A. ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS:

1. BRICK ARCHITECTURE:

Extensive remains of brick architecture confirm that brick constituted the principal building medium in the Valley. Our investigations reveal that, except those of the stone brahmanical temple relics, such as sculpture, yonipitha, pranāla etc., the other elements of architecture, irrespective of religious and secular order, were invariably of bricks. The universal employment of bricks in architecture, as such, shows that brick was considered the appropriate material for architecture. It seems that the easy availability and tractability of brick yielding clay, sustained such a favourable movement for brick architecture in the Valley. However, due to the ravages of time, all those architecture, belong to the ancient and early mediaeval period, have been reduced to heaps or mounds. The only isolated examples of brick architecture now standing erect in the Valley are the gateway at Dimapur and the Negheriting temple at Dergaon.

The inhabitants of the Valley, it appears, produced quality bricks being facilitated by geological factors, because lime stone of the foothill region was traditionally used as mortar for cementing bricks in religious and secular structure1.

Besides, the clay of the neighbourhood of Dimapur is of superior quality and of retentive nature2. A rich bed of shell lime, similar to the ones
that exist in Sylhet is found in the Valley along the course of the Nambor river. Two soil samples from Dhekial near Golaghat, which were tested at laboratory, reveal high plasticity and high iron oxide content and are found to be good for production of bricks as well as pottery clay.

Different sizes of bricks have been found evenly shaped and with smooth surface. The bricks are well-burnt and are of pale reddish colour. Bricks as large as 37.5 x 16 x 6 cm, and 32 x 17.5 cm are found at Deopani and Jagyapur respectively. Bricks found at Dimapur are remarkably different in their size and shape, and no brick is exactly of the same size. Bricks found at the defensive rampart at Numaligarh measure 26 x 20 x 5 cm. Although different sizes of bricks are found, moulded possibly to overcome the difficulties of spacing, a general character is that bricks belonging to the sites earlier in date are found to be larger in size. However, absence of scientific exploration deters us from drawing a full account of the development of brick architecture in the Valley. What J.P Mills observed about archaeology of Assam is true in this case, since spade, the chief tool of the archaeological exploration has hardly been used to reveal the characteristics of architectural development in the Valley. Earlier observations of John Butler, Major Godwin Austen, E.A. Gait and T. Bloch are confined only to the brick gateway of Dimapur. Although a century has lapsed since then, the brick architectural movement, developed in the Valley, has remained virtually uninvestigated. As such, on the basis of surface finds of brick architectural remains, with support from other associated archaeological finds, a discussion of brick architecture of the Valley is attempted below:

ANCIENT PERIOD:

Brick Architectural Remains at Alichiga-Tengani:

Existence of two setubondhas at Alichiga-Tengani have already been discussed (supra). The central rectangular platform (210m x 148m) fortified
by square water ditches (288m x 288m) is found with evidence of brick structure. It is quite possible that Alichiga-Tengani was not only a fortified commercial harbour or paṭṭana, but was also simultaneously developed as a pleasure garden (ārāma) or as an orchard with brick built garden houses or vipanis laid down as per the principle of the Arthasastra and the Mānasāra. This rectangular elevation, surrounded by parikā and bridged with the outer bank at east and west by earthen passages (48 m x 24m), was possibly developed as a pleasure garden (ārāma) or as an orchard where the brick structures, now in ruins, were possibly erected as garden houses, well secured within water fortifications. The ATCS of Sri Vasundharavarmanā is recovered from the outer embankment of this setubandha.

The central elevation of the smaller setubandha (embankment and bridges) ground plan surrounded by a square water ditch (60 m x 60m) and bridged with the southern outer bank with a passage (10 m x 5m) is found with ruins of brick architecture. Bricks unearthed here have width of 21 cm with thickness of 5 to 7 cm. The largest brick measure 30.5 x 17 x 5.6 cm. Incidentally the ATSI of Sri Ratnavarmanā found with four impressions of manusapada and which is datable c. 4th - 5th century A.D. (plate II, a) was recovered from the brick remains existing in the central elevation of this setubandha, water fort.

It could be tentatively said that the remains of brick now found within the setubandha ground plan was possibly a temple architecture with a gopura, developed most possibly by Sri Ratnavarman, who had issued the ATSI.

Ditches, ramparts, walls and watch towers constitute some feature of fortifications at Alichiga-Tengani. Evidence of brick reinforced ramparts exist in north-south alignment in the subsoil. Evidence of another brick reinforced rampart is also found in northeastern alignment. Both the reinforced ramparts appear to have started from the watch tower (aṭṭālaka) existing on the northern part of the site.
Brick Remains at Duboroni:

Extensive remains of brick architecture in a state of complete ruins are found at Duboroni in Borpathar. The higher concentration of brick architectural remains of this capital, laid down in rectangular ground plan of an Audaka fort as per canonical texts, is found concentrated on its northern part, possibly for the reason that the capital was connected with the Dhanasiri by a series of canals in its southern part.

The foundation of the outermost defensive rampart on north and west as already discussed are reinforced by bricks and as such formed the prakāra or the śāla of the capital. Evidence of another brick built wall which appears to be in square or rectangular alignment surrounding the central areas of the site is noticed. As discussed a brick structure, possibly a watch tower (supra) now in ruins existed at the north-east corner of this brick wall. The width of this brick structure is found to be 21.5m. A brick mound (Fig. 7 a) 5.60m in length in north-south alignment, exists at a distance of about 140m west of this watch tower, in the northern part of the central region. This mound is 1.10m high, with a diameter of 15m. Details of this mound are yet unknown. A figure of suparna (pl X, c) found at this site (infra) indicates the existence of a temple or a central hall for meeting of villagers, if we follow the Mānasāra śilpaśāstra.

The brick mounds (Fig. 7, b.c) in the western part, are probably the ruins of two brick apartments of a single structure. Following the Arthāśāstra, these apartments might have been used as kitchen or armoury.

A partially exposed brick mound (Fig. 7, d) exists in the same direction as B & C, in the south-western part of the capital revealing a well laid ground plan, either of a square or rectangular brick architecture (Fig. 9 a.b., BPDI & II) Trial excavation has exposed 8.7 m of the western wall with width of 1m; and 3m of the northern wall with a width of 75cm. The continuation of the two walls in both directions, beyond the trenches laid down for the purpose, indicates the largeness of the structure. Layers of bricks are found evenly laid.
Exposure of a large architectural ground plan and debris of blackish and loose brownish earth in layer II and III, indicate that the structure might have been provided with a thatched roof and wooden frame and these, when they collapsed and disintegrated, probably formed the debris of blackish and brownish colour which is different in texture and colour from that of the surface humus. It may be pointed out that such brick built structures were normally furnished with wooden frames for roof, often covered with mats.

Large oblong shaped ground plan of a brick architecture, as exposed partly in this mound d; appears to confirm that it was not that of a temple. Non-discovery of pottery, and any other antiquities during excavation, seems to indicate that this structure was used for some other purpose such as a stable for horses (or elephants). If we go by the Arthashastra, the stable for horses is to be erected normally on the south eastern part of a fort. Since the location of this mound 'd' is found in the south-western part, it seems possible that this structure was a stable. The walls of the structure is considerably wide and the sizes of brick measure 32 x 22 x 5 cm; 31 x 21 x 6 cm, 31 x 21 x 5 cm. The core of some bricks found is blackish in colour with a thin yellowish outer layer.

The evidence of a terracotta ring as pointed earlier (Fig. 7. TR.1) exposed on the fringe of the central rampart, which was possibly constructed as a secret underground structure (gūḍha bhitti-sopāna) meant to observe movement of enemies from it secretly.

It thus appears that the capital complex at Duboroni was built of bricks. Brick buildings were furnished possibly with wooden roof. The groundplan of some of the brick architectures, laid either square or rectangular. Discovery of temple sculptures with brick ruins indicates that both religious and secular structures were built of bricks as per the principle of śilpaśāstras.
Brick Mound at Nagajori Khanikargaon:

At Nagajori Khanikargaon, in Sarupathar a trial trench NKG 11 (Fig. 12) measuring 4m x 4m, exposed humus of 5 cm in 1st layer, overlying a base of 5 cm of greyish earth containing broken bricks have been found with a floor of brick fragments. In a trial trench NKG 1+1 continuation of the brick floor was found, while trench NKG - 4 exposed two portions of brick floor and in the corner a brick alignment of three courses. The bricks found here measure 30 x 20 x 7 cm. Absence of pottery, and irregular brick soling of floor seem to support the view that the mound together with several other earthen mounds surrounding the site, were possibly debris of some defensive structures like watch towers to observe the movement of enemies.

Brick Structural Remains at Kamarbondha:

Ancient brick structural remains are found at Ahom Gaon at Kamarbondha, 7 Km east of Golaghat. Structural alignment of bricks existed at this site, together with a brick built well, the approximate depth of which was about 10m. Brick as large as 35 x 11 x 6.5 cm (pl. X.d) were found to have been used in the construction of the well. It seems that construction of brick well constituted a salient feature in brick architecture in this valley. Remains of brick structure, together with a brick well indicate that Kamarbondha was an ancient habitational site which might have been associated with ancient iron industry, because Kamarbondha, Kacharihat, and Bossapathar were ancient seats of iron smelting till the Ahom period. This is also indicated by the abundance of iron slags lying scattered in this region.

Brick Architecture During Early Mediaeval Period:

Brick architectural activities, which seem to have begun as secular and
SECTIONAL VIEW OF NKG-1

LAYER 1  HUMUS  5 CM
2  LOOSE SOIL  34 CM
3  BROKEN BRICK  51 CM
4  NATURAL SOIL  13 CM

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defensive ones in ancient period gradually transformed into religious architectural activities as well during the early mediaeval period. This shift in brick architecture from secular to religious also marks the beginning of the second phase of brick architecture in the Valley. The movement possibly made a beginning after the completion of the brick built capital at Duboroni and its harbour (*pattana*) at Alichiga-Tengani, and this process of urbanization was gradually extended to the outlying areas of the kingdom. This policy of expansion of urbanisation in distant areas must have been led by village organisation and temple management.

Numerous remains of small brick temples, found with stone sculptures of early mediaeval period in the eastern part in a north-western alignment, within the fortified capital city at Duboroni, indicate that the second phase of religious brick architectural movement in the valley began within the capital complex at Duboroni itself. The brick mounds exist in the eastern part of the fortified area, and are often found with brahmanical sculptures. The present Siva temple at Duboroni appears to have been constructed upon the ruins of an old brick temple. This is indicated by the scattered remains of old bricks which can be seen below the new structure. Thickness of the bricks found at this temple varies between 5 to 6 cm. Sculptures of Visnu Siva and other deities found at Duboroni, indicate full fledged development of brick built temples of different deities.

(A) Expansion of Brick Architecture:

Nagazori Khanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription as mentioned above records the donation of *agrābāra land* *gourivāṭaka* to some brahmana. It seems that brahmanical cult penetrated these regions inhabited by non-aryan ethnic elements, and seem to have absorbed tribal elements into brahmanical fold through the process of sanskritisation. Some Sculptures bear tribal features and are carved in rigid attitude, giving emphasis to a regional
idiom (pi. V,a) These are also probable indicative of a process of religious syncretism that must have taken place between brahmanical and non-brahmanical beliefs, consequent upon a reconciliation between the autochthonous population and the brahmanical elements that intruded into this region and absorbed the earlier non-brahmanical population into their diluted religious belief-system. This process of syncretism must have started a long time ago whose maturation become materially manifest towards the fag-end of the mediaeval period through those images. Be that as it may, these saivite images of non-aryan belief33, syncretistic icons, and other images were installed in these brick-built temples, and urbanization in the Valley began to take place centering on these temples.

Remains at No.2 Sarupathar gaon:

At a distance of about 8 Km from Sarupathar, at No. 2 Sarupathar gaon, evidence of a brick mound exists 34. The brick mound, now worn out, has an elevation of 2 m and covers an area of 37 m. The bricks have thickness of 5 cm. A yonipitha (1.05 x 82 x 30cm), found at the mound, indicates that the structure was a temple dedicated to Siva. A terracotta plaque of a female figure, possibly depicting Parvati, was recovered from the ruins (pi. XI,a) which is datable to c 600 A.D. on stylistical considerations (infra). This shows that ornamentation of brick built temples with terracotta panels also developed in the Valley during this period.

Remains at Deopani:

Deopani is the name of the river which is crossed by the Golaghat-Dimapur Road near 50th Km. signpost, and is well communicated with Duboroni by this river. On the bank of this river exists brick remains found with stone sculptures. Ninety years ago T. Bloch of Archaeological Survey of Bengal Circle visited the site in 1905 and by K.N. Dikshit during 1923-
Bloch pointed out to the possible existence of a small mediaeval temple, on the basis of the existence of the foundation of a brick wall. Inscribed images of Viṣṇu (pl.IV, a,b), Saṅkara-Nārāyaṇa (pl.IV, c,d) and a Harihara (pl. V, a,b) were recovered from this site. At present there is a modern temple with C.I. sheet roof and its principal deity is Durgā (pl.XI,b); and as such the site is called the Deopani Durgā than, although, figures of other gods and goddesses, found at the spot are also enshrined.

Scattered brick fragments of much larger size found here indicate extensive use of bricks as architectural medium at Deopani. The size of brick is large (37.5 x 16 x 6 cm) and some broken pieces have the thickness of 8.5 cm and width of 17 cm. The ground plan of a brick structure is found partly exposed at this site. Deopani appears to be a sculptors' workshop during early mediaeval period, not earlier than c 800 - 900 A.D. (supra), and this dating is epigraphically proved. It seems possible that the artistes' guild earlier working at Duboronī was possibly shifted to Deopani and this site was developed as artistes' workshop, and a brick built temple was possibly constructed at this site.

Remains at Rajapukhuri:

Rajapukhuri, about 20 Km from Sarupathar, seems to have emerged as another urban area, where brahmanical culture flourished. The site, found with brick architectural remains, is close to the Ahom gaon nāmghar. Evidence of brick-built well, brick temple architecture, and tanks are found at this site. The diameter of the round brick built well is 90 cm. A specimen of brick from the well measures 28.5 x 12 x 5cm. A brick mound measuring 42 x 42 m, from where a Siva linga (pl.XI,c) was found, exists about 500 m to the north-west of the Ahomgaon nāmghar. Broken bricks found at this site measure 17 cm with a thickness of 5 cm. Evidence of brick remains are also found covered with a thin layer of soil on the south-west of the nāmghar.
Sculptures representing Harihara in *dhyanasana* (pl.XI,d), *ekamukhalinga* (pl.XII,a) Viṣṇu (pl.XII,b) Laksñmi (pl. XII,C), are found at this site, which indicate that this site had several brick built temples, and the region possibly flourished as a meeting point of people of different faiths.

**Remains at Telisal:**

Brick mounds have been found in a north south alignment at Telisal in Kasomaripathar. On the north, they start from a mound which yielded a figure of Durgā (pl.XII,d) and continues southwards to Telisal Nāmghar. The northernmost mound has already been dug up by local people leaving no records. Bricks are large and are of the sizes of of 36 x 19 x 7 cm, 23 x 16.5 x 6 cm; and broken bricks having width and thickness of 19x5, 16x5, 18.5x5, 15x4.5 are found. A brick mound toward southern direction, yielding brick remains exists at Telisal. Another brick mound containing a *yoni pitā* (pl. XIII,a) has been found with fragments of broken bricks having width and thickness of 16x7, 17x6, 16x5, 15x5 cm. A brick mound seems to be the remains of two brick structures and exists near Telisal Nāmghar. A figure of Geṇeṣa (48x 32 cm) and a *trisāla* (42 x 26 cm) with other sculptural remains have been found in these brick mounds. It is not unlikely that some more brick mounds existed at this site. A seated female *caturvujā* figure(31 x 18) (pl. XIII,b) has been found at Telisal. A Viṣṇu in low relief has been found at Dineshpur *Paśhim* in Telisal.

Remarkably, at Telisal, employment of stone as structural material in brick temple has been found. A brick mound covering an area of 38 x 24 m is found with a fragment of a door lintel (1.69 x 50 x 33 cm) with late Gupta features (pl.XIII,c). Other finds in this mound are mutilated *yoni pitā* (1.37 x 31cm) and a mutilated *caturvujā* deity (1.19 x 1.3 m) with a semi circular stelae, all found in situ. The width and thickness of broken bricks found here measure 17.5cm, x 7cm, 17x5 cm, 16x5cm, 15x5cm, 15.5x7.5 cm, 16x8cm, 14x8 cm, 14x3 cm.
Remains at Jagyapur:

At a distance of about 6 Km. from Telisal, brick structural remains are found to exist, together with a brick mound at Jagyapur in Kasomapathar. A figure of Ganeśa (1.31 cm x 93 cm), a square Yonipitha (1.4 cm x 58 cm) and a Pranāla (4.3 m x 34 cm) found here, indicate the existence of a large brick temple at the site. The ground plan of a brick structure in east west alignment exists. Specimen of brick found from this structural alignment measure 32 x 17 x 5 cm. (pl. XIII, d). Large water tanks and stone sculptures found at Telisal and Jagyapur indicate that these temples were considerably large in dimension.

Remains at Gelabil:

A circular Yonipitha, measuring dia 84 cm x 23 cm in thickness with a protruding pranāla measuring 15 cm has been recovered from the eroded bank of the river Doiyang at Gelabil. This yonipitha has comparatively a squat liṅga (dia 15 cm x height 16 cm). However, of all the Yonipitha so far found in the Valley, this Yonipitha is the largest. Brick measuring 34 x 15.5 x 5.5 cm, 34.5 x 15.5 x 6 cm are found together with the Yonipitha which proves that a brick temple datable to c. A. D. 900-1000 existed at the site.

Remains at Oparlangtha:

At Oparlangtha about 5 Km from Gelabil, a brick mound with a diameter of 20 m and an elevation of 5 m is found. The thickness of bricks ranges from 7 to 8 cm. A terracotta plaque of a lion (pl. XIV, a) was found at this site. A large Siva liṅga recovered from this site has been shifted to Duboromi Siva temple. A large and heavy pranāla of stone measuring 1.55 m in length, 54 cm in breadth, and 15 cm in thickness has been found at this site.
Remains at Borhola:

At Ujani Nangalgaon, Borhola in Jorhat district ruins of a brick structure (19cm X 19 cm) is found at the distance of about 1 km. from the Kakalonga. Bricks measuring 38 cm x 18 cm x 8 cm; 31 cm x 15.5 cm x 6 cm are found here. Some bricks have the thickness of 8 cm. Fragments of terracotta plaques (pl. XIV, bj XIV, c) found here suggest to the existence of a brick temple datable to c. A.D. 800-900, at this site.

Remains at Naojan and Borpatharua gaon:

Evidence of brick structure in an east-west alignment, parallel to a number of water tanks measuring 300 x 150m, 105 x 80m, are noticed at Bongaon in Naojan. Here the bricks have a thickness of 5.6 cm. Bricks are also found at a site in Borpatharua gaon, Golaghat, on the bank of a dead water stream called Dighalihola. The thickness of bricks is 5cm. Evidence of brick structure also found at Fatuwal gaon, near Furkating. Bricks found here measure 19 cm X 13 cm x 5.5cm and belong to the post Gupta period.

Remains at Numaligarh:

In the subsequent period architectural activities in bricks as well as in stone were shifted from the region of Kasomaripathar to Deoparvat and Arlongpira, around Numaligarh on the bank of Dhansiri, where stone architectural remains are found (infra). Evidence of a rampart and a city wall both of brick reinforced exists at Numaligarh Situated at a strategical location on the bank of a deep swamp of the Brahmaputra in the north, which served as a natural defence, the only vulnerable region here was the foothills. In order to make this region invulnerable for the enemies from the west as well as from the north, the Kacharis fortified the region of Numaligarh by constructing brick reinforced rampart, which the Ahoms called Itagarha.**
The brick rampart exist at Numaligarh starts from river Dhansiri and continues along the National Highway N.H. 37. About 200m of the rampart has been demolished during 1960 when the N.H. 37 was diverted across the rampart. Some portions of the wall have been destroyed by a number of commercial establishment. This rampart is found to be 10 to 12m in height and 9 to 10 m in width. Near Dhansiri, exposed brick structure of the rampart (pl. XIV.d) is found to be 1.23 m in height and 1.70 m in width. Bricks used in this rampart measure 23.5 x 16 x 5.5 cm, 22.5 x 15 x 5.2 cm, 23 x 14 x 2.5 cm. Evidence of two other city walls in east-west direction is found near Babathan and Deoparvat ruins. This indicates that during A.D. 1100 if not earlier, Numaligarh was a habitational site of the Kacharis and was fortified by brick reinforced rampart.

