CHAPTER - 2
ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ŚAKTISM

Kāmarūpa has been regarded as the principal place of Śakti worship from the very ancient times. From the nature, character and appearance of Śakti, it can be easily surmised that the goddesses were pre-historic in origin. There was not a single goddess common to all the non-Aryan tribal groups. But Śiva was the only God worshipped by the tribal people in their own way. He was worshipped in a symbolic way - mostly in general in the form of symbolic or phallus way. Most of the tribes worshipped Śiva in the shape of special type of thorny trees and a kind of cactus or the wood apple tree. They did not have any idea of idol worship. In natural form they worshipped Śiva. Śiva-Śakti was also jointly worshipped by the tribal and the indigenous people of Prāgijyotisha-Kāmarūpa. Lots of sources are available as the evidences of the popular religion of Śiva-Śakti in this land. B.K. Barua in his Cultural History of Kāmarūpa defines that the cult of Mother Goddess or Śakti was not originated in Kāmarūpa but it was well nourished here from the pre-historic times by different tribes at different places with different process. Kāmarūpa was a heap of world culture. The attractive culture of this land was developed due to the admixture of various tribes like the Austrics, Negritos, Bodōs, Kirātas, Drāvidas and the Aryans, migrated

1 Barua B.K. Cultural History of Kamarupa, P- 223.
from different corners of the world such as Indonesian Island, Austria, South and South west of Asia, Indo-Chinā, Himālaya, West of Chinā, Egypt, Babylon. These tribes carried to this land different cultures which enriched Prāgjyotisha- Kāmarūpa. These nomadic races carried the germs of the cult of fertility, similarise with Mother Goddess, Mother cult as Yoni worship in symbolic form. Most of them were matriarchal in nature. So it has been said that roots of Śaktism go back to the pre-historic times as to the fertility cult. The cult of fertility or the worship of phallus- Yōni, was the beginning of the religious system of the Śakti cult. The worship of the phallus, linga and yoni, was personified later on as Śiva and Mother Goddess Śakti. Although the Vedic literatures were silent about Pārvati, they convey the ideas of Śakti referring to the name as Ěshā, Śachi (Indrāṇi) Rūdrāṇi etc. So the historians unanimously remarks that the germs of Śaktism were laid down in the Vedas also.

The inhabitants of Prāgjyotisha- Kāmarūpa migrated from different places of the world, conveying various cultures and they exercised their customs in the newly settled colonies. After the observation of the ancient remainings like various customs, rites and rituals, behaviour among the racial groups, the matter of the origin of Śakti cult is divided into two theories - Divine or Mythological theory and the second one Matriarchal theory.

2 Nath. R.M, Background of the Assamese Culture. P- 1.
Prāgjyotisha - Kāmarūpa has been identified as one of the most sacred and famous place of Śakti cult. Kāmarūpa, unanimously gets recognition as the most powerful and significant Śakti pitha. The available sources furnish us authentic picture regarding the establishment of Śakti cult in the land. In Prāgjyotisha-Kāmarūpa, Śakti has been worshipped in the symbolic form, such as Mother earth in the form of Yōni, and Śiva in the form of Linga. Śakti has been worshipped as Divine energy in various forms on the basis of myths. Different tribes worshipped different Śaktis in different places of Kāmarūpa in the earlier ages, depending on the conception of the social background and behaviour of the local tribes. For the study of the origin and development there is no any authentic data except the traditions, literatures or myths, sculptures and icons.

From the very ancient times the nomadic people had no idea about Śakti or Goddesses. They conceived an idea of primordial Force as its source. The Force conceived as Energy, termed Śakti in Sanskrit⁴ and later it is personified in the form of female. The female principles were personified later on as the Goddesses. The common concept of Śakti is a pan-Indian phenomenon. Although the Vedas traced the idea of Śakti, it is manifested in the Mohenjodārō-Harappā from female figure unearthed there. As the concept of Śakti cult is a pan-Indian phenomenon, so it will be discussed on the Indian concepts.

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⁴ J.A.R.S. VOL- XXXII NO- 1 .2. 1992, p- 1
Prágjyotisha - Kāmarūpa is considered as a great anthropological Museum containing various races like Negritos, Austro - Asiatic Mon - Khmer. Indo - Chinese, Tibeto Burmans, Drávidas, Kirātas, and the Aryāns. The races arrived at Kāmarūpa from South-east Asia, Oceanic world, India and Western countries - Egypt and Babylon with rich culture. The different aboriginal tribes living in various places in Kāmarūpa followed different cultural rites and rituals. They used to worship their deities according to their own customs. They established their own culture in Kāmarūpa carried away from their original land. India was a wild country inhabited by savages and cannibals to whom the conquerors brought the blessings of civilization. The first race of people that came here by sea route with a more or less organized form of society was the Austro-Asiatic or the Austric. R.M. Nath thinks that they settled in Kāmarūpa in about 2750 B.C. They were cultivators and the practice of fertility cult was associated with them. One of the tribes settled in Kāmarūpa was the Austric who were the champion of the matriarchal society or mother-kin-society. Yoni Goddess was sprang up and migrated into Prágjyotisha with the migration of the Austric people. In the ‘Manōbhava Cave’ there was Yōni-mandal in the Nilācala mountain. One of their groups lived on the Nilācala hill and worshipped the Yōni Goddess. Their descendants are now found as an offshoot of the Austrics on the Khāsi Hills - the Khāsis.

6 P.Thomas H.C.P.C, p-3
7 Nath.R.M. Background of Assamese Culture, p-1
8 Kakati B.K. Mother Goddess Kāmākhya, p-49
and the Garos. They were overthrown by Naraka and one of their groups also settled in the Dikkaravāsini. Another group lived in Davakā region where it established women kingdoms named Garûchar and Pramilā and they were also overthrown by the Kirātas to the Khāsi Hills known as Meghālaya today. Nityananda Gogoi refers to the Austrics as the cultural founder of the Neolithic Age. It has also been referred that they were driven out of this place by the most powerful Tibeto-Burmese Borō group to the present Meghālaya Hills. The conception of yoni or Mother Goddess was thus imported from outside in different periods. Naraka’s Kāmākhyā has been patterned on the earlier conception of the Mother Goddess or Yōni Goddess as a primordial deity. The worship of the phallus, in the form of Līnga and Yōni, turned into the worship of Mother Goddess. Originally Kāmākhyā was worshipped by the non-Aryān Austrics and the Kirātas as yoni Goddess, when Naraka founded a kingdom in Kāmarūpa he established himself as the custodian of this Yōni Goddess. The Austric believed that women were related to Earth and further it strengthened the belief that women were favourite to God and so women took an active part in the religious ceremonies as go between between men and God. According to R.M. Nath, at the time of draught, the dancing of a naked woman and at the time of pestilence in crops, the tour of a necked woman round the area considered enough to please the energy God and relief. This

9 Gogoi N.Buranjye Parasa Visvanath Prantar, p-10
10 Kakati,.B.K.mother Goddess Kamakhya p-33
11 Ibid p-37
12 Nath R.M, Background of Assamese Culture p-9
Austric belief has been assimilated in various Hindu customs like Deo-Dhai, a dedicating woman to the God of a temple continued upto the Austric culture\(^\text{13}\). So the women were respected as the representatives to God. In the Indus Valley Ring stones were discovered which has been regarded as the symbol of women organs or symbol of Yōni\(^\text{14}\). In Bisvanāth of Kāmarūpa there existed a lot of Śaila holes called Śaila - Kūṇḍa which were regarded as the symbol of Śakti. People worship Īmā and Cāndi in the symbol of Śaila Kūṇḍa (Hole on the Rock). The exploration of Phūlbāri, Gārō hills have revealed the practice of Śakti cult of the Gārōs who is regarded as matriarchal groups, belong to 10\(^{th}\) – 11\(^{th}\) century. As a sign of regards to Śakti the Gārōs made their houses on the Yōni stone or Ring stones as they had faith in Yōni\(^\text{15}\).

Yōni worship was prevailed among the non-Aryan tribes from the primordial times and it took its existence among the Aryān tribes during Tantra age\(^\text{16}\). Yōni worship was prevailed in different places in the contemporary world from the remote period. Towards the east of Asia, in a province of Yeddō of Jāpān, there was discovered a vast Yōni symbol inscribed on a rock in a cave\(^\text{17}\). In west Asia in Syria a religious sect worshipped Yōni, irrespective of class division\(^\text{18}\). So also the worship of Tripūrā Devi

\(^{13}\) Nath R.M, Background of Assamese Culture p- 9


\(^{15}\) Sharma A.K, Rmergence of early culture in N.E, 1995, p- 18

\(^{16}\) Kakati B.K. Purani Kamarupar Dharmar Dhara, p-3

\(^{17}\) Kakati B.K. Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā quoted from O.A.Wall, Sex and Sex worship1923, p 431) p- 36.

\(^{18}\) Ibid p-36
of Tripūra is a kind of Yōni worship. The Yōni worship of Tripūra Bhairavi turned into Kumārī Pujā. Yōni worship was prevailed among the non-Aryan tribes from the primordial times centering the Kāmākhyā as the chief centre of Yōni Worship. In India, many Vāmācāri Śākta sects worshipped Yōni as a symbol of regeneration. The Dakshināchāris draw Yōni picture in a piece of cloth or leaves of trees and worship Yōni with wine, meat, fish, honey etc. without cast distinction. All people joined in the ceremonies. These disciplines prove that Yoni worship was prevalent in the non-Aryan society of Kāmarūpa and in the world. This Yōni worship was compounded to the Mother or Devi worship. Mother Goddess in the Pre-Aryan stage came into light as fertility cult or the cult of phallus worship. So it has been said that the roots of Śaktism go back to pre-historic times to the fertility cult. The cult of fertility or the worship of the phallus was the beginning of the Śakti cult. Phallus or fertility cult is compared to female principle. The phallic worship came to be recognized as representative of the creative and reproductive forces from the pre-Historic times. Agriculture was the invention of woman. The woman was not only the symbol of generation, but the actual producer of life. So the life producing mother was the central figure of religion. The status of mother in the society is considered superior. Mother has been held as an object of

19 Kakati B.K., P.K.DH.DH, p-37.
adoration by the non-Aryan tribal people. Mother rights and position were fully established in the society, so it is believed that Śakti cult was definitely a direct offshoot of the primitive Mother cult. In the pre-Vedic age, therefore, mother right was on a firm footing which necessitated the Aryāns to break the resistance of mother-right. This problem has been treated strictly from economic point of view. The initial stage of agricultural economy created the matriarchal conditions for the social supremacy of the female. S. R. Goyal also supported this opinion and remarks that Śakti cult emerged from the Mother-kin-society. Only those people, who based their social system on the principle of Mother right, worshipped the Mother Goddess (N. N. Bhattacharya, H. S. R 1974, P - 1). R. P. Chanda made a comparative study of Śaktism of India with the world civilizations and held his view that Śaktism arose in India under the same social conditions as those on which Astarte was conceived in Syria, Cybele in Asia Minor and Isis in Egypt - that was in a society where mother-right or mother-kin was current. With the beginning of agriculture, magic must have been practised in order to ensure the fruitfulness of the earth, despite the enlarged real control over nature, thus introducing agricultural rituals in addition to those connected with hunting. This was the beginning of Tāntrism under the non-Aryan stage.

26 Bhattacharya N.N, History of Sakta Religion, p-9
In the post-Vedic sacred text like the Mahābhārata (IV-6 and VI-22), Harivamsa (III-3) and also in the other Pūrāṇas it was found that female deities of different forms and names were worshipped in many parts of the Indian sub-continent, by the Kirātas, Pūlinḍas etc. Harivamsa referred to the worship of Goddess Dūrgā by the savages-namely the Sabāras, Pūlinḍas and she was fond of meat and wine (Dasgupta S. B, Evolution of Mother worship in India, 1963). These tribes of the non- Aryan origin were certainly dominated by the matriarchal system of society.\(^{27}\) According to the various sources matrimonial system was prevailed in more than 50 tribes in ancient India including Assam. Rama Chetterjee refers to the Śakti worship of the Devi in the Ādya-Śakti or the universal energy originated in those border countries furnished with the mother-kin society.\(^{28}\)

References were made to the female dominated socities or kingdoms in ancient India. Literatures describe about Siri Rājya or woman’s kingdoms. These kingdoms were located mainly on the north eastern and north western borders of India. Megāsthene and subsequently Arrian, polyaenus and Salinus, referred to the queen-rulers of the Pāṇḍya country and it is interesting to note in Kirāta and adjoining regions corresponding to the ancient country vestiges of ancient mother-rights. Hiuen-Tsāng referred to the Sūvarna-Gōtra country in the Kūmāon-Gārhawāl region as the kingdom of woman. Hiuen Tsāng mentions another Strī-...

