian School of mediaeval Sculpture*, Archaeological Survey Of India,
Reprint, 1998, p.18-20)
of Gupta period. It represents sturdy physiognomy with soft and tender facial expression along with half-closed eyes. With the influence of the Pala art of Bengal, the region witnessed evolutionary growth of stella. The sculptures were carved on the stella, of which the lower part merged with the background of the stella and the upper part of the figure is rounded. The high relief was no longer in use. Figures of attendants in small stature developed surrounding the central figure. The growth of stella was at first round on the top. Later the outline varied from rectangular with rounded corners to the half round and slightly pointed on the top. The border is flat or slightly raised. The border of the stella is either flat or slightly raised. Thus the stella became divided into three parts and became traditional. The figure of the deity has ridge-lined lips which disappears in 10th C.E. and garments of the figure indicated by schematic and parallel scratches or ridges with a drapes pattern of rosettes or of lozenge-shapes. The chignon of the goddesses of this period are flat and round on the crown, while the kirāta-mukuta of the deity are prismatic and pyramidal.

But in the first half of the 9th C.E. the stella was plain and devoid of decoration. It had only rope design as a border surrounding the central figure. Another important feature of 9th C.E. is the atibhaṅga posture in which the weight of the body is placed on one side and the knees are slightly bent as if in relaxed mode. The body of the sculptures are flexible and natural having no stiffness in carving of the body. During this period, we find sculptural panel of Umalingana, Linga-yoni along with Kartikeya and Ganeśa in three rows, divided in nine parts. (Plate-10). These apart, broken sculptural panel of Caturbhujas Ganeśa, Kartikeya and Nataraja found at Urvashi Island (now preserved at ASM) (Plate-11) in between pilasters may be datable to 9th C.E. At Uzan bazar, another broken part of a stone panel with depiction of the figures of Ganeśa in dancing posture and Karttikeya in seated posture on his vāhana, mayura in between pilasters is found. Flexibility and tribhaṅga postures of the figures placed the art form in 9th C.E. Another sculpture of Narasimha found at D.C. compound (now at

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37 Indian Sculpture Master Pieces of Indian, Khmer and Chambur Art, pp 15-16.
39 Kramrisch, Stella, Pala-Sena Sculpture, Rupam-40, 1929.
A.S.M.) may be stylistically placed at 9th C.E. (Plate-12). Four human figures on four corners of a broken pillar found at Guwahati (Now at ASM) exhibits musical and dancing scenes stylistically datable to 9th C.E. (Plate-13). Similar human figures of musical scenes are found carved at Kamakhya in Nilachala Hill (Plate-14). This apart the eleven numbers of sculptures in the inner side of the garbhagriha and at the entrance of the Navagraha temple at Chitrachal hill may be datable to 9th C.E. Of them nine represents nine grahas- Chandra, Ravi, Mangal, Budha, Brihaspati, Sukra, Sani, Rahu and Ketu and identified with nine Siva Linga-Yonipithas in the garbhagrihas. All the sculptures were carved on plain stella and lower part of the sculptures were merged with the stella. The figures were rounded and wear folded drapery with prabhāvali behind the head (Plate-15). All these sculptures represent roundness of the body with flexibility and natural movement of 9th C.E. art form. Among the other notable sculptures mentioned may be made of some of the panels of erotic sculptures found at Guwahati (Now at ASM) may be stylistically datable to 9th C.E. The elongated torsos of the erotic figures which are carved in between pilasters, devoid of ornamentation may be placed in 9th C.E. (Plate-16). The earliest representation of amorous couple was generally symbolic- a man and women standing side by side. But in medieval times, with the evolution of art, it was finally depicted on the walls of the temples in physical intimacy, considering it to be a normal human activity or part of life. Another notable sculpture is an image of Camunda with prabhāvali seated on a lotus pedestal at Kamakhya in Nilachala hill. The stella of the sculpture is rectangular on the top, with rope design on the border. Thus the figure may be placed in the 9th C.E. (Plate-17). The art form of this period found at the campus of the modern Viswakarma temple at the foot hill of the Nilachal hill. The broken figure represents a Sakti Goddess and in tribhaṅga posture with bent on knees. The deity is in drooping eyelids and wears pyramidal kirātamukuta and had soft and fleshy body and devoid of stiffness. Thus represent all the features of art of 9th C.E. (Plate-18). There found a broken figure of a Saivite deity at Hengrabari, now preserved at A.S.M. The figure appears to be in tribhaṅga posture and holds kapāla and khaṅga in his hands. The ridge-lined lips and half-closed eyes with kirāta-mukuta in prismatic shape represents features of the 9th

