

### CHAPTER III

## SCULPTURES

Religion was the pivot of architecture and sculpture in ancient India. When temples were built, the idea of decorating them inside and outside also caught the imagination of the builders. The sculptural art of India received inspiration from the various religious creeds of the land; even those sculptures, which were non religious in appearance, found a place on the outer walls of the temples and were accepted as serving the needs of a life, religious in aim and inspiration<sup>141</sup>. That the builders and sculptors of ancient Darrang reached a high standard can be judged from the few remains that have so far come to light. These sculptures are found in the temple components like lintels, doorsills, pillar bases, capitals etc. Many of these carved and chiselled stone pieces were broken into fragments to provide road-metal. Those which are preserved include some early sculptured images of deities, chiselled octagonal or hexagonal stone pillars and carved stone. Pedestals of pillars and finely chiselled panels containing figures of elephant heads, lion heads and human heads, were used to decorate the outer side of the stone plinths of the temples<sup>142</sup>. The majority of sculptures that have so far been found in the Darrang region are of gods, goddesses and other semi divine figures which serve as an ornament to architecture. Like Indian sculpture in general these sculpture may also be divided into four classes, namely: sculpture of the

---

<sup>141</sup> Majumdar. R.C. (ed): *The Struggle for Empire*, 3rd edn., Bharatiya Vidya Bhaban, Bombay, 1979, p. 644.

<sup>142</sup> Acharyya, N.N.: *The Legends and Archaeological remains of Darrang: A Critical Analysis in Bulletin of the Assam State Museum, No. VIII*, (ed) Choudhury, R.D., 1986, Guwahati, pp 29-30.

human form, sculptures and icons of gods and goddesses, sculpture of animal forms, and sculptural designs.

The numerous sites with temple ruins and old tanks indicate that there must have been a settlement in the pre-Ahom period in Darrang region prior to the emergence of the Koch. This is also proved by the sculptural style of the archaeological objects found in this area that belong to the pre-Āhom period<sup>143</sup>. The architectural ruins of Jaljali, Tāmreswar, Mathājhār depict some male as well as female humane figures. While some of them are found in good condition, the others are found in mutilated. The door jamb of Tāmreswar contains some dancing female figures. The images of Rama, Sita and Hanuman found in the *manikuta* of Khatarā *satra* is a interesting feature of the artistic as well as the religious landscape of the study region. Sculptures of animal forms of the study area include representation of real animal as well as composite, mythical figures like *makaras*, *Kirtimukhas* etc. Lion and elephant are very common in the art of the study region. The elephant's head was used as the royal insignia in Assam. Every copper plate inscription of the Kāmṛūpi kings bears the head of an elephant<sup>144</sup>. The flying Dragon was the royal insignia of the Āhom government. The copper plate inscription of the Āhom also bears the flying Dragon. A row of elephants (*gajathara*) is generally found as the moulding of the *adhithana* of some renovated temples in Assam. Such type of elephant figures are found at BhāngāBaruā in Udalguri, Ganeskuwari, Baman etc. The *gajathara* motif of the Kailasa temple of Ellora can be compared with the motifs that are found in Assam<sup>145</sup>. A *gajavyāla* (Fig.17) motif measuring 57cm×44cm×66cm of C.11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. is preserved at District Museum,

---

<sup>143</sup>Choudhur, R.D.; *Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam*, Agam Kala Prakashan. Delhi. 1985.p.243-44.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*:p.180.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*:p.181.

Darrang. Fine representations of lion motif are found at Baman, Murādevar, Damarāpotā, BhāngāBaruā, Jaljali etc. Elephant as well as the lion were treated as important animals in the past and found a place in old icons and art in Assam. Generally the lion is shown as the *vāhana* of goddesses Durgā or Mahishamardini in images. The scene is still found with the earthen images of Durgā during the time of Durgā puḷā of the study region. Normally elephant is shown as the *vāhana* of Indra. Another popular motif is that of *gajasimha*, a rampant lion on an elephant. Snakes are found with the images of goddesses Manasā and the images of Siva. The snake representation is also found in architectural blocks. In almost all the Siva temples of the study region images of snake are found. At Baman and Khāmpāholā the Sivalingas are found entwined with snakes. In some modern Siva temple representation of bull figure belonging to the medieval period are found. Bull is the representation of Nandi, the vehicle of Siva. In the newly built temple of Rudreswar of Darrang the scene is found. At Singiri temple which was earlier within the geographical limit of undivided Darrang a figure of bull is found. Birds are also figured as decorative motifs in the artistic activities of early Assam. Figures of *hamsa* (goose) and *mayura* (peacock, Fig.18) are found in some sculptures of Tāmreswar, Jaljali, Baman etc. as those of the other parts of Assam. A panel of three *apsarās* (flying nymph) measuring 56cm×17cm. of C.10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. is found at the District Museum, Darrang. Several pieces of *Dvāra sakhās* are also found in the region. *Kirtimukha*, the grotesque or mythical figure is quite common in the old Assamese art as in the other parts of India. The conventional symbol of animal always attracted the attention of the artist of decorative art. Most common among the grotesque or mythical figures are *Kirtimukha* and *pranāla*. The figures of *Kirtimukha* are greatly used in medieval Assam as a part of decorating the temples. This is proved by the