\(^{28}\) Chetterjee Rama Religion in Bengal p-173.
Rājya called by him western women’s country, near Lānglā in the present Baluchistan region. Female dominated societies were found in existence in ancient Kāmarupa as well. The offshoot of the Austrics were the Khāsis and Jaintiyas who belonged to the matriarchal society. They were the devotees of Mother Goddess Śakti. The word Khāsi, Synteng (Jaintiya) mean the mother, Khā means born of and Si refers to an ancient mother, that was why Khāsi meant born of a mother. Various Names of clans bear their mother’s (deities) names. Hemlet Borua refers to the clans like Sawiam, Ngap Kynte, Kūrkalang etc. bears the names of clans after their mother (deities), as well, intimately related to a matriarchal system of the people themselves. Likewise, Synteng * means children of an ancestral mother. In Davakā region there existed in ancient times three women dominated kingdoms on the bank of the Kapili river. They were known as Kadali, Garūchar and Pramilā. In the Pramilā kingdom, the woman followed the Yōgini Kauladharma. Kadali, a woman kingdom, belonged to Khāsi and Jaintiyās. A woman queen named Kamalā ruled the Khāsis and Jaintiyās. Kadali means banana tree. The mountains where the Khāsi and Jaynatiya lived, were full of banana tree and that is why the kingdom was known as Kadali. She had 1600 women bodyguard around her for her

30 Borah H, H.C.KH.P. p- 10
* Jaintiya seems to have been an Aryanisation of the original Khasi word Synteng (Zaintain) which developed into Jaintiya.
31 Kalita N. Kapilipar kacharipar, p- 51
security. The Khäsi - Jaintiya belonged to Austric group. Women kingdoms were in the vicinity of Kämarúpa. So Kätäyāyani is supposed to be a leader of a warlike group and under her leadership led an expedition against Prägjyotisha with the help of Dvärakā king Bishnū, in which the Prägjyotisha king Ghataka was killed and placed her son Naraka on the throne of Kämarúpa and advised Naraka to worship the non - Aryan Yōni Goddess to get the support and co-operation of the matriarchal group like the Kirātas. Another woman kingdom was referred to in a folk song in Gōālpārā in which a merchant named Chandradhar is said to have asked his Dölā Carrier about a kingdom on the Louit, when they sailed for trade. In reply the Dölā carrier informed him that the kingdom belonged to the women, where women have been regarded the supreme in all respect. In the kingdom man cooks, and serves, the woman partakes leisurely on the male and punishes the man in the trifling offence. According to the folk song the woman was only the King, Minister and Laskar (soldier). The Märlaṇḍeya Pūrāna (5th cent. A.D.) mentions a kingdom named Vijay-pūr, situated on the top of the hill to the east of Prägjyotishpūr established by Vijaya. Mahiraṅga Dānava was a scion of the Mother-kin-society. His name proved that he was the worshipper of Mother Earth. Mahiraṅga means lover of earth. Mahiraṅga and Bhauma is the same meaning of Earth lover that is the lover.

32 Sarma S, Assamiya, p - 51
33 Datta Birendranath, Goalpara poageet Sangraha, p - 6
34 Nath N.N. Background of Assamese culture p - 96
of Mother Earth. Thus women were regarded as the source of all forces or Śakti. So in the myths women have been regarded as the supreme power and the source of removing all kinds of depression and danger by showing patience and character of a mother.

The traditions of Prāğiyoṭiṣha- Kāmarūpa testify to the evolution of the cult of Mother Goddess on the principle of mother right in the matrimonial society of the Kirāta tribes. The Kirāta had great influence on the kingdom of Nepāl, North Behār, Bengāl and Assam. Mongōl or Kirātas were great in number in Assam. The Yajurveda and Atharvaveda describe them as the dweller in the Aranya (forest) and Kandara (cave). So the deity worshipped by the local tribes was called Aranyāni before the coming of the Aryāns, the Drāvidians were driven out to the said area35. The Kirātas were originally the follower of Śiva but later on they accepted the worship of Śakti also. Gradually they became the staunch followers of Śakti cult. The women and her organs and attributes became the objects of propitiation since the beginning of Upper palaeolithic Age36. Ever since then the devotees of Śakti cult started looking upon women as the symbol of Goddess. The Kirāta people worshipped the Goddess of fertility in haory past. The Kirātas regarded the Goddess of fertility as the symbol of Mother Earth . The

35 Mahanta B. Bharatiya Dharma Sadhana p-24
36 Kakati B.K, Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā, p- 39.
worship of the Mother earth occupied an important position in the village cult. No sculptures has so far been discovered relating to the Kirāta Goddess. But the literatures supply us lots about their cults. They worshipped only Mother and Father as Śīva and Dūrgā. The non-Aryān Kirāta worship of male (Pūng) and female (stree) was turned into Śīva and Dūrgā. Among the hill tribes with which the Vedic Aryāns came into contact in Eastern India and the Himalayan region, the Kirātas were the most prominent. The Aryāns borrowed the non-Aryān culture and made their culture rich. The Yajūrveda, Rājamālā and Rāmāyana refer to the settlement of the Kirātas in Kāmarupa. According to the Yajūrveda, the northern and eastern part of the Himalaya was the homeland of the Kirātas. According to the Rājamālā of Tripūrā, the Kirātas, lived on the bank of the Lauhitya. Rāmāyana refers to the Kirātas as the dweller of the sea. The religion of the Yōgini pitha was of purely of Kirāta origin. The customs, rites, and rituals and various systems of worship of different Śaktis are focused on the Kālikā Pūrāṇa and the Yōgini Tantra. In fact, the religion of the Yōgini Tantra and the Kālikā Pūrāṇa are the religion of the Kirātas with some modification in the Aryān system.

Śakti originally emerged as the Village Mother (Goddess) then to national Goddess. The Kirātas concept of Grāmadevata,

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37 Bhattacharya D. Asamat Sakti Puja, P-39
38 Basu N.N. S.H.K VOL-I, p-18
39 Quoted from Sarma S, Goalparar Jilar Ithias, p- 30
40 Sing G.P. Kirātas in ancient India p- 254
particularly the female deity was intimately connected with the veneration of evil spirits. Every village contained a shrine dedicated to Kirātadevi (the female village deity). Different forms of Śaktis, made of wood, stone and clay, and other Goddesses were regarded as the Grāmadevatās of the Kirātas. The Grāmadevatās, gradually occupied a prominent position and it represents the principal national deity of the non-Aryans including the Kirātas. G.P. Sing referred the Grāmadevatās to the Śudras by quoting a sloka of the Āgama smitīśastra. The Vedic Aryāns were regarded as the foe by the Kirātas and so to settle themselves among the Kirātas, the Aryāns worshipped the Kirātadevi as their Village Goddess or Mother Goddess. As a result of mutual contact of the Aryāns and non-Aryāns in the Vedic Age both the pure Vedic doctrine and non-Aryāns tenets underwent a significant change and the form, method and practice of worshipping the Grāmadevatās were greatly modified. The settlement of the Aryāns and their assimilation with them, led the Kirātas to tend to the Aryānisation. The Kirātas of Kāmarupa were brought within the fold of Aryān religion which started from the Epic age to the Güpta Age. Thus the non-Aryān Kirāta Śakti cult occupied a prominent place in the Brahmanic pantheon. Their Village Goddesses were Kirāta Devi, Parvata Devi (pārvati), Dūrgā Devi (Dūrga, fort)*, Kāli Devi

41 Sing G.P Kiratas in Ancient India p-235
42 Ibid. p-235

* Mārkandeya Purana refers to Durga as the dweller in the Durga/fort Bhāṣayaṃsasa sahasya vana – Kandara nirjaram. M.P. ch= 83 p-333 v-22
(dark complexioned deity) and Gauri Devi (deity of white Complexion). In the Vedas Dūrga is mentioned as Aranyāṇi (the Goddess of the forest). Kautilya mentioned ‘Devi’ in his Arthaśāstra as a ‘spirit of Vegetable’ in connection with the sowing of seeds. From the Earth goddess she was later conceived as the war Goddess (Rana Devi) Dūrgā for the protection of her devotees. Bondopadhyaya refers to the word ‘Dūrgā’ as the presiding deity of an unexploorable region or the saviour from crisis. Thus the Śakti cult is said to have been given an important step. During the age, Indian Śakti was worshipped in two kinds—one was Mother cult, in which mother was worshipped in the tribal method according to the local customs. The other was Aryān or philosophical, in which the mother was imagined as divine power, following the form of Vedas and was given the names relating to human like Dūrgā, Pārvati, Úmā, etc. with some modified form of the tribal deities and including a disciplined rites and rituals. Many historians thought that the first philosophical view on Śakti came into light in the Pañcarātra Samhitās composed in the 4th century A.D. Pārvati has been developed to Śati and Sāti, after her death developed into Śakti Kāmākhyā and its Daśamhāvidyā. The myths identified Pārvati as consort of Śiva and Sāti, another form of Parvati, who committed suicide in her father’s (Dakshyas) Yajña. But the Kālikā Puranā and the Yōgini Tantra refer to her as the daughter of Himālaya. She was called the

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43 Bondopadhyaya P. Mother Goddess Durga p-10
44 Mahanta Bapa Chandra Bharatiya dharmar sadhana. P-20
daughter of the Parvata, that is why she was called Pārvati. Kena Upanishad refers to Umā as knowledge, later known as Saraswati; and Haimavati as daughter of the Himālaya\textsuperscript{45}. On the other hand Pārvati means the dweller on the mountain (Parvata). She was conferred with many epithets such as Śailasūta\textsuperscript{46} (daughter of the mountain's peaks), Giriputri\textsuperscript{47} (daughter of the mountain); Girirājaputri (daughter of the king of the mountain or Girirāja Himālaya) and Girijsha (mistress of the mountain) Śailarājaputri\textsuperscript{48}, which identify her as the dweller of the mountains. They were originally daughter, spouse and mother of the non-Aryan tribes who dwell in the mountains. All the names were extracted from Sanskrit and are referred to in the Sanskrit text\textsuperscript{50}. Pārvati is usually described as dark and in some version is given the name Kāli, the dark one, because of her complexion (in vamanapurana- 25-27, Śiva - Pūrāṇa, Rūdra Samhita 36.24). E. A. Gait, quoted a description of Haft Iqlim in which he referred that there was in Kāmarūpa a class of persons called Bhōgis, who were voluntarily victims of a Goddess named Āi who dwell in a cave (Gait, A History of Assam, p- 58). The temple contains two stone figures and contains inscription in which it was recorded that Śūkladhaj built this temple of bright stones on the High

\textsuperscript{45} Kena Upanisad ch- 3, v- 26 , p- 52; Ed.-Atul Sen, S Tatvabhusan & M. Ghose
\textsuperscript{46} K.P, ch- 44, v-69, p-433 (Sailaputri)
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid ch- 44, v- 81, p- 434 (Girisūta)
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid ch- 44, v- 70, p- 433 (Sailarājaputri)
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid. ch-45, v-11, p-437 (Himavatsūtā)
\textsuperscript{50} David Kinsley, Hindu Goddesses, p-41.

Śakti was worshipped individually, in the family, in the society and nationally according to their attainment of siddhi. Thus Śakti turned into a new way of life. Śakti was worshipped in a secret place individually by using magic, witchcrafts etc. The Yōgini Tantra refers to the benefit and importance of the secret worship. Secret worship has been regarded as the most fruitful to achieve the expected goal of a devotee*. (Ati saṅgūptabhāben ipsitaṅg prāpyate phālaṅg) Śakti was worshipped in a family as a family Devi called Kūla Devi in hereditary customs. Banikanta Kakati called it as Kaulika Dharma51 and the Yogini Tantra refers to a secret Kulacāra (Y.T, P-261, V-50). Of course, some of these Goddesses developed into special cult along sectarian line. Thus public or the common people was organized on the basis of Śakti cult in their respective Kūla, Village and tribes or sects following some local rites which led them to be united under Śakti cult. According to the Kūlārṇava Tantra, the Kuladharma is the essence of the Vedas52. Prāgijyotisha - Kāmarūpa was basically known as the land of Villages of the aboriginals who generally settled on the hilly region. The tradition and culture of the land had their origin and gradual development in the villages. Villages were the basic foundation of the culture, history, religion and all sources. So

* Y.T, Ch-15, v-4, p-212
51 Kakati B.K, P.K.Dh.Dh. p-11
52 Bhattacharya N.N, H.T.R. p-72
the villagers and the villages played an important and vital role in all sphere of earthly life. Villages are the basis of the socio-economic pattern, Religio-philosophic concept, expression of solidarity among the neighbours involvement and mutual exchange in the ceremonies and festivals related with God and Nature etc. were mainly expressed through the cult of ‘Grāmadevataś’. On the basis of ancient or primordial tradition of village cult, P. Thomas divided the cult for the purpose of worship in three principles in the later Hindu age. They were the Grāmadevata (the Gods and Goddesses of the villages), the Kuladevata (the tutelary deity of a family) and the Istadevata (personal deity).

The worship of the Grāmadevata was generally performed in the shrine of the village that is turned into temple in the Purānas and Tantra Literatures. The female principle was later personified as Kāli and Tārā, and were worshipped by different Kūlas according to their own Kūla rites. Otherwise he would go to hell.

Kālitārāmahāmantraṃ bidyamantabhyāṃ rai dhrubōṃ l
Kulālācaraṃ bīna yōhi japeṇ g ma nāraki bhabetah II
(Y.T, P-266, V-43, Ch-19)

Before the advent of Naraka, Kāmākhyā had been worshipped as Yōni Goddess by the Kirātas which was mostly the local goddess. Caṇḍikā or Dūrgā was originally a Kirāta deity and

53 Manna S. Mother Goddess Chāndi p-12.
54 P. Thomas, H.R.C. M, p-32
55 Y. T, B.N. Sastri, tran & ed. P-260
56 Kakti.B.K. Mother Goddess Kamakhya, p-29
originated in the Kirāṭa Deśa\textsuperscript{57}. Śaktism was undoubtedly the most popular form among the Kirāṭa tribes of North-East region. Originally they practised Saiva and Śakti quite independently but later on, it turned into the fold of Hindūism, under the Brahmānical auspicious. The Kālikā Pūrāṇa and the Yōgini Tantra highlight the rites and rituals, system of worship of the non-Aryān Kirāṭa tribes and they greatly contributed to the cultural development of the Assamese people. While Goddesses occupied a subordinate position in the Vedic religion, the Kirāṭas established Śiva, Śākta and other Goddesses in firm footing in their society.

