CHAPTER -I

TEMPLE AND ROYAL AUTHORITY OF KAMARUPA:

POWER AND LEGITIMACY

Introduction

In earlier periods, rulers of the land of Kamakhya derived religious legitimacy of their authority through the performance of grand royal sacrifices. The early middle ages witnessed a decisive shift towards royal patronage of local or regional Cults. This development was deeply influenced by the various cults (Saiva, Sakti and Vaisnava) as the new genuine folk religion. Politically perhaps even more important, however, were the strong local and regional root of these cults. The spatial connotation of the cults, radiating from their sacred place, vested the newly emerging local and regional states with an additional dimension of territory. Of particular interest in this regard are the changing modes of legitimating at different stages of State formation, ranging from princely patronage of tribal deities by emerging early kings to the construction of imperial temples by rulers of the great early medieval “imperial” regional kingdoms.¹ During the late middle ages royal ritual policy shifted its emphasis to royal patronage of places of pilgrimage and their cults and sectarian leaders. In this chapter it is intended to present a brief discussion about the relationship between the royal power and various Cults.

Early history

In its earliest history, prior to the 4th century AD., accounts of the rulers in the land of Kamakhya are legendary in nature. According to the local legends, the earliest ruler is
Mahiranga Danav who ruled from his capital at Mairang Parbat, which has been identified as the area in the neighborhood of Beltola in modern Guwahati. It is said that he was succeeded by Hatakasur, Sambasur, Ratnasur and Ghatakasur. No details of this ruler are found but the appellation Danava and Asura suggest that they are Non-Aryans. Kalika Purana records that Naraka, the son of Visnu in his Varah incarnation killed Ghatakasur, occupied his territory and made Pragjyotishpur the new capital. His son and successor, Bhagadatta, finds frequent mention in the Mahabharata as a powerful ruler of the east. After that under the kings of the three successive dynasties, viz. the Varman, the Salastambha and the Pala, all of whom traced their descent from Naraka; Kamrupa became an extensive and prosperous kingdom covering the entire Brahmaputra valley and considerable parts of present day West Bengal, Bihar, Bhutan and Bangladesh. In this period, the kingdom seems to have initiated a political development on the local and sub-regional level. This development gained new and even stronger impulses through the example of ‘classical’ North Indian Hindu Empire of the Guptas and the Palas. With the decline of the Pala’s, several independent principalities emerged in the Brahmaputra Valley. The Chutiyas established themselves in the territory east of the Subansiri and Darrang. Further west, the Kacharis who claimed decent from Bhim, the Pandav prince, established themselves on the south bank of the Brahmaputra between the river Dikhow and the river Kalang with the capital at Dimapur. To the West of the Kacharis on the South bank and the Chutiyas on the North bank, were a number of independent chiefs called the Bhuyans. To the extreme West, lay the kingdom of Kamrupa. The centre of political activity had in the meantime shifted to Kamatapur in the Goalpara region and by the latter part of the 13th century, Kamrupa which included parts of North Bengal and Mymensing, came to be known as Kamrup-
Kamata. In the meantime, momentous changes had occurred in north India, which had their inevitable fallout in eastern India. In 1192, Delhi had fallen to Muhammad Ghori who swept over northern India. Having overrun Bengal, Muhammad-bin- Bakhtiyar Khiliji, a general of Muhammad Ghori, invaded Kamrupa in 1206, but his army was completely routed. This significant event is recorded in the Kanai barasi bowa rock inscription in North Guwahati. Muhammedans invaded Kamrupa twice in 1226 under Ghiyasuddin Bakhtiyar and in 1257 under Malik Yuzbeg. In 1498 Hussain Shah invaded Kamrupa and a large number of Muslim settled in the area around Hajo, the headquarters, where Ghiyasuddin Aulia, the commander, built a mosque known as Poa- Mecca, implying that pilgrimage to this shrine would earn the pilgrim poa (one-fourth) of the merit earned from a visit to Mecca. Ghiyasuddin, who is now worshipped in Assam as a saint, is believed to have been the first Muslim to spread Islam in Assam.3

