

CHAPTER - II

CHAPTER-II MADAN-KAMDEVA THROUGH THE AGES A HYPOTHETICAL ANALYSIS

Like many other temple site of Assam, the history of Madan-Kamdeva still remain under the warp of an oöscurity. No concrete form of literary, inscriptional or numismatic evidences are there to support the historical existence of this majestic temple complex at Madan-Kamdeva. Despite of the dearth of source materials, we however, have some indirect evidences (mainly in literary form) which can be summerised (more or less) with some probabilities regarding the historicity of this famous temple site through-out the period of our study.

SECTION : 2.1

Literary Evidences-The Kalika-Purana and the Yogini Tantra:

People live in and around Madan-Kamdeva often like to give historical exposure to this temple complex in reference to a *Sloka* in the *Yogini Tantra* which is about the auspicious celebration of *Kam triodasi tithi*. Highlighting the importance of this auspicious celebration, the *Sloka* describe that in the month of *Chaita* (March-April the people who celebrate the *kam triodasi tithi* with utmost sincerity (in utterance of *mantra*), becomes free from all sorts of sin and received *brahmapada*,¹ symbolizing *moksha*. That means, the *sloka* has nothing to do with the history of Madan-Kamdeva, as it simply endorsed the importance of the celebration of *kam*

1. *Cāitre kāmtrayodaśyāñ mantrāṅānena zatnatah
Sarbbā Pāpabinirmuktah Sa Gachhet brāhmanḥ Padañ*
Y.T.-2/9/51.

triodasi tithi. But the people of this locality tried to acclaim the description of this *sloka* in connection with the traditional celebration of *Madan triodasi tithi* at this famous temple site. The *kam triodasi* is the main *utsava*, which being celebrated every year in a traditional way of pomp and grandeur at this temple complex at Madan-Kamdeva.² While examining the linkage of this description of auspicious celebration with Madan-Kamdeva, it is interesting to find that, *Yogini Tantra* itself nullify the supposition. The reference to the celebration of *kam triodasi tithi* is there in the Tantra simply in connection of one *Baranasi kunda*, situated on the eastern side of *Apurnabhaba* with an extension of seven *dhenu*.³ The *Tantra* states that on the auspicious occasion of *Madan triodasi tithi* who take holy deep at *Baranasi Kunda* would free from all sorts of sin.⁴

Giving a further clearification about the geographical location of *Baranasi Kunda*, the Tantra in one of its advising note stated that people should take holy bath at *Baranasi Kunda* prior to his visit to lord *Kamaleshwar*.⁵ According to Maheshwar Neog, the temple of Lord *Kamaleshwar* is situated on the *Gokarna parvat*.⁶ *Gokarna* being referred as an entrance to the heaven.⁷ The people should take holy deep first at *Apurnabhaba kunda*

2. It is on the occasion of *Kam triodasi tithi*, people under grounded two long bamboo tree with red flags at their top and worship there. This is a popular custom to follow every nock and corner of lower Assam on the occasion of the celebration of annual *Bhatheli*. Scholars believe that *Bhatheli* is a converted form of *Indra Puja* or a form of workshop of Madan -Kamdeva in search of fertility. Bargohain, J.K. : *Asomar Utsav Aru Puja(As)*,2004, p.104
3. Y.T., 2/9/50.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid, 2/9/118.
6. Neog, M.(ed.) : *Prabitra Asom(As)*1991, p.234.
7. Y.T -2/9/116.

(prior to make their appearance in Gokarna⁸), the sacred place of *Janardana*,⁹ than at *Baranasi kunda*¹⁰ to make their visit to the abode of Lord *Kamaleshwar*. Thus, the location of *Apunabhava* and *Baranasi kunda* may be referred somewhere around *Hayagriva Madhab* temple at modern Hajo. Accordingly, the circumstantial evidences, inspired us to state that the description of the celebration of *Kam triodasi tithi* is there in the *Yogini Tantra*, only in connection of its traditional celebration at *Kedar* temple at modern Hajo, not in reference to *Madan-Kamdeva* temple.