The Drāvidians, next to the Kirāṭas, played an important role in the development of the cult of Mother Goddess. The Drāvidian tribes introduced the worship of Śiva and Úmā in symbolic form. The literatures, customs and some elements prove the existence and prevalent of Mother Goddess of the Drāvidians. They spread their culture all over India. The Mohenjodārō culture is believed to have been Drāvidian. The Mohenjodārō people worshipped the Mother Goddess, the Supreme spirit. She was represented in numerous pottery figures and on seals and amulets\textsuperscript{58}. This identifies that the Drāvidians were the pre-Aryān stock of the Indus Basin. The pre-Aryān stock of the Indus valley that is the Drāvidians, as we have directly evinced from the archaeological excavations of the Indus valley sites, was the worshippers of the Mother Goddess or the female deities like the inhabitants of Egypt, Sūmeria, the ancient civilised

\textsuperscript{57} Sing. G.P. Kiratas in Ancient India. p-250
\textsuperscript{58} P. Thomas, H.R.C.M, p-3
country of the contemporary world. But the predominant type in
the population of India (excluding Burma) is the Drāvidians.
During the Vedic period their culture attracted the other tribes and
was more influential than the other cults. The Aryāns, cautiously
marked the rich culture of the Drāvidians, whom they met in India.
The Vedic clans or the Aryāns were surrounded by the hostile mass
of indigenous Dāsas, a dark skinned pre-Aryan people, who may have
been the Drāvidians. Rapson comments that there were racial
similarities of the Sūmerians with the Drāvidians and they entered
Barua, (quoted from Marshal, Mahenjodārō and the Indus
Civilisation) the Drāvidinas were more civilized than the Aryans.
They had driven out the Aryans from Northern India and established
their kingdom. The Aryans noticed many kingdoms of the Drāvidians
in the South and North India. Sir John Marshal writes that the Liṅga
and Yōni worship was the invention of the Drāvidians
(Mahenjodārō and the Indus civilization, 1931.) There might have
been thrust of the Drāvidians into Kāmarūpa after they were pushed
down to the South by the Aryāns. They reached Kāmarūpa from
the South-India and it is confirmed that they migrated to Kāmarūpa
by Sea-routes. P.C Choudhury suspected the Nagās to be the
offshoot of the Drāvidians. The Drāvidians were rich culturally who

60 Gait, E. A, A History of Assam, 1926, Reprint p-3
61 Renou R., Religion of Ancient India p-5
attracted the attention of the warlike Aryān hords. They began to
mix freely and to intermarry with the Drāvidians.

Refering to the description of R.Caldwell ( Grammar of the
Drāvidian language, p-117 ) P.C.Choudhury remarks that the Aryāns
were able to suppress and had great influence on the
Drāvidians. The Drāvidians followed a crude fertility cult. The worship
of Mother Goddess was probably brought in by the earlier invaders of
the Mediterranean or Armenoid race, speaking Drāvidian language.
Like the Austrics, the Drāvidian elements may also be suspected
among the Angāmi and Āos Nagās. Sibananda Sarma remarks
that the Drāvida tribes lived in Gōālpārā and introduced the
worship of Śiva and Śakti. The Aryans borrowed the ideas of
Mother Goddess from Drāvidian culture. The Rigvedic Goddess
Prithvi, Aditi, Ūshā etc. were identified with the Mother Goddess of
the Drāvidians. During the palaeolithic age the Drāvidas became the
dominant power group in India. During the copper age there
started the cultural communication between the Indian and Central
Asian Society before 2000 B.C. So it is said to have been
introduced probably the copper age in Egypt, Mesopotamia and
India by the Drāvida of central India. The Aryāns, therefore, saw
the matriarchal society in India introduced by the Drāvidians long
century ago. So it is confirmed that the Drāvida worshipped Mother
in the form of Devi. So Mother was the origin of the Śakti

65 Choudhury P.C, H.C.P.A, 3rd Edtion. 1987, p- 90
worship and the other forms like Kāli, Dūrgā, Lakṣmi, Bhairavi etc. were the symbol of Mother. According to the nature and character of different mothers of different tribes, Śakti or Goddesses were also different in colour, appearance and nature. The process of fertility of the Earth is compared to the Mother and both were the source of great regards. This system also prevailed among the people of Sūmer. The half nude female figure, found in Mohenjodārō was probably the form of mother.

The idea of the worship of Mother in the rock image or in other symbol was chosen out by the Aryāns from the Drāvidians. The worship of Śakti with flower, sandal wood, stick of insense, lamp, song and dance, and system of offering food items were introduced during the Drāvida Age and the Aryāns included these items in the rites and rituals or in their literatures like the Purānas and the Tantras. The word mokshya, pūspa, benū, kānchān, pūjā, bali etc. belong to the Drāvida origin. The names Umā and Ambikā were derived from the Drāvidian word Āmmā (mother) in the sense of the universal mother. The Kūshāna king Hūviska referred to Ommā on his coins.

The Vedic period witnessed the rise of a new advanced culture in India. B. K. Kakati remarks that in Ancient times certain Aryān and Aryanised colonies were established there. The main aims of the entrance and colonization of the Aryāns into India were the spread of Arya-dharma and establishment of their rule.

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69 Sircar D.C, Sākta pithas p- 3
70 Kakti B.K. Mother Goddess kamakhya p- 56
Through the valley of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra from India the Aryans entered Prāgjyotisha-Kāmarūpa\textsuperscript{71} in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century B.C. during the Kirātā rule. The Kirātas were the dweller in the caves and mountains. P. Thomas has rightly remarked that prior to the Aryan conquest, India was a wild country inhabited by savages and cannibals to whom the conquerors brought the blessings of civilization\textsuperscript{72}. Prāgjyotisha-Kāmarūpa was known in abroad as the land of holy place for holy sages. It was called Dharmāranya\textsuperscript{73} and so the Aryan sages came to this place for meditation and to achieve their goal. There are references to the advent of Ātrakmuni, who was the Aryan, and established an Āshrama, now called Ātrighāṭ in the Mangaldoi District. Mārkaṇḍeya, Baśistha and many other sages or munis established their Āshramas in Kāmarūpa and preached Āryadharma. Kāmarūpa has been identified as one of the most famous place of Śakti cult which was focused by the literatures, Archaeology, monuments, temples, coins and epigraphies contributed by the Aryan under the auspicious of the Royal dynasties. In real fact, these sources led the pithas of Śakti famous in India and the pithas got the recognition as the centre of Śakti cult\textsuperscript{74}. It is clear that Śaktism appeared in Kāmarūpa long before the Vedic Aryans, But the Āryans gave its shape, discipline, rites and rituals, official recognition and a scientific form of Śakti for the suitable approach to the common people. They were responsible for the firm footing of Śakti cult in the land in a modified form and made it common to

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{71} Choudhury P.C. H.C.P.A p- 76.
    \item \textsuperscript{72} Thomas P, H.R.C.M. p- 3
    \item \textsuperscript{73} Sarma S Mangaldoir Buranji p- 4
\end{itemize}
all by giving new Aryan name to the aboriginal Śakti or Goddesses.

Mother Goddess or Śakti was the creation of the Aryans. They adopted the cult from the Babylonians who were the neighbourhood of Mesopotamia. The Ishtar (mother goddess) of Babylon was the same with the Mother goddess Dūrgā of India. The Aryans established the faith in the idea of re-incarnation and the worship of the Mother Goddess, personified deities and their worship, the belief in heavenly bodies and the priestly institutions. The literatures composed by the Brāhmanas witnessed the truth of the incarnation of various forms of Śakti to save the Devatās or devotees from their disasters. The 51 pithas which were originally worshipped by the local aboriginal tribes as Grāma-devatā, later on, the Brāhmanas (Aryans) included them in the myths and described the 51 pithas (of course, the number of pithas increased in many texts upto 150, later on) emanated from Ādyā-Śakti.

The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa described that the Aryan rulers advanced eastward with their priests and armies, diffusing the light of Vedic lore and religion over Eastern India. N. N. Basu narrates by quoting Satapatha Brāhmaṇa that in carrying the torch of Aryan civilization eastward king Videgha Māthava and his priest Gotama Rāhūgana were accompanied by a large number of Brāhmanas who

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74 Kakati B.K. Mother Goddess Kamakhya, p-39
75 Sircar D.C. The Sakta pithas p-3
76 Basu. N.N, Social History of kamarupa, vol-1 p-28
settled in the country before the Buddhistic period. Videgha Māthava, in his endeavours to spread Vedic culture, must have been stubbornly opposed by the princes of these Eastern territories, who were non-Vedic in thought, spirit and action. They crossed the Sadānira (Karatoya) river and reached Prājyotisha. So it is clear that the Aryans or Vedic people reached and meditated here long before the advent of Naraka. A passage of the Aitaria Brāhmaṇa is supposed to indicate an early Aryan settlement in Ancient Assam. The passage is supposed to provide this information that by barter and by purchase, the Brāhmaṇas, who had already settled in the soil of Assam, managed to get ‘Soma’ for sacrifices from the tribes who lived in the hilly tracts of Kāmarūpa. Mother Goddess appeared in Kāmarūpa long before the advent of the Vedic Aryans. The aboriginal non-Aryan tribes worshipped mother Goddess as local Goddess following the nomadic rites and rituals in symbolic form. They had no idea of Hindū religion, no idea about Divine energy, except the predominance of Aranya-Dharma. There was no record of the name of Kāmākhyā Pitha in the Mlechcha desa. The country was known as the land of magic and incantations. Various tribes worshipped their mother goddess in their respective areas according to their own customs.

Divine theory is based on mythology and tradition, which contained two views—according to one opinion various forms of Śakti were originated from the limbs of Sati, Śiva’s spouse, while other think

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77 Basu N.N. Social History of Kāmarupa, p- 5
78 Sarma M.M, Inscription of Assam, p- 0.2
79 Barua B.K & Srinivasa Murthy, Temples of Assam, p- 1
Śakti incarnated in different times, to protect the Deva society from the perils faced by them. The Kālikā Pūrāṇa, Yōgini Tntra, Devi Pūrāṇa, Mārkandeya Pūrāṇa etc. are the supporters or champion of the Divine theory. The Mahābhārata and a number of Pūrāṇas like the Bhāgavata, Brahmābaibarta, Skanda, Harivamsa, Devibhāgavata, Varāha, Kālikā and the Tantra like Yōgini Tantra referred to the Yajña and Sati’s death. Srimadvāgavata also refers to the Dakṣya Yajña in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th chapters. According to these sources Dakṣya arranged a Yajña and invited all Devatas except Śiva and Sati. Sati felt ashamed after having the news of her father’s Yajña and she rushed to the father’s house where she was insulted by her father. Being enraged at her father’s behaviour Sati got killed herself in the Yajnāsthalī. Śiva heard the news of Sati’s death and in frantic sorrow Śiva carried the dead body of Sati on his soldier. But by seeing the drastic behaviour of Śiva, other deities requested Bishnū to crush the anger of Śiva and Bishnū then cut the Sati’s body into pieces with his Cakra. Wherever a part of Sati’s body had fallen, the place turned into a Śakti Pitha. Among the 51 Pithas of India Kāmarūpa, Úgratārā etc. were the most important Śakti Pithas not only in Kāmarūpa but also in India. According to Brihadharmapūrāṇa, the parts of Sati’s body fell and turned into stone and the pithas are known as Śakti Pithas.

Chakren vishnunā chinā devyāb abayābāstū te
Nipetūdhāranou bipra sā sā pūnyatarā khitāh
bhūmo patita mātrāste devyā avayābahā kila
jagnū pāsānatāṅg sighraṅg lokānūgrahahetabe

80 Srimadvagavata Ed. Pancanan Tarkaratna 1362 sak.
According to the Yogini Tantra, Adya-Śakti Kāli entrusted the power on Brahmā, Bishnū and Śiva respectively. After getting the power, Brahmā became proud. Mahākāli intended to smash out the conceit of Brahmā and created an Asūra from the conceit of Brahmā to kill him. Brahmā being terrified approached Bishnū and told him about the Asūra. Both prayed to Mahākāli to protect themselves, by giving up their conceit. Kāli was pleased with them and killed the Asūra. After performing her work she disappeared, but Brahmā and Bishnū asked for a place to worship Kāli for the welfare, protection and happiness of the Devatas and creatures. Mahākāli advised them to go to the place where her Yōnimaṇḍal existed with her blood and flesh. The place would be regarded as Yōni-Maṇḍala, the place of generation of all creatures.

Historian Wadel refers to Dirgheswari as the place of meditation. Sage Mārkaṇḍeya established his Āsram there only for meditation. The deep meditation of Mārkaṇḍeya brought Pārvati to the earth. Tradition identified that the forehead of Devi Sati fell on the Bhūvaneswari, navel part in the Ūgratārā, and thigh in Dirgheswari, but it had no iconographical and Pūranic records. Tiger was the Bāhana of the Devi that is why Devi was called Bāgheswari. An image of tiger is there in the Dirgheswari temple. Tradition also mentions that the head fell in the Saumār pitha where Tāmreswari temple was established.

In another mythological view, Śakti has been depicted as an incarnation of Ādyā Śakti. She is said to have been appeared due to prayers of the Devatas to protect themselves. It has been already
acknowledged and accepted in the myths, literatures and traditions that Gods and Goddesses assumed different forms of Śakti for the welfare of the Universe and to protect her devotees from the Asūras. The Kālikā Pūrāṇa and Yōgini Tantra refer to the ten Mahāvidyās of Kāmākhya on the Nilacala Hill and they have been normally worshipped in a group of ten. The Mūndamālātantra also refers to a list of ten Mahāvidyās. They are Kāli, Tārā, Sōdāsi, Bhūbaneswari, Bagalā, Mātaṛgī, Cinnamastā, Dhūmāvati, Bhairavi and Kamalā. The ten Mahāvidyās are later originated. According to the Kālikā Pūrāṇa, the different forms of Śakti assumed their forms to perform different duties. The ten Mahāvidyās are located around and centering Kāmākhya in the middle of the Nilacala Hill. The Kālikā Pūrāṇa, Yōgini Tantra, Mārkaṇḍeya Pūrāṇa, Devi Pūrāṇa, and the Epics put forward their views on the origin or incarnation of various Śaktis. The Yōgini Tantra refers to the origin of Śakti and adorned her various āngas with ornaments. There are different views regarding the origin of Śakti. The Yōgini Tantra refers to the origin of Kāli from the supreme Brahmavidya, which is called Kālikā Vidyā.

Mahāmahābrahmavidyā bidveyaḥ kālikā matāḥ I
Yāmāsādyā sa nirvānānuktimeti nārādhām II
Y.T. ch-2, v- 4, p- 17.