scattered *stambha*, *dvāraisirapattis*, and other stone slabs bearing this motif<sup>146</sup>. *Kirtimukha* figure and *pranāla* are found in the temple ruins of Baman and BhāngāBaruā. The sculptors of ancient and medieval Assam had proficiency in the ornamentation of art work. Mutilated *āmalakas* are found amongst the ruins of Baman, Nārikali, Khāmpāholā etc. *Viswa-padmas* are found at Baman and Lakhimpur. Similar small *padmas*, sculptured independently are also seen in the ruins of Tāmreswar, Jaljali, and Khāmpāholā. Beautifully carved flowers and creepers are found in almost all the temple ruins of Darrang and Udalguri. A few terracotta figures of fish found at Jaljali bear high artistic value.

Among the composite animal figures, representations of *makara* or *magara* (Fig.19) are found, whose mouth is that of an alligator or crocodile or *makara* which has a tail, resembling of an animal and, Garuda are commonly seen in Assamese art pieces of early and medieval period. Garuda, the *vāhana* of Visnu is generally found with the images of Visnu. But an independent image of Garuda is found in the Ganes Kuwari ruins of Darrang. Wooden images of *makara* are an indispensable part of the deul festival of the study area since remote past.

Sculptures of gods and goddesses of the early period reflect the artistic and the religious condition of the study region. Archaeological as well as literary evidence show Saiva, Vaishnava, and Sakti were the important cults of Assam. While one finds stone sculptures datable to both the pre-Ahom and Koch-Ahom periods, wooden sculptures are found primarily in the *satras*, or Neo-Vaishnavite monasteries belonging to the later period.

---

<sup>146</sup> Choudhury, R.D.: *Op.Cit.*p.183.

## STONE SCULPTURES

### *The Mother goddesses*

The study area was an ancient seat of worship of the Mother goddesses. Traditionally, Saktism is considered to have its centre in Kāmarūpa with its chief temple at Kāmākhyā<sup>147</sup>. Tradition also connects the one-time chief priest of Nilāchal Kāmākhyā, Kendukalāi, with Kalāigāon of Udalguri district. The worship of the Mother goddess Kāmākhyā in the study area is said to be as old as that of Kāmākhyā in Kāmarūpa. There is a Kāmākhyā Math amidst the ruins of an ancient stone temple near the ancient tank at Lakhimpur, six kilometers west to Kalāigāon. The presiding deity is a full blown lotus. This is identified as the naval portion of Sati<sup>148</sup>. Hence, it is regarded as another Sakti Pitha or Kāmākhyā in Udalguri. Besides regular worship, special days in the year are scheduled for offering animal and bird sacrifices in the temple. Local beliefs link it with the myth of the ancient period of *Dakhya-yajna*, the self immolation of Pārvati; the terrifying journey of Siva with the corpse of Sati; the falling of her parts in different places of the subcontinent etc., the place may be considered very old in developing Hindu faiths<sup>149</sup>.

Upon a closer examination of the site of the ruined temple it is evident that in this newly constructed temple, a beautifully carved *Viswa-Padmā* on a block of stone has been placed in the *garbhagriha* (sanctum sanctorum) and worshipped by the local people as the navel portion of Sati or Mother Goddess Pārvati and revered as a Sakti

---

<sup>147</sup> Choudhury, R.D.: *Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam*, Agam Kala Prakashan. Delhi. 1985.p.17.

<sup>148</sup> Sarma Nagendra Nath: Annals of Hinduism in Darrang in *Darrangar Rasmirekha* (ed) Barooah, Dipti Prasad. Mangaldai, Darrang Jila Itihas Sankalan Samiti, 2005, p.27.

