CHAPTER EIGHT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Local Name</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
<th>Medium/media</th>
<th>Availability &amp; Location/placement</th>
<th>Persons involved (specific)</th>
<th>Function or role</th>
<th>Function or role in the past</th>
<th>Function or role in the present</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>URĀL</td>
<td>Mortar and pestle.</td>
<td>Wood.</td>
<td>Locally.</td>
<td>SUPAKAR</td>
<td>It is used to grind rice for making cake. Rice cakes are used as offering.</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>CHOWĀR</td>
<td>A tuft of Yak hairs with a small handle.</td>
<td>Hair and wooden handle.</td>
<td>Market.</td>
<td>CHOWĀRI, deity.</td>
<td>It is used to welcome the deity by waving.</td>
<td>The SEVĀTE - CHOWĀRI handled this.</td>
<td>Any person associated with the temple can handle this.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
TIME, TEMPLE, SOCIETY AND MATERIAL CULTURE

Already mentioned that no culture comes out of vacuum, each has its antecedent and this we decipher through the material or non-material evidences. Very often we say of culture change, culture dynamics and civilization. While saying of such thing, one question that lurks in our mind how old or ancient the culture or cultural materials are, that we are dealing with. This leads to the quest of our past against the time dimension.

Time is a concept, it is reckoned always on some tangible or non-tangible phenomena. And such phenomena are written records or literature or history or material creation like the archaeological monuments and objects. And these come to our rescue while ascertaining the time depth of our culture or civilization.

Same problem we experience while dealing with the cultural heritage of Assam. Here in Assam there are many temples distributed over the vast areas of this province. They came into existence at different depths of time as is evidenced from their differences in stylistic formation. Each style stands for cultural ingenuity of the people who built the temple. The temples are the part of religious codes and each forms a socio-economic system of its own. In this system the relative position of the service groups are maintained, sometime this through their rigid involvement of non-material or material
culture. The co-ordination is maintained at both the levels through the classical codes.

With the change of time, some of them have lost their existence and some of them continue to the contemporary time plane cruising past the onslaught of time. Changes may be there over the time, but to what extent? This needs to be deciphered. But this may not be denied that that central force of classical code has not undergone major changes still today, it underwater the socio-religious or cultural life of India. Assam is not exception to that. This becomes more applicable to the area brought under the present study.

When we view the stylistic features of the temples of Assam, we see some temples have got collapsed and their pieces are lying hither and thither, some new ones are built on the original plinth and some stand in the same manner as were in the historic past (i.e. in the same style built during that period). Some are being reconstructed by the Assam state Archaeological Department and Archaeological Survey of India.

The temples of Assam appear to have borne the similar basic North Indian features of the Nagara style (Sarma, 1988:VII). According to Sarma though they are of the Northern Indo-aryan style, regional influences on them are easily traceable. The old temples now in existence found in the towns of Hajo, Guwahati, Biswanath and Sibsagar were constructed during the Ahom period. These temples show in some features the Ahom style of architecture which are regional features. The Kamakhya, the Hayagriva Madhava and Mura Dewar temples located at Guwahati, Hajo and in the district of
Darrang respectively were built during the reign of Koch kings. These temples show high architectural proficiency of the Koches (Sarma, 1988:4).

Some temples like Gupteswar of the district Darrang, Madan Kamdev of Guwahati, Pingaleswar of North Guwahati show the style of architecture of the Pala dynasty of Assam. Jayasagar groups of temple, Fakua Daul of Rangpur, Gaurisagar groups of temples, Sibasagar groups of temple, Rudreswar temple were built during the reign of Ahom kings. The probable time fixed for them is eighteenth century A.D. (Sarma, 1988:7) Ruins of Guwahati region, Manikarneswar temple, Majgaon ruins, Bamun pahar ruins, ruins of Singri region, Deopani ruins belong to post Gupata period. Most of the architectural features are almost akin to central India than Orissa. Sikhara of this period was domical like that of Khajuraho but not pyramidal like that of Orissa (Sarma, 1988:6).