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Another remarkable development in art form is the casting of metal images which was popular in Bengal and Bihar during 9th – 12th century C.E.\(^{41}\) The metal art of eastern Bengal gradually merged with the Brahmaputra valley of Assam during ninth century C.E. and extended towards east. It has religious, social and cultural significance with the principalities of medieval Burma, Malaysia, Siam, Indonesia and Indo-China. Such art idioms can be traced at Narakasur Hill (present Kahilipara) where a hoard of metal sculptures was found. On stylistic grounds, these art activities may be placed in different historical periods. Of these, the figure of Vishnu with two hands placed on \(\text{cakra}\) and \(\text{gadā}\) is stylistically similar to the bronze image of Vishnu with \(\text{ayudha purusha}\) of 8th – 9th C.E.\(^{42}\) (Patna Museum). (Plate-20). Hence this image of Vishnu may be placed in 9th C.E. Another broken image of Avalokiteswara is in \(\text{abhaOga}\) posture. (Plate-21). The broken stella has beaded border. The image appears to be stylistically similar to the image of Buddhist Goddess of learning from Nalanda, Patna District.\(^{43}\) Slender and compact body with diaphanous long drapery and scanty jewellery place the sculpture in 9th C.E. Another broken image of Tara, a Buddhist tantric goddess in \(\text{abhaOga}\) posture in diaphanous long drapery, may also be datable to 9th C.E.

In the 10th C.E., the mastery of composition and aesthetic elegance is reflected in the art form of this region. It represents the wholeness of the body form with fleshiness.\(^{44}\) The facial expression is as calm, soft and sensuous as earlier. The figures are more heightened in relief and marked by vigorous and robust body form with more slenderness in the carvings of the body.\(^{45}\) Though at the beginning of this period the art form is marked by grandeur and dignity within a discipline form, but in the middle of the century modelling in high relief signifies stiffness and rigidity in appearance of the sculptural art. Another important feature of this period is that art became more ornamental with jewellery carved in more details. The top of the stella is occupied by

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\(^{42}\) Sivaramamurti, C. *The Art of India Calambur*, 1977. p390, fig. 518.

\(^{43}\) Bandhyopadhyay, B. *Metal Sculpture of Eastern India*, 1981. Fig. 7


the kirttimukha and flanked by vidyādhara on either side. The head-dress and crown have changed; the chignon of the goddess is placed further down the head. The pyramid of the kirātamukuta has grown more elaborate and the gandharvas now wear pointed karanda-mukuta. The plaits of hair of the jatāmukuta either horizontal or sometimes matted vertically and horizontally, while sometimes tied in single loops. The art of this period can be traced on two stone sculptures found at Guwahati (now at Assam State Museum). Of these, one represents Brahma (Plate-22) and the other represents Indra (Plate-23). Both these sculptures stand on a lotus pedestal with carving of vāhana on it- Hamsa, the vāhana of Brahma and the elephant, the vāhana of Indra. Both the figures are in tribhaga posture. The upper part of the stella of the sculpture of Brahma is broken. The figure of Brahma is flanked by an attendant on either side. The border of the stella is plain with flat broad band. The figure of Indra has a kirttimukha on the top of the stella with vidyādhara on either side. The figure is flanked by two attendants on either side without ornamentation of the stella. The simple broad band of the stella without ornamentation is a characteristic feature of tenth century C.E.

Another important development of this period is rock cut sculptures in and around the Kamrup region. In this regard special mention may be made of large numbers of rock cut Caturbhujā Ganeśa at various places. It was probably due to the belief that the area was earlier dense forest full of animals and since Ganeśa believed to be the remover of all obstacles and God of success, hence Ganeśa was worshipped by the people. Mention may be made of rock-cut Ganeśa at Agiathuri, Hajo, Urvashi, Manikraneswar, Dirgheswari, Kanaiborosi, Kalapahar, Kamakhya at Nilachal hill, Pandunath, Amsang Reserve Forest, Boragaon, Umananda, Bagheswari Peeth, Nazira Khat, Jorabat, Ganeshguri and Latasil area. (Plate-24). Of these, special mention may be made of the figure of Ganeśa in rājalilāsana. The figure is found at the slope of the hill of the Kamaleswar temple at Hajo. The figure wears a upavita of a snake which according to local people had the face of Mother Goddess Kali on it, but the face of Kali is not visible on the sculpture. The figure is known as Kal- Ganeśa by the local