The Kūlahina (go astray from kuladharma) men can attain his mūkti or ultimate goal by acquiring this Brahmavidyā. This indicate that Kāmākhya was no other than Mahākāli. Pārvati is said to have turned into

81 Kalika Purana P-463.
82 Y.T. 1,6-9

* Deity of Knowledge, who acquires immense knowledge called brahmā. Kāli is the supreme deity of knowledge, so she is called the of Brahmāvidyā.
Kāli killing Ghōr Asūra. Kāli formed a huge figure before Ghōr and said- ‘I am Kāli’. She was black and assumed a huge figure, with a garland of human heads in the neck, having her hair hanging loose, tongue to come out, and a loud laughter. (Dhyātvā sat paramaṅg kāliti bādīni).

Mārkendeya Pūrāṇa refers to the multifarious incarnation of Mahāmāyā

Nityaib sā jagamūrtistayā Sarvasidaṅg tatām 1
Tathāpi tatsuśaṃstibhūdhi śrayatāṅg sama 2

M.P., ch-81, v-47, p-325.

Although Mahāmāyā incarnated only for the protection of the three world83, she is the supreme over the trimurti – Brahma, Bishnū and Mahesvar. They all were seen worshipped to the Mahāmāyā to protect them from the impending danger of the Asūras. M.P refers to her as Jagadjanani (earth ) Prakriti84 and called her creator, destroyer and protector. Mahāmāyā is also called Mahādevi, knowledge, shame, nutrion, peace, wealth, power85. So the Pūrāṇa said that the man has no way but to worship her. The Devas, being free from the Mahisāsūra, prayed to Devi and said “you are Dūrgā (invincible), because you are the only boat in the inaccessible life of human being” (Dūrgāśi dūrgāḥbhasāgaranourosaṅgā, C-81,v-10, p-337). Pārvati became Dūrgā by killing the Asūra Dūrgā, son of Rūrū who won the boon from Brahmā after hard meditation86.

The Devi-Māhātmā section of the Mārkandeya Pūrāṇa refers to the evolution of the various cosmic Goddesses from the supreme

83 M.P, C-81, V-48, P-325
84 M.P, C-81, V-47-50, P-325
85 M.P, C-81, V-56-68, P-326
86 Gogoi P.K. God Siva, Devi and Tantric cult, P- 34.
Goddess Mahāmāyā. The Māركaṇḍeya Pūrṇa consists of three mythological descriptions, which included the events of killing of Madhū-Kaitabha, Mahīṣāsūra and Dhūmralochan, Caṇḍā- Mūṅḍā and Śumbha-Nīśumbha by Devi. In the Māركaṇḍeya Pūrṇa, the heroic achievement was told by a saint Medhas to a king named Sūrath. According to Medhas, Madhū-Kaitabha were born of the Bīṣṇu’s ear when he was asleep and the two Āśuras rushed to Brahmā to kill him who existed in the naval part of Bīṣṇu. Being terrified, Brahmā prayed to Mahāmāyā Bhogavati to protect him. Devi was pleased with the prayer of Brahmā and came out of the heart, eyes, mouth, ear and two shoulders and awakened lord Bīṣṇu. Bīṣṇu killed Madhū-Kaitabha with the help of Mahāmāyā.

Netrāsya- nāśikā- bāhū hridayebhyastathuyasa
Nirgamya darsana to tasyou brahmanohobbyakyajanma
M.P, C-81, V-39, P-327

The Māركaṇḍeya Pūrṇa refers to the origin of Devi Dūrgā or Mahīṣamardini. There ensued a war between the Devas and the Āśuras for a long time. The Āśura king Mahīṣāsūra defeated the Devatās and occupied the throne of Devarāj Indra. The Devatās approached to the Trimūrti- Brahmā, Bīṣṇu and Mahēswara with a view to recovering the lost kingdom. The Trimūrti were angry with the Āśuras and from their anger, blood came out of the mouths of the Trimūrti and from other Devatās and Dūrgā was born out of the blood of the Devatās. From each drop of blood of the Devatās was formed a part of her body and every Devatā confer upon her powerful weapons to empower her. Dūrgā became powerful with the Śakti (force) of the Devatās. With the blessings of the Devatās, Devi Dūrgā, mounting on the lion
rushed out to Mahisāsura and killed the Asura. Having the powerful arms from the Devatās Dūrgā became inaccessible that is why she was called Dūrgā or invincible to the enemy. On the other hand she was second to none (incomparable), boatlike in this impassable world. The Mārkandeya Pūrāṇa refers to the origin of Dūrgā not as a spouse of Śiva but as an incarnation of Mahāmāyā as an independent deity.

The Mārkandeya Pūrāṇa refers to the origin of Ambikā from the cell of Pārvatī’s body. Śūmbha and Niśūmbha, two powerful Asuras, fought with the Devatas and defeated them in the battle and occupied the throne of Indra. The Devatas, being desperate, prayed to Mahādevi Mahāvidyā, who is the source of all power of the universe. For the welfare of the Devatas, Pārvatī incarnated as Ambikā. Ambikā was born out of the cell of Pārvatī’s body that is why she is called ‘Kausiki’87, who was seemed roaming on the Himalayas. Caṇḍā and Mūṇḍā, two powerful general of the Asūras informed their king about Ambikā and her beauty. Śūmbha, being charmed with her beauty proposed to marry her. But Ambikā, with a view to engaging him in the conflict with her, gave an evasive reply that she would marry with that hero who will defeat her in the front war. Being infuriated Śūmbha sent Dhūmrālochan to fight and take away her by force but Dhūmrālochan was burnt to ashes. Śūmbha got the news of his death and sent Caṇḍā- Mūṇḍā to take away her by force but they were also beheaded by Devi’s sword, thence she was known as Caṇḍikā. In the long run Śūmbha and Niśūmbha rushed to fight with the Devi but they were killed by Devi and saved the universe along with the

87 M.P. C- 84 V- 38 P-342
Devatas. But the Kālikā Pūrāṇa made an opposite view. Mātāngi was born of the saint Mātānga's body to kill Śūmbha and Niśūmbha. After her birth she was turned from white skinned to black that is why she was known as Kālikā. All saints named her Ûgratārā due to her fierce nature. She has matted hair and so she was famous as Ekjata. The Mārkaṇḍeya Pūrāṇa identifies Ambikā as the dweller of the Mountain Himālaya, who gave her the lion, which meant that the lion was caught from the jungle of the Himālayan region. She was adorned with Arms and ornamented with various ornaments bestowed upon her by the Devatas. The Mārkaṇḍeya Pūrāṇa states the story of the conflict between Dūrgā and Mahisāsūra. As she was the protector of the distressed so she was called the Devi of the distressed (durgata).

Dūrgāyai dūrgapāyaiśāryai savakārinai

In the 'Devimāhātmyā' chapter of the Mārkaṇḍeya Pūrāṇa, the Devatas, in their Prasasti to Devi, uttered that Devi is Gaurī, jagadjanani, bishnūmāyā, chetanā, bhūdhī, nidrā, khūddhā, chāyā, śakti, trisnā, lajjīyā, sānti, mother, bhrānti, kānti, lakhi, bhritti, smriti, dayā, tūsti, sraddhā etc which identify all qualities that are imbibed within men, and by acquiring these qualities men can attain the position of a Devi or Supreme power or knowledge by the exercise of Yōga - Sādhana or kuṇḍalini Śakti. The Yōgini Tantra states that Devi killed Caṇḍā and Mūndā, so Devi came to be

88 K.P, C-61, V-58, P-600
89 K.P, C-61, V-59, P-600
90 K.P, C-81, V-12-32, P-341-342.
known as Candi and Cāmûndā. The Mārkaṇḍeya Pūrāṇa refers to Ambikā as Kaumarirupini, Vaisnavirupini, Nārāyani, Maheswari and Kātyāyani, Bhadrakāli, Bhayahāri etc. This identifies that Śakti is one but she manifested herself in sahasra (hundreds of) forms.

Besides the mythological reference to the origin of Śakti, the historians put forwarded their views regarding the origin of Śakti after the keen observation of nature, character and appearance and behaviour of the people who introduced it. D.C. Sircar, in his work ‘Sakti Pithas’ accepts the views. The different names of the mother Goddesses appear to have originally indicated different tribal deities who were afterwards identified with the wife of Śiva- Pasupati, a pre- Aryan God known to have been worshipped by the Mahenjodaro people. The names of Dūrgā and Pārvati emphasise their relation with inaccessible mountain regions and most of the names were associated with the mountains and mountaineers. Her carriage lion was a forest beast and powerful forest king. Her spouse Śiva was called Girisa dweller of the mountain. Ambikā, who was born of the cell of the body of Pārvati, was Himāchalavāsini, dweller of Himāchala. (Sa drīṣṭa long tatodeviḥ tuḥimāchalasangsthitām). The description of the Mārkaṇḍeya Pūrāṇa gives a clear picture that mythological Pārvati, Dūrgā, Ambikā existed only on the Himālaya and sheltered in the kandara.

91 K.P, C-87, V-24-25, P-49.
92 M.P, C-91, V-15, P-360
93 Ibid C-91, V-22, P-360.
94 Ibid C-91, V-22, P-361.
95 Sircar D.C Sakti Pithas P-3
96 Ibid P-3
97 M.P. C-86, V-6, P-346
(Gûmphâ)98. She was worshipped by the mountaineers (parvatavasi ) as Pârvati. The vedic literature are silent about Pârvati. Elsewhere in vedic literature Šiva’s wife was called Rûdrâni. Her many epithets, such as Šailâsûta, daughter of the mountain peaks; Girîpûtri, daughter of the mountains; Girirâjapûtri, Daughter of the king of the mountains; Girisâ, mistress of the mountains, evidently show her relation with mountainous regions99. So it was clear that she was associated with the non-Aryan tribal people. A long list of Goddesses called Mâтриka’s (mother) is mentioned in the Mahâbhârata and they are said to dwell in inaccessible places100. In the Mrâkaṇḍeya Pûrâna, the Mother has been called Dûrgâ following her achievements as a subduer of the Demon Dûrgâ ( 82/ 11/ 49-50 ). Above all, Dûrgâ was originally the presiding deity of the fort (dûrga ) and is repeatedly mentioned in the Pûrânas like Devi Pûrâna and Devi Bhâgavata101.

KûMÂRI CULT; Śakti cult was developed into a Kûmâri cult and it was one of the most important Śakti cult in Kâmarûpa. The Yûgini Tantra refers to the Kûmâri pûjâ in detail and its importance as a symbol of Śakti. The Yûgini Tantra compares the Kûmâri with the Śakti ( Goddess ). There is no doubt that the worship of Kûmâri means the worship of all Śaktis. They are regarded as the source of great power like the Śakti, which are latent in her. They are believed to be pure, powerful, honest and sources of all virtues like Śakti. All Śaktis are to be propitiated

98 Y.T C- 83, V- 22, P- 333
100 Ibid P- 226
101 Chetterjee Rama, Religion of Bengal P- 180.
if a Kûmârî is worshipped. The worship of a Kûmârî is more fruitful to the devotees. The Yögini Tantra refers to the fruits of the worship of Kûmârî Pûjâ-

Kûmâripûjânaphalaṁ mayâ baktûng nah sakyate.  \( ^{102} \)

(The fruits never come to an end in Kali Kalpa if a Kûmârî is worshipped.)

Na nasyate kadâpi tat kalpakotisatai yurtaih\(^{103} \).

Kûmârî puja was the worship in a living human figure to associate one's soul with the ultimate deity. It is performed either in secret methods or in public place. In the worship a naked damsel below 16 years old are placed on the alter as a Devi or Śakti and worshipped her in tântric methods. But the system of the worship indicate that it is in fact, Yôni worship. Rajani kanta Bardoloi, in his book 'Rahadoi Ligiri' discusses the secret worship of Kûmârî puja to indicate that it is in fact, Yôni worship. Rajani kanta Bardoloi, in his book ‘Rahadoi Ligiri’ discusses the secret worship of Kûmârî puja to attain ultimate siddhi at the cost of a chaste Kûmârî. The Kâlikâ Pûrân refers to Kâmâkhyâ as virgin Goddess (C- 63 ) Tripûrâ. Kâmâkhyâ is called Sôdâsi, a sixteen years old Devi or one of the manifestation of Devi Kâmâkhyâ. This goddess is adorned in three forms- Tripûrabâlâ, tripûrâ Sûndari and Tripûrâ Bhairavi. The Goddess is to be worshipped with ‘Sorasaposâra’ sixteen different items to worship the Devi in Vâmâcâra method. The Yögini Tantra referes to the origin of Kûmârî form of Śakti . According to the Yögini Tantra, Bishnû was cursed by Brahmâ and with a view to free from the curse, Bishnû

\(^{102}\) Y.T, C-12, V-33, P-328

\(^{103}\) Ibid C-12, V- 36, P-180.
prayed Mahākāli uttering Astākhyari Mahāvidyā for thousand years. At last, Devi was pleased but a demon named 'Kōlāsūr' appeared from the heart of Bishnū and captured the kingdom of Indra, Baikūntha of Bishnū and Kamālosan of Brahmā. The Devatas prayed again to Mahākāli and Mahākāli, being satisfied, assumed the form of a Dvija - Kūmāri and approached Kōlāsūr in the guise of a dvija kūmāri and asked for food. Demon Kōlāsūr gave her food but she at once ate up all. Yet she remained hungry and asked more and more food. At last Kōlāsūra permitted her to eat what she wanted. The Dvija kūmāri ate up all including elephants, horses, army, royal kinsmen, royal treasury and at last the demon Kōlāsūra. The Devatas worshipped her as their saviour. Thence, the people used to worship Kūmāri in their houses. The Yōgini Tantra discusses the prevalence of Kūmāri pūjā in Kāmarūpa.

Pujitastoh kūmāri sa kūśumānmandanodbhoboih
Sarbalokoih pujita sa kūmāri sa grille grihe grihe

Y.T, C- 17, V- 19-20, P- 234.

According to the Yōgini Tantra, there is no class distinction for the worship of Kūmāri. Kūmāri is the form of Śakti or Devi. If one worships a Kūmāri, all Gods are pleased with that worship.

Aki hi pujitā bālā sarvaṃ hi deva pujanaṃ

Y.T, C- 17, V- 33, P- 237.