<sup>149</sup> Sarma Nagendra Nath: Annals of Hinduism in Darrang in *Darrangar Rasmirekha*, Barooa D.P.(ed), Darrang Jila Itihas Sankalan Samiti, Mangaldai, 2005, p.26.

Pitha. This *Viswa-Padma* and other architectural pieces and chiselled stone blocks seen around the modern temple may be dated around 10th century C.E. on stylistic grounds.

The archaeological ruins in and around Tāmreswar, Murā Dewar, and Nalkhāmarā clearly indicate the wide practice of Saktism practice related to the worship of Siva and Sakti. The relics and concepts of Ardhanarisvara, the animal and bird sacrifices, offering and use of wine, particularly observance of rituals at the dead of a dark night, indicated the practice of many esoteric forms of Sāktism in the district. However, at present, these practices are very rare and are substituted by the worship of Sakti goddess like Sitalā, Manasā, Jagadhātri, Kāli, Durgā, Bāsanti etc.<sup>150</sup>

The archaeological ruins, in and around Lakhimpur, Mājuli Tea Estate, Tāmreswar, Murā Dewar, and Nalkhāmarā clearly indicate the wide practice of Saktism in the area. The worship of the goddesses like Sitalā, Manasā, Jagadhātri, Kāli, Durgā, and Bāsanti are also prevalent in the area. The anthropomorphic form of the snake-goddess Manasā is popularly known as Māri-Devi, Mārai Devi, Bisahari, Padmāvati or Padmādevi. In the temple of Murā Dewar, a snake, beautifully carved on a ruined stone pillar base indicates the prevalence of Manasā worship in early times. This goddess is worshipped even today, sometimes with animal or bird sacrifices. The remains indicate that there was a temple belonging to the pre-Ahom period at the site<sup>151</sup>.

Worship of the snake goddess Manasā had been a very prominent feature of the religious landscape of the study region. The anthropomorphic form of the snake goddess Manasā is popularly known as *Māri-Devi*, *Bisahari*, *Padmāvati*, *Padmādevi* and so on.

---

<sup>150</sup>Ibid.p.27.

<sup>151</sup>Choudhur, R.D.:*Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam*, Agam Kala Prakashan. Delhi. 1985.p.242.

The Manasā cult is however confined only to the erstwhile districts of Kāmrup, Darrang and Goālpara and therefore the art-form, patronised by this sect of Sāktism is in vogue in some pockets of these particular areas only. “While discussing the religious art-forms of Assam with reference to Sākta rituals we must pay special attention to the Manasā cult of Assam. Because the tradition of Manasā worship in Assam has been encouraging both visual and performing art forms since early years of eleventh century”<sup>152</sup>.

The legend of goddess Manasā and her association with the stories of merchant *Chāndo* and *Beolā-Lakhindar* are narrated in the literary works of the poets like Mankar, Durgābar and Nārāyandev. Their narrative poetry known as Padmapurāna supply themes for both the visual and performing art form<sup>153</sup>. Of the ancient seats of the Manasā worship, the most important was *Mukteswar* (known as *Mukteswari*) temple of Odalāgāon, situated in a place about seven kilometres away from the present Harisingā, a railway station in Udalguri district. The origin of this temple lies in hoary antiquity. According to legend prevalent in the Darrang, the house of *Beulā* is situated near Odolā<sup>154</sup>.

Durgā in the form of Bāsanti Sakti or the spring season is worshipped in various places of the district. Though the Koch kings are said to be the progeny of Siva, they are the devotees of Sakti. They introduced the worship of Sakti in autumn or Durgotsava with great pomp, and the sacrifice of buffalo, and other animals and birds since the seventeenth century C.E. It was a great festival in the royal house, which is still in vogue among the royal descendants. At present, worship of Durgā is an autumn festival enjoyed by almost all sections of people.

---

<sup>152</sup> Sarma, S.N.: *Asamiya Sahityar Samikhatmak Itivritya*, p.56.

<sup>153</sup> Goswami, Malini: Saktism and Applied Art Forms of Assam in *JARS*, vol XXXVI, No 1 & 2, 1997, p.72.

<sup>154</sup> Sarma, B.: *Bhakheri*. A Souvenir of AJYCP. Mangaldai, 2002, P.27.