46 Miller, Barbara Stoler, (ed.) Exploring India's Sacred Art. Selected Writings of Stella Kramrisch, 1994 p 228.
47 Kramrisch, Stella, Pala-Sena Sculpture, Rupam-40, 1929.
people. (Plate-25). Of the other rock cut figures mention may be made of the Dasāvatāra rock cut panel, figure of Hari-Hara, Vishnu and Sūrya at Urvashi (Plate-26), rock cut Durga at Basistha, rock- cut Durga and Uma-Maheswara, other rock cut figures and Yogi in dhyana- mudrā at Dirgheswari. Again a figure of ten armed Nataraja (now at ASM), upon his bull Nandi, within a circle of floral motif of this period, is found at Guwahati (Plate-27). The figure is holding different āyudhas according to iconographic norms. On the basis of ornaments and drapery, the figure may be dated to tenth century C.E. Some of the sculptures found at Nilachala hill may also be dated to tenth century C.E. Mention may be made of an image of Camunda in pretāsana mudrā (Plate-28), the rock- cut image of Bhairava, rock- cut temple motif of Orissan temple style enshrining Vishnu in it, the rock- cut lingas, the rock-cut Venu-Gopala (Plate-29), flying apasara within a lotus motif (Plate-30), which were found scattered on the Nilachal Hill. This apart fragmentary pieces of stone relics like broken part of the head of a deity with kirttimukha and vidyādhara, part of a stella bearing richly decorated kirttimukha on the top, lower part of a sculpture with carvings of double lotus pedestal and an animal figure may be bull and lying human figure on it, which exhibits features stylistically datable to 10th C.E. (Plate-30-A). There is a caturbhujā icon of Ganeśa and a figure of dancing Ganeśa on the wall of the Mangal Chandi temple at Chatrakar Hill, the figure of Parvati with child, all of which may be stylistically datable to the 10th C.E. (Plate-31). Another important art form of this period is found on a broken part of a doorjamb and consists of a Dasāvatāra panel found at Pandunath temple (Plate-32). The female attendants are standing in dvibhanga posture. There found rock-cut figure of Sūrya flanked by consorts and a figure of Indra on his vāhana, Airavata (elephant) stylistically datable to 10th C.E.

The terracotta art of this period can be traced at Ambari Archaeological site, Guwahati. They consists of a mutilated figure of Ganeśa, a male torso, a female torso, decorated female headdress, a broken figure of Urvasi etc. (Plate-33) These apart, there are terracotta plaques - three dancing female figures, one dancing Yogi and a seated guru with a female disciple at Guwahati (now at ASM). The stone relics found at Dol-Gobinda exhibits art activities of this period. There is found a figure of Kartikeya,

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Ganeśa, Siva and other temple components, which represents stylistic features of tenth century C.E. (Plate-34). The slender and fleshy body with definite outline along with simple ornamentation of neckline, waistband and armlet signified these sculptures datable to tenth century C.E. The metal sculptures from Narakasur hills - Indra, Avalokiteswara and Chunda are some of the sculptures of tenth century C.E. Of these metal images the figure of Indra having fleshy slender body in smiling face with half closed eyes express the feature of 10th C.E. The figure is seated on his Vāhana Airavata or elephant. Behind the deity there is a prabhāvali and chattrā above it. Chattrāvalī is a Buddhist iconographic feature that merged with Hindu iconography. The main deity is flanked by two female attendants both of whom are standing in dvibhāga posture on a pedestal, having similarity with the Sravani image of Deulbandi.50 (Plate-35). Thus exhibits all the features of the art form of the 10th C.E.

In the 11th C.E., the art form of the sculptures is characterized by gracefulness and elegance in physiognomic form.51 The earlier trend of heaviness of body form is replaced by slender body form with thin waist and broad chest. The legs of the figures became more stiff and column like. The accessory figures became more independent.52 There was a tendency towards over crowdedness of the stella by elaborate ornamentation with floral motif, vidyadhara, kirttimukha and accessory figures along with the principal figure.53 The ornaments of the human figures and motifs on the slabs compared with the image itself, have equal share on the stella and sometimes surpass the main deity.54 Inspite of these developments, the plasticity of the art form still persists. The kirttimukha of the stella became more elaborate. The facial expression of the figures of this period still maintained spirituality.55 The facial type with full lips is enriched by sensitiveness and pliability. The cut of the eyes of all the faces, whatever maybe the shape remained the same, only varied on iconographical prescription like some images have round and open eyes, while some other images have long and