Through the world Earth was identified with woman in all stages of culture104. The Mother and the soil are alike in fecundity. In the Atharvaveda (xiv, 2-14), it is stated that a woman was called 'seed

104 Briffault. R. The Mother, VOL- III, P- 59.
field'. The fecundity of Earth was taken to be equal to that of woman. The Earth Goddess is definitely associated with agriculture. They produced agriculture without male partner, without husband. So they are called virgin. Earth’s virginity is very natural in its conception. Though Earth, (a mother) is a virgin, so as a virgin mother, she was worshipped in the Indus valley. So also, almost all Goddesses of Kāmarūpa like Dūrgā, Kāli, Tārā etc were virgin, not weded. So Kūmārī or virgin worship played an important role in Kāmākhyā and other parts of Kāmarūpa. Krishnānada, in his Tantrasāra says that hōma does not produce the full fruits without Kūmārī- Pūjā. Girls of the age—ranging from one to sixteen years are virgins. In this year of her age, a girl has a distinct appellation. For example, in the first year she is called Sandhyā, a two—year old girl is designated as Sarasvati, and so on.

ŚIVA-ŚAKTI WORSHIP- Śakti was developed into Śiva- Śakti. The ancient remains of temples, sculptures and images found in different places in Kāmarūpa witnessed the rise and stronghold of the joint worship of Śiva-Śakti in various forms. Of course, the conception of Śiva-Śakti was the origin of the Aryans during the time of Pūrānas and Tantras. Originally, the non-Aryans worshipped it as a local deity on the basis of local rites. During the non-Aryan period, Śiva-Śakti was in the form of Pūrūsha- Prakriti, which were identified as male and female. They were turned into Father God and Mother Goddess and they were worshipped by the pre-Aryan or the pre-Aryan period.

106 Benarjee, S.C, Tantra in Bengal, 1978 P- 83
non- Aryan. The objects discovered at Mahenjodarō showed that Śiva and Śakti were worshipped not only in the human form but also in the symbolic form of the Liṅga and Yōni as a symbol of procreation\(^{107}\). There is inception that where there is Śiva there is Śakti. Kāmarūpa witnessed the joint worship of Śiva – Śakti as local deities from the primordial times. It has been said that the Kirātas were originally the follower of Śiva and later they became Śakti worshippers. They believed that just like pūrūsha and prakriti (a symbol of male and female), were the cause of the creation of the Universe, so also Śiva-Śakti, are the cause of regeneration. Although, Kāmarūpa was a famous centre of Śakti worship, there found lots of images and sculptures of Śiva-Śakti in various forms. The Kirātas had great faith in the Kirāta- Kirātani, later known as Śiva-Pārvati\(^{108}\) offering a pair of battle-nut to fulfill their objects. So the Mikiras worshipped their local deities Mikira- Mikirani\(^{109}\), later known as Śiva-UMB. Davakā region was famous for pair worship of Śiva-Śakti and discovered the images of UMAMaheswara (Davakā), UMAMaheswara (Mahāmāyā hill), UMAMaheswara (Rājābāri), and Tripūrā - Bhairavi (Rājābāri). Moreover, joint images are found in Devasthān, Mikirhātī, Jōgijān, Būrhā-Māyaṇg which witnessed the prevalence of joint worship of Śiva-Pārvati in Kāmarūpa\(^{110}\). The Khōnāmūkhi C.P. grant mentions a Prasasti of Dharmapāla to Ardhayūvatiswara, associated with Tāntric cult. The joint worship of Śiva-Śakti originally was local deities in

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107 Marshal, Mahenjodaro and Indus Civilisation. - I P- 52
108 Kalita Naren Kapilipar Kacharipar 1986. P- 20
109 Ibid P-20
110 Ibid P- 26
different places during the time of the Kirātā rule. When Kāmarūpa
was Aryanised the local deities were transformed into the Hindū fold
and assumed the Hindū name giving up the tribal garbs.

The Drāvida tribes introduced the worship of Śiva and Umā\textsuperscript{111}

The joint manifestation of Śiva - Pārvati, Mahābhairava - Mahābhairavi,
Hara-Gauri, Kāmeswara- Mahāgauri, Ardhanārisvara, Ardhayuvatisvara
were the later development in Prāgjyotisha- Kāmarūpa, which covered
the land in extensive scale among the various groups. From the
Varman dynasty to the Pāla rule almost all the kings donated land to the
Brahmanas with a view to spreading the Arya-Dharma in Kāmarūpa.
The inscriptions supply us valuable sources about the prevalence of
the worship of Śiva-Pārvati in pairs in various forms under different
tribes and under the auspicious rule of the Kāmarūpa kings. The
inscriptions contain prayers to Śiva-Śakti in the form Śiva-Pārvati,
Hara-Gauri, Umā-Mahesvara, Mahākāl- Mahākāli, Tripūrā- Bhairavi etc.
Later Śiva-Śakti was prescribed in the Pūrāṇa and Tantra literatures. The
Deori-Chūtiyas worshipped Kūndi- Māmā as Pūrusha - Prakriti, who
create and protect the whole universe. They imagined Kūndi -Māmā
to be Giri-Girisi or Būrhā-Būrhi and the creation was the result of
the union of Giri-Girisi\textsuperscript{112}. After the conversion into Hindū religion
this Būrhā - Būrhi became Śiva- Śakti. On the other hand, they
believed that Giri-Girisi later known as Baliabābā and Tāmreswari. Giri
transformed into Baliabābā and Girisi transformed into Tāmreswari\textsuperscript{113}.
They worshipped Śakti from the primordial times with the help of

\textsuperscript{111} Sarma S. Goalpara Jilar Itihas P-30
\textsuperscript{112} Deory Dambarudhar Deory Sanskriti P-10
\textsuperscript{113} Deory dambarudhar, Deory Sanskriti. P-11.
Deory, who had been regarded as the purohita. Dambarudhar Deory states that according to Tantric system three groups of people worshipped their respective deities. The Dibangi group worshipped Kûndi-Māmā, Teṅgāpāni group worshipped Baliabābā and Tāmreswari was worshipped by Bargayān group independently. The image of Śiva-Śakti has been found in Goalpārā region which may have displayed the origin and introduction of Śiva-Śakti by the Dravidians\textsuperscript{114}. which was proved by the local literatures and images. The Dravidas settled in the western part of Kāmarūpa, called Ratnadvipa, who were the worshippers of Īmā-Mahesvara. Of course, no traces of the Dravidians are still there. Yet there found sculptures of Ardhanārisvara in the Sūrya Pāhār, is shown standing in Sampada Mūdra having four arms. But after the Aryanisation of Kāmarūpa there introduced the joint worship of Śiva-Śakti with Tantric system. There found another Pitha called Būrhā-Būrhi (Śiva-Śakti)\textsuperscript{115}. The people believed that Śiva-Śakti joint worship is considered as the principal way of knowledge. There is no fruit of Śakti worship without Śiva, So Liṅgarchanā Tantra mentions that –

\begin{verbatim}
Śiva-Śakti bina devi nāstijnānāntu māsake I
Śakti bina mhesāni sarva byārthāghi pārvati II
\end{verbatim}

(quoted from G. J.L., of S.Sarma P- 21 )

The excavation of Baitbāri, Meghālaya, witnessed the emergence of Śiva-Śakti. There unearthed a sculpture of Īmā-Mahesvara\textsuperscript{116}. The joint worship of Śiva and Pārvati is found for the first time in the Pāla Inscriptions. Indrapāla though a Saiva, calls himself “one whose head is

\textsuperscript{114} Sarma S., Goalpara Jīlar Itihas P- 3
\textsuperscript{115} Sarma S. Goalpara Jīlar Itihas, P- 31
\textsuperscript{116} Sarma A. K, Emergence of Early Culture in N.E. India, 1993. P- 60.
adorned with the dust of the lotus feet of Hara and Girijā. 
Haragirijācaranapākajajaranjītottamāṅga
The inscription also mention about Kāmesvara - Mahāgauri which means Śiva- Pārvati. It refers to the king as a devotee of Śiva and Śakti and the Śakti cult associated with the Śaiva cult, became very popular in Kāmarūpa in the second half of the 11th century.

With the coming of the Mithila Prince Naraka, there opened a cultural route for the Aryans from Bengal, Kanauj, Mithilā which changed the socio-religious scenario of Kāmarūpa. The symbolic cult of goddesses of the Austrics, Kirātas and Drāvidas came to light with the touch of the culturally developed Aryans. Naraka, an Aryan prince from Mithilā invaded the kingdom of Kāmarūpa with Bishnū, the king of Dvārakā under the guidance and leadership of his mother Kātyāyani, a name of Dūrgā. He defeated and killed the Kirāta king Ghataka, a follower of Mother worship and established himself in a kingdom, where mother was regarded as supreme goddess.

Although Naraka drove away the Kirātas to the Dikkaravāsini, a large number of Kirātas remained there. Naraka made attempt to win over the remaining Kirātas, who were matriarchal in nature, by adopting the worship of Mother Goddess or Yōni Goddess and he appointed them in his army with a view to pacifying them and settling them there peacefully. Naraka introduced the worship of the dominating deity of the land Yōni Goddess in the name of Kāmākhyā. Naraka was to accept the non-Aryan Kirāta people. Naraka had a large number of Brāhmanas and other high cast people brought here and made grants of land to

117 Guakuchi grant of Indrapala 2nd C.P.of Indrapala. V- 32
Hanuman informed Rama about the non-Aryan society of Kamarupa. He said to Rama about the name of place, men and temples of non-Aryan origin. At that time the temple was surrounded by trees. The Kirata people were the devotees of the Yoni Goddess. The local people hated the Aryans. On the other hand the patriarchal Aryans had no regard to the non-Aryan aboriginal tribes who belonged to matriarchal society. But under force he adopted peaceful and liberal policy towards the Kiratas. From Naraka onwards the kings were under the influence of the Aryans. They established the Aryan Brāhmaṇas with great facilities in different places of Kamarupa and granted lands and entrusted the responsibilities of the holy places in Kamarupa. Naraka, being a staunch devotee of the Goddess Kāmākhyā, he did not allow even the sage Baśistha (an Aryan Brahman) to enter the temple. Bhagadatta brought a hundred Brāhmaṇas from Kanauj of vedic knowledge. P.C Choudhury refers to an attempt of some Aryan chief of Videha to spread Aryan culture in Assam Bhagadatta was likewise responsible for the settlement of the Aryans. The kings of the Naraka line, though preserved some of their customs, were gradually coming under the influence of the Vedic Brāhmaṇas. The consequence of this was that their ancient manners and customs were being gradually modified.

The Aryan kings and the Aryan Brāhmaṇas gradually merged with the non-Aryan society and culture. They were to follow the non-Aryan cult of mother goddess, adopted the various systems of the local tribal

118 Basu N.N. S.H.K....vol-1, p-38.
120 Basu N.N., S.H.K vol-I p-38
121 Choudhury P.C. H.C.A.P. p- 104
society and also followed the rites and rituals of the tribal people of Kāmarūpa. But the most intelligent and culturally developed Aryans infiltrated their Aryan and modified culture to the non-Aryan society. As a result of the contact of the Aryans with the non-Aryan tribes of Kāmarūpa, the Vedic religion underwent radical changes. Some of the Gods and Goddesses were developed into special cults along with sectarian lines independently\textsuperscript{122}. The non-Aryan Mother Goddess Kāmākhya was merged with the Mother cult of India and turned into a cult of civilized society.

The light of the East called Prāgjyotisha\textsuperscript{123} travelled towards the east and west and illuminated the eastern peninsula and the whole northern India\textsuperscript{124}. So the Indian literatures or myths describe the glory of Prāgjyotisha- Kāmarūpa with a view to glorifying India as the most sacred place of Śakti cult. To secure easy recognition by aboriginal people the Aryans brought to prominence another local cult - the cult of the Yōni Goddess as the Mother Goddess Kāmākhya. As the Yoni symbol belonged to the matriarchal tribes like the Austrics, Kirātas, so to satisfy them, Yōni was given a new name 'Mother Goddess'\textsuperscript{125}. Therefore, to win over the allegiance and support of the local tribes and to preach the Aryan ideas and customs, Naraka extended royal patronage to the local cult of Kāmākhya. The most important salient features of the settlement of the Aryans in Kāmarūpa was the

\textsuperscript{122} Barua B.K, A Cultural History of assam, p-161
\textsuperscript{123} Prāgjyotisha was called the land of the rising sun of India. It was Justly called Prāgjyotisha e.i, the light of the East.
\textsuperscript{124} Agarwala A.C, The Ancient History of Assam, p- 36
\textsuperscript{125} Kakati B.K Mother Goddess Kamakhya, p-16.
introduction of human figures\textsuperscript{126} in the system of Mother cult and the philosophy of Mother Goddess\textsuperscript{127}.

Kāmākhya came into existence with a new modified system among the Aryan and non-Aryan society. Prāgijyotisha–Kāmarūpa was a meeting place, from the very ancient times, of the Austrics, Kirātas, Drāvidas, Aryans and Chino-Tibetan people. The tribal beliefs, cults and myths of these diverse races and tribes mingled together as if in a witch-cauldron and formed the foundation of the orthodox religion of the Tantras\textsuperscript{128}. Prāgijyotisha-Kāmarūpa sowed the seeds of the Tantrism long before the Vedic Aryans among the aboriginal tribes like the cult of Mother Goddess, worship of Linga and Yōni, sexual dualism and the practice of Yōga and together with eating fish, and meat. All these elements were components of a new system of Śakti cult called Paṇca-Makāra, which was subsequently known as the tantric tradition. Through the worship of Kāmākhya, the Tāntric system came to light and Kāmākhya became the centre of Tāntric Śakti cult. The worship of Śakti was to exercise through the Paṇca–Makāra or Tāntric system and Tāntrism became the indispensable part of the Śakti cult. Various rites and rituals of Tāntric system discarded the local rites and became the predominant form in Kāmarupa. Gradually Tāntrism proceeded from this land to Tibet, Nepal and China\textsuperscript{129}. B.K. Barua remarks that most of the customs which came to be observed by the Tāntric or ritualistic side of

\textsuperscript{126} Barua B.K., A Cultural History of Assam, p-194

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid p-196

\textsuperscript{128} Barua B.K. A Cultural History of Assam p-223.