As mentioned when we view the temple against the prospect of time and space in Assam, some of them have become object of archaeological past. They retain the socio-cultural dimensions and technological development in a frozen form. Temples like Hajo, Kamakhya and others exist in the contemporary time plan as the living representative of archaeological island. Of that we have placed more importance on Hajo because, it still retains such a socio-economic and socio-religious condition that pivot round the temple and is underpinned by classical code. The influence of classical code felt so much, it appears that the hectic heel of the time does not move at the same
pace as it does to its neighbourhood, It is a situation where past tradition exists in present without undergoing major changes.

It creates cultural ecology of its own. When a man enters into the system of the temple, he dips into the past. He unifies himself with the past system. And this happens as the socio-economic system centering round this temple acts in the same manner as it did during the past.

We have carved out the Hayagriva Madhava temple as a central part of the present problem of study. Other temples are not left out; as each forms small system (as part) within a bigger system.

Temples were built first with material item. Icon of deity was first erected by somebody. To preserve the deity, temple was built on it. In case of the Hayagriva Madhava temple also the same thing might have happened. It seems that the temple was constructed after erecting the deity and the deity was made on the basis of myths and legends.

Wherever there is temple in India it is seen that socio-economically it forms a cultural complex that works independent of modern economy and cultural influence. For example the temple complex of Kashi, Gaya, Puri may be juxtaposed here.

Time no doubt introduces economic change in the functioning pattern of the temple but it has not touched upon the central theme of socio-economic condition based on classical code. In Assam as well this seems to be a reality, flexibility is also
observed, but that does but affect the very central part of classical system. Here classical
code extends its limit to encompass the other traditions with their simple economic
system and integrate them with this complex system. None of the tradition came in
confrontation with this economy as the peoples say. Classical codes made them maintain
their relative position distinctly from one another and make them integrate with religio-
economic system of the temple in an efficient manner.

Now let us examine the present socio-economic scenario of the
temple Hayagriva Madhava against temporal and spatial prospective.

If we examine the structure and function of the temple, it is seen that there
exists a meticulous and balanced relationship among the service groups, the material
culture, pilgrims and the ritualistic calendars. It was in a manner as follows. The classical
code determines the requirements of the temple, the requirements are initially material
based (as is shown in chapter 7). The material items related to the requirements of the
temple may be categorised into two - one is permanent in nature and second one
temporary but regular. The former includes the deities, and the utensils used in the para-
phernalia for worshipping and the other related to ritual (e.g. *CHATRA*, Palanquin, Stick,
*UDHAN* etc.) and the latter ones are pottery, flowers, garlands of *TULASHI, DHUPA*
deities’ cloth, firewood, branches of mango tree for *HOMA* etc.

For each of such regularly required materials for performing worship, a
particular occupational/service groups became an inexorable part of the temple.
each group has become economically interdependent; thus forming a economic matrix centering the temple. They became a part of the temple complex.

The material items used in the temple follow a kind of hierarchical order in respect of their involvement. This may be illustrated through the example of the TULASHI garlands. Here we see different varieties of production having distinct function and specific involvement. Involvement of each type of garland is determined by the ritualistic calendar of the temple. All rituals are not equally auspicious, that is why the production of garlands varies and the items receive hierarchical attribution. This determines the quantum of production of garland in accordance with the needs.

Same is the case for other material cultural items like pottery, DHUPA, branches of mango tree for HOMA, TULASHI leaves, flowers, earthen lamps, Jar etc. In fact each item in temple has an occupational/service group of its own responsible for each production. This has been discussed in the chapter 5.

The occupational/service groups which are already referred to were peasant (as revealed from the information given). The productions of such items were their secondary occupation. And this secondary occupation stands for each occupational/service group as their social identity, hierarchical position among the peasant and caste structure respectively. This was discussed with reference to the material culture, occupational/service group and their economic counterpart.

One group opposes another in the sphere of their production of the
material items and their involvement with the temple structure. A Malakar makes his relative position distinct from a Brahmin or from a potter by virtue of the fact that he does not transgress into another's occupational jurisdiction. This jurisdiction is determined by birth or in other words the concept of occupational determinism by birth keeps one group away from another. But this does not mean that each can puncture its relation from one another at its will. Specialization in material cultural production definitely gives birth to specialization among the material cultural items but when such specialization comes into being this gives rise to deficiency among the occupational/service groups and hence this deficiency gives birth to a kind of bartering among the affluence groups as well (Roy, 1992:231). This deficiency makes each and every group to be interdependent. And this is cemented by the classical code in an unseen manner in a very active and strong manner even today. Economic change around the temple has already set in but that does not hit the innercode core of the temple and its structure effectively. The important fact that the deity worship does not come to the socio-economic picture, it is important how each occupational/service group with their material production got themselves involved with the system of the temple. What appears at the moment that socio-economic and socio-religious system under the classical code are charged with centripetal and centrifugal force.