Kaliyanigarh is another brick reinforced rampart, extending southwest from Numaligarh rampart up to the hill ranges of Karbi Anglong covering a distance of about 3 Km. Evidence of small tanks along this rampart are found. Bricks found here measure 26 x 20 x 5 cm. This reinforced rampart seems to have been raised as a defence on the western side of the habitational site of Numaligarh.

Brick Architecture of the Medieval Period:

The use of bricks in building secular structures, such as rampart, gateways and enclosure to the habitational site was the major feature of architectural activities in the Valley during this period. Internal dissension and political instability in the Valley, after c. A.D. 1300, was possibly the reason for this shift towards the large scale use of bricks for defensive purposes. However, the brick temple at Negheriting is one of the few instances where bricks were used for religious structures during this period.
SECULAR ARCHITECTURE:

City wall at Dimapur:

The Kacharis erected a city wall of bricks encircling their capital at Dimapur (supra). The eastern wall is flanked by a gateway exclusively built of brick, which made the entire area secluded. The entire length of 864m of the brick wall is overlaid by earth. The southern side bounded by the river Dhansiri had been eroded. The walls on either side of the gateway were higher than the walls on the other sides, which were not more than 2 to 3 metres. It seems that all social congregations, religious festival and other celebrations were held within the city wall.

The Gateway of Dimapur:

As has been pointed out, the eastern brick built wall at Dimapur is pierced by a gateway exclusively made of brick, (pl.XV,a). Major John Butler in 1841 and Major Godwin Austen in 1874 observed the use of bricks of all sizes and of flat form, at Dimapur. The courses of bricks in the structure were very neatly laid and the mortar used was very fine and good. Some of the bricks had been very sharply cut into angles and edges for the cornice work. All the moulded bricks were of very fine clay and well burnt. The solid brick gateway has pierced stone to receive the hinges of doors. The central passage has a pointed arch. The gateway is flanked by octagonal turrets of solid brick, and the intervening distance to the central arch, way is relieved by false windows of ornamental moulded brick work. The curved battlements, the narrow, pointed arch over the entrance and the clumsy octagonal corner turrets represent architectural feature of Mahammadan brick architecture of A.D. 1400 - 1500. The ground plan of the gateway has a width of 16.10m facing east. The thickness of the right and left parts is found to be 8.20m and
2.20 m respectively. It seems that the portion in left part was possibly damaged earlier. The width of the entrance corridor is found to be 3.10 m with a thickness of 4.10 m. The front of the gate is adorned with a number of false windows. Its upper part is adorned with horizontal decorative lines.

Being fascinated by the brick structures esited at Dimapur, the Ahoms called Dimapur che-din-chi-pin ("Town-Earth Burn-make") i.e. Brick-Built city.

Brick built well:

Existence of a brick well is noticed in the campus of Kamal Duarah College, Dergaon. The diameter of the well is 63 cm. and its present depth measures 4 m. Indications are there that the brick well was considerably deeper.

Religious Architecture:

Under the Ahom kings, bricks were used to build both secular as well as religious structures and this gave a tremendous impetus to the brick architectural movement. This is noticed in the region of Sital pathar and Negerhering in Dergaon. The brick architectural movement followed by the Ahoms was a policy of revivalism of indigenous art and culture of the region.

Ruins of a stone Siva temple existed at Sitalpathar where a Siva linta was found. King Pratap Singha (A.D. 1603 - 1614) constructed a brick temple at this site in saka 1561. This temple structure was eroded by the Brahmaputra, but its size has been recorded in an Ahom chronicle. King Rajeswar Singha (A.D. 1751 - 1768) constructed another Siva temple about 3 Km. to the east of the old site, upon a hillock known as Negerhering where it still exists. The Siva doul at Negerhering is a brick temple (pl. X.VI) surrounded by rectangular brick built wall of 135 m in east-west and 86 m in north-south. The present height of the wall is 1.10 m and width 7.8 cm.
Bricks used in the wall measure 26 x 16 x 5 cm, 23 x 15 x 5 cm, 31 x 22 x 5.5 cm.

The Ahom kings are said to have taken special care in preparing bricks and only selected craftsmen and bricklayers were employed in brick construction, which is clearly revealed in the plan and elevation of this *pancāyatana* temple. It is a nāgara temple with a number of *ratha* projections in its four corners and three half circular mouldings in the plinth.

In ground plan, the structure has a principal *garbhagṛha* fronted by a *maṇḍapa*. The *vimāna* has four *angaśekhas*.

The principal shrine having a *Sivalīṅga* is flanked in front by subsidiary shrines of Ganesa and Durga and the shrines in the back by Visnu and Surya, on the left and the right respectively. Each of the subsidiary shrines has been constructed as small independent temples abutting the principal shrine, with its own *garbhagṛha* provided with a *maṇḍapa*. The plinth of each of these *maṇḍapas* is 3 m in length, 2.70 m in width, and their average height is 2.50 m. It seems probable that in the beginning, the subsidiary shrines had passages to the principal sanctum, which might have been afterwards closed down. The entire complex is symmetrical and perfectly balanced and is the only *pancāyatana* temple built during the period in question.

The Negheriting temple exhibits certain notable features of architectural importance, in that the *pancāyatana* aspect of this temple has been carried over to other aspects of the structure as well. For instance, most of the sculptures found in the eastern wall depict *pancaśīkharas* Siva. Besides, the principal shrine, together with the four *angaśekhas*, is found with altogether five *sekhāras* or *pancāśikharas*. Over and above, the Negheriting temple is traditionally associated with tantric cult of *panchamakāra*, which include *maṭṭa, maṭmā, maṭṭhuna, maṭḍrā* and *maḍyā* and certain tantric worship of *Panḍopāsana* seems to have preveiled in this temple. The architect possibly had this conception in mind while undertaking construction of this temple.
Changrung Phukanar Buranji, an Ahom chronicle records employment of such building and bonding materials in the Negheriting Siva temple, as follows:

Stone boulders 50470 number, bricks 1055020 pieces molasses 14 C.pots (1 pot - approx. 10 Kg.), pulses 214 pura (1 pura approx 15 Kg) hemp - 30 dann (1 dang - 1 qntls) mustared oil - 44 pots (1 pot = 10 litres), fish - 45 dann (1 dang - 1 qntls), lime powder = 4520 dhol, lime mortar 3630 pot 1 pot = 10 Kg).

Features of brick temple Architecture:

At the present stage of our knowledge, an analysis of the architectural feature of the brick temples that developed in the Valley is difficult. But on the basis of small squat form of rounded sculptures, short pranāla of vedika (56 x 12 cm, 60 x 15 cm) of garbhagṛha of temples with miniatura Siva linga (30 x 12 cm) till we reach c A.D. 900, it may be surmised that the brick temples enshrining the small squat sculptures were possibly not large. The small brick mounds, indicate the existence of miniature temple shrines which, however, were numerous at each site. It seems that small brick temples for family or individual worship was encouraged. Which is indicated by the existence of a class of kulaguru and mathpati in the Valley (supra).

The discovery of saptamātrakā figures, mahārājālilāsana siva, at one and the same place indicates the existence of some brick temple to accommodate different deities in the same architecture. This was possibly needed for admission of proselytes to the syncretistic brahmanical fold from the rank of other aboriginal tribes, and the fact that deities of different sectarian beliefs were found together at one and the same place seems to point to the development of a regional architectural style to facilitate the accommodation of these deities in a single structure. Brick temple ruins at Rajapukhuri, where temple sculpture of Hari hara, ekamukha linga, Viṣṇu Lakshmi are found, were possibly such architectural sites with a difference.
From about c. A.D. 800 - 900, brick temple architecture seems to have become comparatively larger. By this period the EISMA emerged and stone temple sculptures, siva linga, Yonipitbare found to be larger in size. The brick temple ruins of this phase of development are found at Gelabil, Oparlangtha, Jagyapur Telisal and Borhola.

Subsequently, during A.D. 1100, the architectural movement of the Valley found expression in the region of Numaligarh. Brick architecture at Numaligarh assume secular defensive character being chiefly employed in ramparts and walls. The raising of brick-built city wall and gateway at Dimapur are also parts of this secular movement of brick architecture which continued until it was again revived for religious architecture by the Ahoms by constructing brick temple at Negheriting in Dergaon. Although Negheriting temple is a part of the brick architectural movement under the Ahoms, imitation of native tradition of impermanent wooden frame which exists below the roof of a thatched Assamese structure is found employed in the facade of the mandapa of this temple (Fig. II). Remarkably, the pilasters found here are projected from the masonry wall itself and not by superficially used mortar.

**Terracotta Panel for Ornamentation of Temple Structure:**

That the brick built temples of the Valley were studded with terracotta sculptures is confirmed by the discovery of decorative terracotta plaques of human and animal forms, and remains of other decorative motif e.g. mythical bird, maingala vihagale male figure, lion, monkeys, and lotus petalled mouldings in terracotta. The devakostha of the Negheriting temple is also found with terracotta sculptures.

Bricks belonging to the ancient period are comparatively larger and thicker. Bricks found in the particular region mentioned above are of slightly varying have general similarities in sizes and shapes, manufactured possibly to employ the right brick at intervals to overcome the difficulties in
construction. Bricks found at kamarbondha however, show an oblong shape. Brick in archaeological sites of both ancient and early mediaeval period are normally found in the same overall larger size, except those used in the Numaligarh rampart, which are found to be smaller.

The development of brick architecture and its expansion in the Valley was sustained by the local availability of clay and mortar needed for the purpose. Further the discovery of the pair of bronze coated architect’s plummets similar to the Gupta architect’s plummet (infra) suggests that the architects’ possibly constituted a separate class of artisans or guilds who carried out the scheme as per engineering codes of civil architecture in a similar line of the Gupta brick architecture.
Notes and References:


4. Soil test report from the Regional Research Laboratory Jorhat, may be seen at Appendix II-III


9. T. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*, p. 82


14. T.Bhattacharyya. *op.cit.*, pp. 82-83
Field investigation revealed the existence of brick mound which has been subsequently mutilated by the localsof the area.

The figure of Suparna (pl.x, c.) was first found by the late Keshab Buragohain, photograph was obtained per permission of the Head of the Department of Anthropology Dibrugarh University.

Directorate of Archaeology Assam, had exposed part of this mound (BPD (D)) in 1994.

This mound exists in the pattaland of Sri Punyaeswar Khanikar of Khanikar Gaon, Sarupthar. This mound was partly exposed in 1994 by the Directorate of Archaeology Assam.

This writer, as Registering Officer (1982-91) noticed the exposure of brick structural remains of a well and the plinth of damaged brick structure at Ahomgaon in Kamarbondha. The site has since been converted to a fishery.

A few specimen of bricks collected from this site by this writer have been donated to the District Museum, Jorhat, on 6.8.88.

Existence of a class of mahattara, or village headmen and a class of priest in charge of temple (mathapati) in the Valley during this period is epigraphically proved. M.M. Sharma op.cit., pp. 304-09.
The earliest stone sculpture viz. the Suparna (pl. x) has been recovered from Duboroni. This image, which is a part of a Viṣṇu image, is stylistically assignable to c. 6th century A.D.

These sculptures, recovered from nearby brick mounds of Duboroni area, are at present enshrined at Duboroni Siva temple Borpathar, and are stylistically assignable to late 7th early, 8th century A.D.

This writer, with the help of Sri R.N. Muhuri I.A.S., Sri Debodhar Gogoi, and the late Umesh Ch. Sen, collected these figures of Viṣṇu (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2055, dt. 5.12.84), Vārāhi (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2053, dt. 5.12.84) daksha (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2052, dt. 5.12.84) a câmunḍā (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2056, dt. 5.12.84) a Saivite figure (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2054, dt. 5.12.84) from this region which were reported to have been recovered from such brick temples. These are now in the Assam State Museum Guwahati, bearing (ASM Acc. No. 3566, 3567, 3568, 3569 and 3570).

R.S. Gupta, Iconography of the Hindus Buddhists and Jains, 1980, pp. 36-37

This brick mound exists in the compound of Sri Dhaniram Saikia, No. 2 Sarupathar gaon, Sarupathar.


JARS, Vol. VIII, No. 4, 1941, pp. 130-134

The Deopani inscribed sculptures are epigraphically dated to c. 800-900 A.D. M.M. Sharma. op. cit. 1978, pp. 307-12.

The brick built well exists at the pattalond of Sri Khagen Gogoi at Ahom gaon in Rajapukhuri. A specimen of brick was collected from the site by the present author in 15-12-94, and has now been handed over to the District Museum Jorhat.
This brick mound exists in the residential compound of Sri Raieswar Brahma in Telisal, Kasomaripathar.

This brick mound, found with a *yonipitha*, exists in the compound of Sri Nikar Brahma in Telisal.

These stone sculptures are now preserved by Sri Bharat Chandra Hazuary of Hidimbapur village near Telisal.

This *vishnu* image is found with Sri Lakshan Mushahari of Dineshpur Pachim at Telisal.

This brick structural alignment exists to the south east of the brick mound within the residential compound of Sri Aken Basumtari at Jagyapur in Kasomaripathar.

This *yonipitha* is now found in care of Sri Khudram Bora, Gelabil, Boropathar.

P. C. Saikia, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

These remains have been found in the compound of Sri *Parama Gaur* at Bongaon, Naojan.


A number of commercial shops including that of a petroleum depot have been established after removal of this rampart.


John Butter, *op. cit.*, p. 24

Major Godwin Austen, *op. cit.* pp 1-6

E. A. Gait, *op. cit.*, p. 302

*ARASI*, 1906-07, (1909) p. 19


Although Hiteswar Borborua, in his *Ahomar Din*, P. 119, records the date of construction of this temple as Saka 1561, the Negheriting Siva
temple inscription records the construction of the devargrama temple as Saka era 1626 by king Rudra Singha, Moheswar Neog op.cit., p. 58


59 A temple is called 'doul' in Assamese which is a corrupt form of deul which is a generic name for a temple. Percy Brown, op.cit. p. 102.

60 Francis Hamilton, op.cit. 1963, p. 65.

61 Panchâyatana Puja appears to be a syncretistic belief developed as attempts at reconciliation between rival creeds. In panchâyatana putâ the principal deities of the five approved Brahmanical Hindu cult e.g. Siva, Viṣṇu, Durgâ, Gaṇeśa and Sūrya were the objects of veneration. The principal object of worship in it was usually in the form of an aniconic emblem which symbolised all the five cult deities. J.N. Banerjea, The Development of Hindu Iconography, 1974, pp. 540-541.

62 Ibid., p. 153, p. 230, pp. 541-42

63 Lila Gogoi, Tai Sanskritir Ruprekha, 1985, p. 16
2 STONE ARCHITECTURE

The brick architectural movement possibly obviated the need for stone architecture in the Valley. Architectural remains confined to three places viz Deoparvat and Arlongpira in Numaligarh and Sivatalpathar in Negheriting however indicate a phase of stone architecture that developed in the Valley during A.D. 1000-1200.

REMAINS AT DEOPARVAT:

Deoparvat is located by the side of N.H. No. 39 at a distance of 4 kms from Numaligarh. Stone architectural remains of Deoparvat which were first noticed in 1874 indicate the existence of pancharatha temple belonging to the A.D. 1000-1100.

Possibly the temple had two main compartments, namely, the cella or gabhagrha and an assembly hall or mandapa, with an entrance portico or ardhamandapa. The structure had a well defined arrangement of corrugated amalaka finial at its top, as confirmed by the fragments of amalaka and other stone blocks from the cornice of the temple.

Of the remains the major architectural components is the ceiling slab (3.80 x 4.35 x 0.5M) of the Vimana bearing a carved viswapadma having three layers of concentric petals. The seed vessel of the embossed viswapadma (2.40M) contains a graceful figure of Vidyadhara of great artistic finish. The monolithic cella floor (4.23 x 4.10M) with a mortice to hold the tenon of the image is found earned by levelling a natural rock on the top of the hill.
The *pañcharatha* ground plan and the square ceiling slab dimension seems to indicate that the structure had a stunted *śikhara*. The *pañcharatha* ground plan possibly continued to the curvilinear tower as is to be found in north Indian temple of *rekha-deul* variety of the *Nāgara* temples, giving an emphasis on vertical lines on the contour of the temple. Because the monolithic cella floor found with *ratha* projections gives such indications of a definite arrangement for carrying the *ratha* projections upward to the top of the *śikhara*. Although none of the buildings up to A.D. 1200 has survived in full forms, it is found that stone architectures of Assam were always of the *Nāgara* especially of the *latina* or *rekha-deul* variety. Stone blocks of *rathi*ka panels gracefully carved with the forehead of an elephant indicate that the *pabhaga* of the temple contained a *gajathora*. Mortices for employing iron dowels to hold the blocks together are seen.

Other remains include a pair of ornamented doorjams (2.61M x 80cm x 37cm and 2.5 M x 80cm x 36 cm) (pl. X.V.C.) found with a number of *śākhās*, arranged vertically into decorative sections of drooping lotus petals and entwined creeper scrolls, with human figure at the loop in bottom. Carving of the door frame are remarkably done by employing decorative symbols and motifs, both for beauty and auspicious appeal. It seems that entrance to this temple was given special attention, and elaborate arrangement of decoration was introduced to impart beauty, grace and life to the entrance leading to the deity. This is confirmed by the fact that both the door jambs are found with exquisitely rich and delightful forms of ornamentation done in foliated scrolls (*patralata*) rarely found in the region. One doorjamb is found with *dwarapali*ka with coronets and huge perforated *pattrakundala*.

Evidences of cruciform pillar capital indicate the existence of pillared *mandapa* of massive proportions. Large pillar capitals with their cruciform ends were possibly fitted with *Kālamakaras* with protruding tongue and large eyes (pl. XV, d). These were possibly arranged to decorate the *śikhara as face of glory*. Representation of *Kirttimukha* at Deoparvat assumes more realistic
form* and, with its grotesque feature, may be regarded as a rare example of art in the context of northern Indian temple structure*, which earlier scholars* believed to have been carved under Javanese influence. What deters us from admitting such possibilities is that, as Javanese influence was not found in other aspects of art at Deoparvat, the artform of Kirttimukha cannot be singled out as product of Javanese influence, because development of a regional architectural style and form at Deoparvat was not impossible.

It is found that a high degree of perfection was attained in the decoration of the temple at Deoparvat. Coping piece from torana, pillar base from mandapa, pillar capital with gavāksa* design and other displaced architectural blocks are found elegantly carved. Carved friezes of flying vidyādharaś (pl. XVI, a) display such a perfection that it looks as if the divinities are flying in air and offering oblations to the deity below, in an endless soaring motion. A convincing effect of weightlessness of the figures depicted hovering in the air is achieved in treatment by means of the upward swirling lines of the chest, arms and hands. Bracket figures of flying vidyādharaś are found at Hojai and Pingaleswara ruins at Nagaon and Kamrup districts respectively. But stylistically the Deoparvat ones surpass them in facial expression and beauty†.

The architrave and the portion near the ceiling are provided with decorative brackets having carved figures of vidyādhara Kirttimukha and figures of other celestial bodies used as substantial architrave. Such ornamentation including that of lotus carved ceiling slab of the garbhagṛha of the temple made a definite departure from the plain treatment of Orissan interior towards central Indian. Khajuraho group of temples having interior decoration, although in other respects, this temple has not even remotest similarities with the Khajuraha group.

Other figure composition of animated nature, friezes with independent grace and stone blocks carved with decorative motifs and design, point to the ornamental nature of the structure. The sculptors in this respect appears to have exercised great ingenuity and artistic skill, which in several ways aided plastic embellishments with native texture and regional development. P. C. Sarma rightly
comments that "there are certain bracket figures, from the cornice of the temple, which are not seen in any of the existing Indian temples and must have been unique feature of Assam architecture of A.D. 1100."

Female figures of enchanting grace and loveliness provided with tunas, huge perforated *patra-kundala* (pl.XVI, b) posed in flexuous attitudes, each as a finished statuette in itself, or in group are found, which were probably used for decoration of the walls.