\textsuperscript{129} Wintemitz A History of Literature vol-11, p-400.
the Śakti and Śaiva cults were taken from the soil of Assam\textsuperscript{130}. From the 5\textsuperscript{th} century onwards the Tantra Śāstras and the Purāṇas were composed with the local elements, which replace local Goddess into Divine Goddess in the mythological stories with ritualistic system. The Tantras and the Purāṇas mention the power and activities, also the various methods of worship of various Gods and Goddesses. In the Tantras like the Kāmākhyā Tantra, the Yōgini Tantra and the Purāṇas included the local elements like fish, meat, wine, yōga, etc. together with most of the aboriginal rites and customs. The Śakti Tāntric system was associated with Vāmācāra. Its general meaning was Dakshinācāra or left-handed and it was later developed. N.N.Bhattacharyya asserted that the word Vāmācāra is not Vāma or left, but Vāmā is woman\textsuperscript{131}. Therefore, the local cults were recognized as national by the Aryan rulers, with a view to settle with them. There appeared a large number of Goddesses including ten Mahāvidyās of Kāmākhyā, who assumed lot of names in the Purāṇas and Tantras.

In the first or second century A.D., a sudra king of Kāmarūpa, named Deveswar was a devotee of Śakti and he started the worship of Kāmākhyā\textsuperscript{132}. In the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century A.D. Pūshyavarman founded the Varman dynasty in Kāmarūpa. His kingdom was very weak and his first and foremost duty was to strengthen and consolidate his kingdom. So he did not interfere in the rights and beliefs of his subjects. The political condition of that time was favourable for him. He decided to keep his subjects quiet and safe. The kings respected the religion.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{130} Barua B.K, A Cultural History of Assam p-223.
\textsuperscript{131} Bhattacharya N.N. H.T.R, p-108
\textsuperscript{132} Khan choudhury A.A. History of Koch behar p-14.
\end{flushright}
and culture of all sects and therby won the popularity of the people. They extended royal patronage to the local cults of the land. Even they had given full liberty to the royal members to accept their deities according to own choice. It was the duty of the kings to protect the religion of his subjects. So the king never imposed his religion over his subjects. This encouraged the devotees of various cults of Kămārûpa to live together which helped to the development of the various cults. There was co-existence and co-operation among the various sects. The inscriptions of Kāmarûpa prove that the queens of Kāmarûpa adopted their own names in the name of Goddesses which were recognized by the kings. This indicates that Śakti was favourable not only among the queens but also influenced the kings which marked the development of Śakti cult. During the Bhauma dynasty, under the influence of the Aryans Tantric Śakti cult, rites and rituals spread to different parts of Kāmarûpa. From the 7\textsuperscript{th} - 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D, Gōālpārā was Aryanised and Tantric Śakti cult spread to the area and Devi temple was built there\textsuperscript{133}. There found Śakti goddess Dûrgā with Śiva in a cave and there were two large caves which contained at least 15 to 20 men, the place is called now Pāglātek. It was believed that under the Gupta influence these caves and temples were built. During the Śālastambha dynasty, king Śri Harsha had cultural contact with Orissa and the sculptors from An̄ga, Banga and Kalinga were imported who had immense contributions in the art and architecture of Kāmarûpa\textsuperscript{134}. There grew up, in Gōālpārā, a large number of Śakti pithas like Ālōkjhāri

\textsuperscript{133} Sarma S. Goalparar Jilar Itihias p- 42
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid p- 42
Mahāmāyā and Tūkreswāri Bhāgavati. The matriarchal aboriginal Drāvidas and Austrics were believed to be the inhabitants of Gōālpārā. Under their influence three Kāmākhyā Devālayas were built in Gōālpārā namely Kāmākhyā, Jaibhūi Kāmākhyā and Mānkāchār Kāmākhyā. Being encouraged by the liberal policy of the rulers the Aryans attempted to spread their knowledge all over Kāmarūpa. The Doobi and Nidhānpūr copper plates show that during the Varman dynasty the Aryans spread Aryan dharma on the basis of local cults giving new shapes and forms. The plates included a good number of Brahmanas. The copper plates refer to the Goddess of various forms like Pārvati (D.C.P, V-22,53), Bhōgavati (N.C.P, V-35), Dūrgā (D.C.P, V-51), Śyāmādevī (N.C.P, V-22) and included various rites and rituals of the Vedic systems like Coronation ceremony (D.C.P, V-37), Age of Kali (D.C.P, V-75) and Asvamedha sacrifice (D.C.P, V-31). The main aim of the king was to establish peace and order among the masses. Doobi C.P, confirms that Bhāskarvarman’s chief duty was to expel the Kali Age (age of unruly, might is right) the period of disorder.

Dharma: prakhalita: Kali pūnarapi pra (dhāranya). (V-75)

Traces of Mahāmāyā temple’s remainings in Śingimari, known as Singhamāri was discovered in Gōālpārā but the temple of Singhamari is supposed to be destroyed in the battle between Gauda and Dhaval Ghosh, a tributary raja of Gōālpārā. Thus Gōālpārā was enriched with the cultural contact of the Aryans. It is true that there is not a single line about Kāmākhyā as the titular deity of any kings, on the other hand it does not mean that they were not the devotees of Kāmākhyā. The

135 Sarma S, Goalparar Jilara Itihas, p-38
136 Sarma S, Goalpara Jilar Itihas, p-46.
inscription refers to the liberalism of the Varman kings. They extended royal patronage to the Aryans who spread the Ārya Dharma and the modified form of Śakti cult. The queens assumed the Aryanised name of the Goddess. The Doobi and the Nidhānpūr copper plate grants supported that the Varman kings acknowledged the beauty, power and motherlike character of the Goddess and their queens seemed to be compared with the role, virtue, kindness and power of the Goddesses like Pārvati, Bhogavati, Dūrgā etc. Most probably the queens were loyal to the Goddesses and maintained their family discipline. During the Varman dynasty Hindu religion and the worship of Hindū Goddesses were propitiated all over the country amongst the neighbouring Bodōs and other races. The Aryans were so mild in their policy that they never insulted nor crushed the racial sentiments. Even Buddhists enjoyed royal favour and lived amicably side by side with other neighbours. The Buddhist University at Nālāndā got regular contributions from the emperor of Kāmarūpa. The Śālastambha rule witnessed the rise of the Śakti cult and started a new age by constructing the Śakti temple along with Śiva which showed the gradual development of Śakti cult under the dynasty of the Vauma lines. The Śālastambha rulers not only paid respect to the Goddesses but also worshipped them in the temple on the pattern of Nāgara style of southern India. Śakti cult got a new life and under the royal patronage three rock temples were built at Biswanath. Vanamālavarmādeva was the devotee of Kāmeswara-Mahāgauri and he made a beautiful plan to build a group of

137 Nath R.M, B.A. C. p-38
138 Gogoi N. B.P.V.P p-14
temples at Biswanāth and thereby attempted to make Biswanāth the second Kāśidham\textsuperscript{139}. It is interesting to note that Kāmarūpa was known as Mlecha Kingdom. There was no existence of Hindu religion and with the coming of Naraka and Bhagadatta, the process of Aryanisation system continued and came to end in the 7\textsuperscript{th} century A.D\textsuperscript{140}. The rulers of Kāmarūpa were called Mlecha (M.B, Sabha-xxx-27) in the epic. Naraka and Bhagadatta imported hundreds of Brāhmanas to spread Ārya Dharma. Magic practices and Tāntric rites took place in the Śakti cult under the guidance of Brahmanas and with these new cult, Śakti cult developed and occupied a prominent place in the 7\textsuperscript{th} century A.D\textsuperscript{141}. During the Varman dynasty, no mention was made about Śakti worship in the inscriptions. B.K. Barua comments that the silence may, however, be explained by the fact that Śaktism represent a particular phase of religion which was mainly personal and esoteric. Consequently it had no connection with any public religious order or establishment. Personal in origin, its tenets and history were preserved in a special class of magical and sacramental, commonly known as Tantras\textsuperscript{142}. The Tezpur copper plate of Vanamāla and the Gūwākūchi copper plate of Indrapāla have recorded about Kāmeswara - Mahāgauri and Mahāgauri- Kāmeswara. The royal patronage to the Śakti cult of the Kāmarūpa rulers will be discussed in the fourth chapter in detail.

\textsuperscript{139} Tage tada & B.J Das Malinithan, p- 24-26
\textsuperscript{140} Jonaki, Natun Khanda, bohag Bihu, 1824, 4th Ed. P- 949-52.
\textsuperscript{141} Choudhury N.D, H.A.C.A, p- 112
\textsuperscript{142} Barua. B.K A Cultural History of Assam, p- 167; Choudhury N.D. H.A.C.A, p-114.
Šakti worship developed and flourished all over Kāmarūpa after the coming of the Aryans or during the Royal dynasties on the basis of aboriginal tribal cult. Traces of Šakti cult are found in the Villages among agricultural society in different form – personal, family and in the Kūlas with the aboriginal tribal methods. The deities, in course of time, were worshipped in the society in common form, but confined in a particular race such Kirātadevi, Mikirani etc by the matriarchal society. The Austrics and their offshoots worshipped the Yōni symbol as the power of regeneration on the Nilācala hill in a cave, later on known as Manōbhava cave during the Tantra age. The Yōni Goddess on the Nilācala is considered as the most Ancient holy place of Prāgjotiasha- Kāmarūpa. The Yōni Goddess developed into Mother Goddess cult of Kāmākhyā after the settlement of the Aryans by Naraka. The Pūrānas and the Tantras personified the Yōni Goddess with the spouse of Śiva as Pārvati, Sati, Úmā etc, an imaginary composition. On the other hand, Kāmākhyā was called Dūrgā, Kāli, Bhūvaneswari, etc. by the Pūrānas and the Tantras and they are already recognized by the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana. For the promotion and popularity Naraka introduced the worship of Kāmākhyā. The worship of Kāmākhyā spread all over India which influenced the Aryans, settled in other places of India. The famous saint Baśistha came to visit Kāmākhyā. The story of Kāmarūpa–Kāmākhyā was composed by the Pūrānas and the Tantras as the most holiest places. There is a legend offering a mythological explanation

143 Kakati B.K. Mother Goddess Kamakhya p- 16.
of the origin of the pithas of Kāmākhyā. On the basis of Kāmākhyā and other goddesses there originate a dozen of legends. There developed a well-known story of the Daksha Yajña. The Mahābhārata, Brahmā- Pūrṇa, Kālikā Pūrṇa and Yōgini Tantra narrate the story of Daksha Yajña and creation of Śakti Pithas from the Satis deadbody. The Hevajra Tantra, a Būddhist work of 693 A.D. mentioned four pithas including Kāmarūpa. A Tantra work Rūdrajamala (around 1052 A.D.) mentions ten holy places of which Kāmarūpa was one of them. Jñānaprarnava Tantra contains eight pithas, Kūbjikā Tantra 42 pithas and another section of Jñānaprarnava Tantra 50 pithas. According to mythology, Kāmākhyā's original form was Śati, daughter of Daksha and from Kāmākhyā brokeout ten Mahāvidyā as an incarnation and Divine figure, namely Kāli, Tārā, Sōḍāsi, Bhūvaneswari, Bhairavi, Cinnamastaka, Dhūmavati, Bagalā, Mātaṅgi and Kamalā. They were the development of the Tantra age.

Śakti cult was developed with the beginning of icons in Kāmarūpa. The beginning of the regional icons is marked by a group of sculptures from Deopāni, the earliest of which may be assigned to circa eight–ninth century on the basis of the inscriptional evidence. They first erected the Śaṅkara Nārāyana figure. But the iconographic formula does not show any local elements. Gradually the perception comes closer to the idealized nuances of eastern Indian sculpture. The kings of Kāmarūpa established cultural and political contact with the neighbouring countries like Bihār, Patalipūtra, Nepāl, South India and with the Güpta empire.

145 Vangavasi Ed. Hevajra Tantra seventh patal (quoted by Bagchi) p- 410.
146 Sircar D.C. The Sakti pithas p- 15-17.
147 Roy Amit.& Mukharjee Samir, H.A.I. p-288-89.
from the 1st century A.D. The Brahmanas belonging to various góttras from Upper India came to Bengal and settled all over this region. Assam accepted the Brahmanas of different góttras, mentioned in the land grants of the rulers of Kāmarūpa from mid-India. Assam accepted the Aryan culture late and not in a fairly early period, as is claimed by B.K. Barua who further contends that Assam had contact with India since the Mauryan Period. The contact conveyed the knowledge of the art to Kāmarūpa. A group of artisans entered Kāmarūpa, settled in the land and the people of Kāmarūpa were influenced by the artisans. This wave of artisans and assimilation with the local people, made the people of Kāmarūpa aware of the art. This concept almost created a new feelings of art of making images and started the art of sculpture. The period from the 4th century to the 12th century may be called the period of ‘golden age’ in Kāmarūpa art. During this period innumerable images of Gods and Goddesses have been engraved. This period witnessed a large number of temples, decorated with a lot of images. The development of art of images enriched the Śakti cult and its influence in Kāmarūpa. The Yōgini Tantra refers to the spread of Śakti cult to Śrisailaparvata, Vārānasi, Kāmarūpa, Nepāl and Maṇḍarpurvat by Śiva himself.

Mahātmyāṅg Kirtitang tasya purā śrisailamandire I
Vārānasyang kāmākhyāṅg Nepāle mandarācale II

The Kālikā Pūrāṇa and the Yōgini Tantra give the iconographical description of the Śākta deities and give evidence of the popularity of these deities or goddesses. Most of the ancient

148 Choudhury, R.D., A.B.V.A., P-209
149 Y.T. Ch-1, P 1.
goddesses were preserved in these Śāstras. The inscriptions, Architecture and the literatures contain the name of the Goddesses. Of course, most of the epigraphical names of Śakti are not found or not valid in the present society. The Goddesses like Úmā, Gauri, Girijā, Kāmeswari are not popular or not worshipped as usual. On the other hand, some ancient goddesses are still popular and are in dominating position in the present society. They are Kāli, Dūrgā, Mahāmāyā, Caṇḍikā, Pārvati, Bhūvaneswari.