A sculpture of Durgā of late medieval period found at Mājbat is labeled as Tribal Durgā (Fig.20) and preserved in the ASM. The figure of sand stone, measures 30cm×21cm. “The deity is in standing attitude with ten arms. All the arms are stretched outwards. The objects held in the hands are not clear. Below the deity there are three miniature human figures at the lowest level of the sculpture. The deity is flanked by two animal figures. They may be probably identified as a tiger and a fox. On the chest there are some iron nails. The eyes of the deity are golden. Probably two gold nails are fixed on the eyes. The *silapatā* is tapering without the usual figures of *Vidyādhara*s and *Kirtimukha*. It is a most uncommon figure, probably of tribal affiliation. Because of its peculiarity and simplicity, this forms an aspect of abstract art”<sup>155</sup>. The image of Durgā is completely local in treatment. It is very crude and flatly carved on a stela with dance floral designs. One on the right and two deities on the left of the image on the lower part of the stela are in dancing poses. Parallel to the feet of the deity a lion and the Nandi on the right and left are carved. The eyes and necklace are inlaid with gold and the *āyudhas* on the hands are indistinct<sup>156</sup>.

Kāli is another manifestation of Sakti. The finding of a beautiful image of Kāli at Bijulibāri, Mangaldai proves that the worship of the goddess was prevalent since early times. The Assam State Museum has preserved this image of *Kāli* found at Bijulibāri, Mangaldai, in Darrang district. “The deity is shown as standing almost in *ālīdhā* attitude on a prostrate human figure. In her four hands the goddess holds clockwise, an unidentified object *Kapala*, *kartāri*, and *khadga*. The hair tuft of the goddess seems to be rising like the hood of a serpent. The *mundamālā* worn by the

---

<sup>155</sup>Choudhury, R.D. :*Catalogue of Stone Sculptures*, Assam State Museum, Ghuwahati, 1998, p.50.

<sup>156</sup>Dutta, Manoranjan: *Sculpture of Assam*, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 1990,p.90.



goddess is clearly seen. The deity is pot bellied. The image was discovered along with some other images”<sup>157</sup>.

This stone sculpture measures 13.7 cm× 6.7 cm and weighs 350 grams. From the posture of the deity and the *mundamālā*, it may be taken as an image of a Sākta deity. The detail of the face of the deity is lost. Though the material used is black stone, yet, it is not very hard, as it appears. The local people called it the image of Kāli. The worship of goddess Kāli is very popular in Assam amongst the Sāktas<sup>158</sup>.

### *Siva*

The *Kālikā Purāna* of about 10<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and the *Yogini Tantra* of about 16<sup>th</sup> century C.E. indicates that the worship of Siva and Sakti was popular in Assam. The numerous *sivalingas* found in the temples of the study area along with the other parts of Assam belonging to the period from about 5<sup>th</sup> century C.E. to the late Āhom period bear testimony to the popularity of Siva cult in Assam. Viswa Singha, the founder of the Koch dynasty claimed his descent from Siva. A beautiful *sivalinga* with *yonipitha* measuring 58cm×61cm×65cm. belonging to C.12<sup>th</sup> century C.E. is well preserved at the District Museum, Darrang. Another artistic miniature *sivalinga* of black stone measuring only 7cm. datable to the c.18<sup>th</sup> century C.E. is also preserved at the museum. Siva was known by various names, such as *Hetuka-Sulin* (Tezpur grant of Vanamāla), Sambhu (Guwahati grant of Ratnapāla), Paramamahesvara (Tezpur rock inscription), Rudra (Nagaon grant of Vanamāla) etc<sup>159</sup>.

The study of the archaeological remains reveals that Siva was extensively worshipped throughout the two districts. Siva, in various forms, was worshipped in the

---

<sup>157</sup> Choudhury, R.D.: *Catalogue of Stone Sculptures*, Assam State Museum, Guwahati, 1998, p.26.

<sup>158</sup> Choudhury, R.D.: *Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam*, p.235.