Husain Shah’s son who was appointed Governor of the newly conquered territory was killed soon after his father’s departure. Thereafter there was no single ruler of prominence in the region till the emergence of the Koches under Biswa Simgha (AD 1515-1540). During the reign of the Koch Naranarayana rebuilt Kamakhya temple at Nilachal Hill. Their reign was also remarkable for the Vaisnava reformation started by Sankardeva. The neo-Vaisnavism of Mahapurush (Saint) Sankardeva had considerable impact on the society of that period.4

Meanwhile, an event of tremendous significance which was a band of hardy men of Tai origin from upper Burma crossed the Patkai Hills and entered Assam. They settled in the territory around Sivasagar and enthroned Sukapha as their first King in AD 1228. After a long reign of the Ahoms, Assam passed under the control of the Burmese during the reign of Chandrakanta Simgha, who unleashed a virtual reign of
terror in the region. This insecurity in the North-Eastern frontier threatened the
security of Bengal, where the British had solidity entrenched themselves in the
meantime. The authorities of the East India Company realized that it was no longer
expedient to remain complacent, decided to abandon Shore’s policy of non-
intervention. In 1824 war was declared by the company Government against the
Burmese and a force advancing up to the Brahmaputra occupied Rangpur and forced
the Burmese to surrender. By the treaty of Yandaboo (1826), the Burmese king
renounced his claims on Assam, Cachar and Jayantia.5

The 19th century thus proved to be very significant period in the history of Assam.
The collapse of the Ahom monarchy and the entry of the British were marked by a
swift transition. The changeover from the old order to the new was characterized by a
complete overhauling of the administrative machinery, which heralded far-reaching
political, social, economic and religious changes in Assam.6

**Nuclear areas in the land of Kamakhya**

Although influenced from outside, the political development in the land of Kamakhya
in the early centuries A.D. is characterized by a territorial segmentation. The limit of
the kingdom varied according to the power of the ruling dynasties but some names as
well as a simultaneous development of some ‘nuclear areas’ belonging to a
community surrounding a Cult or temple probably took place.7 In this connection we
may recall the Tezpur Grant of Vanamala, where it is recorded that the kingdom in the
land of Kamakhya was full of “the temples with the sweet sound of the musical
instruments and songs, the parks with the chanting of the performers of the sacrifices
and the beautiful ponds, charming with the lotuses and scattered in various countries
even today proclaim his (Vanamala’s) pure fame” . Another centre of such nuclear
area namely the city of Harupesvara, where the temples of Mahagauri and Kamesvara were located, it is recorded that “there the people belonging to all the castes and all the stages of life (ashram) are extremely happy. This is the place of innumerable fortunes and honest scholars, where the broad royal roads remain crowded with kings who come to pay homage to the monarch and go back being seated on colorful elephants, horses and Sivikas (palkins) and where all the quarters always remain blocked with innumerable military potentialities”. The Parvatiya Copper Plate Grant of the same king records that Harupesvara was “the home of innumerable good soldiers, virtuous men and learned men the royal roads of which (city) are crowded by the great kings which has its currents in full with such a (rush of) water, which is purer on account of constantly washing the slopes of the Mount Kamakuta, the top of which is the abode of the glorious (Lord) Kamesvara and the (goddess) Mahagauribhattarika”, and “which is characterized by the people living in the whole neighborhoods of its banks delighted by the fragrance of the musk’s of the musk deer”.8

However, it is not known whether the nuclear areas in the land of Kamakhya enjoyed defect self-government through corporate institutions like the great district assemblies (periyandu) in Tamilnadu, as pointed out by Burton Stein. It appears that in the land of Kamakhya they were under direct rule of the kings who were either independent or only temporarily and nominally subjugated by ‘foreign rules’. The kings organized their political power according to the Hindu law books (Sastras). Its centre was the king and his court.9 In the following pages it is intend to discuss about the main royal temple policy like- Royal patronage of important places of pilgrimage within their respective kingdoms, A systematic and large-scale settlement of the Brahmins, The
construction of new imperial temples within the kingdom, by which we may have found a clear idea about the legitimating of royal authority in the land of Kamakhya.