Comparing to the *Yogini Tantra* the *Kalika Purana*, a product of 10th century A.D.,¹¹ has provided us more reliable reference to the historical existence of this temples at *Madan-Kamdeva*. One school believed that *Madan-Kamdeva* is the place where Lord *Kamdeva* regain his lost beauty after a prolonged and rigorous *tapashya* (meditation) of Lord *Sadasiva*, who once burnt him to ashes.¹² In explaining the story, the *Kalika Purana* has made some interesting references¹³ that,

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid. 2/9/22-31.

10. The existence of *Baranasi kunda* is not found today, but still it supposed to be at the lower ridge of *Kamaleshwar* temple near *Swargaduar* (entrance to the heaven) at Hajo.

Dutta, Sarma, S. : *Sri Sri Hayagriva Madhab*, 2002, p.32.

11. Barua, B.K. : *Cultural History of Assam*(1951), 1986, p.12.

12. Kalita, K.K. : *Madan-Kamdeva*, 2003, p.13.

13. *Maṅikūṭācālāt pūrbhat Maṅshyaṭdhwajkulācalah !*
Nirdagdho zatra Madano Haranetrāgnina Pulah !
Śarirang Praṇa Tapasā Samārādhyā bṛiṣḍhwajam !!
Tatra Maṅshyaswarūpastu kāmādeben saṅstītah
Adhityakayan Prithibin bikhman Samantath !!
Nadē Tu Śaswati Nāma Tatrāste Dakṣiṇsrabā
Sabah kāmāsaro Nāma Tatra Sdile Byabastitam !!
Śāsватыān Bidhibat Snātā Pīwa kāmāsarohvsi
Bimukta Pāpaḥ sūddhātmā Sibaloke Mahāyate !!
 K.P. 79/52-56.

on the eastern side of *Manikut Parvat*, there is a hillock known as *Matshyadhvaj* where *Kamdeva* regained his lost beauty after a year long meditation of Lord *Brihadhvaj*. *Matshyadhvaj Parvat* is the abode of Lord *Vishnu* in fish form. The sacredness of this place has received further elaboration with the existence of a *dakshina bahini* river known as *Swaswati* and a *sarobar* known as *kam sarobar*.

Poet Ananda Chandra Agarwal, in his famous composition *Kamrupar Tirtha Bibaran*, has already identified *Matshyadhvaj Parvat* (A popular name of Madan-Kamdeva) as second *Madanasal*, the *Kamsarobar* as *Madan kut* and the *Madankur* river came out of *Madan kut sarobar* as *Swaswati* river of the *Kalika Purana*.¹⁴ However, in accepting the geographical identity of *Matshyadhvaj Parvat* as Madan-Kamdeva, there is a confusion itself created by the *Kalika Purana* over the question of the exact location of *Manikut Parvat*. The *Kalika Purana* amicably identified the location of the *Manikut Parvat* on the north eastern side of the *Bhasmakuta*¹⁵ *Bhasmakuta* being presently identified with *Umananda*.¹⁶ The problem arises when the *sloka* has made a description about the existence of one *Manikarno Siva linga* at *Manikut Parvat*. The term *Manikarno* has normally inspired to call it as the *Manikarneshwar Dewalai* (a *Siva* temple) in north Guwahati. This identity has made it difficult to accept the *Matshyadhvaj Parvat* as Madan-Kamdeva, because it would place it on the norther side of *Manikut Parvat* which should be on eastern side of the same as to the description of the *Kalika Purana*.

14. Saikia, N. (ed.) : *Anandachandra Agarwalla, Granthavali*, (As), 1974, p.304

15. K.P. 79/44

16. Bardoloi, N.P. : *Siva*, (As), 1979, p. 355

However, the problem would have found an amicable solution, on the light of an another description in the *Yogini Tantra* for the identity of the *Manikut Parvat*. The Tantra described one *Manikutasala* as an abode of lord *Vishnu* in *Hayagriva* form.¹⁷ This description led us to identify *Manikutasala* as the present *Hayagriva Madhab* temple at Hajo in Kamrup district. This has widen the scope to presume *Matshyadhvaj* with Madan-Kamdeva, as it would place the temple complex of our concern on the eastern side of *Manikutasala* of *Hayagriva Madhab* temple at Hajo in compliance of the descriptions of the *Kalika Purana*.