The above discussion makes it clear that stone structure of Deoparvat was an Indo Aryan temple having a curvilinear tower. The temple at Deoparvat was work of thick masonry structure erected by the architects in a top heavy manner. The entire outer surface was decorated with numerous sculptures, reliefs and ornamentations, one above another suggest that the inner pliability of all creations was carried in a linear rhythm from form to form. Embossed *viswapadma*, interior architectural decors suggest the internal decoration of the structure. Sculptures are more thematic than iconographical which were possibly meant for breaking the monotony of religious icons. The sculptors carefully utilized most of the architectural portions for filling them mostly with lotus like flowers, meandering creepers, auspicious tree (*Srivrksha*) amorous couples (*mithunas*) dwarfish figure (*pramathas*), *Ínvati* and other secular and epical scenes to provide harmony to the total scheme of decoration datable to A.D. 1100.

**Remains of Arlongpira:**

Scattered stone blocks carved for a *nagara* type of temple are found at a site to the south of Deoparvat on the bank of river Rangchali. This site is known as Arlongpira. 'Arlong' is a karbi word meaning stone and 'pirá' indicates a sitting tool in Assamese.

The site is located on a slope of a hillock dotted with outcrops of Archean granite in large proportions. Surviving evidence confirms that
segments of numerous stone boulders, hewn out from these natural rocks, were carved into architectural blocks in the site, to make them ready to employ as components of a temple structure. Architectural block, all belonging to the basal part of the plinth of the proposed temple are shaped precisely to employ them in their appropriate position while constructing the structure (pl. XVI, c).

These blocks were laid out in a saptaratha ground plan (26M x 24M) just below the hillock with re-entrant angles in four corners indicate that construction of a nāgarāja type of temple was proposed at the site. The way these blocks were laid out at the foot of the hillock does not leave any space in front for the construction of the other subsidiary structures like mahāmandapa ardha-mandapa etc. As such, it will not be wrong to suppose that initially these blocks were placed there to see if they fitted together. Subsequently, these blocks would have been shifted to a convenient place to construct the proposed temple which, however, was abandoned due to one reason on another. Had it been completed, it would perhaps have been one of the largest temples of the c. A.D. 100-1200.

A remarkable feature of the site is that it includes the working site of the artists and craftsmen. Distinct evidence of removing stone blocks from live rocks and carving of such blocks into required structural form are found here. Rocks around the site still exhibits lines of chiselled holes (pl. XVI, d) with clear indication of hewing, meant for removing stone blocks in required sizes. The rock that exists at the top of the hillock is found to be full of holes in perfect geometric shapes measuring:

- 1.18 M x 84 Cm
- 1.06 M x 68 Cm
- 1.35 M x 96 Cm
- 1.44 M x 71 Cm
- 1.84 M x 74 Cm
Three other carved pieces found at the site are chiselled into cubical blocks which measure as follows:

- 75 CM x 1.16 M x 66 Cm
- 92 CM x 95CM x 37 CM
- 1.07 M x 52 Cm x 61 Cm

The structural remains lying at Arlongpira offer some rare information on temple architecture. The remains indicate that models of temple structure in accurate measurement of its exact ground plan and elevation were prepared to scale prior to their final construction. The Sthapati under whose supervision the construction work was executed must have stayed along with his chief surveyor and chief sculptor and other craftsmen at this site of workshop. The remains project a fact that all the primary work associated with temple construction possibly began at the quarry site. This gave an easy access to procure required materials in required sizes. This is confirmed from the existing evidence of the marked live rocks at the site form where huge blocks of stone were hewn out. Indication are here that at the quarry site, blocks of stone were carved to size and dressed into structural form providing smooth and even surfaces so that they rest smoothly on the other by their own weight so as to maintain structural balance by themselves. Large numbers of blocks were found with grooves and offsets cut into the block in such architectonic forms that they might themselves slotted into one another. Carved blocks found here indicate that these artists were well conversant with and used to such practices of stone carving out of natural rock.

Remains at Sivatal pathar at Negheriting:

Displaced remains of a Siva temple belonging to c. A.D. 1100 existed at Sivatalpathar about 1.6 Km to the west of the present Negheriting temples in Dergaon. A Sivalinga (90x90 cm), together with other stone structural remains, existed in a mound at this site, known as Sivatal pathar or Sital pathar.
The Ahom architects utilized the remains of old stone structure of Sivatal pathar in the construction of the path leading from the bottom of the hillock to the top where the present Negheriting temple exists. During 1926-27 K.N. Dikshit, dug out the path and the better carved stone blocks were rearranged on either side of the steps leading to the temple, and the uncarved stones were relaid in the stone steps of the stairway. Remnants of these ornamental stone pieces suggest a style of execution datable to A.D. 1100.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

3. Pradip Sarma, *op.cit.*, pp. 78-79
7. "Kirttimukhas are found in the front of the threshold of the temple". Stella Kramrisch, *op.cit.* p. 322
10. *ARASI*, 1936-37, p. 58
11. Pradip Sarma, *op.cit.* p. 79
B. SCULPTURAL REMAINS

1  STONE ART

Stone primarily used for carving was shale and granite. Evidences of incised plaques, carved megaliths, temple sculptures and architectural relics, found in the valley, indicate a developed stage of stone carving. A study on this development may be taken up period-wise as follows:

ANCIENT PERIOD:

Stone artefacts belonging to ancient period are few and those are found at Duboroni in Boropathar.

THE DUBORONI FINDS INCLUDE:

I  Plaques incised with geometrical carvings

II  Fragments of quern and pestle

III  Stone pieces bearing inscribed letters

The Duboroni plaques (Fig. 4) incised with geometrical pattern of abstract line drawings in schematic fashion seem to represent some ancient tradition of earlymen. A plaque is found inscribed with a letter either sa (for Sūrya) or a (for Āditya) which may be representative of numerical figure 100. On a corner of this fragment is represented an animal figure of indeterminate nature. Isolated carvings of animal figure found with geometrical carvings may perhaps represent some ancient art traditions.

A plaque (23cm x 16.5 cm) possibly a part of a quern, depicts an incised figure of a fish. Depiction of fish (Pl. XVII,a) either represents a true object of
nature carved as an ornamental motif or indicates some ancient belief in animal symbolism. As fish emphasises the male principle it might also indicate the cult of fertility. Such depictions of fish as symbols of fertility cult are galore in Indian art traditions. It may be recalled that a sculptured form of a pond full of fish, with a crab, and an elephant is depicted in the Bharhut bas-reliefs. On the basis of the inscribed stone pieces in Brāhmī character, datable to c. A.D. 200-300 (Supra), which were found together with the incised stone plaques and querns, the date of this development of stone art could be assigned to c. A.D. 200-300. Incidentally, so far, this development appears to be the earliest historical evidence of stone art so far found in Assam.

**EARLY MEDIAEVAL PERIOD:**

During early mediaeval period stone art movement in the Valley is found to have emerged under the shadow of the classical idealism of Gupta art. Besides retaining the classical basis, this movement began to incorporate regional trend, brought about by intricate fusion of various racial elements. These are found reflected in the physiognomy such as wide open eyes and lack of spiritualism, as is normally to be found in the Gupta sculptures. Another local characteristic is the pot-belly which is almost invariably to be found in all images, even in cases where such pot-bellies are not called for. Sculptures of this period are squat without stelae and frontally carved out of elongated stone boulder which provide a roughly round contour. In the process, although idealism of Gupta art in terms of high relief, plasticity of rounded modelling and artistic excellence of inner spiritualism was attempted, it found expression with mixed results. The sculptures found to have been sparsely decorated. At times, the spirit of native regional trend is over-emphasised, and in such cases the classical idiom gets blurred. In certain cases syncretistic belief strongly reflects the development of sculptural art forms. Often single sculpture are shown to have possessed a composite character. Some sculptures are found engraved with inscriptions either on edges or on
their pedestals. Although human figure is the pivot of this artistic expression side by side with human figures, carving of divinities in symbolic form such as linga and yoni vṛshabhātriśūla mānusaliṅga together with saṅkha and dava have also been found. The depiction of saṅkha and dava as separate sculpture is also a characteristic rarely to be met with elsewhere.

It seems however that, from about c. A.D. 800, the regional art that developed in the Valley gradually disappeared, giving way to the EISMA. From this period sculptures seem to assume flat characteristics and carving of stelae found gradually emerged in sculptural modelling, in place of the stelaless round figures carved earlier. Figures of Viṣṇu gradually disappeared and sculptures of Gaṇeśa gradually emerged. Sculptures in most cases found to represent Saivite pantheon and figures such as Durgā, Gaṇapati, are noticed.

**DESCRIPTION OF SCULPTURES:**

A figure of Garuḍa (65 x 29cm) represented as Suparna i.e. a bird with a human head (pl. X,c) is the earliest stone sculpture so far found in the Valley. The face of the Suparna is mutilated and the ears are provided with round kundalas. Both legs, claws and spreaded wings are engraved in relief. Similarities are to be seen in the facial expression of this Suparna, with that of the central figure provided in the lalāta bimba of the temple doorframe at Dāh parbatiya in Tezpur as also with other such contemporary figures found elsewhere.

**VIṢṆU IMAGES:**

Figures of Viṣṇu are found in samapāda sthānaka and depicted as caturbhujā. The āyudhas normally provided are saṅkha, chakra, gada, and padma. Stylistically, the āyudhas of the lower arms are normally the gada and chakra resting on the adbiṣṭhāna of the figures. Besides āyudhas these figures are found
with ornamentations such as kirita-mukutayajñāpovita, kantiḥabāra, vinamāhi, puspakundala karikana, valaya and Śrī vatsa.

The *Kirita-mukutas* of the figures are round and flat at the top. The upper margin of the *mukutas* are either beaded or rope-designed. Between the upper and lower margin are found on both sides typically arranged peacock feathers are found on both sides. The *Kirita-mukuta* of a Viṣṇu (63 x 26 cm) at Duboroni adorned with *kīrttimukha*. The *kiriṭa-mukuta* of a Viṣṇu (70 x 26 cm) at Duboroni is ornamented with a precious gem below a *kīrttimukha* (Pl.XVII, b) some similarities of the Viṣṇu images of the valley particularly in the depiction of *kiriṭa-mukuta* could be observed with those from Benisagar region of Bihar⁸. But the *kiriṭa-mukuta* of Viṣṇu from the Valley are more superb and highly finished.

These figures depict a soft and kindly disposition, in bare body, without much decoration. The lower garment provided in the shape of *dhoti* bears a slight flaring end. The figures have round face, small eyes open in most cases, prominent lips, acquiline nose, broad chest and shoulders, and eyebrows. The tuft of hair is shown as resting on shoulders, and the hair band visible at the back of the head is decorated with floral ends.

Although the fleshy contour invariably suggests a contented sensuousness, in facial expression, the figures of Viṣṇu display a sort of calm contemplation. Thus, a sensuous youthful physiognomy combined with calmness of inner spiritualism, constitute the basic ideology of these sculptures of Viṣṇu.

Five of these Viṣṇu images⁹ of this genre exist at the Duboroni Siva temple Borpathar, measuring 25 x 12 cm, 42 x 19 cm, 63 x 26 cm, 41 x 18 cm and 70 x 26 cm, the first three are found to be Madhusudana Padmanabha, and Viṣṇu and the last two appear to be the Purushottamaforms¹⁰ respectively of Viṣṇu. Another Padmanābha form is found at the Kathkotia village¹¹ of Santipur in Karbi Anglong. A Purushottama¹² form (47 x 20 cm) was recovered
from Oparlangtha (Pl.XVII,c) and another Viṣṇu form is to be found at the Ahomgaon nāmghar at Rajapukhuri (pl.XVII,d). A Padmanābha form (46 x 15cm) from Borpathar is found carved in a precise contour (pl.XVIII,a). The Viṣṇu figures enshrined at Deopani Durgāthān are lavishly painted which have made iconographical studies on them difficult. The inscribed Deopani Viṣṇu image (pl.IV,a) is found to be the largest figure so far found. Stylistically, all these figures of Viṣṇu are identical.

However, two Viṣṇu figures from Rajapukhuri Ahomgaon nāmghar, and another from Telisal in Kasomāripaṭhar, are found to differ from the Viṣṇu figures discussed above, on account of their treatment. The Rajapukhuri Viṣṇu (44 x 12 cm) is found to be elongated with a slim waist and a slender contour of linear disposition (pl.XVII,d). The figure (30 x 18 cm) from Telisal is found to be the only Viṣṇu (pl.XVIII,b) which hold the chakra and the gada in the upper right and left arms respectively. Unlike the other figures, this Viṣṇu is flat in treatment with a circular stelae without the rear part carved. Besides lack of depth, a deadpan face, disproportionate shorter legs are the other notable features, of this Viṣṇu.

It is clear that the figures of Viṣṇu so far found are basically akin, (except the Viṣṇu from Telisal), as far as their physiology, physiognomy and decorative elements are concerned. On the basis of these similarities these figures of Viṣṇu could be conveniently assigned to the Regional School of Art that flourished in the Valley during the early mediaeval period.

**Dasavatara figures of Viṣṇu:**

Two avatara figures of Viṣṇu viz.: a Narasiṃha (61 x 31cm) and a Vāmana (60 x 31 cm) are found at Deopani Durgāthān, Sarupathar. Viṣṇupurana describes Narasiṃha as caturbhujā. The carving of this Narasiṃha (pl.XVIII,c) in human form with a lion-face, and with two arms seems to be local characteristics. The samapāda sthānakās figure has a well
moulded fleshy physic, broad shoulder and pot belly. Its vanamāla across the arms reaches the knee, and the lower garment reaches the ankle. The yajnopoviṣṭa reaches the belly.

Stylistically, the samapāda sthānaka figure of Vāmana (pl. XIX,a) is carved similar to that of the Narasimha. The left and right arm of the figure held a kamanḍalu and an akṣhamāla. The hair tuft is tied upward.

Sāivite Figures:

A high relief of mahārājāgilāsana Siva (50 x 24 cm), holding a damaru (?) in the left hand and a lotus in the right hand depicted in varadamudrā, the latter resting on the right knee, is found at Borpathar\(^\text{10}\) (pl. XIX, b). The figure is adorned by braided jata-mukūṭa, flanked by a blooming lotus on each side. The tuft of the mated hairlock flows down to shoulder. The elongated ears are seen with kunḍalas.

In facial expression Siva is calm and pleasant. Its ovoid face reflects deep meditative insight marked by graceful bliss and is datable to c. A.D. 800.

Another saivite figure (50 x 80 cm), in lalitāsana, found at Borpathar, holds a mudgara in left hand, with the right hand in varadamudrā (pl.XIX, c)\(^\text{11}\). It has a broad shoulder, strong, stout and fleshy body with large abdomen. The eyes and nose are large. The broad lips are wide open and so is the forehead. Two folds of braided jata flow down at both the sides upto the shoulder. Sutraka is seen below the navel region. The sturdily built mundane figure iconographically appears to be one of the ekādasa Rudrasas enumerated in Viśvakarmā Śilpa\(^\text{12}\).

Three images of either Harinaigamesi or Naigamesa or the goat-headed Daksha praśāpati\(^\text{13}\), as the case may be, are found. Of these, two figures, one seated in mahārājāgilāsana and the other in utkatikāsana were recovered from Borpathar (Pl.XIX, d) and the third in mahārājāgilāsana from Rongajan T.
Estate Tinisukia. All the figures have two hands, are carved frontally in high relief, providing a stout body and swollen belly, with sutraka below the navel region. The long horns and the prominent ears of the goat headed figures are similar. The figure found at Borpathar (58 x 18.6 cm) holds a parasuin in the right hand, while the left hand is shown in varadamudrā. The figure found at Tinisukia represents a fleshy soft texture of tender modelling, with broad shoulder. The āyudha in the right hand is indistinct, and the left hand is in varadamudrā. The Harinaigamesa figure from Duboroni (27 x 19 cm) is broken and its lower part is missing. It helds a khaḍga in the right hand and the object held in the left hand is broken. The figure is provided with an ornamental udarabandha.

A sculptural stelae of Umā-Maheśvara (45 x 44 cm) at Deopani, (pl. XX,a) depicts Maheśvara clasp Uma by left hand and holding a triśūla by the right hand. The Devi is seated on the left thigh of Maheśvara. An oval shaped probhāwali is seen behind the head of Siva. The sarpa is shown on the right prominently. The image may be dated to c. 9th century A.D.

Another Umā-Maheśvara (30 cm x 13 cm) figure (pl. XX,b) is found at Borholla Tea Estate in Jorhat district. This is a low relief work carved in samapāda sthānaka postures and the figures stand upon their respective mounts vyāghra and nandī the lower drapery of Umā is semi-disphanous. The figure of Maheśvara is depicted as ithiphallic and as caturbhujā. He is adorned by a beautifully arranged jatamukuta. Elongated ears are seen with Kuṇḍalas. The āyudhas excepting the triśūla in the left upper hand and the aksamālā in the right lower hands are indistinct. The figures are of simple disposition. Themeditative eyes of Siva point to the tip of his nose. Stylistically, this variety of Uma maheśvara holding palms sculpture, in samapāda sthānaka posture is a rare representation, and belong to c. 8th century A.D.

Stelae-carved Gaṇeśa figures in low relief are found at Deopani and Kasomari pathar. All the figures are caturbhujā, pot belliced, without tooth and their trunks turned left. The figures are seated in mahārāja lilāsana. Of these.
two figures of Ganesa have their trunk placed on the left lower hands.

Of the two Ganesa (33 x 23 cm) found at Deopani Durgathan, one (pl.XX,c) seems to have been carved as taruna Gaṇapati¹ as revealed by its tender trunk and ears. It holds in its right upper hand an aṅkuśa and in the left upper hand a paraśu (axe). The objects held in the lower two hands are indistinct. An attempt at carving the aura (prabhāvali) is seen behind the head. The other Ganesa depicts definite increase in its height, together with its stelae found with a squarish prabhāvali. A sarpa is seen on its left upper part. It holds a paraśu in the left upper hand and the object (aksamālā?) in right lower hand is indistinct. In the left lower hand rests the tip of its trunk.

The Gaṇesā (48 x 32cm) from Telisal² is, however, of simple disposition. The āyudhas held clockwise from its lower right hand are aksamālā in varadamudrā, triśūla, paraśu, while the left lower hand supports the tip of its trunk. The stelae of the sculpture is semi-circular at its top and stylistically the figure may be assigned to A.D. 800.

A figure of Gaṇesā (1.31m x 93cm) with a bow-type ornamental stelae exists at Jagyapur (pl.x,b,) in Kasomaripathar. The figure, seated in mahārajaḷilāsana, on lotus pedestal, is flanked by two female attendants below, and flying gandharvas at the top. Below the pedestal mount mice is seen at bottom. The deity is pot-bellied, over which the yajnopovita is seen. Behind the head of the figure an ornamental squarish prabhāvali is seen. The āyudhas provided clockwise from lower right hand are an object in varadamudrā, an aṅkuśa, triśūla, while its lower left lower hand is broken. On stylistical consideration, it may be assigned to the late 9th century A.D. There exists another figure of Gaṇesā in the south west part of Dimapur town³ which is akin in style to the one mentioned above.

A mutilated four-armed caturbhujā saivite figure (1.19m x 1.37m) in samapāda sthānaka posture, with a triśūla in the left upper hand exists amidst ruins of a brick structure at Telisal in Kasomaripathar (pl. XX,d). The left lower part of the figure is found with a relief of Gaṇesā. Impression of a squarish
*prabhāvali* on its large apsidal stelae is seen. This unidentified sculpture seems to be contemporaneous with the Gaṇeśa of Jagyapur.

**Devi Images:**

A figure of Lakṣmi⁴¹ (27 x 12 cm) on a lotus pedestal in *samaṇḍa sthānakā* posture is noticed at Ahomgaon *nāṁghar* at Rajapukhuri in Sarupathar. The *caturbhujā* figure (pl.XXII|c), carved in high relief and in round contour, is provided with *āyudha* of *cakra*, *maṅgala kalasa*, *saṅkha* and *gadd* clockwise from the right lower hand respectively. The ovoid face of the figure expresses inner spiritual bliss. The figure is adorned by a *mukūṭa* and attended by an owl below. The tuft of hair behind the mukūṭa rests on shoulder. Usual ornaments such as *muktāvali* around neck, *kuṇḍalas* on ears, *kankaṇa* on wrist, *uttariya* across her body and semi diaphanous drapery as lower garments are seen.