50 Bandyopadhyay, Bimal, Metal Sculptures Of Eastern India, 1981, Sundeep Prakashan, p177
52 Miller, Barbara stoler(ed.) Exploring India's Sacred Art, Selected writings of Stella Kramrich 1994, p. 228.
54 Kramrisch, Stella, Pala-Sena Sculpture, Rupam-40, 1929.
55 Dutta, Manoranjan Sculptures Of Assam, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 1990, p 82.
beautiful eyes with eyelids lower and modeled in oblique cut. In the middle of the 11th C.E., the Goddess wears flat and high chignon, either on the crown of the head or at the side or backwards. The kirīṭa-mukuta by this time became cone-shaped. The miniature figures of Vishnu, Mahishamardini and Sūrya found at Ambari Archaeological site in larger numbers, though corroded, maintained clear contours of the form datable to eleventh century C.E. The mutilated Catturbhuja figure of Hari-Hara found at Uzan Bazar (now at ASM) seated in padmāsana on a lotus pedestal and exhibits rigidity of slender body form (plate-36). The stella has four miniature figures along with devotee worshiping Linga and Garuda on the pedestal. There is a halo behind the head of the main deity on the stella. The facial expression of the icon shows spirituality with drooping eyes. The accessory deities are independent figures. All these features represent characteristics of eleventh century C.E. Nilachal hill also witnessed art activities of eleventh century C.E. For example there are images of Bhairava, figure of Bhubaneshwari, figure of Chamunda with kirttimukha and vidyadhara on either side, another bust of a female figure with drooping eyes and large breast exhibits features stylistically datable to eleventh century C.E. (Plate-37). The Art form of this period can be traced at Cotton College Campus where a number of terracotta plaques were found while digging for construction of the indoor stadium buildings at the site. Mention may be made of figure of dancing Ganeśa with attendants, sivalingas with devotees, Kartikeya, Indra, flying vidyadhara etc. The slender body form with thin waist, broad chest; stiff and column like legs represents the features of 11th C.E. The figures of the deities are flanked by independent accessory deities. (Plate-38, 38-A). Further, two terracotta plaques of stucco images of Buddha found at Uzan Bazar (now at ASM) may be stylistically datable to 11th C.E. Of them one is inscribed below and datable to 11th C.E. Both figures of Buddha are in Bhumisparsha mudra within an arch. In one of the plaques the main figure is surrounded by Stupa and inscribed below on the pedestal, while the other one is flanked by two miniature stupas on either side within a niche. The earlier one is similar to the stucco figure of Buddha in Nalanda. The art form indicates influence of

58 Dutta, Manoranjan. Sculpture of Assam, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi,1990, p 83.
Buddhism in this region as in counter part of Bengal and Bihar. (Plate-93-A, 93-B.). Other notable art activities of this period found at Manikarneswar are the rock-cut Ganeśa flanked by two attendants on either side, the image of Bhairava and the figure of Brahma and Vishnu on the slope of the hill. (Plate-39). The independent accessory figures, heavy ornamentation and slender body with stiff and rigid form represents all the characteristic features of eleventh century C.E. Another remarkable art form of this period, are the sculptures of Madan Kamdev Archaeological Site at Baihata Chariali in North Guwahati. The site has ruins of temple activity of the eleventh century C.E.59 The temple art resembles the Orissan temple art form. The erotic art form resembles the erotic art form of the Khajuraho group of temples. The dvibhaṅga posture, column like legs and heavy ornamentation, rigidity of the sculpture signifies characteristics of eleventh century C.E. (Plate-40). Notable sculptures of this site are figures of sakti Goddesses seated on a corpse with slender waist and large breasts representing heaviness in body form of eleventh century C.E. (Plate-41). It represents the influence of Tantricism in Brahmanical art and religion. The sculptures of Pingaleswar archaeological site is artistically similar to Madan Kamdev Archaeological site and may be datable to eleventh century C.E. The sculptures of Kartikeya seated on his vāhana, Mayura (peacock) having slender waist and broad chest with heavy ornamentation represents features of eleventh century C.E. (Plate- 42) Another important feature of this period is the depiction of bestiality as found in Konark and Khajoraho of Orissa and Sun temple of Modhera of Gujrat alongwith musical and aesthetic scenes on the adhisthāna of the temple also found at Madan-Kamdev and Pingaleswar temple. (Plate-43).60 Another figure of Buddha in dhyānamudrā on panel with bestiality indicates influence of Buddhism during this period. (Plate-44) Erotic sculptural panels of Pingaleswar resembles erotic panels of Madan Kamdev archaeological site. But the sizes of the sculptures are not equal in size of the sculptures of Madan Kamdev Archaeological site. At Pingaleswar archaeological site, we find panels of rows of elephants, rows of lions, frieze of female figures each with sword and shield in hand within a circle in between pilasters, panels of rows of apsara and different social and cultural aspect of human life represents slightly different art from