<sup>159</sup> Choudhury, R.D.: *Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam*, p.15.

ancient temples of Deulpur, Nalkhāmarā, Mukteswar, Rowtā Mādhavgosain *Math*, Rudreswar (Fig.21), Tāmreswar etc., and in the temples near the ancient tanks of Jaipāl, Sānpāra, Baldev etc. In most of these temples, Siva was worshipped as the central deity. However, other gods and goddesses were also worshipped in these places along with the presiding deity Siva on all occasions. For instance, in Rudreswar, there is a Visnu image with two attendants fixed to the wall inside the temple<sup>160</sup>. In Tāmreswar, amidst the ruins of the stone structure, Ganesa along with other gods and goddesses are seen. According to R.D.Chodhury, from the stylistic point of view the Tāmreswar ruins belongs to tenth century C.E., if not earlier<sup>161</sup>. It is said that till the sixteenth century, i.e. till the rise of the Koch dynasty, human sacrifice was practiced in Murādewar. In present times goats, ducks and birds are offered for sacrifice<sup>162</sup>. In some of these temples Siva was represented by a stone block (i.e. in Deulpur and Nalkhāmarā), in others he was worshipped in the aniconic phallic form (in Mādhagosāin) and in others, in the anthropomorphic iconographic form (i.e. Mukteswar, Sanpārā etc.). In the ancient temple of Murādewar, Siva was worshipped as the principal deity. Among the Koches, the worship of Siva was popular from a very early date<sup>163</sup>. Siva was known by local names like Burhāgosain, Bholanāth, and Mahādeva etc. and is often considered as the guardian deity of a village. It is believed that, the well being of the village depends upon the maintenance of continued worship for the pleasure of the deity for ensuring his blessing and protection. Image of Natarāja (Fig.22) is also found in Jaljali.

---

<sup>160</sup> Sarma, N.N ; *Darrangar Rasmirekha*, in Dr. D.P.Barua (ed) *Darrang Jila Itihas Sankalan Samiti*, Mangaldai. 2005, p 25.

<sup>161</sup> Choudhury, R.D: *Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam*, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi. 1985, p 243.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.* p.25.

<sup>163</sup> Choudhury, P.C: *The History of Civilization of the People of Assam to the twelfth Century A.D.*, New Delhi. 1959, p 445.

### *Visnu*

From early times the worship of Visnu was prevalent in Assam. Images of Visnu are found in different parts of Assam. Apart from sculptural evidence, epigraphic data also confirms that Vaishnavism was a popular cult of Assam. The rulers of Kāmarūpa traced their lineage to Visnu through Naraka. The Badagangā rock inscription of Bhutivarman (6<sup>th</sup> century C.E.), Puspabhadra grant of Dharmapāla (12<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) etc. also confirm the worship of Visnu<sup>164</sup>. The worship of Visnu prevailed in the districts since remote past as in other parts of Assam. Being a part of the kingdom of the Varmans, Sālastambhas, and the Pālas the rulers of the land were believed to be the progenies of Visnu as referred to earlier. An image of four armed Visnu in *samapada-sthānaka* attitude, flanked by Lakshmi and Saraswati was found at Bijulibāri, Mangaldai. According to R.D.Choudhury, the black basalt sculpture measuring 58cm×29 cm belonged to C.10th -11th century C.E. The deity holds *gadā* and *chakra* in his upper hand. The *āyudhyas* held by the lower hands are broken off. These *ayudhās* must have been the *sankha* and *padma*. The *silaptā* on the upper left side is broken along with the figure of *Vidyādhara*. The sculpture is of high order although, though the corner of the *silapatā* is slightly mutilated<sup>165</sup>. At the *garbhagriha* of Rugdreswar Devālaya, a sculpture of Visnu (Fig.23) measuring almost 30cm×28cm is also noticed. Two beautiful sculptures of Visnu (Fig.24) were recently unearthed from the Jaljali ruins. At Māroi *satra* too some beautifully carved sculptures of Visnu belonging to the medieval period are still found.

---

<sup>164</sup> Choudhury, R.D. :*Catalogue of Stone Sculptures*, Assam State Museum, Ghuwahati, 1998, p.16.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*: p.36.

A square *Visnupattā* bearing the miniature figures of *dasavatāra* of Visnu, on all sides of the border was also found at Mathāj̄hār in Mangaldai and is now preserved in the ASM. The black basalt *Visnupattā* measuring 23.5cm×23.5cm belonged to c.11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. In its centre, one pair of feet of Visnu is shown symbolically on a round pedestal inside a square. The square is surrounded by swastika motifs and other designs in the corner. This is the only piece of *Visnupattā* found in Assam. The stone is coarse grained, so the minute details of figures are not very clear. The reverse of the slab has a full blown lotus at the centre, surrounded by *sankha*, *padma*, *gadā* and *chakra*<sup>166</sup>.