While working on this presumption, again it is interesting to note that the *Yogini Tantra* was written in a much later period comparing to that of the *Kalika Purana*. The importance of the *Yogini Tantra* in the history of Kamrupa lies mainly to the description of the holiness of different pilgrimage places situated in Kamrupa. Under such circumstance, why *Yogini Tantra* failed to make any reference regarding Madan-Kamdeva is not understandable. Probably the place had lost its importance in due course of time, more specifically, by the time of the commencement of *Yogini Tantra*, Madan-Kamdeva might have lost all of its importance to the socio cultural entity of Kamrupa.

SECTION : 2.2

Madan-Kamdeva and First Muhammadan Invasion:

Apart from that, there is a group of people headed by Tarini Kanta Sarmah,¹⁸ who would have like to commemorate the

17. Y.T.-2/9/123

18. An Instructor of Basic Education, who had contributed lot to bring Madan-Kamdeva into time light.

history of Madan-Kamdeva in the context of the first Muslim invasion in Kamrupa led by one *Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar* during 1205-1206 A.D. These people tried to establish an incidental association of Madan-Kamdeva temple with the said invasion of *Bakhtiyar*. This well known story of the invasion as confirmed by *Minhajuddin*, in his famous *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri* and quoted by different writers goes like that *Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar* after conquering *Radha* and *Varendra*, established himself at *Lakshmanavati* (Gaur) in and around 1198 A.D., from where he led an expedition against Tibet (supposed to be Turkestan and Tibet) through Kamrud (Kamrupa) about the middle of 1205 A.D.¹⁹ From *Lakshmanavati*, *Muhammad* proceeded with his huge army to a town called *Burdhankot* on the bank of river *Begamati*, from there he followed the northern course of the river for ten days and arrived in a place where a river was spanned by a bridge of twenty arches and ultimately with the help of the stone bridge, he entered in Kamrupa.²⁰ The King of Kamrupa, who was evidently informed with the intentions of *Muhammad* and accordingly advice him that it was not the proper time to march into the country of Tibet. *Muhammad* ignored the advice of the King of Kamrupa and continued his march until he arrived into a plain which was well cultivated and thickly populated and in the middle of which there stood a strong fortress.²¹ The problem arise when the *Turk* started plundering the villages which instigated the inhabitant to join hands with the garrison in the fort and offered stubborn resistance

19. Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) : CHA, Vol.I, 1990, p.168.

20. Ravetry, H.G.(tr.) : *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri*, 1881, p.561.

21. Barua, K.L. : EHK, 1966, p.137.

to the invaders. The King of Kamrupa re-enforced his garrison which compelled *Muhammad* to enter into a defensive battle and ultimately compelled him to retreat which proved to be disastrous one. The *Kamrupi* garrison attack him from back which caused a heavy lost of his man-power. Somehow, he managed to escape to the bank of the river and found that two arches of the bridge had been destroyed and the river was unfordable. He ultimately decided to take shelter in a Hindu temple, nearby to the river. The *Kamrupi* King besigned him in the temple by constructing a bamboo palisade all round the temple. Having no other alternative, *Muhammad* decided to take risk and breaking through the palisade, he along with his army tried to cross the river which put him in total hell. He lost the entire force and only with some best mounted soldier, he somehow survived to reached the opposite bank of the river.

Connecting the incident of the invasion with Madan-Kamdeva, Tarini Kanta Sarmah has made a suggestion that *Bakhtiyar* took shelter in one *Narasimha* temple situated on an isolated hillock known even today also as *Narasimha Parvat*, at the ending point of the series of the famous Madan-Kamdeva group of temples.²² In support of his presumption, Sarmah has put forwarded his view in the following word that *the king of Kamrupa managed to surround the temple when Bukhtiyar took shelter, with the bamboo palisade, which the Turks any how broke through and tried to cross the river running by..... the erection of bamboo palisade all round*