**Legitimization through large-scale settlement of Brahmins**

The centre of ‘nuclear areas’ were encircled by a number of tax free *agrahara*. The Brahmins of these villages formed the elite of the administrative and ritual functionaries, who along with those who had been settled in the outer areas lost no opportunity to make an influence upon the people of the remote places of the ‘nuclear area’ and the maintenance of Hindu law and royal order. Due to their influence the ‘nuclear areas’ could not escape from the process of gradual integration in to all Indian sphere of Sanskrit learning. As it appears from the illustration of the inscriptions of the Kamrupa kings, the most significant economic feature of such ‘nuclear areas’ was a peasant agriculture based mainly on rice cultivation.\(^{11}\)

The process of the territorial development entered its formative phase in the 5th – 6th century when donations of land to Brahmins became more and more frequent from the days of Bhutivaran. And it was certainly fully developed in the late seventh century when the Dubi and Nidhanpur Copper plate grant of Bhaskaravarmana bear evidences of a steadily increasing number of such donations.\(^{12}\) The following chart indicating the land Grants as royal patronage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Spot where found</th>
<th>Details of Donated Land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nagajari rock</td>
<td>5th century</td>
<td>Sibsagar</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dubi Plates</td>
<td>7th century</td>
<td>Kamarupa</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nidhanpur Plates</td>
<td>7th century</td>
<td>Syllhet</td>
<td>Land to support 208 Brahmans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hayunthai Plates</td>
<td>9th century</td>
<td>Mikir Hill</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tezpur Plates</td>
<td>9th century</td>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>One Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parbatiya Plates</td>
<td>9th century</td>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>One Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Uttarababil Plates</td>
<td>9th century</td>
<td>Mikir Hill</td>
<td>Land with 2,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Unibari Plates</td>
<td>9th century</td>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>-Do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nowgaon Plates</td>
<td>9th century</td>
<td>Nowgaon</td>
<td>Land with 4,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bargaon Plates</td>
<td>A.D 1055</td>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>Land with 2,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Suwalkuchi Plates</td>
<td>A.D1036</td>
<td>Kamarupa</td>
<td>Land with 3,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Coratbari Plates</td>
<td>Early 11th century</td>
<td>Nowgaon</td>
<td>Land with 4,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Gauthali Plates</td>
<td>A.D1058</td>
<td>Kamarupa</td>
<td>-Do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Guwakuchi Plates</td>
<td>A.D1071</td>
<td>Kamarupa</td>
<td>Land with 2,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gachial Plates</td>
<td>A.D1080</td>
<td>Nowgaon</td>
<td>Land with 8,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Subnamakarpatsnaka Plates</td>
<td>12th century</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Land with 6,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pushipabhadra Plates</td>
<td>12th century</td>
<td>Kamarupa</td>
<td>Land with 10,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Khonamukha Plates</td>
<td>12th century</td>
<td>Nowgaon</td>
<td>Land with 6,000 units paddy yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Kamauli Plates</td>
<td>A.D1142</td>
<td>Varanasi</td>
<td>Two villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Assam Plates</td>
<td>A.D1185</td>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>Seven villages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That the process was blossoming is known from the Copper plate grants of Kamrupa kings when they extended royal patronages not only to individual Brahmin but also to the various Cults and monastic institutions.¹⁴

**Royal patronage of local deities**

Royal patronage of local deities seems to have been an essential precondition for the consolidation and legitimating of political power in the Hindu-tribal zone in the land of Kamakhya.¹⁵ For obvious reasons, whether Hindu kings or the Hinduized chiefs ascending from the local tribes (like Varmans, Salastambhas and Koches) or whether they had entered in the land of Kamakhya from outside (like Vaidyadeva and the Ahoms), most of them accepted the dominant local deities of this part in the land of Kamakhya as family and tutelary deities of their dominion. An example may suffice for this early type of royal patronage of autochthonous deities in the land of Kamakhya. The *Kalika Purana* states that at the time of his installation in the throne of Kamrupa, Naraka was told by his father Visnu not to worship any other deities except Kamakhya and Naraka accordingly made proper arrangement for the worship of the goddess. During the reign of the Varman and Pala kings (10th – 12th centuries), they recognized her as Mahagauri ¹⁶ and the Koch king Naranarayana (16th century A.D.) restored her worship as Kamakhya according to Vedic rites. This tradition had been preserved for centuries for which the Ahom king Sivasimha (18th century A.D.) made necessary arrangement of maintenance of the deity by appointing Krisnaram Nyayabagis as the *Seva-Caloa* of the temple. It has already been stated that the king had to depend on the support of the tribes and races for the legitimization of their rule in the non-Aryan dominated land in the land of Kamakhya on the one hand and also needed their land for the gradual extension of the peasant agriculture which yielded
Sufficient surplus crop for the maintenance of the court, e.g. the members of the ruling family (raja, rajni, rajanyaka, rajaputra), Brahmin officials (raj guru), and soldiers on the other. Tensions were also there with a number of local chieftains due to the efforts of the dominant Hindu or Hinduized kings to extend their economic base at the cost of their tribal neighbours. During this period of gradual development the Brahmins played an important role. Moreover, the following chart indicating the religious streams at royal patronage may help us in this connection.