A *caturbhujā* female figure (30cm x 13cm) standing on a buffalo in *samaṇḍa sthānakā* pasture is found at Bisrampur⁴² in Kasomari pathar (pl.V|a). The figure, with her half open eyes, reflects deep meditative insight, although the squarish treatment as reflected in her face, and the *mukūṭa* with prong like identical features, recall its earlymedieval artistic trend. elongated ears with *kuṇḍalas*, beaded *muktāvali* around the neck, *yajnopavita* from the shoulder down the waist and lower garment down the ankle are provided. A beaded designed aksamālā leisurely rests on both of her lower hands.

The *āyudhas* provided clockwise from the right lower hands are *padma* in *varadamudrā*, *cakra* elongated *triśāla* which may be shown in flame⁴³ and a *saṅkha* in *varadamudrā*. Ornaments such as *āṅgada* and *kankaṇa* are seen. The deity is supported by two attendents seated in *padmāsana*. Of them, the left attendant holds a chowry and a *sula* by left and right hand. The right attendant in right holds up a *sula* with his left folded hand rests on stomach. Iconographically the figure seems to represent Yama⁴⁴ worshipped also as Viṣṇu⁴⁵ and the figure might have been shown in female aspect. But on the
basis of the name krṣṇā-Durgā inscribed in the two line inscription (supra) engraved on its edge, this figure may be identified as krṣṇā-(Durgā) possibly worshipped in association with Siva in Saivism and Viṣṇu in Vaishnavism* and paleographically, assigned to c. A.D. 800**.

The figure of Parvati (34 x 23cm) from Tinisukia* represents a well developed fleshy contour seated in utkatikāsana (pl. XXI,a). Her mated hairlock is stylistically plaited over head. The figure is provided a round face with pointed chin. Ḫunḍalas in ears, large eyes and a yajnopavita, are provided. Remarkably, her left arm bears the enface of a tiger. The right and left hand respectively held an akṣamālā and a ghaṭa which are the āyuḍha of ṭīmā*.

A caturbhujā figure of Manasa* (23 x 10 cm) standing on lotus pedestal in samapāda sthānaka posture (pl. XXI,b) is found at Jonakimandal gaon in Titabor. Ears of the figure are elongated and her snake hood numbers seven. The figure is carved in all iconographical details and a stelae is retained in its background.

Stelae carved figure of Durgā in samapāda sthānaka posture are found in Deopani and Kasomaripathar. Sculptures of Durga in Deopani Durgathan are too coloured for a satisfactory study. However high relief of rounded modelling, high squarish aura raise from the shoulder upto the upper margin of the stelae, and appearance of independent accompanied figure on either side of the main figure, ascribe a period of A.D. 900 to these sculptures (pl. XXI,c).

The Deopani Durgā (1.81m x 1.08m) is a tall and stout figure, carved in high relief (pl.XI, b). Both lower hands of the figure are in Varadāmudrā. The right upper hand held a trisula and left upperhand holds adarpana. The deity is flanked by two worshipping female figures in folded hands. A figure of Gaṇeṣa in right and Kārtikeya riding on peacock in left of the deity are seen.
High relief of a stelae carved *caturbhujā* Durgā (1.25m x 1.05m) in *samapāda sthānaka* posture (pl.XXe, ) is found at Telisal in Kasomaripathar. The figure has a tall physiognomy with fully developed breasts and wears a long drapery up to the ankle. A serpentine carve possibly depicting a *pāśa* is seen behind its mutilated face. The right upper hand held a *trisūla* and the left upper hand held a *darpana* and lower hands are mutilated.

The figure is attended by flying *gandharvas* at the top, a figure of Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya in the middle, and two female attendants at bottom. On stylistic consideration, the figure may be dated to c. 800 - 900 A.D.

Such a stelae carved mutilated female figure (95 cm x 42 cm) was found in Rangdhali village in Kasomaripathar which seems to be contemporaneous of the Durga, as discussed above.

**Saptamātriṇā Figures:**

A *caturbhujā* Devi image (31 cm x 18 cm) seated on an lotus pedestal in *padmāsana* has been noticed in Telisal (pl.XIIIb) Both the lower hands of the figure seem to be in *varadamudrā*. The *āyudhas* provided are indistinct. The right and left upper hands respectively hold a *cakra* and a *trisūla*. The motif or vehicle provided on pedestal is indistinct. Her squarish *prabhavali* is flanked by a serpent hood on right. The elongated ears have *Kundalas* and a *mukuta* adorns her head.

The figure has a round slender waist with well developed breasts. The figure is carved frontally in high relief. The deity is in deep meditation and seems to represent, Vaishnavi, one of the seven mother goddess or *Saptamātriṇās*, and datable to late A.D. 800. A figure of *Vāraṇī*, (68 cm x 22.5 cm), seated in *uṭkatikāsana*, with both hands resting upon the knees (pl. XII,a) is found at Borpathar. The frontally carved figure has a round modelling, and its plaited hairlock is parted and
rests upon her shoulders. Her boar-shaped face is found to be triangular in treatment. The ornaments such as *nūpura* and *kankanakūṇḍalas* and the breasts provided are prominent. She holds a *kapāla* in the left hand and a *matsya* in the right hand. Holding of *matsya* in one hand may indicate some tantric association of this figure, since fish or *matsya* is one of the five “mas” of the *panca-makara*.

Also a squat figure of Cāmunda (55cm x 18.5cm) seated in *mabhārajālilāsana* is found carved in high relief (pl. XXII, b) at Boropathar*². She is fearful, with her protruding teeth, emaciated body, sunken eyes, pendulous breasts and withered belly. Her head is shown as a bare skull. The ears are provided with *sahkha-kūṇḍalas*. Bold ornaments are provided on ankles. She holds by her left hand a *kapāla* (human skull) and a *sūla* by her left*.  

**Syncretistic Figures:**

A *samaṇḍa sthānaka* figure of Ardhanāriśvara (52 x 23cm) is found at Duboron*² (pl.XXII,c). The figure is carved round and the *jāta* of the figure is tied overhead. Although the figure is withered, an ornament in the left ear, *kūṇḍala* in the right ear and *nūpura* in the left leg are seen. Both hands of the figure are shown in *varadamudrā*. The figure is flanked by *vṛāghra* (Pārvati) on left and *nāṇḍi* (Siva) on left at bottom.

A *caturbhujā* figure of Harihara (H. 30x dia 10cm) in *samaṇḍa-sthānaka* posture (pl. V,c) is recovered by this author from Bisnupur in Kasomaripathar (supra). The figure depicts a round contour and its pedestal is inscribed. The figure is ithyphallic and found with ornamental and iconographical details, executed minutely. Its round face appear to be meditative.

The inscription Harihara figure (35 x 20cm) standing on a lotus pedestal in *samaṇḍa sthānaka* posture from Deopani (supra, now at Assam State museum, Guwahati, (ASM, 41) is a specimen pronounced with stiff and squarish features (pl.V, a). The syncretistic character of this sculpture is noticed only in its *āyudhas. An amṛtghata* with an *aksamāla* in right lower hand, a
trisūla in right upper hand, and a saṅkb and cakra in left lower and upper hand respectively are to be seen. The figure is flanked by garuḍa (viṣṇu) on left and naṇḍi (Śiva) on left at bottom. The usual ornaments, such as, kundala, bāra, keyūra, valaya, are provided. The vanamālā reaches the ankles and the yajñopovita reaches to the thigh. This sculpture is provided a flat squarish treatment which is prominent in face, ears, hands and in the mukuṭa. The mukuṭa is found with feather like folk motif. Its lips are flat and wide. Long nose, eyes are flat owing to the rigid and stiffened lines with sharp edges, which provide the figure with a mundane outlook.

Earlier scholars considered the static and rigid execution of this Deopani Harihara as prototype of wood carving61. But the discovery of an wooden Viṣṇu figure (pl. XXIII, a) which bear similar stylistical feature, as those of stone sculpture of Viṣṇu confirm that the Deopani Harihara, was not imbibed with features of wood carving. What seems is that, this sculpture incorporates native tribal texture and folk elements. The development of this trend in sculptural art could be attributed paleographically to A.D. 800, as confirmed by the epigraph inscribed upon this Harihara figure (supra).

The sculpture is provided with a bejewelled fillet set around its head held against matted hair arranged in the form of a crown. The figure has a third eye, a well developed body with round face, broad shoulder and chest, long pointed nose, flat lips and elongated ears. The usual ornaments such as bāra around the neck, keyuras and valayas in arms, yajñopovita across the body and diaper designed vanamālā flowing across the lower hands upto the ankle are provided. Aksamālā and trisūla respectively in right lower and upper hands and saṅkbha and cakra respectively on left lower and upper hand are provided. The figure is flanked by garuḍa (left) and naṇḍi (right).

The Śaṅkara Nārāyaṇa (65 x31cm) image from Deopani now at Assam State Museum Guwahati (ASM 2410) a high relief work retaining a circular stelae of equal height of the deity (pl. IV, c) . This is a Harihara figure, but called Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa for the occurance of this name in the inscription73
engraved on its left edge. The figure is stiff and its treatment is rigid in attitude. A round contour of the figure retaining its stelae on the background was attempted. Such increasing sign of decadence seems to have continued in the Valley for sometime before it finally merged with the strong tradition of the EISMA. This Harihara figure seems to represent the fusion of the Duboromi School of Regional Art with the EISMA.

Another caturbhuja Harihara figure (28 x 14cm) in samapāda sthānaka posture is found at Namti in Sivasagar district, which prove that the region of Sivasagar was within the cultural purview of the Valley. In treatment, this figure (pl. XXIII, b) is flat and display squarish tendency. Folkish elements of native ethnic texture has found expression in this figure. Its left lower and upper hands held a saṅkha and a cakra and the right lower and upperhand hold a japamala and a damaru fitted trisula shown with a serpent respectively. The head of the figure is adorned by a jatamukuta. Besides wearing kanthabāra and vanamāla, the deity is seen with patrakundala in ears, and valaya in arms.

That certain regional characteristics developed in the, syncretistic art form in the Valley could be deduced from the syncretistic caturbhuja (36cm x 23cm). Harihara icon seated in padmāsana in dhyanamudra (pl. XI, d) found at Ahomgaon nāmghar at Rajapukhuri in Sarupathar. Two of its lower hands are clasped together in dhyanamudrā and the right upper and the left upper hands respectively hold a Śrīphala and a padma. The figure is provided with an exquisite jatamukuta adorned by floral bands in vertical and horizontal lines. Matted hairlocks from the mukuta reaches down the shoulder and arms. Both the elongated ears have been provided with kundalas. The Śrīvatsa is seen on chest. The Yajnopovita across the body is reaches the stomach. A prominent sutraka is seen on waist.

The figure has broad shoulders and a fine polished well shaped body. Its ovoid shaped face expresses deep meditative insight. The half closed eyes of the sculpture point towards the tip of nose. The serenity and pleasant mood expressed in the posture of a Yogi is found superbly revealed in precise lines.
of high relief. This Harihara is a unique composition and possibly the best product in the valley and datable to c. 8th century A.D. on stylistical considerations. Monoranjan Dutta\(^6\) discuss this sculpture as Yogasana Viṣṇu which seems to be unfounded.

It seems that iconographers strongly emphasised the religious reconciliation among the principal Hindu cults, such as Vaishnavism Saivism and Tantricism. As a result certain regional characteristics in the art developed. In this development, as found in certain cases, single sculptures were often depicted to have composite characters. Some times the composite characters of individual image is found additionally emphasised epigraphically, e.g. the inscribed Deopani Viṣṇu image\(^8\).

Two Viṣṇu images one at Borpathar\(^6\) (pl.XXIII,c ) and the other at Sivatal pathar\(^7\) in Dergaon (pl.XXIII, d) are found with aksamālā provided in their right upper arms. The other āyudhas of both the figures are the sankha, the gadā, and the cakra respectively, seen in their upper left, lower left, and lower right arms respectively. As the japmālā is an āyudha of Siva\(^9\), it seems possible that these individual Visnu images are shown as composite Harihara icons, datable to c. A.D. 900, on stylistical considerations.

Miscellaneous Divinities:

Figure of a Sūrya\(^9\) depicted in a fast moving chariot drawn by seven horses (pl.XXIV,a) is found at Alichiga-Tengani in Borpathar. Stylistically the sculpture (1.09 cm x 53cm) is divided horizontally into two panels. Its lower panel depicts seven horses set in motion. The front legs of the horses have been shown raised suggesting movement. The charioteer Arūna projected below the main figure of Surya is found holding the reins of the horses. Surya is depicted in varadamudrā and provided with a mukūṭa, which is round and elongated. Ornamentation of squarish decorative emblems have been found on the mukūṭa. Kuṇḍalas have been provided on ears.
The central figure has been flanked by Usā (right) and Pratyusā (left) projected from their knee level. This sculpture has a mutilated stela. Stylistically, this sculpture seems to be a product of late A.D. 800.

A figure of a devotee or Bhakta (60cm x 31cm) in aṇjali mudrā with folded hands drawn close to chest is found at Duboroni Siva temple. (pl.XXIVb). The figure has a rounded modelling, carved in precise outline. Bhaktas are represented in anthropomorphic form. The head of the figure is without hair.

A number of consecrated symbols of divinities seem to have been carved and possibly worshipped either as āyudhas of gods or as independent divinities. Of these, a saṅkha (54 x 41cm) carved out of a single block of stone (pl. XXIV) is found at the Duboroni Siva temple. A broken part of a saṅkha (65 x 45cm) is seen with the Śuryaimage at Alichiga-Tengani.

Three numbers of dava (H. 35 cm x dia, 59cm, H. 27 x dia 28cm, and H. 15 cm x dia 18cm), which are stylistically similar to the type of drum or dava played in the saṅkha institutions and nāmghar in Assam, are found at Duboroni Siva temple. Two figures of āśāvatthā (96 x 44 cm and 90 x 42) are found at Duboroni Siva temple at Borpathar. A triśūla partly broken (42 x 26cm) is found at Telisal. The bottom of the triśūla is carved with a lotus. Triśūla is primarily an āyudha of Siva. It seems that Siva was worshipped in symbolic form of triśūla.

Sivalīṅgas of both sthāvara and asthāvaracatagories are found. Of the two sthāvara linga (1m x 50cm and 62 x 26cm), now found at Duboroni Siva temple, one was said to have been shifted from Oprarlangtha. Notably a mānusaliṅga (44 x 16) (pl. XXIV.d) is found at Duboroni. Its lower square section is known as brahmabhāga, the middle octagonal section as vijayabhāga and the topmost circular portion as rudrabhāga. The rounded top of the rudrabhāga, from the shaft technically known as śirōvarttana is fashioned like a human phallus. An ekamukhaliṅga (32 cm x 19cm, above ground) is found at
Rajapukhuri Ahomgaon Namghar in Sarupathar. One face of the linga is provided with a human head with a jatamukuta, horizontal bands of which are visible (pl. XII, a). The figure has a pointed chin. Its half closed meditative eyes point to the tip of the nose. The figure has a facial expression of deep meditation. A squat caturmukhaliṅga (10 x 5 cm) is found at Deopani Durgathan.

A few miniature Siva liṅga (H 30 x 15 cm dia) and two temple pranāla’ (57 x 12 cm ; 30 X 12cm) in fine polish possibly for small temples are found at Duboroni Siva temple (pl.XXV, a) A Siva liṅga (h. 15 x dia 36cm) with its round yonipitha (84 x 23cm) with a protruded pranāla of 16cm length exists at Gelabilta in Borpathar. Yonipithas together with brick remains are found at No. 2 Sarupathar gaon, Telisal, Jagyapur and oparlangtha. Subsequently stone art activity appears to have moved to the region of Deoparvat.

**STONE ART AT DEOPARVAT:**

Sculptured panels of divine, semi divine and animal figures, panels of epic episodes, decorative art motifs, auspicious symbols and other reliefs are found to have been used as constituent parts of the architecture at Deoparvat. The flat treatment of eyes, nose, lips and tapering faces of the figures at Deoparvat display native ethnic texture (p.xvi). The sculptures found with heaviness in modelling, and contour of attenuated waist, broad hips, round breasts emphasising the femininity of the elegantly carved female figures suggest a remote influence of the EISMA. However, sensuous suggestiveness of mediaeval art seems to have been replaced by a non-erotic charm to these sculptures, which seems to be the characteristic of the stone art developed at Deoparvat.

Profuse ornamentation in beaded design, stylised garlands, bangles, and the lower drapery of the sculptures seem to represent native art drawn from tradition. Depiction of large round Kundaḷas in ears and high tiaras are found invariably with male and female figures. Female figures, in certain cases, are
found with panel of mango at their top, and their folded left hand drawn close
to chest held motif either of elephant, bird, plant or bowl, (pl. XVI,b) Depiction
of panel of mangoes may also connect the sculpture with “the myth of the
inner connection between the life of tree and women”. Some figures, are
found with panel of lotus stalk at their top.

The sculptured panels appear to be more thematic or narrative than
iconographical, developed possibly as native popular art. Panels depicting
episodes from the Rāmāyana (1.44m x 41cm x 52cm) (pl.XXV, b), the
Mahābhārata (1.50m x 48cm x 55cm) the Bhagavata Purana (87cm x 43cm x
73cm) (pl.XXV,c) and those e.g., three women grinding corn (1.10m x 76 cm
x 46cm) (pl.XXV, d) and others e.g. playing of musical instruments and
dancing (99cm x 42cm x 6cm) appear to be some of the representation
of this development.

Animals represented are of two types viz. the natural and the fabulous.
The latter, however, is only one type and is a great lion. The former includes
elephant, bull, lion, deer, monkey, rhinoceros, snake, horse, all well represented
in profile. A few stone carvings of fore part of elephant from the Pāṭhāgā of
the temple found at Deoparvat. Plasticity, dynamic coherence and accentless
distribution are some of the features of creativity developed at Deoparvat.

Among others sculptures. Siva (50 x 34 cm) holding a trisūla in left
hand, and a japamālā in the right hand which is drawn close to chest, and a
bow legged vārabāhaka (58 x 28 cm) are found from the pāṭhāga of the temple.

Two Kirttimukhas in realistic form (pl. XV,d) used as coping parts
on three sides of two pillar capitals found. Three faces of this Kirttimukha
were carved so as to face three directions seem to symbolize trimukha
conception) of god. These Kirttimukhas are inter spaced by figure of a nāga
in namaskāra posture. Depictions of the lower portion of the naga in form of
a fish seem to represent cult of fertility. Although T.N. Ramachandran as
discussed, finds similarities of these lionic features Kirttimukha with potruding
tongue and sockated eyes with Javanese Kālamukara, these art representations appear to be innovative product of local spirit and conventional in Indian art.

Another type of kirttimukhas, numbering four possibly representing water as feminine and maternal, is found at Deoparvat. These kirttimukhas depict lotus stalks issuing out from the mouth of elephant shown in symbolic form. From the lotus petal emerge fomy elements upholding creatures such, as elephant or bull or lion and these are depicted in two separate branches in schematical arrangements (pl. XXVI,a). On these animals caturbhujā nāgas holding objects like trisūla, bird, or tree plant, damaru and snake, bows drawing close to their chests are seen. Stylistically, these kirttimukhas resemble to the shape of an womb or genital. Here the creatures seems to have depicted in acquatic character of water elephant, water bull and water-lion shown as born from lotus, generated by the elephant, evidence of which are galore in ancient Indian art. Stylistically, these kirttimukhas appear to be native creations born of a local spirit. A female figure (58 X 34cm) bedecked in ornaments and costumes holding motif of an elephant by left hand close to chest in a charming posture has been noticed (pl. XVI, b). Fluidity of its contour with non-erotic plasticity and arrangement of horizontal panel of managoes atop are native in treatment and might be central Indian in theme. This female figure seems to represent lāvati holding her son Airavata (elephant) symbolizing the life giving force of nature or the fostering divinities, as Airavata is believed to be related in many ways to his mother.