22. Chutia, D.(ed.) : A Seminar Proceeding title as History of Culture of Assam, 1984, p.181 (Kamrup Anusandhan Samitee)

*the temple is only possible in case of Narasimha Parvat, because it is isolated one. Most probably the palisade was thrown up all round the hillock. The Turks broke through and advancing about a furlong on the right side, got the river which is now dead and known as Madan Kuri.*²³ Incorporating another clause in support of his conclusion, Sarmah has further stated that at the proximity of the *Silsako*, Madan-Kamdeva was the only temple site which can accommodate a huge battalion of *Bakhtiyar* size within its primeses.²⁴

On the way to examine the acceptability of his presumption, our prime concern however would be to find out the exact location of the *Silsako* (because this would be the only clues to support the conclusion put forwarded by Sarmah). Regarding the location of the *Silsako*, Gait has made an interesting comment that this ancient stone bridge situated not far from Hajo *makes the bed of a river that has long since left it and taken another course.*²⁵ Giving a more clear idea about the exact geographical location of the *Silsako*, Rai Bahadur K L Barua has stated that the *bridge spanned the Barnadi river running through the present abandoned bed known as Puspabhadra, fall into Brahmaputra several miles below its present confluence.*²⁶ Depending on some relics he further confirmed the location of the stone bridge at *Najuli* of modern Sanṅsari.²⁷ D.C. Sircar in the *Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol.-I* has stated that *Silsako* was the only stone bridge over the river *Barnadi* at a

23. Ibid, p. 182.

24. Ibid.

25. Gait, E. : *A History of Assam*, 1992, p.20.

26. Barua, K.L. : *Op-cit*, 1966, p.139.

27. Ibid, pp.139-40.

distance of eight miles on the north-western direction of modern north Guwahati.²⁸ This geographical location is very supportive one to place Madan-Kamdeva at the close proximity of the *Silsako* which normally heighten the scope to consider Madan-Kamdeva as a sheltering house for the huge *Bakhtiyar* army. However, when we visited the very site of *Silsako*, no relics are there to survive for us, but still, people's (of this locality) strong argument has left no other alternative for us, but to accept the presumption made by Tarini Kanta Sarmah and to wait for future archaeological discoveries to have more light on the subject.

SECTION : 2.3

Madan-Kamdeva and Its Construction :

A) At Royal Initiatives :

Referring to the problem of its date of construction, the gurdian authority of this famous archaeological site, the Directorate of Archaeology, Assam, has made it confirmed that Madan-Kamdeva is a product of 11th/12th century A.D, when the mightly *Pala* rulers had maintained their rule in Kamrupa (as the sign board at the very entrance of the temple complex has referred to us). Earlier, the same authority, however presumed it as being a product of 10th/12th century A.D.²⁹ Dr. P. C. Sarma, on the other hand, has put forwarded a view that stylistically, the time of construction of this temple can be dated to the 12th century A.D.. Without entangling much into this controversy at this stage of our study, here we would simply like to examine all those confirmation

28. Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) : Op-cit, 1990, p.170.

29. Kalita, K.K.(ed.) : Op-cit, 2003, p.14.

and if possible to co-related them with different socio-economic probabilities which have prepared the ground for the construction of this mighty temple complex.

Accordingly, if we consider 10th century A.D. as the initial phase of its construction, at that time Kamrupa was under the rule of the *Salastambha* family. The Bargaon Copper plate grant has clearly stated that there were twenty one kings of that line³⁰ and all of them can safely be accommodate in between 7th to 10th century A.D.³¹ Regarding the condition of eastern Indian politics, it was during this time, one of the prominent political power of this region, the Bengal *Pala*, was on the road to its decline, specially after the tenure of Devapala (810-850 A.D).³² The engagement of the *Pala* rulers in the tripartite struggle for the mastery over Kanauj, has further accelerated the process of

30. Bargaon, C.P. : v. 10.

31. This assumption is quite controversial one as the scholar like D.C.Sirkar tried to confirmed the date of the last king of this line Tyagasimha in between 890-900 A.D.

Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) CHA, Vol.I, 1990, p. 138.