The whole system centering round the temple rests on the interrelationship between the occupational/service groups and pilgrims, who are in other
words economically treated as clients. The clients and the occupational/service groups come under the coverage of classical code. The ritualistic calendar determines and regulates the functional aspect of the temple annually apart from its regular performances. The ritualistic calendar determines or regulate the differential involvement of pilgrims in the temple. This consequently determines the quantum of production of material items needed by the pilgrims. This works in this manner, classical code determines the ritualistic calendar and its functional pattern, this is being transmitted through the pilgrims, the need of the pilgrims at a given time (i.e. ritualistic calendar) is known to the occupational/service groups and their productions reciprocate the needs of the pilgrims. So the pilgrims and the occupational/service groups enter into an intricate economic relation through the dictation of the temple. All act as a cohesive components under the direct or indirect influence of religious code. This works unseen. This unseen bond of religious system makes the occupational/service groups to interact with one another in a balance manner and make its roll on to the present.

The interrelationship amongst some material items deserves our special attention. This gives an idea of the interrelationship between the man and material items inside the temple. This is expressed through the use of KOSHĀ, ARGHA and TĀMI (see table7for description). Their interrelationship has been noticed in order to find out their working mechanism in the temple. KOSHĀ, ARGHA and TĀMI are most unavoidable material items without which priest can not perform worship. Priest is exclusively
involved in this practice. Along with the uttering of MANTRAS (charms) the priest has to offer pure water to deities. It is done following the religious code. Pure water is kept in the KOSHA and it is offered by the ARGHA. Pure water is discharged in the TAMI with the help of ARGHA. Here it is seen that the three material objects are interwoven. These become non-functional when a priest does not operate them. If one material item disappears, it becomes impossible for the priest to operate the system. Here it is observed that these three material items maintain their interrelated existence for specific purposes (during worshipping the deity).

The KOSHA, ARGHA and TAMI are invariably made of copper. This material is ancient and unadulterated in nature and is considered to be ritualistically pure. This concept of purity has made this material cultural item distinct from the others made of alloy material also. From the view point of material purity, it is considered to be higher than that of others.

The moot point I like to draw out here is that the concept of ‘purity and pollution’ has been playing a decisive role in the ‘classical code’ and caste structure. The same concept may have been extended or reflected on the material cultural items as well. That’s why the KOSHA, ARGHA and TAMI because of its material purity assume high status and role and rank higher among the other material cultural items used in the temple.

Here the items are made to work in harmony under the dictation of
religious codes where the priest is exclusively responsible for its operation. In fact, here man and material items work as a functional whole.

The temple follows definite rhythms of functions - one is regular another occasional. Both are important for the service groups as their economic life and activities work in tune with the ritual calendar of the temple. Such calendar determines the relative nature of the involvement and the quantum of production of each service groups and this makes them to exist as an interdependent viable socio-economic unit.

It is already mentioned of the existence of population other than the Hindus like the Islamic population who reached here sometime prior to or after the rebuilt of the temple. But this appears to be a fact that prior to the arrival of the aforesaid population, the area was under the jurisdiction of the temple or religious institution. We do not know exactly what was the original form of such temples. The arrival of Islamic population did not affect the works and activities of the temples. Rather, they indirectly became a part of the temple or the system under the classical code. These become evident from the fact that the Islamic populations have been existing within the sphere of the temple system. They were given land to settle as the other service groups of the temple did. But their involvement with the temple was not regular, they are made to discharge the services to the temple from outside and this reflects even today from the participation of SAUKĀDHARA (stick holder) on a particular occasion when the deities are taken out for procession. Similarly the Marias do not enter the temple but this was
obligatory on their part to repair utensils used in the temple free of cost. Although the system recently ceased to exist, but this survives actively in the memory of the old persons even today. Such persons stand in between past and present and act as a connective and living bridge between historic past and the present.