Pala-sena art and indicates influence of Orissan art form. (Plate-45). Some of the sculptures of Hayagriva Madhava temple at Hajo also appears to represent art form of 11th C.E. The figures of Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana are found depicted on the outer wall of the garbhagriha of the temple, like the carvings of the figures of Ghatotkocha, Dronacharyya from the Mahābhārata and the figures of Ram, Lakshmana and Sita on exile, Bali, Sugriva etc from Rāmāyana are found depicted on the wall of the Hayagriva-Madhava temple. At Kanvachala in Bapuji Nagar Housing Colony thirteen Sivalingas and Yonipithas of different sizes are found which may be datable to 11th C.E.61 The sculpture of Camunda found at Chaygaon may be assigned to the 11th C.E. (Plate-46). The tantric image of Camunda is in ālidha posture on a double lotus pedestal. The image is in high relief and stella has simple broad band and devoid of decoration. The stella is pointed on the top with a kirttimukha on it and vidyādharas on either side. The main deity is flanked by two independent attendants in dvibhaṅga posture on either side and a corpse is carved on the pedestal. All these features represent the art form of the 11th C.E.

There found a metal image of the tantric Goddess of Buddhist pantheon Prajnaparamita or Chunda, in the metal hoards of Narakasur hill, Kahilipara datable to 11th C.E. The deity is in vajraparayaṅka posture on viswa-padma (double lotus) pedestal. The figure stylistically appears to be similar with the metal images of Chunda and Sri-Vasudhara from Chittagong District of Bangladesh. (Plate-257). The open eyes of the deity, jatamukuta and rounded top of the stella with chattrāvali resembles the metal images from Bangladesh.62

By the 12th C.E., art displays more exuberance and lavishness of ornamentation all over the surface of the stella. The slender body form of the preceding years remained as earlier but modeling became petrified.63 The main deity is overshadowed by the accessory deities, decorative kirttimukha and other motifs.64 Thus there was resultant lost of plasticity and vigor. The sculptures are more elongated and the legs of

63 Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol-V, Struggle For Empire, Fourth edition, 1989 p 648
the figures become more stiff and column like. Heavy ornamentations of the sculptures and the accessory deities made the art clumsy during this period. It thereby lost its spiritualism and naturalism in art form. During this period, the bust of the woman figure became bigger and the lower portion thin. The relief became higher in modelling of the figure. The relief of this period occupies three planes and the density of the composition keeps growing denser because of the multitude and heaviness of the accompanying details. The movement of the accompanying figures is stiff and also the facial features rigid. The frizzy hem of the *uttariya* and its ends arranged in single and parallel folds on either side of the figure. There appears lack of artistic connections between ornaments and folds with the modeled body of the figures. The pedestal of the deities had a number of projection with lotus motif and figures of donors and *vāhana*. During this period the figures were depicted in *samapada-sthānaka* postures in general. Mention may be made of mutilated *caturbhuja* figure of Vishnu beautifully carved on black basalt found at Chandmari (now at ASM) (Plate- 47). The figure is in *samapada-sthānaka* posture and flanked by two attendants on either side. The upper and lower portion of the image is broken. The stella of the figure is decorated by stylized lion and floral motif. Though broken, it appears that there is a halo behind the head of the main deity. The figure is richly ornamented and wears folded drapery. All these features place the sculpture in 12th C.E. Similar characteristics may be found of an image of Vishnu in North Guwahati (Plate-48). The figure is in *samapada-sthānaka* posture and flanked by attendants on either side. The stella is pointed at the top and bears *kirttimukha* and *vidyādhara* on it. The image appears to be richly decorated though not very clear due to the bad quality of the stone. There is another broken image of Vishnu found at Ulubari (Now at ASM) that may be stylistically datable to 12th C.E. Such rich ornamentation has been found at Merghar in Chaygaon. There found a black basalt image of Surya in *samapada-sthānaka* posture. The stella of the figure is pointed with *kirttimukha* on the top and *vidyādhara* on either side. The deity is flanked by attendants on either side. Over crowdedness of the relief with *ratha* projection of the pedestal with stiff attitude placed the sculpture in 12th C.E. (Plate-49) Similar features

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is traced at temple relics found at Aswakranta temple in North Guwahati. There found a
door-jamb having figures carved in samapada sthānaka posture in between pilasters
and female attendants on either side in dvibhaṅga posture with floral motif exhibits
stiff and column like legs with rigidity in attitude. (Plate-50) The rock-cut sculptures of
Janardan Vishnu, Sūrya, Ganesa and Durga at Sukresvar on the south bank of the river
Brahmaputra may be datable to 12th century A.D. The disproportionate arm, rich
ornamentation69 and long kirāta-mukuta exhibit characteristics of 12th century A.D.
The legs of the sculptures are stiff and column like and evidences of lack of plasticity
of movement are found. (Plate-51).