But the scholar like P. C. Choudhury on the other hand has stated that the rule of *Salastambha* line was continued probably to the middle part on 10th century A.D. Choudhury, P.C. : HCPA, 1987, p.224 Supporting this another eminent scholar M M Sarma has issued a genealogical list of *Salastambha* family stretching from 7th century A.D. to 10th century A.D. by keeping a gap of three unknown rulers between Balavarman III, the last great ruler of this line and Tyagasimha. Thus, the matter can safely be sum up in the words that the 10th century A.D. had witnessed a transition of power from *Salastambha* to *Brahmapala* dynasty.

Sarma, M.M. : *Inscription of Ancient Assam*, 1978, pp.33-34.

32. Choudhury, P.C. : *Assam Bengal Relation*, 1988, p.45.

their decline. The tripartite struggle is an important occurrence to the history of India in which three major power of Indian politics, namely the *Rashtrakuta*, the *Pratihara* and the *Pala* (during 8th to 10th century A.D.) by extending their military activities to win over the famous city of Kanauj. But that was at the cost of their respective powers in toto, as no one can ever attain any success over this famous city (in a permanent way) and it proved to be total wastage of their man, money and power, which ultimately led them to a point of their complete extinction.

The tripartite struggle and, more specifically the declining trend of the Bengal *Pala*, had some implication in the *Kamrupi* politics. First of all, it had provided an opportunity to the *Kamrupi* king to extend the centre of their political activities, if possible, to the region lying west of river *Teesta*.³³ King Vanamalavarmadeva of *Salastambha* line (832-55 A.D) was the first *Kamrupi* King who had purposefully utilized the opportunity of *Pala's* engagement in the tripartite struggle and extended his frontier towards north and south eastern part of Bengal. He became the true empire builder by extending traditional western boundary of Kamrupa beyond the river *Karatoya*. Thus, the tripartite struggle and consequent decline of Bengal *Pala*, in combine, have prepared the ground in emerging Kamrupa once again as a paramount power in the east Indian politics.

This paramouncy, on the other hand, might have created a favourable atmosphere in instituting a new boost to an unbroken movement of temple buildings activities in Assam, right from the initial formative phase of the *Gupta* cultural epoch to a

33. Choudhury, P.C. : *HCPA*, 1987, p.45.

mature phase of its culmination. The prolongness of the tripartite struggle had created an atmosphere of instability in north Indian politics which might have frustrated the artisans and other persons of these regions. This type of political instability always proved to be devastating one for those people whose day to day livelihood based on the patronization of the royal and other wealthy group of people in the society. This normally inspired those skilled but frustrated artisan to move out of this turmolic atmosphere and to make search for a land of peace and tranquility and accordingly Kamrupa appeared to be the best choice land for them to settle (the matter will be taken up in more detail in the chapter V). The migration of these skilled artisan have injected a fresh lease of life to the surviving tradition of plastic activities in Kamrupa.

The best prove example of this fact is found in the inscriptions of *Vanamalavarmadeva* in which he being described as the constructor of palatial building with decorated rooms and with beautiful pictures.³⁴ It is also said about him that he rebuilt a mighty *Siva* temple *Hataka-sulin* and endowed it with villages, elephants and temple girls.³⁵ This prolific building activities initiated by *Vanamalavarmadeva*, was continued and ultimately reach its culmination during the tenure of *Pala* rule in Assam. Among the *Pala* rulers, *Ratnapala* (920-60 A.D) was the most important king, during whose reign Kamrupa had witnessed all round development of plastic activities.³⁶ King *Ratnapala* had the credit of building new fortresses in the capital known as *Durjaya*

34. Ibid. p. 218.

35. Tezpur C.P. v. 24.

36. Nath, R. : *The Background of Assam Culture*, 1978, p.45.

(impregnable). The grandeur of this new city as described in Bargaon copper plate grant³⁷ had clearly manifested Ratnapala's patronizing zeal to the plastic activities.