Kāmākhyā and its adjoining regions were the centre of Śakti cult and the icons discovered in the area proved that Śakti cult was prevailed and was predominant in the region. Besides the inscriptions, various images of Śakti of different forms and of different periods from 6th to 12th century A.D, found in various places of ancient Kāmarūpa show the prevalence and development of Śakti cult. Kāmākhyā and its surroundings were the principal place where Śakti cult developed and prevailed and the area contains various forms of Śakti images. Images of Mahisamardini Dūrgā of ten hands are found at Ülūbāri (Gauhati) and at Hājō. Another image of Mahisamardini, of four hands, is found in the Nātmaṇḍapa of the Kāmākhyā temple. A small image is noticed on the way side to Kāmākhyā. A stone image of the Goddess is found along with the image of Úmā - Maheswara on the way to Kāmākhyā. N.D. Choudhury noticed a miniature bronze image of the deity of eight handed, in the residence of Sri U.C. Bora,
Rangmahal, North–Gauhati. The image belongs to 12th century A.D.

There was a temple on the high hillock of the pre-Āhōm period, at Śūālkuchi named Siddheswari temple which contained an image of goddess Mahisamardini of ten hands and another in front of the wall of Siddheswara temple. According to R. M. Nath, the specimen are of South Indian style and assign to the Dravidian pattern. A miniature of bronze image of Mahisamardini of eight hands, now in A.S.M, is collected from Kūkūrmārā. A rock cut image of Mahisamardini of 18 hands on the bank of the Brahmaputra behind Śūkleswar temple, Gauhati, assigned to 9th- 10th century A.D. A good number of images of Mahisamardini of 16 handed have been discovered from Āmbāri, Gauhati, belonging to 13th- 14th century A.D. At Paṇcā-Pāṇḍava temple at Pāṇḍūnāth on the foothills of Nilācala hill, there is an image, identified as Dūrgā, which is assigned to 9th century A.D.

An image of Dūrgā of four hands, carved on a block of granite, is now in A.S.M., assigned to the 9th century A.D. An image of Pārvati of four hands stands in the Ūmānanda, Gauhati, it is carved on a block of stone, may be assigned to 7th century A.D. Three images of Cāmuṇḍā of 10th to 11th century A.D have been seen at Kāmākhya. The shrine of the Great mother Kāmākhya and its adjoining regions are rich in haory tradition. The image of

150 Choudhury R.D, A. B.V. A p-86
151 Ibid P-86
152 J.A.R.S VOL- XXXVII, NO- 1,2, 1998 P- 155
153 J.A.R.S V-XXXVII NO- 1,2 1998-2000, P- 156-163
Bhūvaneswari, found at Kāmākhyā, belonged to the 10th-11th century A.D, an image of Mahisamardini, Gauhati, of 10th-11th century A.D, and the discovery of Yōnipitha at Āmbāri, Gauhati of the pre-Āhōm period, prove the existence and prevalence, also the development of Śakti cult in Kāmarūpa. (now in A.S.M.).

Daraṅg region was extended and developed with Śiva-Bandanā and Śakti worship from the non-Aryan period and the Daraṅgi kings woned it from their ancestors. Following their ancestors the Daraṅgi kings worshipped Devi with the sacrifice of buffaloes and goats. There found Dāo, Ṣarāi, Māihāng, Jālikāhi and many other articles used in the time of worship proved the Devi worship with Tāntric rites.

In the south bank of the Brahmapūtra, at Gōālpārā there has been discovered an image of Dūrgā in a great cave along with a Śiva Linga. There is a temple known as Pāglātek temple. Observing style and structure of the cave and the temple, it may be surmised that the cave and temple were constructed under the influence of the Gūpta culture. During the reign of Śrī Harsa (7th-10th century A.D.), Orissa had cultural contact with the land of Gōālpārā. As a result, sculptors from Anga, Vanga, and Kaliṅga rushed to this land. Gradually Śakti Tāntric cult spread to Gōālpārā. There existed, Devi temple at Gōālpārā, which is referred to in the ‘Dharma - Mangala’ of Śrī Ghanaram Chakravarty-

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154 Sarma D Mangaldoir Buranji, P-121.
155 Ibid p-124
156 Sarma S. Goalpara Jilar Itihas, P- 38.
157 Ibid, P- 42
Śakti was worshipped in the Ratnadvipa. There is reference to the inhabitants of the Austrics at Göālpārā, who were matriarchal. The images and architectures identify that there lived in ancient times at Göālpārā, the Austrics, and the Drāvidas. The Drāvidas introduced the Liṅga and Yōni worship like Kāmākhyā, as Siva and Śakti in Göālpārā regions. Traces of Liṅga and Yōni have been discovered there. On the pattern of Kāmākhyā, they established the three Kāmākhyā devālayas or Yōni - Tirthas. They were Kāmākhyā, Jaibhū Kāmākhyā and Mānkāchār Kāmākhyā. Traces of a good Number of Śakti Pithas were found in Göālpārā region, which developed the cultural scenario of the region. Ālōkjhari - Mahāmāyā, Āisakhāt and Tūkreswari Bhāgavati were the important places of Śakti. On the basis of Śakti cult, Göālpārā region developed in art, literature and culture. The Ardha-dharmiya Folk festival of Göālpārā was bamboo worship associated with Kāli Goddess as a symbol of Madan-Kāmadeva. The act of reproduction has been revived in this kind of worship. The symbol of Liṅga and maithuna are connected with this worship. In a story entitled, ‘Madan Kūmārar Janma’ there is a reference to Kamalā – Dūrgā.

158 Collected by S. Sarma and quoted in his book G.J.I P- 46
159 Sarma.S, Goalpara Jilar Itihas P- 38
160 Datta. B.N, Goalparyia Lokageet samgrah, Ed. P- 64.
Madan –Kāma was referred to as a killer of an Asūra\(^{161}\). Devi was called ManaGa Candikā and Tribhaṅga Kālikā in the song sung by the women of Gōālpārā. The song is—

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Māngalbāre janma devir} \\
&Māngal Candikā I \\
&Raktarūpe janma haila \\
&Tribhaṅga kālikā II
\end{align*}
\]

(Datta B.N, Gōālpārā Lokageet Saṅgrah, p-112)

There have been seen rock cut Yōni in the Sūrya Pāhār, and a rock cut sculpture of Ardhanārī. Recently the Guwahati Circle Excavation team has brought to light an image of Dūrgā Mahisa Mardini assigned to 9\(^{th}\)-10\(^{th}\) century A.D\(^{162}\). The Sūrya Pāhār complex consist of five shrines dedicated to Bishnū, Dūrgā, Śiva, Ganeśa and Sūrya. When Sūkāphā established the Āhōm kingdom in Upper Assam, Kāmarūpa king Sandhyā shifted his capital to the bank of the river Dhalā (west part) for the protection of his Kingdom and capital. King Sandhyā accompanied him the Devi Kāmākhyā or Kāmadā and placed in his capital known as Kamatāpūr in the name of Kāmadā or Kamatā\(^{163}\).

Sakti cult was extended and developed in the Davakā kingdom. The Hindū culture of India was assimilated with the non-Aryan cult in the 4\(^{th}\) century A.D when the king Samudragūpta conquered the land. Allāhābād Pillar Inscription mentions the name of Kāmarūpa, Nepāl, Davakā which were conquered by him. The golden age of the Gūpta period had great influence on the culture of Davakā

\(^{161}\) Datta, B.N, Goalpara Lokageet samgrah, Ed., P-68.  
\(^{162}\) Choudhury Milan. K, Surya Pahar, 2003 (not Published) P-35.  
\(^{163}\) Sarma Sushil Assamiya P-63.
and Kāmarūpa under the Gūpta art. Originally the region was inhabited by the Austrics. The inhabitants of the region were the Kārbi, Kachāri, Khāsi, Gārō and Tiwā belonging to the Kirāta or Tibeto Burmese group\textsuperscript{164}. The Khāsis worshipped the Kapili Devi, but when they turned into Hindū, Kapili became Kāli. The Kālikā Pūrāṇa referred to the Kapili as Kapil Gāṅgā and its purity\textsuperscript{165}. They offered sacrifices of goats, cocks to the Kapili. From Howārāghāt to Davakā the whole area was rich in remains of the ancient images of Gods and Goddesses. In Jōgijān of Davakā, there was a rock cut Śiva and Śakti, known as Kirāta- Kirātani. The local tribe (kachāri) offered a pair of battle-nut to this Goddess, when they started for hunting\textsuperscript{166}. Lanka and Lumding were also influenced by the Austric culture. Like the Austric, the Tibeto-Burman and Dimāsā-Kachāri worshipped Mother Goddess as ĀI- Pūjā. They had their own Lokācāra, rites and rituals and faiths. For the memory of the dead they placed a flat piece of stone as pūrūsha (male) over another piece of stone as prakriti (female) as the symbol of regeneration. In the Davakā region innumerable ruins of temples are discovered and some of them are Devasthān, Dakmakār Mahāmāyā, Bargaṅgā, Būrḥāgohāin Thān and Ākāsīgaṅgā. All these temples are said to have been built by the Pāla king Ratnapāla\textsuperscript{167}. A large number of Śiva-Śakti images have been found here. Those are Tripūrā-Bhairavi, Rājābāri, (niw in A.S.M), Īmā- Maheswara, Devasthān; Īmā- Maheswar, Davakā

\textsuperscript{164} Kalita Naren. Kapilipar Kacharipar P-11
\textsuperscript{165} K.P. C-79 V-146 P-813
\textsuperscript{166} Kalita Naren Kapilipar Kacharipar, p-20
\textsuperscript{167} Kalita Naren Kapilipar Kacharipar P-
(Now in A.S.M.), Ûmā-Maheswara, Mahāmāyā hill, and Ûmā-Maheswara, Rājābāri (now in front of Raha police Station); Ûmā-Maheswara, Mikirhāti; Ûmā-Maheswara, Ganesh Pāhār; Bûrhā Māyaṅg and Kāsasila-Pāhār. In the Ghilānī area there was worshipped a pair of deity called Mikir-Mikirāni (Śiva-Parvati). The system of worship was Tantric that was proved by the existence of Śakti Tantric deities, sacrifices of human being, animals and practice of Paḍca-Makāra (vāmācāra) were the system of worship, mentioned in the Kālikā Pūrāṇa and Yōgini Tantra. The Tantric six systems or Satkarma like Śānti, Bāsya, Stambhan, Bidves, Ucchātan and Māran, the magical rites were practised. The women performed the Yōgini Kauladharma. It was believed that Minanātha was attracted by the charms of the eight systems of Kāmakalā of the ladies like Basikaran, Sanmoh, Akarsan, Yaunābhisek, Pūraskāran, Rajashpan, Prastāb and nibriti, and forgot his meditation. The Kālikā Pūrāṇa refers to a pitha, named Dûrjayapitha and in the South east corner there was a Goddess on a red rock known as Paḍca-Yōni*. So it was later came to be known as Paḍca-Pûskarini.

Śakti cult was developed in Šonitpūr, the ancient kingdom of modern Tezpūr, from the remote period. The traditional king Bāna was the devotee of Śiva. He built the temple of Bhairavi also in his capital, which still exists in same grandeur and fame. His

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168 Kalita Naren, Kapilipar Kacharipar. P-169
169 K.P. C-79 V-159 P-815
* According to K.P. Paḍca-Yoni are Ugracandā, Pracanā, Chandogrā, and Candanāyikā Candā, consisting of five Yonis.
170 K.P. C-79 V-161-162 P-815
daughter Úshā was the devotee of Bhairavi and she always worshipped Devi Bhairavi. An image of Dûrgā of sixteen hands has been unearthed from the Bâmuni Hill. Maheswar Neog in his work ‘Pabitra Assam’ mentioned the existence of Dûrgā in Sonitpûr. The Bâmûni Hill witnessed the rise of Śakti cult in this land. The ancient remains marked the existence and development of Śakti cult in and around the ancient capital of Vāna. The ruins of Bisvanâth identified the Yôni worship. The rocks in Bisvanâth contained some holes which represented Yôni or Goddesses and Gods. There are Bisvanâth temple, Úmâ temple, Caṇḍi temple and Kāmeswara temple and the holes are considered as the images in the temples. The holes represent Gods and Goddesses. Not a single inscription refers to the Śakti worship in Kâmarûpa. But the Tezpur copper plate grant of Vanamālavarmâdeva and Gauhâti and Gûâkûchi copper plate grant of Indrapâla mention the Goddess Kâmeswara- Mahâgauri. An image of Kâmeswara-Mahâgauri has been discovered at Bisvanâth which was constructed by Vanamālavarmâdeva. He attempted to make Bisvanâth the second Kâśi. There has been standing a broken temple with a Devi image on the Kâmakûta Hill near Šilghât. The Šâlastambha King Vanamālavarmâdeva with a view to worshipping Kâmâkhyâ near his capital, established a pitha equal to Kâmâkhyâ and introduced the worship of Śakti in Vâmācâra Tāntric rites and sacrifices in the 8th cen A.D. A newly discovered image of ‘Daśabhûjâ Dûrgâ’ found at Gahpur, Helen, is now in the Tezpur Museum. The

171 Neog Maheswar Pabitra Assam P-173
172 Gogoi N. Buranjiye Parasâ Visvanâth Prântar P-14
image was assigned to 10th century A.D, but the Museum authority has not published it till now. The images discovered in and around Tezpur, identify the stronghold of Śaktism in Kāmarūpa during the dynastical rule of the Varman, Śālastambha and Pāla line. The images, unearthed and stored in the Tezpur Museum was Tārādevi of Būrhāmādhab Devalaya, Bisvanāth Chāriali, assigned to 10th century A.D; Śiva-Pārvati, Śīngari 10th century A.D and Bāli-Tārā-Aṅgad, Dhekiājūli of 10th century A.D.