As for metal sculptures mention may be made of an image of Tara found at
Narakasur hill. (Plate-52) This Tantric Buddhist goddess is sitting on Mahambujapitha
on a lotus pedestal. The figure has elongated and slender body form having rich
ornamentation. The sculpture has a smiling face and appears to be similar to the image
of Lokanatha from Kurkrihar, Gaya District of 12th C.E. (now at Patna museum).70
Hence the image of Tara may be datable to 12th C.E. and it signifies influence and
assimilation of the Buddhism and the Hinduism in art form of the region.

Hence it may be noted that the evolution of sculptural art from 9th – 12th C.E.
belong to the Pala-Sena form of Bengal having regional and indigenous characters
imbued in it. However, we find some notable and distinguishing features of socio-
cultural scenes and dress ornamentation such as puspa-kundala of Orissan and North-
Indian art style.

(3) Late Medieval Period (13th – 18th C.E.)

On the eve of the late medieval period (13th -14th C.E.), art developed a
regional and indigenous character, deviating from the earlier trend that originated from
the Pala-Sena art form of earlier period. By 13th C.E. there was a change in the political
scenario, in the region. The repeated attacks of the Muhammadans from the west in 13th
C.E. and the rise of the petty kingdoms like Kamata, Koch and Kacharis after the fall of
the Pala kingdom affected the socio-political life of the people of the region. Art lost its
royal patronage, and thereby lost its earlier grandeur and plasticity. The rich and heavy

69 Dutta, Manoranjan Sculptures of Assam, 1st edition 1990. p 86
70 Bandopadhyay, Bimal Metal sculptures of Eastern India, 1981, p 44, fig. 37
ornamentation as well as decoration of the stella and sculptures of the earlier period was replaced by plain and simple decoration. During this period art became indigenous and conventional in character both in facial and body form. The shape of the face became squarish or oval with round and puffy eyes, thick lips and flat nose. *Pancaratha* and *Saptaratha* projections of the pedestals were avoided and it become a part of the stella. The *kirttimukha* became longer and the tongue of the *kirttimukha* touched the *kirāta-mukuta* of the main deity. The *kirttimukha* of the deity also become longer than the head of the main deity. The legs are column like and stiff without a bend at the knees. The size of the attendants was bigger than earlier and disproportionate. The figures of this period became round and stiff in attitude. As a whole, the sculptural art form was disproportionate during this period. The relief of the sculptures became high. The sculptures found at Ambari - Vishnu, Mahishamardini, Sūrya Ganga, Yamuna, Muni, Ganeśa, Nataraja and a large number of miniatures sculptures may be stylistically datable to the 13th century C.E. Simple band on the stella, long *kirāta-mukuta*, stiff rounded structure of the figures and *samapada sthānaka* postures represent the art form of the 13th C.E. The excavated findings of large numbers of sculptures of different sizes along with pottery at Ambari indicate that the site was atelier as well as continuation of habitational settlement in 13th – 14th C.E. (Plate-53).

An inscription of Samudrapala found at the site refers to a *sattra* or monastery in Yogihati in 1232 C.E. The image of a ten handed Nataraja and sixteen handed Mahishamardini is carved on plain stella with *kirttimukha* on the top of the stella. The legs of the sculptures are stiff and rigid. Both the sculptures may be placed at the end of the 12th C.E. or the beginning of 13th C.E. because both the sculptures maintain some features of 12th C.E. like pyramidal *kirāta-mukuta* and ālīdha postures, while plain stella and pedestal exhibits the characteristics of 13th century C.E. Similar art form of this period can be traced at Uzan Bazar where a figure of Narasimha is found (now at ASM) (Plate-54). Another notable sculpture is the image of Ḩara-Gauri and Candika at Chaygaon. The long *jata-mukuta* and open eyed Ḩara-Gauri, plain stella and pedestal of both the images may indicate 13th C.E. art form. But a detailed study of both the images

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were not possible as they were covered by cloth. Similar art style may be found at the Basistha temple. There is a sculpture of Vishnu in samapada sthānaka posture on a pedestal. The kirāta mukuta and the āyudhas are longer and disproportionate. The figure is flanked by Lakshmi- Saraswati on either side and devotee on left side with the vāhana, Garuda on pedestal and may be stylistically datable to the 13th C.E. (Plate55). Similar stylistic features are found at Nazirakhat Archaeological site. There exists rock-cut Ganesa and temple relics which are lying on the bank a hilly stream known as Karchiya. The elongated kirāta mukuta and disproportionate figure of the sculptures exhibits characteristic features of 13th C.E. (Plate-56). By the end of the 13th century there was hostility between the Ahoms and the Kamata kings which continued for several years. In the fourteenth century there was a political disturbance among the Kamatas, the Ahoms, the Kacharis and the Chutiyas due to the expansionist policy of the Ahoms and the Kamata kings. Due to this political turmoil development of art activities in the region suffered a setback. The Kamata kingdom disintegrated. Art suffered due to inferior craftsmanship and faced a period of decadence. Special mention may be made of sculptures found at the Merghar, Chaygaon in Kamrup District. The scroll and floral motif of the door jambs, and panels of human figures in dancing postures exhibit inferior craftsmanship. The human figures are disproportionate and represent an indigenous feature in art. The figures appear as if carved on terracotta. This sculpture of the Merghar may be stylistically datable to the 14th C.E. (Plate-57)