The building activities of the *Salastambha* period was mainly confined to the central and lower Assam.³⁸ The architectural remains prove that the *Salastambha* had successfully maintained post Gupta temple building trend of north India, by using *stone components of heavier dimension*.³⁹ Increasing number of sculptures and other ornaments to the outer surfaces of the temple structures were the two other primary characteristic features of the *Salastambha* architecture.⁴⁰

The archaeological remains, excavated in and around modern Tezpur and Guwahati, are generally referred as being the products of a period starting from 7th century A.D. to 10th century A.D.⁴¹ and sometime the time frame of these find spots, however, may be extended to 12th century A.D. While referring to the basic character of the temple building activities between 900 A.D.-1400 A.D., it is interesting to note that the royal house and the feudal chiefs, were two of the prime organs in the society who not only commissioned the temples but also used it as a fertile ground to exposed their taste and out look.⁴²

On the light of this discussion when we referred to the temple ranges of Madan-Kamdeva, the most important point of

37. Bargaon C.P vv.30-40.

38. Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) : CHA, Vol.III, 2007, p.316.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Desai, D. : *Erotic Sculpture of India*, 1985, p.40.

our attraction is the lusturous ornamentation of these temples, which seems to be possible only with a greater financial support. This type of expenditure was certainly not possible for any ruler of general standard, only the king of Vanamala, Ratnapala or other great rulers in repute can deared to bear this type of financial liabilities for the construction of any temple complex of Madan-Kamdeva standard. The use of stone components of heavier dimension normally inspired us to placed the temple complex in a close proximity of *Salastambha* tenure. Thus, issuing a new direction, the circumstantial evidences led to a conclusion that the foundation stone of this majestic temple complex might have been laid down during the 10th century A.D. or in the last part of the 9th century A.D. when the ruler like Vanamala of *Salastambha* had maintained their rule in Kamrupa in a glorious manner. Similarly the *Pala* rulers, like Ratnapala in repute also seem to have contributed a lot to the construction of this mighty temple complex. While trying to establish linkage between Ratnapala and Madan-Kamdeva, we would like to mention here an important conclusion earlier made by one of the eminent scholar of Assam, Rajmohan Nath that king Ratnapala had made a successful attempt in establishing a friendly relation with south Indian kings and in doing that he offered lofty proposal which caused a greater immigration of people who were either temple labours or job seekers.⁴³ This proposition is only on the light of invasions made by different south Indian kings in Bengal like Rajendra Chola the great in 1025 A.D., Joyasimha II the son of Rajendra Chola and

43. Nath, R. Op-cit, 1978, p.45.

ultimately the *Hoihoya king* Gangeya Deva, *Ratnapala tactfully entered into friendly relation with the Deccan kings, got his son Purandara Pala married to the Hoihoya princes Durlabha and recruited a large number of architects and sculptors from Tanjore, Mysore and Travancore and made them settle in the country.*⁴⁴ How much authenticity is there in his proposition is yet to be ascertained, but still the discovery of large number of *Surya* sculptures of south Indian type certainly have instituted a new weightage to his proposition and at the same time, also increase the scope for the involvement of Ratnapala and his recruits in the construction of this mighty temple complex of our concern.

B) At Some Other Social Opportunities :

Apart from the contribution of these great royal personals or the royal houses, there were some other social opportunities in the *Kamrupi* society which seems to have played some role in the development of this majestic temple complex at Madan-Kamdeva. While trying to explain this proposition, the first point which came to our mind is that from the ritualistic point of view *the site of a temple is a Tirtha wherever it is situated.*⁴⁵ From the time immemorial these religious centre or pilgrimage place have played a vital role in the development or growth of a city as well as a kingdom. As for example, the famous temple of goddess *Kamakhya* was the epicentre of our own ancient kingdom Kamrupa and the country had enjoyed an extension of hundred *Yojanas* around this temple in all directions.⁴⁶ Similarly, the city