An image of Visnu seated on *gurudasana* measuring 57cm×31cm×47cm belonging to the C.11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. is preserved in the District museum, Darrang. The upper part of the body shows that the deity is seated on *dvibhanga* attitude holding the usual *āyudhas* in four hands. The upper right hand is holding the *gadā* and the upper left hand is holding the *chakra*. Although the lower hands are mutilated these can be taken as holding the *sankha* and *padma*. The face of the image is badly mutilated. The *garuda* on whose shoulder the deity is seated is depicted is in *alidhāsana*. The face of the *garuda* is too mutilated. The upper right portion of the image is broken. This is an excellent piece of Visnu in *garudāsana*. The sculpture is of great value from iconographical point of view. It seems to be the only icon of Visnu in *garudāsana* found in Assam<sup>167</sup>. The lower portion of a huge image of some deity measuring 66cm×66cm. belonging to the C.10<sup>th</sup> century C.E. is found at District Museum, Darrang. The upper portion above the belly is badly mutilated and missing. The image is in seated posture.

---

<sup>166</sup>Choudhury, R.D.: *Catalogue of Stone Sculptures*, Assam State Museum, Guwahati, 1998, p.34.

<sup>167</sup> Choudhury, R.D & Goswami,S.K.: *Catalogue of the District Museum, Darrang Mangaldai*, Directorate of Museums: Assam, Guwahati, 1998.p.4.

<sup>168</sup>*Ibid*.p.1

The toe of the left leg, seen properly, carries a mark showing miniature lotus. The right leg is placed horizontally on a full bloomed lotus. The right leg which must have placed vertically is broken and lost. The upper portion of the right hand is missing. There is also a trace of *nupura* on the left. The navel is prominently shown. As the deity is seated on a big lotus, it may be identified with Visnu<sup>168</sup>.

### ***Minor Deities***

Along with major deities like Visnu, Siva, Sakti sculptures of other minor gods and goddesses such as Ganesa, Kārtikeya, Lakshmi, Saraswati belonging to the past are found in the study area. Numerous images of Ganesa are found in Assam. The images of Ganesa are well preserved in the ruins of Baman, Jaljali, Ganes Kuwari, Tamreswar, BhangaBarua etc. The seated Ganesa of Murā Dewar (Fig.25) is still found in good condition. A four armed Kārtikeya image is also found at Murā Dewar. Lakshmi and Saraswati along with Visnu are found at Mathājhār.

### **WOODEN SCULPTURE**

The art of wood carving was carried out in the study area to a great extent. The art of making wooden sculpture was specially cultivated under the influence of Vaishnavite *satras*. The wooden post and beams of the *Nāmgharas* in the villages and in the *satras* were decorated with figure-carvings<sup>169</sup>. The *satra* institutions were the main centres of wood craft during the medieval period. *Singhāsna* (an ornamented wooden seat supported by sculptured lion), *Garudāsana* (an ornamented wooden seat supported by wooden sculptured Garuda, the Eagle vehicle of Visnu), wooden *Magara* (crocodile) are commonly found in the *satras* and the temples of the study area<sup>170</sup>. *Satras* possessed

---

<sup>169</sup> Rajguru, S.: *Medieval Assamese Society 1228-1826*. 1<sup>st</sup> edn, Nagaon, Asami. 1988.p.309.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*.p.311.

some exquisitely beautiful articles viz. Thrones or seats for the deity or sacred books (*simhāsanā*), decorative birds, flowers, creepers, figures of gods and goddesses, other mythical beings. Under the royal patronage, the wood workers attained considerable skill and excellence and produced a great variety of articles for the use of the nobility, the court and the members of the royal family, and also for the common people<sup>171</sup>. Palanquins, called *Dolā* (Fig.26) are still preserved in the District museum Darrang and some of the private houses. A *dolā* was generally built by using iron and wood. Generally two to six men requires carrying a *dolā* who were known as *dolābhāri* (*dolā* carrier). *Dolā* was a medium of transport in early times. Particularly during marriage ceremony the bride was brought to the house of the groom through *dolā*. Besides these a few other fragmentary remains of temple sculptures are also found in places like Silbori of Darrang and Khāmpāholā of Udalguri. The conventionally carved, Silbori door frame represents an artistic beauty of great order. Silbori sculptures may be placed in the tenth century C.E. on the basis of treatment. The sculptures found at Silbori inspire emotion and sensuality, devotion and graceful serenity. Figures are given a round shape and curved lines are not sharp but it displays a rhythmic movement<sup>172</sup>. A few sculptural blocks belonging to the 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> century C.E. are still found at Khāmpāholā, 3 kilometer away from Kalāigāon of Udalguri. Worship of goddess Kāmākhyā is still prevalent here<sup>173</sup>.