In 15th century, the sculptural art developed a new late medieval pattern of art based on local style of art in assimilation with Brahmanical and Islamic art tradition. During this period the Ahom king Suhungmung (A.D. 1497-1539) extended the kingdom towards west, ousted the Mohammedans and destroyed the Chutiyas and the Kacharis, thereby bringing political stability to the region. During this period in 1498 C.E. Hussain Shah of Bengal had destroyed the Kamata Kingdom and the Koch came to power in the region. Both the Koch and the Ahoms king patronised artistic development in the region. Sculptural art of this period was projected in profile and frontally carved. In this regard mention may be made of sculptures of Bhairava

74 Dutta, Manoranjan Sculptures of Assam, 1990, p 113.
75 Das, P. History and Archaeology of North East India, 2007, p 23.
76 Dutta, Manoranjan. Sculptures of Assam, 1990, p 123
found to be fixed on the wall of the *maḍḍapa* of the Kamakhya temple in Nilachal hill. The figure is frontally carved and stump like legs without bands. (Plate-58) This art form continued for four centuries up to the eighteenth century C.E. The Chandra Bharati Rock inscription of 15th -16th C.E. refers to a construction of *maḍḍapa* in North Guwahati.\textsuperscript{77} In 16th C.E. we find art activities under the aegis of the Koch, the Kacharis and the Ahoms. Sculptures of this period have compact bodies, with broad shoulders, having angular bends. Their legs are like stumps without any bend at the knees.\textsuperscript{78} As per epigraphic record, the Koch king who was follower of tantricism, rebuilt the Kamakhya temple at Nilachala Hill and Pandunath temple at Pandu.\textsuperscript{79} The Koch kings later became followers of Vaisnavism promulgated by great Vaishnava reformer Sankaradeva. The Koch king Raghudevha reconstructed the Hayagriva Madhava temple in late 16th C.E.\textsuperscript{80} Hence we find influence and assimilation of the Islamic, Vaishravite and Brahmanical art tradition. (Plate-59) The sculptures of Hajo as seen in the temples of Hayagriva Madhava, Kameswar, Kamaleswar, Ganeśa temple and Kedar temple exhibits Vaisnavita influence in art. The figures of Jay-Vijay and conical head-dress and drapery represents Vaishnavite influence.\textsuperscript{81} The Ahoms also patronised Hinduism and rebuilt many of the earlier stone temples in indigenous form with the assimilation of the Mughal art form.

In the 17th C.E., the art continued the tradition of the preceding periods of frontal and round profile of the sculptural activities. The size of the sculptures are smaller, to carved to decorate the walls of the temple. Sculptures are disproportionate and the artists were not quite aware of the *āyudhas* of the deities as prescribed by the Indian *Silpaśastras*.\textsuperscript{82} The face of the sculptures are generally square with open or half open eyes, thick lips and flat nose.\textsuperscript{83} The facial type is often round, and represents regional and local facial type. The breasts of the female figure are small in comparison to the size of the body.\textsuperscript{84} The dress of some of the sculptures signifies regional style in art form. The figure of a woman in indigenous dress style at Kamakhya exhibits

\textsuperscript{77} Neog ,M. (ed), *Prachya Sasanawali Inscription* - 2
\textsuperscript{79} Dutta, Manoranjan *Sculptures of Assam*,1990, p 115.
\textsuperscript{80} Dutta, Manoranjan *Sculptures of Assam*,1990, p 113.
\textsuperscript{81} Dutta, Manoranjan, *Sculptures of Assam*,1990, p 117.
\textsuperscript{82} Barpujari , H.K. (ed), *Comprehensive History of Assam*, III 1994 1st edition, p 386