44. Ibid.

45. Kramrisch, S. : *The Hindu Temple*, Vol.I, (1946), 1996, p.5.

46. Das, H.P. : *Geography of Assam*, 1970, p.7.

like Hadapesvara developed, centering round a temple, which attracted pilgrims, ultimately giving rise to shop, rest houses and other amenities.⁴⁷ This type of example, (in Indian prospective) normally inspired the scholar like Kosambi to summerised the matter in the following word that one of the basic character of the medieval temple building activities was that they were usually constructed at the focal centres of the country's political power and thus reflecting *on one hand courtly ambition and on the other, the popular cult basis of medieval Hinduism.*⁴⁸ The king and his subordinates always found it politically expedient in promoting the temple as well as monastic organization *because the religious sub-ordination of the masses helped the rulers to perpetuate their political authority.*⁴⁹ Thus, the possibility of the emergence of a pilgrim centre as a seat of political or as a seat of commercial enterprises is always there.⁵⁰ In case of ancient Assam, however there are very few and ambiguous references to the existence of pilgrim and commercial towns.⁵¹ Accordingly, it is only in the Gachtal inscription of Gopalvarman where we have found the reference of a holy city (*punyapuri*), named as *Hadapyaka.*⁵² Similarly, the famous Dubi copper plate grant has also inform us about the existence of a market town in ancient Assam.⁵³ Whatever might be the references, a town of commercial

47. Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) : Op-cit, 1990, p.244.

48. Kosambi, D.D. : *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India*,(1964), 1994, p.196.

49. Nandi, R.N. : *Social Roots of Religion of Ancient India*, 1986, p.99.

50. Lahiri, N. : *Pre Ahom Assam*, 1991, p.109.

51. Ibid.

52. Gachtal Inscription, v.31.

53. Dubi, C.P. v. 40.

enterprises (which may have been a convert of pilgrim town) normally have a favourable location for transportation and communication.⁵⁴ Thus, the whole matter, concerning to the religious or commercial consideration seem to have played a vital role in creating new cities or to the growth of village into town with improved system of road connectivity.

While referring to the question of commercial activities as well as the road connectivity that ancient Assam had with rest of India and abroad, the first interesting point to note is that before the discovery of the land route between India and China through north western part of India and central Asia, Assam was the only corridor to make a communication with China from rest of India.⁵⁵ Regarding this, *The Periplus of the Erythrean sea* of the first century A.D. has also made an indication about the existence of a trade route between north-eastern part of India and south west China.⁵⁶ *Chang Kien*, one Chinese explorer, politician, marine officer has made a description that it was atleast from the 2nd century B.C. there was an unrecognized trade route between Assam and south western parts of China. Giving a new impetus to the whole matter of road connectivity of ancient Assam, P.C. Bagchi has made an interesting comment that *Pragjyotisa-Kamrupa stood on a highway leading to China started from Pataliputra*.⁵⁷ Explaining the stresses of the route, he further states that starting from Pataliputra, the ancient capital of India, this road passed by

54. Barua, B.K. : Op-cit (1951), 1969, p.79.

55. Chatterjee, S.K. : *Asom Aru Bharat(As)*, Published in *Asomiya Sanskriti*, Neog. H. & Gogoi L.(ed.)(1963),1975.,p.218.

56. Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) Op-cit, 1990, p.258.

57. Bagchi, P.C. : *India and China*, 1950, p.19.

Champa (Bhagalpur), Kajangala (Rajmahal), Pundravardhana (north Bengal) and thus proceeded to Kamrupa (Gauhati) in Assam.⁵⁸ From Assam, this route was divided into three roads towards different directions and of them the first one passes through Patkai ranges of hills to Upper Burma, the second route through Manipur into the Chindwin valley and third through the Arakan to Irrawaddy valley; all of them met on the frontier of Burma near Bhamo and then proceeded to southern Chinese province Yunnanfu.⁵⁹ In support of his conclusion, the scholar has made the reference to the testimonials of *I-tsing* and Hiuen Tsang, two famous Chinese traveller belonging to 7th century A.D. Accordingly, he referred to the report of I-tsing in which the traveller mentioned about the visit of twenty Chinese monk to India by using overland route through Assam during 3rd century A.D. He further directed our attention to the matter of good road connectivity between ancient Assam and rest of India on the light of an incident described in the life of Hiuen Tsiang⁶⁰ that king Harsha of Thaneshwar send a messenger from Kangoda (Ganzam) to Kamrupa; similarly, Bhaskar Varman, the contemporary king of Harsha in Kamrupa, also dispatched a currier in the hand of a messenger from Kamrupa who presented the same to the lord of Thaneshwar at Nalanda, only after two days of his journey from Kamrupa. Reacting to his conclusion, here, we would simply like to add that the highway which he mention to start from Pataliputra was actually a scion or pan Indian expansion of great Central Asian Silk Route, (which) ran to connect China with Mediterranean region. The matter will