Plasticity of water-elephant lotus relationship seems to have influenced other expressions of art at Deoparvat. Manifestations of lotus at Deoparvat have become suggestive of true ascent of life and its rhythmic movement (pl. XXVI,b). The seed vessel of the Visvapadama of massive artistic finish in three courses of lotus of its ceiling slab therefore found with relief of Vidyādhara.
It may be inferred that, stone art at Deoparvat, basically developed as a regional art style, which was innovative in character. It manifests a remote influence of the ancient Indian art traditions. The artists at Deoparvat represent the inner pliability of elephant lotus human relationship ingeniously in form of abstract art, which is an achievement of the regional stone art flourished at Deoparvat during A.D. 1100.

**Mediaeval Period:**

During the mediaeval period, stone art became sporadic in nature and can be divided into megalithic art and stone sculptures.

**Megalithic Art:**

Numerous ornamentations set the megaliths of the Valley distinctly apart from their primitive types. Megaliths found in the form of chessman column, V - shaped column, Buffalo-horn column and Ficus - Tree column are basically new types of structures; and appear to be memorial column rather than those of sepulchral in nature. These megaliths by and large represent customs and social beliefs of the native tribes of the bordering regions of the Valley.

The chessman column with large rounded tops and concentric foliated carving below the shaft, found in one general form, look like human form. Amidst all ornamental motifs, the only object found are sword or dagger and animal motifs are conspicuous by their absence in the chessman columns.

Hemispherical canopies of chessman column constitute a major ornamental section. Except two bare canopies, the ornamentations employed in others are varied. Ornamentations, mostly floral and geometrical are done in low relief, and space for ornamentation are acquired by verticle and horizontal bands. A canopy is found with a horizontal panels of plantain tree and with floral ornamentation. Its cardinal part is adorned by lotus petal
arrangements. A canopy is found with a number of rectangular sections acquired by a number of vertical and horizontal decorative bands. Some canopies are ribbed with vertical decorative bands both at the top and at bottom.

Below the canopy, in each case, is a constricted neck found with a beaded band followed below by symmetrically placed vertical concave and decorated tassels bound together by a beaded fillet. The area below this zone is decorated by such another row of vertical tassels interspaced in certain cases with spearhead design with a globular pendant over it or a dagger motif. Often tassels are horizontally divided into two parts, the lower part is found with three hanging tassels, and the upper part with three concentric lotus.

Chessman columns (pl. VIII, b & d) thus could be safely said to have represented human being in one form or other which might have been initially made in crude and stylised human form in impermanent materials and subsequently assumed the present form through abstraction, which was finally translated into stone to make it permanent. Proto-types made of such materials as timber, bamboo, textile etc. having its archetype in life size wooden effigies of the dead the remote parallel of which are to be found among the Angami Nagas*.

The large isolated columns found at Dimapur, and at Kasomaripathar are structurally and stylistically dissimilar from the chessman columns discussed above, on account of their cylindrical feature.

The one (pl.VIII, c) erect at Dimapur is found with a crest on its canopy. Relief of this column are now withering.

The large isolated column at Kasomaripathar (pl.IX, a) is tapering downward. Its canopy is adorned with thirteen ribs flowing downward from its followed by a decorative panel of tree profile at the middle part and by a beaded design at its bottom. A band of decorative tassels bound together by a beaded fillet is placed around its neck.
The portion below is adorned by a decorative band of upward and downward petal having a beaded fillet in between. Below this band are found a number of equidistantly carved vertical ridges which merge lower in the shaft, providing an intermediary space for carving long swords pointing upward. The bottom of the column has a semicircular decorative arrangement supported by a panel of animal figures like stylized lion and elephant interspaced by vertical lotuses.

The arms of the erect V-shaped columns (pl. IX, b) at Dimapurare found with symmetrically arranged relief viz; the frontally carved lotus in the upperpart, followed downward by floral motifs, the figure of a goat, a floral motif with four equidistant decorative projections placed around the rim, and the relief of a goat at bottom.

The surface of another large broken V-shaped column (4.4Cm x 1.20m) is found divided into three horizontal sections. The upper part is ornamented by four frontally carved lotuses. The middle part is ornamented with three vertical floral arrangements.

The space at bottom is adorned by two prominent lotus stems with three frontally carved concentric lotuses (pl. XXVI, c).

Another profile of this column is divided into four horizontal sections carved with fourteen concentric lotus in its upper part, followed downward by a decorative square arrangement and at below by a panel of four frontally carved concentric lotuses each measuring 37cm in diametre. The panel at bottom is adorned a relief of vertical lotus flanked by a peacock on each side within an angular arch which supports a stylised lion in each side (pl. XXVI, d).

It seems that lotus was a popular subject for carving. Large lotuses with a diametre of 91cm are carved with six concentric layers. Some panels are found with 12 numbers of lotuses each with a diametre of 16cm encircling a large lotus with a diametre of 56 cm (pl. XXVII, a).

Animal figures such as goat, lion, peacock, tiger, elephant horned
animal like rhinoceros are done in similar low relief. Animal motifs, carved in
these megalith, seem to signify fertility cult, because carvings of herbivorous
animals, such as goat, is associated with male procreative power and carnivorous
figures like lion, and tiger, irrespective of their sex, represent female principle'.
The shape -V of the megalithic structure seem to emphasise female principle’.

The Buffalo-horn columns have semicircular top 100. Their upper parts
have a triangular carving which projects three frontally carved concentric
rosettes. A figure of dagger or sword is noticed at the middle of the triangular
carving. The space below is carved with two straight plaits bisecting each other
at their centre.

It has already been referred that megaliths at Kasomaripathar are found
with carving of tree (pl. IX, c,d,) , which seem to be a scraggy - Ficus tree”
revered as “Priest of tree”102.

The ficus tree stems form a horizontal band decorated on either side
by lotus petals and the tree fork off into two branches which are decorated
with a number of spirals representing leaves. Each stem is flanked by a pair of
frontally carved concentric lotus on each side, and the tree is topped by a pear
shaped panel. This pearshaped panel bears carvings either of vertical or
horizontal lotus, or motif of lion, bird or other ornamentations. Carvings of
sword or dagger are found either at the bottom or at the middle of the spirals.
Figures of elephant, lion are found at bottom below the horizontal decorative
band.

STONE SCULPTURE :

Stone sculpture of the mediaeval period are those employed in the
devakosha of brick temple e.g. the panel of the panchayatana, brick temple at
Negheriting in Dergaon (supra). Sculptures of Viṣṇu, Brahma, Daksha,
Pancāna Durgā(representing the sakti of pyncānana (Siva) with prominent
tilaka (pl.XXVII,b) are found. The temple being a panchāyatana, emphasis to
represent some sculptures in *pancañana* i.e. five headed is noticed. Figures of Durga are invariably found in her *pancañana* aspect as the *śakti* of Siva which are placed mainly on the eastern wall of the principal shrine dedicated to Siva.

Some of the figures are provided with *mukutā* bearing prong like dentical projections. Most of these sculptures are frontally carved and emphasis is given only in their frontal aspect discarding at times, physiognomical considerations. Some sculptures are found with their lower drapery reaching the ankles. But an *astabhuja* Durgā is provided with a lower drapery up to the thigh. Another *caturbhujā* Durgā is provided with a beaded bordered draperies up to the knee. The *āyudhas* provided in arms of some figures have become indistinct. Remarkably, a deer has been found provided as *āyudha* in right lower arm of a female figure. The sculptures are flat and stiff in treatment lacking sensitive touch and artistic skill. It may be recalled that, the early mediaeval stone art tradition in the Valley came to a halt after c. 1100 A.D. The Ahom Kings patronising art and architecture had to revived it, albeit in brick, with panels of stone sculpture inserted in the *devakosthas*. This is virtually a new conception of stone art developed in the Ahom kingdom to suit brick temple structure.

It is found that the sculptures on the body of the Negheriting temple were carved as per iconographical norms suitable to a *panchāyatana* temple with Siva as the principal deity. We found that the style of execution of some sculptures seems to reflect a remote connection with the tantric ritual cult of *panchamakārā* prevailed in this temple, where the tradition of offering ritual by *devadāsis* was prevailing with the manifestations of some tantric traditions prevailing in this *panchāyatana* shrine. The sculptures of Negheriting display, as such, a charm of their own inspite of their pervading stiffness and lack of elegance in execution (pl.XXVII, c).
A RESUME :

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL SCHOOL OF DUBRONI ART :

The socio-cultural and political life in the Valley generated a strong sense of regionalism, the impact of which is found reflected in the development of regional school of art and styles, during the early mediaeval period. The earliest representation of stone art is found at Duboroni. From about c. A.D. 600 to c. A.D. 900, the sculptures found in the Valley are stylistically similar and represent certain common characteristics which are evidently regional. The first phase of activity of this school of art is found to have begun at Duboroni where stone sculpture datable to c. 600 A.D. has been found. Duboroni, being a fortified capital seems to have been dwelt by artists. Architectural evidence lead to confirm the existence of artists at Duboroni at least from c. A.D. 400 - 500 if not earlier. Hence the artistic development may preferably be called the Regional School of Duboroni Art where the art tradition originated. Earlier scholars called this development the Deopani School105. Deopani was possibly an artists workshop and dwelling place which flourished during A.D. 800 - 900, as confirmed by inscribed sculptures so far found at Deopani. Deopani possibly witnessed the second phase of the regional art style which already began at Duboroni. Employment of all mediums of expression such as terracotta, wood, metal and stone, and brick as medium of architecture indicate that the Regional School of Duboroni Art had solid foundation and was possibly supported by the native kings of the Valley.

Since c. A.D. 900, the Duboroni School of art went out of existence, and under the shadow of the EISMA another indigenous stone art style was developed at Deoparvat during A.D. 1000 - 1100. Near Deoparvat, Arlongpira is found to be the architects and sculptor's workshop.
The regional trend developed in the stone art of the Valley was very strong. Even the megaliths, where such artistic approaches are not called for, have been found ornamented.

The stone sculptures of Neperiting represent the mediaeval style of temple sculptures, commonly found in other brick built temples of the Ahom kingdom.
Notes and References:

1. See Appendix 1, Fine grained sedimentary shale are found at Sarupani where the Doiyang descends from Naga hills, and outcrop of the coarse grained plutonic igneous granit of whitish look are found in Karbi Anglong hills.


3. These incised plaques are now preserved in the Anthropology Department, Dibrugarh University, Photographs and sketches, per kind permission of the Head of the Department of Anthropology Dibrugarh University.


7. These brahmi characters found with incised plaques are datable to A.D. 200-300, (infra),


11. Asis Sen, op.cit. p. 34.

12. Fish is considered as one item of panchamakāra belief. A figure of Vārahi holding a fish as attribute has been found in the valley.

13. A. Cunningham, op.cit. p. 52 (pl. XXVfigure 2)
Until recent times, the temple door frame at Dali parvatia in Tezpur belong to the post Gupta period was believed to be the earliest representation of stone art in Assam. A description on this doorframe may be found at *ARASI*, 1924-25 (1990) pp 98-99; *BASM*, No. 1. 1975. p. 37. Monoranjan Dutta *op.cit*. p. 41.


This figure of *suparna* was found by the late Keshab Buragohain at Duboroni. Reg. No. DBR/ASM/3713 dtd. 3.8.1990.

Frederick M. Asher, *the Art of Eastern India 300 - 800*, 1980, pl. 107 *ibid.*, plates 101,102, 103.

These figures were chance finds in brick ruins and mounds at Duboroni.


This *Visnu* image is in care of Sri Kola Bora, Kathkotia village, Santipur in Karbi Anglong District.

This *Visnu* was found at Mirichuk in Oparlongtha, Borpathar, and was collected by this author with help of Sri Sonaram Bharali, teacher Borpathar.

This *Visnu* (ASM 3568) preserved in Assam State Museum, was collected by this author with help of Sri R.N. Muhuri, I.A.S. from SriRamakanta Singh.

The fire *Visnu* images enshrined at Duboroni Siva temple measure 62 x 25 cm, 46 x 17cm, 32 x 13cm, 27x17 cm, 23 x 29cm,


This *Visnu* was found with Sri Dolendra Narjari, Telisal in Kasomaripathar.

30 This figure is in the residence of the late Umesh Chandra Sen. Boropathar, Regn. No JRT/ASM/2051 dated 5-12-89.

31 This sculpture first found by the late Umesh Chandra Sen Boropathar, in his compound, was collected by this author with help of Sri Debadhar Gogoi, Boropathar and Sri R.N. Muhuri, IAS, and now preserved in the Assam State Museum (ASM 3570) Guwahati.


34 This sculpture (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2052, dtd. 5.12.89) first found by the late Umesh Chandra Sen, Boropathar, and was collected by this author with help of Sri R.N. Muhuri, IAS and Sri Debadhar Gogoi, and now preserved in the Assam State Museum Guwahati (ASM 3568).


36 This Harinaigamesa image, first found by Sri Rakesh Malakar at No.2 Duboroni, was collected by Sri Babul Das on 5.5.95. On 18/5/95, it was shifted by Sri Dulon Sonowal S.D.O. (civil) Sarupathar, on 5.6.95, the present author collected it to the Directorate of Archaeology Assam Guwahati.

37 This *Uma-Moheswara* figure was found by Sri Lalji Mirdha at Borholla Tea Estate. The present author collected this figure on 8.4.90 with help of Sri Dharmeswar Gogoi o/c Borholla Police Thana. This figure, Reg. No JRT/ASM/3602, dt. 4.3.90, is now preserved in Jorhat District Museum.


39 This *Ganesa* is found with Sri Bharat Chandra Hazuary, Hidimbapur Village, Telisal in Kasomaripathar.


41 This figure is found at Ahomgaon namghar at Rajapukhuri, Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2481 dtd. 2.3.86.
42 The present author collected this inscribed image from Bisrampur in Kasomaripathar on 7.2.88, with help of Sri Nikunja Singh (O.C. Merapani Police Thana). This sculpture Reg. No. GI/G/ASM/4591 dtd 4.3.90, is preserved in Jorhat District Museum.


44 Ibid


47 Vide personal communication from Dharmeswar Chutia.


51 This sculpture was collected by this author with help of Sri Padmeswar Gogoi, Rupkolia Gaon, Golaghat, from Rangdhali village in Kasomaripathar. This sculpture, Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2181, Dated 3.4.85, is preserved in Jorhat District Museum.

52 This sculpture is found with Sri Harkeswar Brahma, at Telisal in Kasomari pathar.


56 This **Vârâbi** (ASM 3507) was found by the late Umesh Chandra Sen Borpathar. The present author collected the figure (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2053 Dtd. 5.12.84) with help of Sri R.N. Muhuri I.A.S. and Sri Debadhar Gogoi, Borpathar, and now preserved in Assam State Museum, Guwahati

This figure was found by the late Umesh Chandra Sen, Borpathar. The present author collected the figure (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2256 dt. 5.12.84) with help of Sri R.N. Muhuri I.A.S. and Sri Debadhat Gogoi, and now preserved in the Assam State Museum (ASM 3569).


This figure is found with Sri Niranjan Sarkar, Duboroni, Borpathar.

B.N. Mukharjee, *East Indian Art Styles*, 1980 p. 20 Monoranjan Dutta, *op. cit.*, p. 57, p.60. The conjecture as offered by Monoranjan Dutta that this sculpture represent the prototype of wooden sculpture cannot be accepted, as confirmed by discovery of a wooden Visnu figure, which is similar to the stone versions (pl. XXIII A).


This Harihara figure was found by the late Taraprasad Mahanta, while digging a pit in the compound of Sri Sri Namti Sattra, at Namti, in Siwasagar District. M.M. Sharma *op. cit* 1978, pp. 310-11

Monoranjan Dulla, *op. cit.*, p. 57


This image is found with Sri Ramakanta Singh, Borpathar, Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2484 dt. 2.3.86

This Visnu image is installed in a temple at Sivatalpathar, Neheriting, Dergaon.


This Surya figure is located at Alichiga Tengani Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2057 dt. 5.12.84.


Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2080-1 and JRT/ASM/2081 dt. 2.1.85.
This *trisula* is found with Sri Bharat Chandra Hazarv, Hirimbapur village, Telisal in Kasamari pathar. This *trisula* was recovered, together with figures of *Ganesa*, and a mutilated Devi image from a brick mound at Telisal on 20-11-92

P.C. Saikia, *op.cit.* p. 34.

This *mānusalinga* is in care of Sri Niranjan Sarkar, Duboroni village, Boropathar.


Such a *pranāla*, first found by Sri Rakesh Malakar at 1 No. Duboroni village was collected by Sri Babul Das on 5.5.95 it was shifted by Sri Dulon Sonowal S.D.O. civil, Sarupathar, on 5.6.95, this author shifted this *pranāla* to the Directorate of Archaeology Assam, Guwahati.

This *linga* and *yonipith*, with brick remains were exposed on erosion caused by the Doityang at Gelabil, and now found with Sri Khudram Bora.


*ARASI*, 1936-37, (1940)p. 58

Monoranjan Dutta, *op.cit.*, p. 94.


Asis Sen, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

*ARASI*, 1936-37, pp. 57-61.

This possibly indicate that all living things rise from water and to be born of water means to be born of another womb? Asis Sen, *op.cit.*, p. 35.


Ancient Indian art depicts elephant as fostering divinities. Relief panel of railing post of Stupa II, at Sanci dated B.C. 200, depicts a lotus scroll uphold by elephant, which stands on a fish, and a racing bull and *Yaksas*. 

It is because Indus valley art has shown the tree, the animal and the human figure by the side of one another in isolation. To this, an inner pliability and reflective attitude was provided in a creative form at Bharhut and Sānci relief. A Cunningham, *op. cit.*, plate XIX, XXI, XI., III, XLVI and XLVII, Henrich Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 16.; Stella Kramrisch, *op. cit.*, Plate 29, Asis Sen, *op. cit.*, Plates VI, VII.

A female figure stylistically similar in respect of drawing her folded hand close to chest for holding tree plant could be seen at the Pusenjīt pillar of Bharhut. A Cunningham, *op. cit.*, Plate XIV.

Ivāvati is described as ‘she’ who is possessed of fluid (irī) of life. Henrich Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p.104. This sculpture is now preserved in D.R. College, Golaghat. Reg. No. SBR/ASM/993 Dtd. 10.12.82.

Asis Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 16.


*JASB*, No. 1., pt. 1. 1874, pp. 1-6.


J.H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Towers in Naga hills*, p. 6

The tantric *panchamakāra* cult was prevailing in this temple at Negheriting.

T. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.* p. 84; K. Krishnamurti *op.cit.* p. 22

Monoranjan Dutta, in his work, *Sculpture of Assam* pp. 54-61, describes this school of art as the Deopani School. But this nomenclature donot cover the origin and early phase of this school of art which developed centering Duboroni. Besides, if we accept Duboroni as its centre of origin, we get a genealogy for four centuries. Hence, the school of art developed in the valley, may be described as the Regional School of Duboroni Art.
METALLIC ART

Metallic art objects of ancient and early mediaeval period are meagre. A chance discovery of a bronze pot, a pair of bronze coated iron plummets, and bronze icons so far found indicate the development of metallurgical craft in the Valley. Metallic idols and other art objects of the mediaeval period are found in the sattras and as family heirlooms. It is evident that metal was used as medium of expression side by side with stone.

ANCIENT PERIOD:

So far only one specimen, a bronze pot 1 (11.4 x 10.5cm) of this period has been found at Alichiga-Tengani in Borpathar together with ATCS. and on the basis of the date of the ATCS, this bronze pot (pl. XX VII,d) is tentatively assigned to the ancient period.

EARLY MEDIAEVAL PERIOD:

Metallic objects of both secular and religious nature belonging to this period are found. The secular group includes a pair of architect’s plummets and the religious group includes bronze sculptures.

A PAIR OF ARCHITECT PLUMMETS:

A pair of bronze coated iron architect’s plummets (pl.XXVIIa) were found at Kharua gaon in Borpathar while digging a pit. Both the specimens are stylistically similar. Of them, the large plummet measures 26.2 cm x 29.5 cm and the smaller one 25.2 cm x 27.5 cm. The inner iron core of the plummet is exposed in its round socket. The plummets have pointed ends at bottom
flanked by two pointed ends terminating in a lotus bud in each. Their central parts are adorned with a number of horizontal lines.