### TABLE-II: ROYAL PATRONAGE OF THE KAMARUPA KINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. NO</th>
<th>RELIGIOUS SECT</th>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kirata Siva</td>
<td>Before the advent of Naraka</td>
<td>Kalika Purana, chapter 36-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sakta at the centre</td>
<td>From the days of Naraka who introduced the worship of Kamakhya</td>
<td>Kalika Purana, chapters 36-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vaisnava</td>
<td>4th-5th century A.D.</td>
<td>Umacal rock inscription of Surendravarman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Saiva</td>
<td>6th-7th century A.D.</td>
<td>Dubi copper plates of Bhaskar Varian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Saiva and Sakta (Tantric)</td>
<td>9th century A.D.</td>
<td>Tezpur and Parvatya CP grants of Vanamala Simultaneously mention the temple of Mahagauri and Kamesvra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Saiva and Sakta (Tantric)</td>
<td>10th century A.D.</td>
<td>Khonamukh and Subhankarapataka CP of Dharmapala (mention of Ardhayuvatinarisvra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vaisnava</td>
<td>12th century A.D.</td>
<td>Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva records the rise of Vaisnavism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tantric</td>
<td>Last part of the 12th century A.D. up to the rise of Koch power</td>
<td>A period of disintegration of Kamrupa kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sakta</td>
<td>16th century A.D.</td>
<td>Rock inscription of Nilacala Kamakhya temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vaisnava</td>
<td>16th century A.D.</td>
<td>Rock inscription of Hayagriva Madhava temple regarding the construction of the temple by Raghu Deva and Rock inscription of Pandunath Hari temple of Raghu Deva,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Saiva</td>
<td>17th century A.D.</td>
<td>Rock inscription of the Umananda temple regarding construction of the temple by Gadadharsimha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Saiva, Sakta and Vaisnavaite</td>
<td>last part of 17th century A.D. and first part of 18th century A.D.</td>
<td>Land grants inscription of Kamakhya, Padmanatha and Ugratara temple by Rudrasimha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Saiva and Sakta</td>
<td>18th century A.D.</td>
<td>Sivasimha took initiation from Krisnaram Nyabagis, appointed him as Seva-caloa of Kamakhya temple and authorized him to compile a vidhi for the worship of the deities in Kamrupa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Saiva</td>
<td>Last part of 18th century</td>
<td>Rajesvarasimha’s successor laks-husimha took initiation from pahumaria gossain and built Banesvara and Chandrasekhar temples at Guwahati and made considerable endowments of land and men to the temples of Kamarupa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Uprising of Vaisnavites</td>
<td>Last part of 18th century</td>
<td>Moaraima rebellion as evidenced in the relevant CP grants reproduced in the prachya-sasanavali edited by M. Neog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Vaisnava</td>
<td>Last part of 18th century</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As has been pointed out in the foregoing pages, they not only created the legendary origin of the kings from dominating deities (e.g. origin of Naraka from Varaha incarnation of Visnu through prithivi, a local goddess, of the Koches from Siva and of the Ahoms from Indra), but also defined and codified the duties of the different castes and creeds as laid down in the Hindu religious texts. It was also the responsibility of these Brahmins to whom lands in remote areas had been donated, to propagate the ideal of the Hindu Sastras including the Mahabharata and the Ramayana for their own and their king’s sake.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{In connection with the State Revenue}