The sculptural activities of the people of different regions reflect the socio religious condition of the people. The socio-economic stability of the region led to the material progress of the society and this in turn led to the growth of religion, art etc. Mainly stone and wood are the medium of sculptural expression of the study region.

---

<sup>171</sup> *CHA, vol-III, p.115.*

<sup>172</sup> Dutta, Manoranjan.: *Sculpture of Assam*, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, Pp.92.

<sup>173</sup> *DI: p.218.*

Generally wood was used in the medieval *satras* of Assam. From the sculptural point of view the study region was an integral part of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa in the Pre Koch-Āhom period. The ruins are the clear indicator of human habitation in the region since early times. Discovery of a good numbers of varied images proves that the people were well acquainted with the Gods and Goddesses of the Brāhmanical pantheon.

*A Few Sculptures of the study area*<sup>174</sup>

Sl No	Account No	Name of the Objects	Size in (cm)	Date	Provenance
1	5704	Architectural piece	22×16cms.	c.9 <sup>th</sup> cent. C.E.	Khoirabari, Mangaldoi
2	6113	Do	20×46cms.	Do	Do
3	5712	Do	40×21cms.	Do	Do
4	5713	Do	21×44cms.	Do	Do
5	5701	Broken architectural piece	49×18cms.	Do	Do
6	5710	Corroded architectural piece	16×53cms.	Do	Do
7	5716	Stone block carrying warriors	18×49cms.	Do	Do
8	5715	Six female figures	54×24cms.	Do	Do

<sup>174</sup> **Source:** Choudhury, R.D.: *Catalogue of Stone Sculptures Assam State Museum*. Guwahati, Directorate of Museum: Assam, 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1998, pp.60-72.

9	2686	Fragmentary piece of stone	32×54cms.	c.9-10th cent. C.E.	Do
10	2795	Broken architectural piece	16×44cms.	Do	Do
11	5692	Architectural piece	17×4cms.	Do	Do
12	2147	Do	8×33cms.	Do	Do
13	2617	Fragmentary of round stone	14×7cms.	Do	Do
14	2427	Decorative stone block	44×28cms.	Do	Do
15	5703	Broken architectural piece	14×47cms.	Do	Do
16	5691	Seated human figures	59×17cms.	Do	Khoirabari
17	5711	Decorative architectural piece	19×29cms.	Do	Khoirabari. Mangaldoi
18	5720	Piece of human figures	19×43cms.	Do	Do
19	5707	Architectural piece	52×37cms.	Do	Do
20	5694	Decorative architectural piece	22×27cms.	Do	Do
21	5719	Piece of human figures	19×41cms.	Do	Do



22	5709	Decorative architectural piece	20×47cms.	Do	Do
23	6878	Architectural piece	12×70cms.	Do	Do
24	6872	Broken architectural piece	12×70cms.	Do	Do
25	5700	Do	12×70cms.	Do	Do
26	5717	Sculpture of elephant	19×30cms.	Do	Do
27	2489	Broken lotus pedestal	55×22cms.	Do	Do
28	5718	Human figure in Dhyana pose	24×25cms.	9-10 <sup>th</sup> cent. C.E.	Do
29	38	Unknown female figure	79×28cms.	Do	Singiri
30	2531/3	Image of Monkey	25×20cms.	Do	Mangaldoi, Jorpukhuri, Majuli Tea Estate
31	2499	Fragmentary stone piece	27×53cms.	Do	Khoirabari, Mangaldoi
32	5696	Decorative architectural piece	13×35cms.	Do	Do
33	5699	Architectural piece	44×40cms.	c.10 <sup>th</sup>	Do