The pair of plummets in their shape and forms are similar with Gupta metal plummet found in the Surma river, on the basis of which the pair found of Borpathar may be dated A.D. 600. Their weights are framed in prongs terminating in lotus buds, which recall the plant, decorative plant forms of ornamental Gupta Sculpture in Stone. The pair of Borpathar plummets being direct imitation of the rare example of Gupta metal work made of bronze coated iron confirm that alloying tradition in metal on similar lines of the Guptas possibly flourished in the Valley. Besides this technological advancement, the pair of Borpathar plummet suggest the availability of iron, iron smithers and manufacturing process, in the Valley during c. A.D. 600.

**Bronze Sculptures:**

A few specimen of bronze icons were found at Merapani and Titabor by this author. It seems that bronze was considered ideal for casting and was produced by 'cire perdue' or 'lost wax process.' Of this group, a *caturbhujā* female figure (14 x 5 cm) in *samapāda sthānaka* posture is found at Merapani (pl.XXVII, b). Both the right arms, the lower left arm and the pedestal of the figure are missing. The only *āyudha* found is a *saṅkha* held in the left upper hand. From the round mole like *tilaka* on forehead, the figure could be identified as Durgā. The deity is provided with a half crown and hair tuft set in a knot at the top of the head. The eyes in rounded face with pointed chin are large and the lips are open. The elongated ears are provided with *puspa kundálas*. An ornamental decorative band around the neck and a *kanthabāra* with pendants are provided on neck. A *yajñopavīta* is found flowing across the chest. Semi-diaphaneous drapery is provided as lower garment beyond the ankle joint. The garment is shown in schematic folds which are horizontal on the left and vertical on the right leg.
Stylistically, the figure displays a slender and elongated modelling of a round contour. Its long attenuated waist broad hip and prominent breasts, depict tender modulations of a young body. Its broad shoulder gradually attenuated to a narrow waist line, provide the figure delicacy of an idealised beauty.

Probably, this figure exhibits a sensuous suggestiveness in spiritual mood rooted in the inner experience of eroticism under the inspiration of certain Yogic or tantric cult. On account of simple gesture, round contour, and hair set on top of head, the sculpture may be dated to first half of A.D. 800.

Together with the Durgā, was found a bronze caturbhujā figure of Harihara (25 x 7 cm) at Merapani (pl.;XXVIII,c). This Harihara figure is found in a dilapidated state, and except the right lower hand holding a trisūla fitted with an axe, the other three arms are mutilated. The figure stands in samāpāda sthānaka posture on Kurmāsana supported by a pedestal of lotus. The right arm of the figure has a serpent hood. Hara (Śiva) is depicted on the right part and Hari (Viśnu) on the left part of the figure represented by mount Nandi (bull) and Guruḍā respectively in the inscribed pedestal, which is now illegible. The figure is provided with a mukūṭa. The tuft of hair as raised over head and tied with a decorative band upon which the ardhačandra is depicted on right. The elongated ears are seen with puspakūṇḍalas. A Kantabhāra provided in beaded design. The yajnopoviṭa flows down to the belly, and the vanamālā reaches the knee. Like the other stone Harihara sculpture, this figure is also shown in ardhaṇaṅga and semi diaphanous lower drapery. A tiger depicted in face which looks like a human face is seen in the right thigh. The figure has a round prabhāvali. The nimbus has a border of four rims and the outer rim shows a ring of fire.

The figure has broad shoulder and large hip with elongated and attenuated waist. The round face, with pointed nose and meditative eyes, together suggests a spiritual insight in facial expression.
Stylistically, this figure is identical with the figure of Durgā. The elongated feature and the round contour of both the figure are remarkable. Similar ornamentation of kanthabāra, pushpakunḍala and facial expression make it clear that both the sculptures are work of the same artist and datable to the early part of A.D. 800. Existence of native ethnic elements in the feature of these sculptures, reminds one of the native features of the Duboroni School of Regional Art (supra). The decorative horizontal band around the neck of the bronze Durgā mark imitation of native texture cultivated by local sculptors of the Valley. Both the bronze figures are provided with elongated physiognomy in round contour. The figures depict full of vigour and youthfulness reflecting a calm facial expression, found in the stone figures of Durgā in the Valley. It may be recalled that a good number of syncretic Harihara stone figures are found in the Valley. As such, it is evident that both the bronze figures are local product and ideal representation of the Regional School of Duboroni Art flourished in the Valley.

A caturbhuja bronze figure of Sūrya (47 x 27 cm) is found at Titabar. This is an erect Surya figure in samapāda sthānaka attitude (pl.V,d). The deity stands on a lotus pedestal supported by a Kurṃāsana. The deity holds two full bloom lotuses in both hands and is flanked by figures of pīngala (Agni) and Dandi, (Yama), both door-keeper of Sūrya. Of Agni and Dandi, the former holds a pen and the later a sword, which have been projected to the right and left of the main idol respectively. The entire complex has been placed on a rectangular pedestal which is inscribed as Viśvakunḍasya Kirtti i.e. the glory of Viśvakunḍa, which seem to indicate the name of the sculptor (supra).

The deity is adorned with a tall and tapered kiritamukuta and provided with a prabhāmāṇḍala of burning fire behind the head. The deity wears a bārā, a Katibandha, and a lower garment which clings down to the ankle.

In facial expression the principal figure suggests a meditative state. Its half closed eyes point to the tip of its pointed nose. The elongated ears are provided with kunḍalas. The deity has a well developed body with broad
shoulders, chest and round and narrow waist, that merges in its large hip. Both the hands are bent at elbow and finger are bent inwards evidently for holding the long stalk of two full bloom lotuses, one in each palm. The lotus stalks pass over the bent arms upto the upper point of the shoulders where two lotuses are shown prominently.

The attending figures Dandi and Pingala, on either side of the main deity, are depicted in wide open eyes. The round narrow waists and large hips of these figures are similar to the principal deity, and decorated in similar style of their overlord. These subordinate figures are also found with prabhāmandalas.

The prabhāmandala of the main deity has atleast six rims. The outermost rim has dotted ornamentation, possibly indicating a ring of fire, the nimbus is further adorned by two flames on each side and one at the top. By discarding earlier style the sculptors resumed to stylization in this figure and as such could be dated to A.D. 900.

Physiognomically, the Titabar Bronze Sūrya is similar to the other bronze figures of Harihara and Durgā. Its broad shoulder narrow waist and large hips are redolent of the Duboroni School of Art. However, this Sūrya icon maintains certain similarities with the Kahilipara bronze figure (23 x 14cm) of Sūrya as noticed in the depiction of the figures and prabhāwali. But in depiction of facial expression the Titabor Sūrya icon is found with an elegantly carved meditative state and stylistically more elaborate. Its frame work behind the figure remains invisible from the front.

These figures, although miniature in size, constitute a part of the east Indian metallic sculptural tradition of the early medieval period. Unlike in the case of stone sculptures, no new local style in metallic art developed during this period. These sculptures, although express a sensuous feeling, their half closed eyes invariably pointed to the tip of their noses, suggest meditation and impart a feeling of spirituality at the same time. Two of these figures are inscribed, which constitute important characteristics of Hindu iconography.
Mediaeval Period:

A gradual decline is noticed in metallic art during first half of the mediaeval period, possibly owing to the contemporary political confusion then prevailing in the country. During this period the early mediaeval tradition completely died out. Metallic art again developed in the Valley, after the Ahoms restored political stability and adopted a policy of cultural revivalism, and a new movement in metallurgical art emerged in social life.

As a part of this movement possibly, the architects provided round iron ventilators in the Śikharas of the panchāyatana temple at Negheriting, to permit light and air to its interior. Iron nails are found to have been used in sculptural panels of the Negheriting temple for holding terracotta sculptures. It seems iron smelting was in process during this period and skilled iron smelters manufactured solid iron objects such as cannon and iron frame i.e. dbekar for litters. Cannon was manufactured at kacharihat and Dhekial and dhekor was manufactured at Dhekorgorha Kamargaon. Expert smiths produced iron dies (mobar-chāp) for minting, octagonal Ahom coins (pl.XXVIII,d).

Metallic Sculpture:

Metallic sculptures of mediaeval period are similar to those found in other parts of the Ahom kingdom. These figures are invariably small and short in their sizes. The figures are provided with attenuated waist and stiff treatment. Their round face are found with sharp cut open eyes, pointed nose tilaka at forehead, and both male and female figures invariably are hairless. The figures are bereft of ornamentations, and āyudhas are provided extra. Mukuta of these figures, which occasionally carved extra, are found similar to the stone sculptures of the contemporary period. Some metal sculptures depict the Mughal headdress and drapery.
A figure of a Dashabhujā Mahiśāsuramardini (pl. XXIX,a) is found at Negheriting temple in Dergaon. The deity (46 x 29 cm) stands in a tribhanga posture placing her right foot on the vāhana lion, and left leg on back of Mahīśasura depicted in the form of Mughal warrior with headdress. The figure is provided with pleated flounced skirt as lower garments and high footwear with curled up toes and a short sword in right hand, which are reflections of contemporary costumes and garments. The figure of buffalo represented by the severed buffalo head is strikingly similar to the Mahiśāsuramardini Durgā of Dibrugarh datable to A.D. 1800 and as such may be dated to early A.D. 1800.

A figure of Gaṇeśa seated on an āsana is also been found at Negheriting temple (pl. XXIX,b). Figure of Laruā Gopāl and vansi vādana images of lord Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, are found in the vaishnava sattras of the Valley. Vāsudeva aspect of Viṣṇu seem to have become popular perhaps for the reason that it makeup the "Śakti-Māya-Vyūha" as described in the Brihad Bhārata Sāṁhitā. The Vāsudeva aspect refers that "the being who has neither beginning nor end, who has myriads of forms, who is omnipresent and resplendent and is the supreme Brahmān is known by the name of Vāsudeva". Vāsudeva possess six attributes namely, jñāna (wisdom), sakti (energy), aiśvarya (supremacy) bala (strength), tejas (brightness), Virya (Heroism), and nirdosa (free from all evil). We have found so far three figures of Vāsudeva in the Valley. All are in Samapāda Sthānaka posture, and caturbhujā. A figure found at Dergaon. All arms of the figure are depicted bent at the elbow and wrist joints (pl.XXIX,c). This figure has been shown as being carried by Garuḍa, with a snake which has been provided with silver wings (H 47cm X 14 cm) superimposed by a circular pedestal above, where Vāsudeva stands (pl. XXIX,d). The head of Vāsudeva is crowned with a squat kiritamukūṭa, which is less samvakāra and ornamented with a number of outer cones arranged vertically along the brim. The figure has round face, open eyes, prominent nose and makara-kundala in...
ears. The facial expression of the figures is somewhat static. This is a well built rounded figure with broad chest and attenuated waist. The deity is provided with a lower drapery up to the thigh.

Another such caturbhujā figure of Vāsudeva (29 x 18cm) is found at Titabor1. The deity is adorned with kīriṭa-mukūṭa, kanthabāra vanamālā and nūpura. The mukūṭa has been further adorned with a silver crown (pl. XXX, a) and the image could be dated to A.D. 1800. A similar Vāsudeva (30 x 16cm) has been found at Ganakpukhuri20. This figure has elongated ears, hair tied at the top of head and could be dated to early A.D. 1800 on stylistical considerations.

Among other metal sculptures found in the Valley images of Kṛṣṇa mostly in tribhāṅga posture playing flute, and Lāruā Gopal are found. Rarely, figures of Kṛṣṇa are also found with companions of Rukmini and Satyabhāma, the wives of Kṛṣṇa, carved independently to accompany the lord on right and left respectively21. Such a group is found at Dergaon22. Of this group the figure of Kṛṣṇa (34 x 15cm) in tribhāṅga posture has a smooth round modelling with broad shoulders, attenuated waist and large hips (pl.XXX,b). Both the hands are in the posture of playing flute. This figure has a round face, wide open eyes, prominent nose and ears, and a top knot. Some sort of over stylization is noticed in the upper part of the body, while rigidity is noticed in the depiction of the left leg.

The figure of Rukmini (23 x 20cm) is bare headed, with over-developed ears (pl.XXX,c). The figure has a round face with stylised eyes and pointed nose. Her right hand carries lotus, while the left hand is in pralambapāda. The figure has a round contour and well developed feminine shoulders and an attenuated waist which merges with the large hips. The figure strive upward raising the right arm in a stylised body movement. Articulating in a dance like posture, her left hand spreads downward with a bend at the wrist and the right hand in a tribhāṅga posture raised upward. But this emphasis is not revealed in the lower part up to the hips, as the legs are in rigid form.
The other accompanying figure of Satyabhāmā (H. 23cm X dia 20cm) is found in Samāpadā sthānaka posture (pl.XXX,d). Both of her hands are bent at the elbows and stretched forward in a movement of right palm upward and left palm downward.

Stylistically, the figures of Kṛṣṇa, Rukmini and Satyabhāma are identical with each other, as found in the round contour, attenuated modelling in waist, broad shoulders and large hips. Striking similarities are also noticed in the depiction of eyes head, nose and in facial expression, which indicate these productions as the handiwork of the same artist.

Figures of vaṃśivādana kṛṣṇa are found in the Vaishnava sattras in the Valley. Two elongated figures of Vaṃśivādana kṛṣṇa measuring, 40 x 15cm and 22 x 9 cm, respectively exist at Garigaon (pl.XXXI,a). Another Vaṃśivādana kṛṣṇa (22 x 6cm) is found at Dhekial (pl. XXXI, b). Folk elements as found in legs face, ears, nose in a Vaṃśivādana figure at Titabar (p. XXXI, c) are prominent.

Among other forms most commonly found are images of Laruā-Gopal. Such a Laruā-Gopal (8.5 x 9.5) has been found at Titabor (pl. XXXI, E). All these sculptures are made of brass with exception to the figures of Dergaon which are possibly gold plated, and the wings of the Garuḍa finished in silver (pl. XXIX,d).

A caturbhujā figure of Durgā (17 x 12) seated on lion, found at Halowa pathar Joy Durgā than at Doigrung has a head dress similar to that of pāğiya. (pl.XXXI, d). The figure has a Kanṭhabāra a scarf round the neck flowing down to the thigh. A round tilaka is provided on the fore head. The deity (11.5 cm X 6 X 4cm) stands on a rectangular pedestal. A figure of Durgā seated on lion exists in Kotohaguri than, at Borphukan khat of Hamdoipathar in Golaghat.
MISCELLANEOUS ART OBJECTS:

Numerous metallic art objects such as ornaments, house hold articles etc. were produced in the Valley. Golaghat\(^2\), Titabor, Kasarihat had brass and bell metal industry with the principal centre at Namdoiyang\(^*\).

Bell-metal utensils are usually cast in moulds but brass vessels are made out of thin sheet of that metal which are beaten out and pieced together. The furnace is a hollow and generally bellows are made of skin of goat. The items produced are pikbân (spittons) šārāi, (stemmeddish), bān-kān̄hī (a kind of dish on stand) botā (XXXII,a) or (a dish-on-stand for offering betel-nuts) as large, as (dia; 34cm x height 19cm) and which are often of gold (pl. XXXII, b) safurā (pl.XXXII,c) loṭā (pl.XXXII,d; XXXIII, a) dogdogi, Kalab, gāgori bētā temā-temi, (pl.XXXIII, b) jakā and so on. These are all containers of one kind or other.

Stylistically, some utensils are found on stand called khurā and often they are covered with decorative lid in the most cases with stylised lotus bud and petals. Some of the productions are without joint. Natural lac was utilized as mould in the manufacture of some utensils, and the craft of using lac in making moulds for metallic ware was more popular in Golaghat\(^3\). Titabor was another seat of metallic industry where metallic wares were manufactured. Metallic wares of copper, brass and bell metal, produced at Titabor and Golaghat were renowned for their art and craftsmanship.

Enamelling on gold is usually of three kinds - a dark blue, dark green and white; but red and yellow are also sometimes used. The goldsmiths possessed a fair amount of skill and ornaments were prepared of large size. Some of these were filled up with natural lac to enhance their sizes. The artificers called “Sonāri” work for native needs\(^5\) and ornaments were studded with jewels which are called bākbhor patā. Ornaments worn by males are motāmani (necklace) Lokāpāra (earings representing pigeon) longkeru (clove-shaped
ornament) Gāmkbāru (bracelet). The usual ornaments for ladies were jonbrī (crescent-shaped pendant) galpatā (necklace Dugdugi, (necklace) bīrī (drum-shaped gold ornament) for neck bejewelled rings, muthikbāru (bracelet) and so on".

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Notes and References:

1. This metallic pot, found together with the ATCS, at Alichiga-1 engani, was collected by this author with help of Sri Pradip Konwar, Sonaram Bharali, Borpathar, and Sri Rebakanta Gogoi Sarupathar on 14.12.95 (Reg. No. GLGT/ASM 4022).

2. This pair of architect’s plummet was collected by this author, from Sri Tolon Gogoi of Kharua Gaon Borpathar (Reg. No. KRT/ASM/ 2485 2486, dated 2.4.86) and now preserved in Jorhat District Museum.


4. Ibid.


7. This Bronze Sūrya was found by S.K. Nurul Hussain, Amgurkhat, Titabor in his compound. It was collected by this author on 21/4/88 for Directorate of Archaeology, Assam, Jorhat Branch (Reg. No. JRT/ ASM/ dtd. 4.3.90) and donated to Jorhat District Museum on 6.8.89.

8. P.K. Bhattacharyya; *Iconography of Sculptures* 1983, p. 10


11. Existing information has it that, 21 persons working for 81 days produced about a quintal of iron at Bassadoiyang, in Golaghat Benudhar Sarma, *opcit.*, pp. 273-279.
12 A cannon (249 x 10cm) found at Rajabahar in Titabor, was collected by this author and is now preserved in the Jorhat District Museum. Another cannon (99 x 20cm) is found at D.R. College, Golaghat.

13 A pair of iron mint of king Gourinath Singha are found with the late Mohini Rajkumari, Muhuramukh in Kamargaon.


18 This figure of Vāsudeva on Garuḍa pedestal is found at Śrī Śrī Nagosāṁ Sattra Dergaon in care of Sri Rohini Vallav Goswami Regn. No. ASMR JRT/1377 and 1379 dtd. 4.1.84.

19 This figure of Vāsudeva found at Kumarbheti village, Borrholla. It is now with Shri Biman Singh of Jonaki mandal gaon, Titabor.

20 This figure of Vāsudeva has been found in Śrī Śrī Elengi Modarguri Sattra of Ganakpukhuri Golaghat.

21 R.S. Gupte: *op.cit*. pp. 33-34

22 Figures of Kṛṣṇa with Rukmini and Satyabhāma are found in Śrī Śrī Na-Gosain Sattra, Dergaon, Reg. No. JRT/ASM/1424; JRT/ASM/1425 and JRT/ASM/1479, dtd. 8.11.84.

23 Two figures of Viṣṇu are found at Śrī Śrī Ouguri Sattra in care of Sri Jibeswar Mahanta, Garigaon, P.O. Oating Golaghat.

24 This sculpture of Viṣṇu found with Anil Kumar Goswami of Dhekial.

25 This sculpture of Lāruā Gopal is found with Sri Biman Singh of Jonaki Mandal Gaon, Titabor.

26 This sculpture of Durgā is in Halowa pathar Joy Durga Dewalay, in care of Sri Sagar Chandra Thakur, Doigrung.
27 Bhuban Chandra Handique; *op.cit.* (1959) pp. 46-47.
29 B.C. Handique; *op.cit.*, (1959) pp 46-47.
30 Mr. Darrah; *Notes on some Industries of Assam* (1896) p2 Assam Secretariat, Shillong.
31 T.C. Heniker; *The Gold and Silver wares of Assam*, 1905, Assam Secretariat printing press, Shillong.
Clay was a popular medium of art in the Valley since ancient times. Terracotta art objects such as clay seal, potsherds, bas reliefs of human and animal figures, sculptures and other decorative art, found together with brick remains suggest a developed stage of terracotta art in the Valley. This development was possibly aided by the easy availability of pottery-yielding clay in the region. As the filing of iron are to be mixed with clay before modelling terracotta objects, it was evident that iron nodules abounding in the stiff retentive clay of the Valley provided the convenient medium to the modellers.