Another reason behind this royal patronage was connected with the state revenue. P. Chidambaram Pillai notes that, “Every old temple in India was founded by the rules of the country with a view to get a handsome returns in the shape of offerings from the worshippers. The offerings to the gods must reach the king’s treasury and processions and festivals will have to be arranged purely for collecting money for the king. That is to say the ancient Hindu temples were so much sources of public revenue to the king.\textsuperscript{20} In all probability it may be also one of the reasons for which the lavish endowments of men, land and utensils were made to the temples of Mahagauri, Kamesvara, Hatakasulin Siva and many other deities by the Kamarupa kings in between seventh to thirteenth centuries A.D. During this period the autochthonous tutelary deities in the land of Kamakhya underwent a process of Hinduization, the intensity and direction of which usually was directly influenced by the parallel rise of the political authority. Generally speaking, the process of Hinduization of these tutelary deities was similar to the Sakta, Saiva and Vaisnavite topography of Hinduization. The worship of Hinduized tribal deities by the king of Kamarupa should not be interpreted as an indicator of a tribal culture at their respective royal
courts. The high and beautiful temple at their capital city, e.g. Mahagauri, Kamesvara and Hatakasulián Siva are eloquent testimonies of their high Hindu culture. The reason why these dynasties over centuries had patronized Hinduized tribal deities as their tutelary deities was the fact that the royal ‘nuclear area’ were surrounded by tribes on whose loyalty and military support they depended. It appears, therefore, that both the king and the temples maintained a mutual relationship between them, which can be surmised as follows.\(^\text{21}\)

(a) That the temples had a great role to play for the maintenance of kingship and the royal house;

(b) Dynamic sectarian leaders were the co-coordinators for all sorts of links between the people living in the nuclear areas;

(c) The king had not interfered the day to day management of a temple and it was left in the hands of the  Sastrakars  (local sectarian leaders). But the ultimate responsibility for temple maintenance was with the king and

(d) In case of any conflict in a temple, the king had to play his role of administrative character and not of legislator.

In classical Indian treatises it is described as the “Pious act of gift” (danadharma) was an important element of the role of the kings.\(^\text{22}\) In land of Kamakhya, under the Varmaná rule in the late seventh century A.D. a fundamental change occurred in the conception of the sovereignty. The giving of gifts which was previously only one element of the basic definition of kings, sacrifices now became the regular habit of the sovereignty. This shift during the Varmaná and Pala rule coincides with the beginning of temple building associated with the puranic deities, such as Visnu, Siva and Sakti. This mode of kingly generosity was the basis for generous royal endowment of temples as well as for the establishments and subsidy of Brahmadeys (settlement of
learned Brahmins with highly favorable tax assessment). However in the articulation and public display of sovereignty in the Pala period, it appears that temple construction began to play a peculiar and powerful role. Royal endowments to temples become a major means for the redistributive activities of the land of Kamakhya sovereigns which played an important role in agrarian development. But after the disintegration of the land of Kamakhya in early part of the twelfth century A.D. there was a serious decline in the status of *Brahmadeya* as well as the temples became weak which eventually led most of them to be abandoned due to lack of a strong political support.

**In connection with the construction of temples of various cults**

With the rise of the Koch power under the leadership of Visvasimha in the western part of old Kamrupa during the early part of sixteenth century, the temple activities began to revive. To make the Koch rule legitimate in the eastern part of the land of Kamakhya, which was ruled at that time by a number of Sakta Bhuyans, Naranayaran, the son and successor of VisvaSimha (who was educated in Varanasi, a well known center of Sanskrit learning) not only rebuilt the temple of Kamakhya, but also made all the necessary arrangements for the restoration of her worship. Naranarayana was followed by his nephew Raghudeva, who revolting against the former founded a new kingdom, rebuilt the Hayagrivamadhava temple at Hajo and the Pandunath temple.

The history of the Hindu places of pilgrimage (*tirtha*) was linked undoubtedly with the Bhakti faith which gained its momentum in South India from late sixth century A.D. onwards. Bhakti meaning personal devotion was the innovation of *Bhagavat Gita* which justifies the ‘one way of deriving all view from a single divine source’. It bears a close link with a fully developed feudalism in respect of production, land
ownership, military service, tax collection and conversion of local produce to a mercantile commodity with the help of wealthy and influential men. For political and economic reasons, the royal authorities put much importance upon the tirthas lying within the territory of a feudal Chief and with the gradual extension and establishment of his authority over different regional powers; the autochthonous cults were included to the pantheon of Bhakti Hinduism. Thus it was through this Bhakti movement that various autochthonous deities in a long and gradual process of Hinduization were included into the sphere of all Indian Hinduism and they were invariably brought into prominence. The Bhakti religion thus earned the characteristics of a folk religion with its emphasis on personal faith and self sacrifice and become “the best religion” to hold a peasant society and “it’s states together”.