				cent.C.E.	
34	5705	Do	43×16cms.	Do	Do
35	5704	Do	57×37cms.	Do	Do
36	5722	Do	69×43cms.	Do	Do
37	5695	Do	38×12cms.	Do	Do
38	2531/2	Bust of a male humane figure	16×21cms.	Do	Majuli Tea Estate, Mangaldoi
39	2529	Broken architectural piece	78×54cms.	Do	Khoirabari, Mangaldoi
40	2530	Architectural piece	94×22cms.	Do	Do
41	2646	Architectural stone block piece	50×10cms.	Do	Do
42	2425	Fragmentary piece	18×20cms.	Do	Do
43	2250	Fragmentary stone piece	13×38cms.	Do	Do
44	6767	Dvarasirapatti, depicting ghata	1.28×31cms.	Do	Do
45	5690	Architectural piece	36×16cms.	Do	Do
46	3813	A lintel of a door frame	22×52cms.	9-10 <sup>th</sup> cent.C.E.	Mangaldoi
47	3714	A broken dvara silai	1.20×40cms.	c.10 <sup>th</sup> cent.C.E.	Khoirabari
48	5762	Fragment of a pillar	70×46cms.	Do	Do

49	6763	Four sided Dvarakaksha	95dia×90cms.	c.9-10 <sup>th</sup> cent C.E.	Do
50	6764	A creeper design on a block	64×73cms.	c.10 <sup>th</sup> cent.C.E.	Do
51	41	A female dancing figure	64×43cms.	c.9-10 <sup>th</sup> cent. C.E.	Singri
52	2103/1	Upper part of a female figure	10.5×21.5cms.	Do	Hatigarh Tea Estate, Mangaldoi
53	3812	A door lintel	173×33cms.	c.10-11 <sup>th</sup> cent. C.E.	Nao- Noi,Darrang district

*Sculpturs of District Museum Darrang*

SI No	Account No	Name of the Objects	Size in cm	Date	Provenance
1	DDM/Ar/16/87	Erotic stone image	55×31×26cms	C.9 <sup>th</sup> century AD.	Kalyānpur
2	DDM/Ar/01/87	Dvrāsakhā	1.23×39cms	10 Century A.D.	Silbori, Darrang

3	DDM/Ar/02/87	Do	1.25×36cms	do	Do
4	DDM/Ar/03/87	Unidentified male figure	66×66cms	C.10 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.	Bhāgawati <i>satra</i> , Darrang
5	DDM/Ar/04/87	Flying nymph	56×17cms	do	Puniā, Darrang
6	DDM/Ar/05/87	Dvārasakhā	75×40cms	do	Do
7	DDM/Ar/11/87	Ghata	31×87cms	do	Nārikali, Darrang
8	DDM/Ar/15/87	Stone block		do	Barthekerabari, Darrang
9	DDM/Ar/18/87	Unidentified Stone block	36×25cms	do	Māharipara, Darrang
10	DDM/Ar/24/87	Stone block	52×24×20cms	do	Nārikali, Darrang
11	DDM/Ar/25/87	Do	25×32×24cms	do	Nārikali, Darrang
12	DDM/Ar/8/87	Do	30×60×25cms	C.11 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.	Lakhimpur, Darrang
13	DDM/Ar/13/87	Do	29×39×22cms	do	Tāmreswar, Udalguri
14	DDM/Ar/14/87	Visnu	57×318×47cms	do	Kalyānpur
15	DDM/Ar/17/87	Gajavyāla	57×44×66cms	do	Boinajapārā
16	DDM/Ar/26/87	Stone block	25×29×30cms	do	Lakhimpur, Darrang
17	DDM/Ar/27/87	Do		do	Bijulilibāri,

					Darrang
18	DDM/Ar/07/87	Do	44×34×21cms	C.11/12 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.	Bālipotā, Udalgury
19	DDM/Ar/9/87	Lotus block	58×61×65cms	C.12 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.	Bāghmārā
20	DDM/Ar/10/87	Sivalinga	45×50×37cms	do	Do
21	DDM/Ar/20/87	Sivalinga	84×30×19cms	do	Bijulibāri, Darrang
22	DDM/Ar/21/87	Stone block (pokhali)	70×42×35cms	do	Lengeripārā, Darrang
23	DDM/Ar/12/87	Lotus block	1.17×21cms		Narikali, Darrang
24	DDM/Ar/23/87	Stone block (pokhali)	49×38×22cms		Bezpārā, Darrang
25	DDM/Ar/19/87	Sivalinga		C.18 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.	Barthekerābāri, Darrang
26	DDM/Ar/06/87	Venu Gopāl	22×13cms	do	Chapāi, Darrang
27	DDM/Ar/22/87	Stone block (pokhali)	58×41×31cms		Bezpārā, Darrang

\*Source: Choudhury, R.D. & Goswami, S.K.: Catalogue of the District Museum,

Darrang, Directorate of Museums: Assam, Guwahati, 1998.