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regional and local tradition. (Plate-61) A miniature brass image of Krishna at Kalibari Railway colony, seven broken lingas at Bhasmachala and a broken image of Vishnu found at Silpukhuri are some of the art activities of the 17th century C.E. (now at ASM). Stylized lion is another important feature of Ahom architecture, which is found in the western gate of the Kamakhya temple at Nilachala hill (Plate-62). In the 18th century C.E. we found continuation of the earlier style of profile and frontal art but there was a movement of the contours of the sculptures. Bold physiognomy is replaced by slender body form. The eyes are open and peaceful facial expression is found in the art. The artist gave equal importance to all the figures within a foliage arch. The sculptures of the Asvakranta temple represent the art form of the eighteenth century C.E. The main deity, the Anantaśayee Vishnu is carved with Durga, Brahma and attendants and devotees in equal order within a foliate arch. The style differs from the stella pattern of preceding periods. (Plate-63) The figures of Asta-dikapāla, Indra, Niritti, Yama, Agni, Vayu, Varuna are found frontally carved within arched niches of the wall of the temple. (Plate-64) It appears as if they are carved on wood. Similar sculptural pattern are found at Basistha temple (Plate-65, 66). The Basistha temple which has evidence of temple relics of early medieval period was reconstructed by the Ahom King Rajeswar Singh in 1764 C.E. The sculptures on the outer wall of the garbhagriha of the temple are round and frontally carved. They may be stylistically datable to the 18th C.E. Metal images of four handed and four faces Siva on Nandi at Rudreswar Devalaya may also be datable to the 18th C.E. Another silver image of Siva with five face and ten arms at Umananda may be datable to the 18th C.E. Another notable terracotta art form of this period is a terracotta plaque having floral motif with man and animal found at Ambāri. The panel has depiction of two man in riding on an elephant and horse for hunting. The panel exhibits influence of Mughal art form in head-gear and foliage art. (Plate-67). Some of the sculptures at the Nilachala hill - stylized lion at the entrance of the Tara temple, Bhairavi temple, two Dwarpalas at the entrance of the Bhubaneswari temple and grotesque terracotta figures may be

The sculpture of Bangsi-Gopala at Mangal Chandi temple, Chatrakar Hill is also datable to the 18th century C.E. The figure is depicted along with his consort Radha and devotees on a stella having a plain band on the border. The deity is playing a flute under a tree and surrounded by devotees and animals on the pedestal. Plate-68 The equal depiction of all the figures with small bust of the female figures, frontal and profile art represented 18th C.E. art form. The sculptures at the Siddhesvar temple, Sualkuchi in Kamrup District represents features of 18th century A.D. Rock Inscription of the Ahom king Rajeswar Singha of C.E. 1764 refers to the Siddheswar temple. The sculptures of Vishnu, Sūrya and Mahisha mardini at Siddheswar have elongated disproportionate body in rigid and stiff posture and exhibit features of 18th century C.E. art form. Plate-69 The drapery of the image of Vishnu exhibits Vaisnavite influence. Stylised lions and other sculptures on the outer wall of the garbhagriha of the Siddhesvar temple also may be datable to the same period. Recently there found two metal images at Jambari in Chaygaon of Kamrup District. Of them, one of the metal figures had been wears conical headress like vaishnavite style and wears knee length katisutra, while the other figure adorned with mukuta and similar katisutra. The elongated disproportionate body with rigid and stiff postures appears to be placed both the figures in 18th century A.D. plate-70. Another remarkable art form of this period is to be found at Phakua dol of Hayagriva Madhava temple, Hajo. The human figures on the outer wall of the Phakua dol were dressed in British style. The sculptures of individual soldiers with a rifle are found carved within a pointed arch. The sculpture is clad in knee-length half-pant and fully covered shirt with a crossed belt in front. It holds a gun in one hand may be belong to late 18th century A.D., when the East-India company came to this region during the reign of King Gauri Nath Singha.

Wooden sculptural art form during this period was as popular as stone, metal and terracotta art. Wood was an easily available material found in the region from the earliest times. But as it is easily perishable only a few wooden sculptures of 18th–19th

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88 Das, P. History and Archaeology of North East India., Agam Kala Prakashan, p 104.
90 Das, P. History and Archaeology of North East India., Agam Kala Prakashan,2007, p 27.
C.E. are found at Vaishnavite Satras of Assam. Mention may be made of a wooden sculpture found at Samaria Sattra, Kamrup datable to 18th-19th C.E. (Plate-71).

In conclusion, it appears that evolution of sculptural art in Kamrup District found expression through different mediums throughout the different historical periods. In early period the art based on Gupta artistic trait imbued regional and indigenous character in it. But in early medieval period the art form witnessed the matured phase of East Indian Pala-Sena art of Bengal and Bihar originating from Gupta artistic idiom having regional and ethnic influence in it. The late medieval art form was a deviation from earlier art trends based on local and indigenous art idioms. It exhibits assimilation of different religious sects and beliefs of the people in immature art form.

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