In case of Assam in general it seems that Brahmanical Hinduism first entered in to the Ahom court during the days of Sudangpha (1397-1407 A.D.) and under the influence of Brahman priests, the issue of land and men grants as Dharmottara, Brahmottara and Devottara dated from the days of Pratapsimha (1603-1641). The Bhakti movement, of course under the leadership of non-Brahman Samkaradeva (1449-1569) reached its height at the same time. Consequently Barpeta in the land of Kamakhya became the head quarters of this Bhakti movement in last part of sixteenth and first part of seventeenth centuries A.D. particularly in case of the land of Kamakhya the issue of Devottora, Dharmottara and Brahmottara is dated from the days of Gadadharsimha, (1681-1696) who probably to consolidate his authority rebuilt the temple of Umananda. Thus the ground for extension of the Ahom rule in the land of Kamakhya was prepared during the reign of Rudrasimha, the son and successor of Gadadhar. It may explain why Rudrasimha not only made a lavish endowment of land and men to the temples of Umananda and Hayagrivamadhava but also made a survey
of the *tirthas* (sacred places) in the land of Kamakhya with a view to bring them into prominence. It may also explain why Rudrasimha’s successors vize. Sivasimha, Pramattasimha, Rajesvarasimha and Laksmisimha constructed a large number of temples on these *tirthastan* made lavish endowments of land, men and other valuables to them. 28One of the characteristic features of these newly elevated centers of pilgrimage was an increasing process of ritual ‘Royalization’ of the respective deities. 29It is of course difficult to say whether they had assumed more and more royal features due to royal patronage, or because the priests had ascribed these features of kingship with an intention to glorify them. However, in the land of Kamakhya, the legitimating of royal power and wealth of the divine king (*Svargadeo/Svargamaharaja*) were inextricably visualized through the performance of daily rituals and great annual festivals with royal paraphernalia and increasing endowments made to them.

**In connection with the management of the Cults and its temples**

Although royal figures conducted extensive and elaborate relationship with temples (by the building of new temples and the extension and enrichment of old ones), the day to-day management of temples remained in the hands of local sectarian leaders vize. The *Dolai* and his associate, it appears that the Ahom kings and their agents (*Barphukan* and *seva-caloa*) had an active role in the supervision of temples in this regard. In analyzing the settlements of temple disputes, it may be said beyond any doubt that they were not royal legislation, but were rather administrative commands of authoritarian character. The decision taken and declared publicly were commonly understood as *Siddhanta* amongst the members of local corporal groups and the communities, which were to be obeyed by all to whom it might concern. In this
context, the royal command was nothing but “the act through which the king sanctions a collective regulation.”

From the above discussion we may come to the conclusion that the concept of ‘nuclear area’ has its own relevance in relation to the process of state formation as well as the growth and development of the temples of various cults in the land of Kamakhya since its earliest times up to the last days of the Ahom rule. Both the king and the cults maintained a mutual relationship between them, which can be surmised as follows-

Royal patronage was extended to popular places of pilgrimage. Tirthas has played a significant role in the Bhakti movement and had also become sufficiently well-entrenched in Brahmancial ideology. The land of Kamakhya, an established tithra, constructed temple building of various cults and settling Brahmins with grant of land.

From the earliest times till the Ahom period, Brahmins were patronized by chiefs of principalities in the temple realm. By maintaining a symbolic relationship with the state; their presence was significant in building up a political and administrative hierarchy, and legitimization of the royal authority.

Thus the temples of various Cults become the symbol for the overarching structure of royal authority. It was a centralized nucleus where the diverse process of legislation converged, and through its height and grandeur, represented the hierarchy of political and social relationships at whose apex sat the king. By constructing the temples of various Cults in the land of Kamakhya to depict the integration of diverse ideologies and project their own glory over the land, as protector of the deity.
Notes and Reference:


10. *Mayurasalmagrahara* of Nidhanpur Copper Plate Inscription of Bhaskaravarman, line 51, Sarma, M.M: *op. cit.*


28. Adhikary, G: *op.cit*, p.117

29. *Ibid*.