The four impressions of foot prints (mānasapāda) on the surface of the ATSI are found to be a rare evidence of terracotta art (pl. II.a). It seems that the top surface of the inscription was provided with a coat of wet clay or mortar where the foot impressions were imprinted. It is possible that these foot prints, devoid of divinity sign were not used as a symbol of God. The reference of "Śrī Ratnavarmanapāda", as found in the line fourth of the first part of the inscription, points to these foot-prints having possibly belonged to Śrī Ratnavarmanā and were, possibly revered as a symbol of royalty, a phenomenon not uncommon in the context of ancient Indian culture. On the basis of the date of this inscription the terracotta foot prints may be dated to c. A.D. 400 - 500 (supra), and may be regarded as the earliest evidence of terracotta art, so far found in Assam. Besides, the clay seal of Vasundharavarmanā, found at Alichiga-Tengani (supra,) confirms the existence of a highly flourishing tradition of terracotta art in the Valley during c. A.D. 400 - 500.

It has already been pointed out that, a typical globular or ovoid bodied terracotta vessel with narrow elongated neck, traditionally manufactured by the potters at Dhekial, which is known as the dhekiyalid kalah (supra) might have been originally devised as pot form or clay furnace for smelting iron.
as decanters to pour smelted iron in foundries. This seems to have been possible because, the *kumārmāti* or brownish potter’s clay found at Medeluwapathar and Elengidorāpathār, and Rangalimāti, or yellowish potters clay used as colouring agent, found at Dhekial, are of high plasticity and have oxide content. Field investigation reveal that, potters of Dhekial region have a remote antiquity, who have traditionally continued their trade to this day. Notably both the potters village and the iron smelting site of Rahdhola pukhuri at Dhekial are close to one another.

Remains of brick temples in the Valley belonging to early mediaeval period are found with terracotta sculptures, bas reliefs and ornamental reliefs. These were possibly employed as terracotta panels in brick temple architectures of the Valley, and could be classified into (i) Religious and (ii) Secular terracotta art.

**Religious Terracotta Art:**

A mutilated female figure (25 x 22 cm) seated in *yogāsana* (pl.XI a,) was recovered from a brick mound at No. 2 Sarupathar Gaon. A *yoni pitha* found from the same mound indicates that the ruins belonged to a Siva temple, and the figure might have been installed in some of the *devakōṣṭhas* of this brick temple. Both the hands rest on thighs and the image is moulded in a square plaque.

This sculpture depicts a sensuous youthful form in high relief. Her hair tuft is raised to the top of her head. Her ears are elongated. The *Kanthahāra* seems to be of simple style. A lower drapery is provided below the navel region. A gradually declining classical idiom in favour of a local one contributing to the development of regional school of art which developed at Duboroni is noticed in this sculpture. Such development of regional trend is a common feature in Indian art of post Gupta period. The figure may represent Parvati in meditation. Stylistically, this figure is datable to c. A.D. 600.
At Ujani Nangalgaon, in Borhola, a terracotta plaque (33 cm X 5 cm) depicting two swans facing each other and holding rosary in their beaks (pl. XIV, b) and another plaque (27 cm X 21 cm X 5.5 cm) depicting monkeys carrying branches of trees (pl. XIV, c) are found (supra).

**Secular Terracotta Art:**

A number of terracotta bas reliefs of variegated mouldings and decorative patterns have been recovered from brick ruins. These bas reliefs are either decorative or depict some motifs or scene of life. Fragments of human form and animal motifs are found. Ornamental art representing decorative scroll work, floral design, birds and other chequered patterns are recovered. The plaques were either square or rectangular and are generally found with a raised border.

A terracotta lion (56 x 37 x 6.1 cm) is found at Oparlangtha. The face of the lion is mutilated (pl. XIV, a). The lion, depicted in profile, has a long body with a narrow waist, and may be dated to c. A.D. 800. Remnants of a mythical bird have been recovered from Mirichuk in Oparlangtha. The owl-like face (pl. XXXIII, c) of the bird is provided with round sockets in the form of eyes. Besides, a lower part of a female figure (17 x 14 x 6 cm), an ornamented hand of a human figure (18.8 x 14.5 x 4.7 cm) in upright posture, and a few floral fragments of lotus petal design (pl. XXXIII, d) have also been recovered from Oparlangtha. The lower part of the female figure is provided with a lower garment up to the knee, which is ornamented with circular rings. The figure seated en face, was moulded in a posture with her hands resting on her knees. The ornamented hand in upright posture seem to belong to some female figure (pl. XXXIV, a). These terracotta base reliefs and other ornamentations (pl. XXXIV, b) were possibly employed to decorate the panels of the brick temple, evidence of which is found at Miri chuk in Oparlangtha. On the basis of this it could possibly said that the walls of the brick temples of the Valley were decorated with terracotta panels during the early mediaeval period.
During the mediaeval period, terracotta art appears to have become sporadic in nature. The early mediaeval trend that flourished together with brick architecture, seems to have declined along with the decline of the brick architectural movement. As such, isolated instances of terracotta art is found at the brick built gateway at Dimapur, and at the Negheriting temple at Dergaon.

The Dimapur royal gateway of the Kacharis is found with terracotta ornamentations. The false windows of the solid brick gateway are found with terracotta art. The upper part of the gateway is finished with two horizontal bands bearing ornamentation of feather-like motif similar to those found in some megalithic columns.

Some terracotta sculptures were employed in the devakostha of the Negheriting Siva temple, at Dergaon. A matsyavatara of Viṣṇu (pl.XXXIV. d) is found intact in the western panel of this panchāyatana temple. Evidence of several other terracotta figures are still to be found in this structure. Terracotta floral ornamentations are also found in the walls of this panchāyatana structure.

Dhekial, Dergaon, Athgaon, Bossapathar, Rongamati and Gurgongan mouza in Golaghat are traditional sites of pottery industry. Here cauldrons to boil juice of sugarcane are made of the most durable kinds of potters clay. A pair of spouted earthen pots 73 cm x 17 cm & 61 cm X 14 cm were found from Ahomgaon in Kamarbondha which were recovered while renovating a tank. Since these types of pots (pl. XXXIV, c) are no longer in use these may very well belong to the last phase of the mediaeval period, if not earlier, these pots have incised horizontal decorative lines, at outer surface. The inside of these pots are black in colour.

Another pot (24 x 14cm) was recovered at Rajapukhuri Sarupathar from inside a brick-built well which has some incised decorative designs at its surface.
Notes and Reference:

1. The clay in the neighbourhood of Dimapur is of a superior kind and the mortar out of which Dimapur bricks were made was very white and good, Major Godwin Austen, *op.cit.*, pp.1-6; W.W. Hunter, *op.cit.* Vol.I, p. 176, Vol.-II, p. 176. It is notable that a cement industry established at Bokajan is fed by raw materials from the neighbouring region.


4. Appendix, II, III.


6. This author collected this female figure from Sri Muhi Saikia, No. 2 Sarupathar gaon on 3.4.85 and is now preserved in the Jorhat District Museum, Jorhat.


8. P.C. Saikia, *op.cit.*, p. 34. This terracotta lion (Reg. No. DBR/ASM 3714, Dtd. 3.8.90) is preserved in the Anthropology Department, Dibrugarh University.

9. Fragment of this mythical bird was collected by this author from Mirichuk in Oparlangtha.

10. These plaques are now preserved in Anthropology Department, Dibrugarh University.

The Terracotta pots have been collected by this author and are preserved in Jorhat District Museum, Jorhat.

This pot was collected by this author from Shri Khagen Gogoi, Rajapukhuri, Sarupathar (Reg. No. GLGT/ASM/4024), and now preserved in Jorhat District Museum.
Wood being organic in nature is prone to natural decay and as such do not last for long. However, at this stage firm evidence of ancient wood carving, in the Valley could not be claimed with any certainty due to their non existence. Evidence are likely to come to light if systematic archaeological exploration is taken up.

**EARLY MEDIAEVAL PERIOD:**

However, a frontally carved wooden *caturvija* figure of Viṣṇu in *samapāda sthānaka* posture has been found at Borpathar¹. It was recovered in a dilapidated state (pl. XXIII,a) and carved portions depicting the *āyudha* of the figure have almost withered. Of the *āyudhas* the *gada* and the *cakra* provided in the lower left and right hand, respectively and *padma* provided in the right upper hand are intact. Stylistically, *āyudhas* of lower arms are found resting on the *adhisthāna* of the figure.

The cylindrical kiritamukūṭa of the figure is flat at the top and finished with a typically arranged net work of ornamental carving. The tufts of hair are shown resting on the shoulder, and the hair band visible at the back of the head is decorated with floral ends. The figure is provided with a round face and elongated ears with *puspakunḍala* are visible. In facial expression the figure depicts a calm disposition. The figure has a well-built physic with broad shoulder and is pot-bellied. In terms of its physiology, physiognomy and decorative elements, these characters are noticed in the stone versions of Viṣṇu images found in the region. On this basis, this wooden Viṣṇu figure can be conveniently assigned to c. 700-800 A.D., the period when the Regional School of Duboroni Art flourished in the Valley (supra).
confirms that wood carving in the Valley possessed a solid foundation and the art movement of the Valley produced wooden sculptures, by providing native artistic tradition that developed in the Valley during post Gupta period.

Incidentally this is the only wooden sculpture found in Assam that is as old as 8th cent. A.D.

**Mediaeval Period:**

Owing to a series of wars fought between the Ahoms and the Kacharis during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, art activity in the Valley dwindled and consequently the early mediaeval trend in wooden art died out. The Ahom victory over the Kacharis had brought about political stability and generated a congenial atmosphere for promotion of art and culture in the Valley.

Under the Ahom rule wooden art activity in the Valley was rejuvenated. The existing evidence of wood carving of this period can be divided into the religious and secular types.

**Religious Wood Carving:**

Religious types of wood carvings were associated with the Vaishnava sattras Kirttangbar and namghars. Wood carvings of divine and semidivine figures normally adorn the interiors of such religious institutions. Simhasana and mayurasana, the vaishnavite alter, are believed to be the abodes of Viṣṇu and were carefully carved out of the plank of a wood of gomāri (gmelina arborea Roxb) tree. The four posts holding the simhasana bear the motif of tortoise, elephant and lion. The four posts of mayurasana are found with four motifs of peacock. These altars called guruāsana are painted with hengool (vermillion) and hātal (yellow arsenic).
The doorway to the altar in kirttanghar is flanked invariably by two wooden figures of Jaya and Vijaya. A caturbhuja figure of Jaya (1.19M x 28cm) and a caturbhuja figure of Vijaya (1.19M x 28cm) in high relief, painted in colourful indigenous pigment are found at Sri Sri Elengi Modarguri Sattra in Dhekial, Golaghat (pl. XXXIV,e). The entrance to the manikuta, the sanctum of the kirttanghar of this sattra, is adorned with a highly decorative wooden torana with motifs of lion, makara, and other floral ornamentations, all embellished in rich painting (pl.XXXV,a).

A caturbhuja figure of Brahmā (1.27 x 24cm) a Hanumāna (1.28 x 24cm) a Garuda (79 x 87cm) in half kneeling posture with its spread wings and holding a snake in hand are also noticed. These figures are provided with a round contour and embellished in traditional pigment. The figure of Brahmā (pl. XXXV,b) manifests an elongated and squarish tendency in face as well as in feet. Colours such as black green, yellow and red are used. Both hands of the figure are drawn close to chest and the figure wears a crown which is provided with triangular ornamental projections. The figure of Hanumāna (pl.XXXV,c) is painted yellow, leaving its face and legs in green and the drapery in red. The upper ridge of its crown is finished with triangular projection. The Garuda is carved in considerably high relief and painted in dark red. Figures of Garuda of both large and smaller sizes are found. A small figure of a Garuda (28 x 8 cm) with hands broken and an elongated Garuda in round modelling are found. A caturbhuja figure of Viṣṇu flanked by two attendants with their hands folded (31cm x 41cm) is found at Dhekial. The figures are provided with prominent drapery and ornaments either in relief or in painting. These figures depict a native ethnic characteristics. Stiffness and rigidity, together with squarish tendency, is found expressed in its facial expression.

Karāpāt or the gateway to the sattra are often adorned with a wooden figure of Kṛṣṇa depicted either as a cowherd or as playing a flute. A caturbhuja figure of Viṣṇu (42.5 x 30cm) with two lower arms in namaskāra posture and the upper right and left arms hoding a padma and a cakra respectively (pl. XXXV, d) are found.
Wooden boxes for keeping manuscripts, often carved out of single block of wood are found. Some manuscript boxes are found with paintings of the dasavatara figures of Viṣṇu done in indigenous pigments. Some boxes were painted with colourful floral design. Painting is generally done on red background in variegated colours, such as green, yellow, black and blue. Relief work of lotus petal mostly carved in circular arrangements, are found in manuscript boxes (XXXVI,a).

Sarāi, thagā, gasā, kariā were neatly carved and adorned with motifs of peacock, lion, lotus and magara (makara). Kīrttanghar, being a religious place for social congregation of all sections of people for prayers and performance of bhāvonā, its wooden objects were finished with carvings of religious motifs.

Secular Wood Carving:

Numerous secular wood carvings are found. A pair of wooden sugarcane pressure found at Nogora in Jamuguri consists of a taller and a shorter wooden round beams, (175.5M x 35cm; 1.60M x 35cm) with pinion like carvings in their neck (pl.XXXXVI, b) which fit to one another to act as rollers for extracting sugarcane juice.

Different types of boats such as barnāo, caranāo, pāncoi, baykali siku, jāpnāo citapāti, bilaicārā magarmuri, kapikal and other canoes were manufactured. A tank at Borpatharuaagon in Golaghat is found with a large wooden post which is in situ. This post was found with relief of lotus and bird. Wooden beams, posts, doors, windows, ventilators were carved with floral and animal motifs. Wooden litters, known as dolā, are carved with motifs of lion, peacock, magara, and painted with colourful floral ornamentation in indigenous dye e.g. hengool (vermilion) and haital (yellow arsenic).

Bedsteads called pāleng, are provided with decorations. Stylistically, the head of a pāleng is decorated with scroll patterns depicting lion, lotus and other
floral motifs. Often single blocks of timber were neatly and skillfully carved as playing boats, boxes, pirā, tāmulipirā, gasā, kariā of big and smaller sizes. Besides, wheels, various handles, tulachālani, perā, barperā were carved. Caskets both ovoid shaped and lotus featured (pl. XXXVI, c) are found. Among other wooden objects barpirā, paguri temā, sālpirā, hātaniperā, Ural were carved.

Although wood carving developed in Assam in general and in the Valley in particular, as a branch of the mainstream of Indian art, it had its own distinctiveness. During the early mediaeval period, wood carving in the Valley contributed to the development of regional school of art centering at Duboroni. The valley yielded quality timber, essential for wood carving and carpentry. Under the Ahom rule, Kāth Katyā Baruās were employed to collect wood in the Valley. There were villa settlers Pāiks engaged in cutting wood.

Wood carvers were called bārbai and khanikar. A section of khanikars is said to have settled in the Valley in the Nagajori khanikar gaon at Sarupathar, whose forfathers once worked for the Ahom kings and the Vaisnava Sattras. The Khanikars are selective in the use of timber of different trees for different types of carvings. As a part of sophistication, certain objects were carved in lathe, a method locally called Kundatdiya. Such a method was also taken up to infuse the object with indigenous pigment of hengool and haital with help of the hot brunt of cane. This process locally called repiyā or rewadiya, provides fine durable polish to the objects.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. This wooden figure of Viṣṇu was found by Sri Babul Deb, while reexcavating an old tank near Borpathar college, in 1971, since the sculpture was in mud of the tank it withstand the withering effect considerably. However, the natural denudation of last centuries reveal in its plank.


4. It is reported that, mortar, bedstead, chest alters, and creeper designed ventilators are carved from gomāri (gmelina arborea, roxb) tree.

5. Śrī Śrī Elengi Modarguri Sattra, Dhekial in Golaghat preserves wooden figures of Brahmat, Hanumān, Garuḍa, Jaya and Vijoya and others.

6. This figure of Garuḍa was collected from Sri Jogen Mahanta Birinasoyek, Titabor, by this author to the Directorate of Archaeology Assam Jorhat Branch, and donated to Jorhat District Museum.

7. This elongated figure of Garuḍa is preserved at Śrī Śrī Ouguri Sattra Oating in Golaghat.

8. This figure is found with Sri Anil Kumar Goswami, Dhekial.

9. This caturbhuja figure of Viṣṇu is preserved in Jorhat District Museum.

10. Two manuscript boxes (47.3 x 17 x 20 cm and 40 x 17 x 15.5 cm) with paintings of the dasavatāra figures of Viṣṇu are preserved in Śrī Śrī Elengi Modarguri Sattra in Dhekial. Such a manuscript box (44 x 18 x 15 cm) is found with Sri Benu Bora, Bongaon at Rohdhola in Golaghat.

11. This pair of sugarcane pressure was found with Sri Bhugedhar Bhuyan, Nogra, P.O. Oating, which were collected by the present author for the Directorate of Archaeology Assam. Jorhat Branch on 2.2.90 (Reg No. GLGT/ASM/3640 and GLGT/ASM/3641 dtd. 4.5.90) and donated to the Jorhat District Museum.
12 B.C. Allen, *op.cit* pp. 128-29.

13 B.C. Handique, *op.cit.* pp. 61-64.

14 This carved wooden post was first noticed by the late Hema Mahanta of *Sri Sri Gazala Sattra*, Rupkalia Gaon, Golaghat. The post is in situ.

15 An ovoid shaped casket (8.5 x 9 cm) was collected from Sri Sarat Buragohain Titabor by this author for the Directorate of Archaeology Assam Jorhat Branch (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/3067 dated 4.2.88) and donated to Jorhat District Museum. A lotus type casket (6 x 5 cm) was collected from Sri Mukul Mahanta, Titabor, by this author, for the Directorate of Archaeology Assam (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2962 dated 4.10.87) and now donated to Jorhat District Museum.


18 *Reponidiya* or *rewadiya* is a wood carver's process of application of lac mixed with *hengool* and *haital*, to rounded objects by drawing the object backward and forward with a downward pressure of application of the pigment with the help of cane, Ilemchandra Borua; *Hema Kosha*, An Etymological Dictionary of the Assamese Language, Saka 1814, p. 823.
Remains of ivory art exist in the Valley are, like those found in other parts of Assam, and datable to the late mediaeval period. A Kachari king is said to have sent to Ahom king 500 rhino horns and a pirā finished with ivory2. A distinct Assamese ivory art tradition1 developed under the patronage of the Ahom kings, remnants of which are now found in the Valley, mostly as family heirlooms. The Ahom king patronised a special class of ivory carvers, called the khanikaras, who solely worked for the Ahom kings, and obtained free grant of land. These artists made very fine mats, hand-fans, hand scratchers of ivory1. Two ivory combs (pl. XXXVI, d) carved by the Ahom royal artist, Bahadur gāoñi burha or Bahadil gāoñi burha4 exist in the Valley5. Of these, the smaller (3 x 3cm) comb is coloured in crimson red. The larger comb (218 x 5.5 cm) is pure white with 22 miniature motifs of peacock and crescent moon or new moon of Islamic ramjān. The comb has a beauty of its own natural hue.

Kākai (comb) of various styles have been found. A simple decorative type is found at Golaghat (pl. XXXVII,a)6. An elongated variety of kākoi (18x4 cm) with gazavāla motif is found at Jalukonibari in Titabor7. The elephant has been depicted in natural gesture but, the crouching lion is shown larger than that of the elephant (pl. XXXVII, b). This variety of Kākoi was used as decorative hair pin by the Assamese women.

A specimen of mākoē, (35 x 2.5cm) or shuttle used in loom for weaving cloth is found at Borpathar (pl.XXXVII, c)7. A pair of ivory caskets, used to keep ornaments and other precious objects, are found at Muhuramukh in Kamargaon8. The caskets (3 x 4.5 cm ; 6 x 7cm) show that their height are less than their width. (pl.XXXVII,d)
Pawns and stick of pashākhel, were also made of ivory. We have noticed six buffalo horn and nine ivory pawns of pashākhel at Dergaon (pl. XXXVIII,a). The horn makes one set of chessman, the ivory the other. A kind of table used in the gaming on which four persons play with men and dice. The sticks marked with dots at ends are played to advance the chessman on the board, according to number obtained.