Śakti worship existed and was developed in the extreme North-East of Kāmarūpa. Naraka invaded Prāgjyotisha, defeated the Kirātas and they were driven out upto Dikkaravāsini. They sheltered in the hilly area and established there their deity, known as Devi Dikkaravāsini or Kesāikhāiṭī. The temple was built of copper, that is why the temple is known as the Tāmreswari temple. The Ābor Hills goes to underline the wide prevalent of the worship of Dūrgā in the entire region. Śakti was worshipped not only in the Tāntric system but the inspiration behind every constructional design was derived from this form of worship173. The Mālinithān, now in Arūnāchal pradesh, has been bearing evidence of the prevalent of Śakti cult. A few erotic sculptures, which provide indication about the prevalence of Tāntric Śakti ideas at Mālinithān are found in the region. There discovered a lot of miniature images of female, image of female erotica and an image of Dūrgā. A most powerful and influential Śakti pitha in Sadiyā region was the Dikkaravāsini or the

173 J.A.R.S. VOL-XVIII 1968 P-36
Tamreswari Goddess. The Chütiyas and the Deory called her as ‘Tāmār-Māi’. The Chütiyas claimed themselves as the successor of Vismaka, a traditional king of Kūḍīlā. This Tamreswari was the tutelar deity of king Vismaka. In the temple, there was an image of Goddess in which Devi was worshipped in the Vāmācāra method by the local priest, offering various sacrifices of ducks, pegion buffalo, goat even human was believed to be sacrificed there. Devi was worshipped as Kāli, Dūrgā, Bhairavi, Cinnamastā, and Tārā. Besides the Chütiyas, Deory, Misimi, Singphou, Ābor, Khāmti tribes were also influenced by the Vāmācāri system of the Śakti cult, performed in the temple. Even people from Tibet, Cīnā and Hindūsthān came here to visit and worship Tamreswari Devi174. The Devi assumed two forms-Tiksṇa- Kāntā (fearful appearance) and Lalitā- Kāntā (graceful appearance). Tiksṇa-Kāntā was Ekajatā (single mated hair) known as Úgratārā, with her attendants, such as Cāmūṇḍā, Vikalā, Bhsanā etc. The extensive ruins of temples and sculptures confirm our belief that the faith had an important stronghold in the land from early times. The existing materials, both as records and remains, pointed out the widespread prevalence of Śakti cult. Even after the introduction of Vaisnava reformation by Sri Saṅkardeva, a great bulk of the population remained Śaktas. The Śakti pithas still have been attracting not only the Śakta devotees but the pilgrimage from other places of India and abroad.

The Śadiyā kingdom was famous for Śakti worship. The Deory-Chütiyas were the inhabitant of the region, who

174 Bardoloi Rajanikanta Tamreswari P-36
worshipped the Kūḍī-māmā¹⁷⁵ (kūḍī- Śiva and Māmā- mother) who were their local deities. The Brahmanas of Kauḍīlya Gōtra settled here and so the place was called as Kauḍīlya and later known as Kūḍīl. Some historians believed that a group of Aryans migrated to India through the north- east corner and the Deory -Chūtiyas were believed to be the first Aryans who settled in this region of Kāmarūpa. Regarding the name of Deory, it is stated that a person who is involved in the Śakti worship and performed the ceremonial programme of worship, offering of sacrifice and distribute the Bhōga (Prasād) among the devotees, and arrange the ceremony is called Deory. He is all in all in the functions relating to the Śakti worship. Thence, Deory system was introduced not only in Śadiyā but in Darang and Kāmarūpa. Even today, in every temple there is a Deory to perform the religious work. But in course of time, three Deories were to perform the duties in the Temples- they were Chief Deory, Mājū Deory and Var Deory. In the 10th Khaṇḍa of Bhāgavata, Rūkmini the daughter of Vismaka, a king of Kūḍīla, worshipped devi (V-39-50, P- 749) with her friends.

Pāse je pasilā gaiya Dūrgāra grihat I
Lagat pasile brāhmaṇa Kanyā jat II
Bayasat bridha jat Jānanta bidhik I
Bhālmate Dūrgāk pūjailā Rūkminika II

(quoted by D.Deory in ‘Deory Sanskriti’)
The chief tutelary deity of the Deory-Chūtiya was Tāmresvari Devi. They worshipped mainly Kūṇḍi-māmā, Baliabābā and Tāmreswarī.

¹⁷⁵ Deory Dambarudhar, Deory Sanskriti. P-1
The echo of Śakti cult reached the Gārō Hills. There discovered a gold image of Goddess- Astabhujā , which belonged 10th to 11th century A.D. at Phūlbari. The traces of Devi marked the development and existence of Śakti cult upto this region. This identified the strong belief in Śaktism of the tribal people located there. The Gārōs were belonged to the matriarchal group and they made their houses on the Yōni stone with the belief that this would overcome any obstacle of the family. The entire area within the fortified complex is glittered with ancient structural ruins, brick bats, a number of ancient tanks of various diamitre, Śiva liṅga and Yōni etc.\textsuperscript{176} There found at Vadagokugiri, images of two handed Kāli, one is in standing pose and the other is in a sitting pose, both holding a khadga and several human heads from which it may be assumed that the Kāli was worshipped in Tāntric form. Two images of Ūgra Tārā of two handed, have been discovered at Bhaitbari. Both were of ferocious nature. Śiva - Śakti worship was prevalent there. An image of Ūmā-Maheswara was unearthed in Baitbari.

The Kālikā Purāṇa mentions Güpta Kāmā, Dirgheswari and Bhūvaneswari among the Asta-Yōgini * of Kāmākhyā. Bhūvaneswari was standing on the peak of the Nilācala Hill as the Tāntric pitha. On the east there found the pitha of Dirgheswari. The system of worship of Devi was Vāmācāra Tāntric, same with the Kāmākhyā system. The pitha is called as the Güpta Kāmākhyā. Tiger is depicted as the Devi’s Vāhana. It is known that there is no traces of Śakti worship

\textsuperscript{176} Sarma A,K Emergence of Early Culture in N.E India P- 21-22

* AstaYogini—Gupta kāmā, Srikāmā , Vindyabāsini, Kotismari, vanasthya, padadurga, Dirgheswari and Bhuvaneswari.
during the last several hundred years. But the Āhom kings introduced the Śakti worship on the basis of Tāntric system almost all over Kāmarupa. The ruins of temples, images of Goddesses and symbol of Yōni found in different places in Kāmarupa pointed out the prevalence of Śakti cult. But most of the icons are unearthed in the Village area which prove the emergence of the Śakti cult in the village by the village people. A most important Śakti image was found in a village Sirājuli in the vicinity of Dhekiājuli. It is an aspect of Dūrgā called Mahisamardini. This form of the Goddess is beautifully delineated in the Brahmānda Purāṇa and the Devi-Mahātmā of M.P. One figure was noticed in the Śeeṣee riverbed. The other figure was found at a place in South-West of Kāmarūpa, about 40 Km to the South-West of Gauhati. Similar sculptures were noticed in the Chardūār ruins. An image of Mother Goddess, having ten hands, was lying in the heap of ruins of Śīṅgiri, but it is not traceable now. An image of eight handed Mahisamardini of the pre-Āhom period has been discovered in Kûkûrmārā (now in A.S.M.). The peculiarity of the image lies in the fact that the Vāhana is not depicted here. From the 5th to 12th century Śakti cult spread and became a dominant cult in Kāmarūpa. Extension of Śakti cult along with Aryan expansion are to be found out from the discovery of ruins or images of Sākta Goddesses. An image of 6th-7th century Pārvati is found in the Raṅgmahal Tea Esstate, Tinisūkī (now in A.S.M.). A two armed Cāmūṇḍā image, assigned to 7th century A.D. has been

177 Choudhury R.D A.B.V.A P- 82
178 Choudhury R.D A.B.V.A P- 86
179 Choudhury R.D A.B.V.A P- 86
collected from Barpathār. A rock cut four armed deity is found in the Kāmākhyā Hill (in A.S.M) and the deity is supposed to be Bhuvaneswari which belonged to 10\textsuperscript{th}-11\textsuperscript{th} century. Mangaldoi region was not outside the bulk of the Śakti cult. Traces of Śakti cult of 10\textsuperscript{th} to 11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D has been discovered at Bijūlibāri, Mangaldoi. A four handed deity called Kāli is found in a broken state having a mūṇḍamālā which identified a Śākta Tāntric deity.

ORIGIN AND ORIGINAL PLACE OF ŚAKTI- The concept of Śakti, in its broad sense, is Indian phenomenon. So it is difficult to identify the original place of Śaktism. But it is believed that the idea of fertility, mother or Yōni cult migrated from abroad with the migration of the Austrics, Drāvidas, Kirātas and the matriarchal groups who were connected with the old civilization of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Babylon etc. Assam lay at the threshold of a number of routes to various foreign countries. In the process many people might have passed through Assam, some of which made Assam their homeland pushing the original rudiments to the foothill\textsuperscript{180}. The idea of fertility cult and Yōni cult were the invention of the tribes coming from abroad who conveyed the idea to this land of Kāmarūpa and introduced it in their locality or in the villages. But regarding the origin and original place of Śakti, there arose conflicting views among the historians. R. Sathinathaier, without confusion, states that Assam is the

\textsuperscript{180} J.A.R.S. VOL- XVIII 1968 P- 22
home of Śakti and fanatism\textsuperscript{181}. The archaeological evidences, literatures, phallic symbols, nature of rites and rituals practised by the non-Aryan tribal people show that Kāmarūpa was the original place of Śaktism. R. D. Choudhury identifies Bengal and Assam as the homeland of Śaktism\textsuperscript{182}. Sir Eliot opined that the birthplace of Śaktism as a definite sect seems to have been north-eastern India\textsuperscript{183}. But during the non-Aryan period Kāmarūpa became the principal centre of Śaktism with the centre of Kāmākhyā and a strong Śakti sect formed in Kāmarūpa. Kāmarūpa, Tibet and Nepāl became a place of Śakti worship. It is true that long before the advent of the Aryans Śākti sect was formed in Kāmarūpa. H. H. Wilson, in the preface to his translation of the Bishnu Purāṇa says that it is a singular and seems to have been in a great degree the source from which Tāntrism and Śaktism proceeded. The origin, growth of the important elements of Tāntrism may be supposed to be the contribution of the non-Aryan in Kāmarūpa\textsuperscript{184}. So it may be strongly supported on the basis of tradition, myths, customs, rites and rituals, practices of different customs that Śakti cult originated in the form of fertility and Yōni cult and developed in the Śakti form or woman figures from the primordial times by the aboriginal tribes. Although, seeds of

\textsuperscript{181} Sathinathaier R. Indian History, 1941 VOL- II, P- 106
\textsuperscript{182} Choudhury R.D. A.B.V.A. 1985, P- 16
\textsuperscript{183} Eliot Charls, Hinduism and Buddhism, VOL- II, 1975, P- 278
\textsuperscript{184} Choudhury R.D. A.B.V.A. P- 10
Sakti cult migrated to this land from outside, it formed a special cult of Sakti worship in the society in Prāgjyotisha-Kāmarūpa. Before the conquest of Prāgjyotisha by Naraka, Sakti was a living faith in Prāgjyotisha. The Kālikā Pūrāṇa refers to the existence of Kāmākhyā before Naraka—

Nimajya khyamātreṇa prāgjyotisha pūranāg gatah I
Madhyagaṅ gāmarūpashya kāmākhyā yātrā nāyika II

The Yoni symbol was found out in various places of Kāmarūpa which identified that Yoni worship (mother goddess) was prevailed in this land as the symbol of regeneration long before the introduction of Divine Goddess like Dūrgā, Pārvati, Kāli, which were of Aryan origin. But it is sure that the cult was confined in the locality or in the village, in the family and individually. So it cannot be possible for the aboriginal tribes or people who were economically very weak and lacked in knowledge, to construct a temple or to carve out images of deities. In that situation there was no archaeological development on the Sakti deities till the royal encouragement or support or patronage.

The universal energy originated in those border countries furnished with the mother-kin-society. P.C Bagchi asserts that the social structure of the countries are matriarchal. But it is true to speak that Saktism originated in Kāmarūpa and its responsibility must go to the Aryans who got immense

185 Chetterjee.Rama Religion of Bengal P- 173.
186 Bagchi.P.C. History of Bengal, VOL- I, P- 405
obstacles from the aboriginal tribes of the land to settle and spread Arya-Dharma here. The political and social condition of the land or the east of Sadānira river was not favourable to them. So, to overcome the political and social resistance of the non-Aryan tribes, they created a new idea and philosophy of Śakti cult with the help of the local elements available here, which might appease and satisfy the tribes, which led them to assimilate with the tribes and settled in Prāgiyotisha. Bengal was Aryanised little earlier than Assam. They settled and spread Arya-dharma in Bengal without any obstacles. So the Vedic religion touched Bengal earlier than Assam with the Vedic Aryans. On the other hand, the situation of the east of Sadānira (kararōyā) or Assam was different from that of Bengal. So to achieve the goal, that was to settle and spread the Arya dharma in Kāmarūpa, the Aryans found out the means of a new cult suitable to the aboriginal tribes. But the origin and growth of the important elements of Tāntrism are to be attributed to the non-Aryans in Ancient Assam. Śakti cult already was there among the aboriginal tribes in the form of Yōni and fertility cult associated with some barbaric rites and rituals, which were formulated in a system with disciplined way by the Aryans, called Śakti cult. Gradually, the Brāhmananas became the spiritual guide of the Śākta sects.

Prāgiyotisha-Kāmarūpa was called to be the fertile land for Śaktism. All the elements were found in Prāgiyotisha and Magic, witchcraft etc were common in the land. So P.C.Choudhury thinks that

187 Choudhury R.D, A.B.V.A P-16
the origin of Śaktism and Tāntrism are to be attributed to the non-Aryans in ancient Assam, and the foundation of Śakti and Tāntric faiths which was largely laid by the megalithic culture of Assam.