A piece of pithikhajuā or back scratcher (pl. XXXVIII,b) is found at Dergaon. This scratcher (45 x 4.5 cm) has an intricate part skillfully designed by joining together four peacock motifs to acquire flexibility while scratching. The palm of the scratcher beautifully carved. The other end is finished with a motif of magara.

Some knives were provided with ivory hilt. An ivory handled (19 x 3 cm) ḍāḥ kotāry (pl. XXXVIII,c) is found at Borpatharua gaon Golaghat. When folded the hilt of this knife serves as cover to the sharp edge. The blunt edge of the knife is finished with gold. The ivory hilt of this knife has a yellowish red colour. It seems that a technique of colouring ivory was known.

A pair of elephant models have been found at Titabor. Both the elephants are of the same size (12 x 8 cm) and stylistically similar. Figures of animals, such as elephants, fish and drawings of creepers and flowers are common subject of ivory carving in Assam; evidence of which are found in the Valley.
Notes and References:

5. *Ivory works of Bahadur Gaonburha are now preserved by Md. Mustafizur Rahman at Birina Soek, Titabor. Reg. No. JRT/ASM 2966-67 Dtd. 4-11-87.*
6. *This Kākoi is found with Sri Amulya Saikia, Golaghat. Reg. No. SBR/ASM/991 Dtd. 10-12-82.*
7. *This mākoe is found with Shri Chandan Bora, Borpathar. Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2068 Dtd. 5.12.84.*
8. *The pair of ivory caskets are found with the late Mohini Rajkumari the grand daughter of Konchong Barpatra Gohain.*
10. *The ivory pawns and stick are found with Sri Rohini Vallav Goswami, Dergaon.*
12. *This back scratcher is found with Shri Rohini Vallav Goswami Dergaon Reg. No. JRT/ASM/1399, Dtd. 4.1.84.*
13. *The Ivory handled knife is found with the late Narayan Chandra Dutta Borpatharu Gaon, Golaghat, Reg. No. JRT/ASM/2079, Dtd. 2.1.85.*
14. *This pair of ivory elephants are heirlooms of Shri Ratnadhar Phukan of Titabor, Reg. No. JRT/ASM/3070-71, Dtd. 4.2.88.*
C. PAINTINGS

1. MANUSCRIPT PAINTINGS

The antiquity of manuscript paintings in the Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley is obscure. Manuscript paintings now found are similar to those available in other parts of Assam, and belong to the mediaeval period. These can be classified into three groups as follows:

TAI-BUDDHIST PAINTINGS:

The Tai-Buddhist Paintings are found in a number of Tai manuscripts of the Theravadi Buddhist religion. Three illustrated Tai manuscripts, written in paper (tulapat)

Of the illustrated manuscripts a copy of kin kārita in Tai script was found at Borpathar. Two folios of this manuscript are only illustrated. All illustrations are done in black colour in a style more akin to folk. The text narrates a jataka and a story of king, King Karit. A figure of Buddha is illustrated in its first page and the story of the jataka is depicted in the rest. Paintings are of religious order.

A few coloured paintings (65 x 43 cm) are contained in another manuscript called Mohochatta, a jataka story of a king named Pinchanarige, and the deeds of his clever primeminister Mohochatta, in Tai Aiton language and script. It describes how Mohochatta cleverly deceived the commander in-chief of the king of Witcharige. The paintings depict different phases of war (pl. XXXVIII,d). Other depictions found are those of coconut tree, bird, a hybrid female figure with tail of fish. The colour used primarily are red, brown.
black, white and blue. Human and semi-divine figures, physiognomical features of slim elongated contour, expressed in long hands and fingers and round faces are noticeable. The mukuta with triangular vertical projection similar to those found in mediaeval stone sculptures are noticed.

Another manuscript called Phung Chin (59 x 32 cm) in Tai Aiton script and language, with altogether 29 paintings is found at Duboroni Shyam gaon in Barpathar (pl. XXXIX,a) Phungchin describes Theravada conception of sixteen heavens and sixteen hells. Transmigration of the soul has been described in this manuscript and each concept has been illustrated. The illustrations are finely depicted in violet, pink, yellow, brown, and black on a gray background. This copy of Phungchin seems to belong to a later date of A.D. 1800. The Shan style of painting continued by the Buddhist communities in South East Asia immediately contiguous to the borders of Assam have direct bearing on these painting traditions.

VAISHNAVITE MANUSCRIPT PAINTINGS:

Quite a few specimens of the Vaishnavite manuscript paintings done in sancipat (acquillaria agallocha), which form a speciality of Assamese manuscript, are found in the lower part of the Valley.

These manuscript paintings, in miniature form of book illustration seem to have evoked a new trend. It embodies projection of native traditions, depicted in native landscape, flora and native socio-cultural life, as revealed in local variation of dress, ornaments, hairdress, introduction of local garments for ladies, and native customs, of the contemporary Assamese Society. These manuscripts deal with the subject matters primarily drawn from the Bhagavata, the Ramayana, Kirttana, Ghosā, and Daśama. The paintings seem to have nourished a native art tradition that forms a separate style of late mediaeval Indian painting.
A *Sundarakāṇḍa Rāmāyaṇa*, with total of 74 folios of *sāncipāt* (pl. XXXIX,b) of 46 x 12.5cm has been found at Birinasek in Titabor[1]. The paintings of the manuscript begins with an illustration which depict Rama and Sita moving towards the forest with Laksmana. The artist pays considerable attention to the painting of monkeys depicting them as thoughtful over the question of crossing over the sea to Lanka. Portraits of banaras like Angada, Jambuvāna, Neela, Nala, Hanumāna, Sugriva are seen. Picturisations of wit and wisdom of fury and friendship, of fickleness and determination of monkeys, are found to be a strong source of inspiration for artists of these manuscript paintings.

In folio No. 3 and 4, the bānas have been painted on red background depicting intense curiosity, and a state of helplessness in their facial expression. This psychological aspect dominates in pictorisation of the varied position of hands, tails, eye-sight and grief striken movement of the bānas in the painting of this manuscript.

Folio No. 7 depicts Hanumāna flying over to Latika. Consciousness of the artist in painting a sea below by drawing of a whale, sea plants, sea animals, an octopus scrimmaging another sea animal indicate the artists’ clear conception about the sea. Painting of Maināka and the sea-god stylistically done in background of the water of sea. The killing of the sea demoness Asharika the flowing of blood from her mouth and providing a narrow strip of garment to her waist and thigh, reflect the ability of the artist. The demonic nature and ferocity of some creators depicted in some folios are emphasised by providing snake like tongues, heads of bear, elephants, horses and other animals to the figures of the rakṣasas. Folios depicting Sita being guarded by demons, Ravana sleeping with his wife Mandodari, the construction of a path (*setu*) over the sea to Lanka, Rama and Laksmana being carried on shoulder by bānas to the *setu* and conversation of the bānas deserve mention.

The folios in the beginning are provided with a red background, and the later folios are provided with green background. Other colours used are
yellow, white, light green, black blue and brown. A fair degree of similarity between Ravana and his wife Mandodari of this manuscript, with those depicted in Lava-Kusar Yuddha of Harihara Vipra, preserved in the Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti, at Guwahati, is noticed. On the basis of this similarity, and other stylistical considerations this manuscript may be dated to c. 1700 A.D. 

A copy of Bhagavata skanda, (chapter) X was collected from Golaghat to the Kamarupa Anusadhan Samiti, Guwahati. The manuscript 48x13cm a metrical Assamese rendering by Sankardeva (A.D. 1449-1568) from the Sanskrit original of the Bhagavata, skanda X, deals with the birth and exploits of Kṛṣṇa and his various miraculous activities. This manuscript is the first part of the Xth skanda, and is known as Ādya Daśam. The manuscript is partly damaged and painted in Raja saka 1687, by 'Ruchibapu'.

A minimum of space has been provided for the illustrations (pl. XXXIX.,c) which are of very simple nature. Out of 198 folios of the work 73 folios are painted. The scripts of the painted folios are found to be different from the unpainted folios. Most of the paintings appear in plain background. In several respects the limitation of the artist in executing proper physiognomy in proportion to their hands and other limbs of the figures are noticed. Another copy of Bhagavata skanda X has been found at Dergaon. This manuscript in sancipat (46.5 x 10.5 cm) has altogether 2472 verses and was compiled in saka era 1727, by one Krishna Das. The border a few folios in the beginning of the manuscript are colourfully decorated with creeper designs known locally as 'latākata puthi.' This is done in black pigment. Paintings have been done in red, blue, yellow, and on the bare background of the folios, by using such colour as black, red, yellow, and green. The use of black colour was confined to represent such scenes like Putanābadha Kāliyadamana etc. The folios towards the end are found illustrated on plain background of natural hue of the folios. The depiction of mukuta with dentical feature. Kosāpatiyā pāg similar to mughal headgear, and hair knot tied over the head are seen as headdresses.
Folio No. 33 and 73 depict a musical group playing musical instruments like cymbal, drum and dancing. Local influence is found reflected in the depiction of smoking device. Depiction of cow, human figure in simple outline project folk treatment to the illustrated folios of this Bhagavata.

A copy of *dalama* (50 x 15.5 cm) manuscript (pl. XXXIX,d) has been found at Dhekial17 in Golaghat with paintings done in four folios. The illustrations depict altogether eight incarnations of Viṣṇu. They are: Vāmana, Nṛsiṁha, Parasurāma, Śrī Ram, Hālirama, Matsya kurma, and Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu. Originally, this manuscript was with Śrī Nalia Hazarika, who handed over it to Śrī Petua Bora in the year 1963. The paintings have been bestowed a gentle touch on a pale yellowish background. All the figures are amiable in their outlines and painted in simple disposition, which provide them with charm, beauty and a calmness18. The work is dated to Śaka era 1736 as found in the colophone.

A *Kirttana* (39 x 14.5 cm) is found at Nogora in Golaghat19. This manuscript is said to have been compiled by two unmarried sisters of Guwahati in the śaka era 1722. The total number of folios are 186, and most of the folios have half page illustrations. The employment of two types of scripts could be found, which possibly suggests employment of two scribes and the difference is observed from folio No. 127.

The illustration of Prahlāda Caritra, and Gajendra Upākhyana depict natural life. The first half of the manuscript has a background more akin to the Royal court tradition in depicting headdress, buildings, and general background. But this is relinquished in the next half in favour of a style which is more native and folk. From folio No. 146 local variations of dress, hair design, ornaments, showing of flowers in hairstyle, introduction of native garments for ladies are depicted in the background of a native texture and landscape 20 (pl. XL,a).

The only illustrated manuscript found in *tulāpāṭ* or ginned cotton paper is a *Kirttana* (37 x 15.5 cm) of which only twenty folios now exist. The
available folios depict subjects like Grāha Gagendra, Hiranaksya and Prabhāda, Ajāmila-Upākhyān and Haramohana. The paintings are done on red background with other colours of yellow, green, red, gray & black (pl. XI.h). Some folios have two illustrations. The paintings could be dated to late A.D. 1700. Kīrttana seems to have become a popular subject of painting for the artist. We have found six folios of a Kīrttana (44.5 x 12.5 cm) which seems to belong to A.D. 1900.

Evidence of an illustrated yantra manuscript is found in nine illustrated saci folios, (49 x 13.5 cm) at śrī śrī Na-Gosāin Sattra in Dergaon, with illustration of altogether 74 Yantras. Red, yellow, black, white, and green colours are found to have been used meticulously in the illustration of the yantras (pl. XL,c) in yellowish background of the folios. Besides illustration of a Sarvatobhodramaṇḍala other illustrations of yantras such as Tārā, Annapūrṇā, Śiva, Kuṇḍina, Mūrtinjay, Gopāla, Nṛsinha, Rāma, Ganeśa, Bhairava, Bāla-Gopāla, Kāli Bagalāmukhibi, VarāhaTripura-Bhairavi, Caitanya, Sat Kuta, hatuka, Garuda, Śmaśāna Kāli, Dhanadā, Tārini, Manju Ghosha, Vana Durgā, Bhudanesvari, Hanumān, Śrī Vidya etc are found. The illustration of a number of kūṇḍas such as Vṛitta, Tyatsra, Ardhaçandra, Yoni, Padma, are also found in the folios.

The manuscript seems to be a part of a complete work, and no date or colophone is found. It seems to belong to A.D. 1800.

Secular Manuscript Painting:

Of this category, the only manuscript (43.5 x 10 cm) found is the Gajendra Cintāmani at Birina soek (pl. XL,d) in Titabor. This manuscript has 77 folios out of which 15 folios pictorise a total of 122 numbers of elephants. Each folio pictorises 4 elephants with the exception of one folio, which has illustrations of 6 elephants. The other 42 folios have the text. The manuscript is dated śaka era 1533. Two illustrated folios are reported to have
been lost. It is probable that this manuscript had illustrations of altogether 145 elephants or more. Because, we have reference of 148 kinds of tuskers followed by 11 types of female elephants in Assam, with their distinct behaviours and characteristics to train them up for various uses. The use of various colours such as white, black, blue, red, brown, light pink and grey to illustrate the figures of elephants on background of blue, black and green are noticed. Physiognomical disimilarity of the elephants with one another is noticeable. Description of each species in respect of its physical bearing mental make-up and treatment of diseases and various ailments are found in the text of the manuscript.

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:

Materials for compilation and painting of manuscripts called pathis are procured locally from nature and worked out in an indigenous process by the artists known as Khanikara. E.A. Gait, gives a detailed account of preparation of saci folios from the bark of saci or agaru tree (acuillaria agallocha) by removing its alkali content in water and records application of a paste of matimah (phaseolus radiatus) and drying of smooth bark by means of yellow arsenic, before they are rubbed as smooth as marble to write and paint upon. Most of the manuscripts found in the Valley are compiled on saci bark although tulapāt or ginned cotton papers are also found used for painting.

Preparation of tulapāt seems to have entered Assam with the Tai Ahoms and other Tai communities. To prepare tulapāt shoots of jari tree (Ficus form) or Sānci tree (acquillaria agallocha) are split, ground and boiled in strong alkali to make them soft. These are ground into smooth soft pulp and spread over a textile fitted in wooden frame. With the help of a scrapper, the pulp is dipped in water to get the required shape of paper with even surface. It was then left dry and further smoothed by rubbing seeds of ghilātree (Entada Scandens). R. Dasgupta records the use of Yamon and Nuni tree to prepare tulapāt in a similar process. Verrier Elwin describes another 'Sukso' plant as 'Paper tree'.

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The common colour found in these manuscripts, such as, red, blue, white, yellow, green, black were derived from natural plants, a few specimens of these are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Ancbu tree (Morinda Augustafolia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lochan (Mallotus Phillippinesis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gongaiguti (Mueli - arg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majathi (Nubia cordi folia linn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bhomroti (Symplocos xyphylla)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick red</td>
<td>Seed of Jarath (Bixa orelena linn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Seed of Godbuli gopal (Milabilis jaipa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Root of Pulikanit (Cudrania cochinchiensis (lour) Masam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Halodhi (Curcuma domestica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray</td>
<td>Khoira tree (Acacia catechlu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Silikha (Terminalia Chebula Zets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeds of Bholatree (semecarpur anacardium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rom tree (Strobilan thus flacecidifolus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack tree (Artocarpus heterophylla)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other materials used in painting are gerumati (yellow ochre) white, clay lamp black besides, hengool (vermilion), and haital (yellow arsenic) a. Paste of egg and dbekiā (Gleichenia glauca) dboturaguti are used as adhesive. The ink was prepared with the main ingredient of Silikha (Terminalia-Chebula) mixed with urine of the bull, sap of earthworm, iron waste and blood of a variety of fish known as Kuchiā with which dark coloured indelible ink was
prepared. Dried *silikha* seed (*Terminalia Chebula*) has been used as dye in India from the earliest times, and in combination of salt of iron produces an excellent black. The Khanikaras were also aware of the preservation of the manuscript paintings, because, extraction of alkali from the sac folio, prevented natural decay, application of *bāitāl* (yellow orsenic) possibly acted as insecticide. While preparing the pigment, seed of thorny plant known as *Letāgutī* (*cesal pinia bondusila*) and the sap of *mohā neem* (*miliaazadirachta*) and the urine of bull are mixed. The ink derived from *silikha* is said to be free from attacks of insects. The content of the sap of earth worn in ink made the scripts of the manuscripts readable even under the light of earthen lamp. The Khanikars used the stem of *dhekiā* (*gleichnia glauca*) reeds of *khāgori* (*pragmites karka*) feather of kite, fur from the tail of squirrel, and otter as brushes. Besides, bamboo reed, and small metallic rod, were also used as writing tool.
Notes and References:


2. Small communities of Tai Aitons and Tai Turungs, of the Valley maintain Buddha Vihara in their villages where Tai Manuscripts are found.

3. This copy of *King Kārīta* was collected by Sri Nabin Chandra Shyam Phalung from the Buddha vihara of Duboroni, Shyamgaon, and deposited to the *DHAS* Guwahati, Assam.


5. The illustrated *Mobochatta* is found with Nang Ali Thowmung of Duboroni, Shyamgaon, Borpathar, Golaghat. Details of painting are known from Sri Nabin Chandra Shyam, Guwahati.

6. This copy of *phung chin* is found with Sri Saikhong Thumunglung of Duboroni Shyamgaon, Borpathar. A similar copy of *phung jeng*, is available at Namphakey Buddhist temple at Naharkotta, Dibrugarh.


8. These painted manuscripts are similar to the other illustrated manuscripts of Assam.

9. E.A. Gait, *op.cit.*, Appendix, d.

10. S.K. Chatterjee, *op.cit.*, p. 57,


12. This copy of *Sundarākanda Rāmāyana* found with Sri Jogen Chandra Mahanta, of Bharaluwa Gaon. Birināsāyek, Titabor, was collected by
this author for the Jorhat Branch of the Directorate of Archaeology, Assam, (Reg.No.JRT/ASM/2657-2798 dated 3.12.86) and has been handed over to the Jorhat District Museum.

13 This observation of this author on the illustrated *Sundarākānda Ramayāṇa* was published in the Assam Tribune, the Sunday Reading, Vol.L, No. 351, 25th December, 1988.

14 This copy of *Ādyā Daśām* manuscript was presented by Sri Pepuram Medhi, Bengena khowa Golaghat, and collected by Sri Ramchandra Das of Sundaridiya Sattra of Borpetta on 28-5-31 and is now preserved in Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti (Sl. No. 156/P-17) Photograph: Courtesy, Secretary, Kamrupa Anusandhan Samity.


16 This copy of the *Bhāgavata* Skanda X has been found with Sri Prafulla Kakoti of Tekela Borua Gaon, Dergaon. (Reg. No. GI GT/ASM/3722 to 3778 dated 3.9.90, GLGT/ASM/3781-3787 dated 4.11.90).

17 This *Daśām* is found with Sri Petua Bora of Borting Naosaliya gaon, (Reg. No. JRT/ASM, 1344-1348, dated 4.1.84)


19 This *Kirttana* is found with the late Jibon Chandra Mahanta of Nogota, in Golaghat, (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/1435-1782 dtd. 4.1.84)


21 This *Kirttana* is found with Sri Rohini Vallav Goswami of Sri Nagosam Sattra, Dergaon (Reg. No. GIST/ASM/4241-4256 dtd. 5.9.93)

22 A number of ten illustrated folis of *Kirttana* were recovered by this writer from Sri Madan Kalita of Jorhat on 21.1.84. These folio (Reg. No. JRT/ASM/1879-1889 dated 4.7.84) have been handed over to Jorhat District Museum Jorhat. These paintings seem to belong to A.D. 1900.
This illustrated *Yantra* manuscript is found with Sri Rohini Vallav Goswami of *Śrī Śrī Na-Gosain Sattrā*, Dergaon (Reg. No. GLGT/ASM/4251-4257 dated 5.9.93)

This manuscript is found with Sri Suresh Rajkhowa, Vill. Birina Soyek, Titabor (Registered (JRT/ASM/2811-2840) This manuscript is a family heirloom of Tiwananda Dihingia Phukan who was the first Rajkhowa of Bossa-Doiyang under Ahom King.


E.A. Gait, *op.cit.*, Appendix-D.


Verrer Elwin, *The Art of North Eastern Frontier of India*, 1959 P. 70

Hemendranath Dutta *op.cit.*, P.85.

Kapila Vatsyayan & Moheswar Neog, *Gita Govinda* 1986 P. 7