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Li Hwui-Beal. S(tr.) : *Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, 1911, p.169.

be more clear when we referred to Margiana, an adjoining place of Bactria. It was a *transit point for silk coming from the east that was intended for Mediterranean*.⁶¹ From this point, the road has found an extension towards India through Gandhara. As a result of that Gandhara also became *a nodal point for overland trade tapping the Silk Route and eastern Byzantine trading centers*.⁶² It then extended to Ganga plain through Mathura, from where one part of it marched towards Ujjain to Barygaza in western India and other part ran through Pataliputra⁶³ and then only to Champa, Rajmahal, Kanrasuvarna, Samatata and ultimately to Kamrupa.

On the light of numismatic evidences, Nicholas Rhodes, in one his monograph paper has made a beautiful study about the trade routes of ancient Assam and its territorial extension towards east and west. In this paper, he first highlighted the importance of the Samatata region as it seem to have control two major trade routes, one connecting sea port of Chittagong with Pataliputra (to the north west of Bengal) and other with Kamrupa (to the north east).⁶⁴ Stressing on the numismatic evidences, he further said that this Samatata region was under the suzerain authority of the *Kamrupi* king, specially from the time of Kumar Bhaskarvarman to the *Salastambha* tenure and there seem to have been a good trade connectivity between the two regions.⁶⁵ Regarding this it

61. Thapar, R. : *Early India*, 2002, p.238.

62. Ibid.

63. Davies, C. Collin : *An Historical Atlas of the Indian Peninsula*, 1949, p.17.

64. Rhodes, N. : *The Trade Routes of Early Assam-the leight shed by coinages 2003, NEHA Proceeding*, p.46.

65. Ibid., pp.46,50.

should also be remembered that after the decline of the old port Tamralipati during the 7th century A.D., Chittagong emerged as the maritime gateway to Bengal. Whatever may be the fact, Kamrupa either through Tamralipati or through Chittagong seem to have enjoyed a linkage not only with the outer world (specially with the south east Asian region) but also with the rest of India as the road stress forward through Pataliputra to other parts of India (Map No-3). On the other hand towards east, though there were number of routes to connect Kamrupa with upper Burma region, they were not very popular in use because they all have their passage through stiff mountainous tract and dangerous forest region, however, missionary activities, specially after 8th century A.D. in Tibet, have brought these roads into lime light.⁶⁶ Thus, all the earlier studies have made it to summarise that Kamrupa had an access to the sea at the point of Tamralipati or at Chittagong which normally intensified the possibilities of its overseas contact with the other part of the world. Similarly, the road leading toward Mathura via Pataliputra (via Tamralipati/Chittagong) have provided Kamrupa and its product with a popular overland opening to the famous central Asian Silk Route.⁶⁷ That means two ways accessibility of Kamrupa (either by using water ways or overland

66. Ibid, p.51.

67. Some scholar tried to highlight the importance of Kopili Valley near modern Nagaon as it supposed to have a road linkage with Middle east through China via the great Silk route.

Phukan S.K. : *The Study of Hodonymy*, 2001, p.39.

routes) at least from the time of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*⁶⁸ brought this country and its economic product into lime light so to find mention in Ptolemy's *Geography*⁶⁹, *Periplus of the Erythrean sea*,⁷⁰ *Kautilya's Arthasastra*.⁷¹

It is very natural that a road of an international repute when pass through a country, normally have an access to its capital or other important cities. Similarly, the famous highway of our age old time, connecting different important localities of Indian sub continent with China in the east and Mediterranean in the west, while passing through Kamrupa, seem to have enjoyed an approach to its capital cities. Now, regarding the question of capital

68. Earliest reference of Pragiyotishpur-Kamrupa has been found in *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The composition of these two epics has been assigned to a wide period, viz., between 4th century B.C. to 4th century A.D. The reference of Kamrupa in the two epic proves that Kamrupa was an affordable tract for other Indian communities.

Barpujari, H.K.: CHA, Vol.I, 1990, p.61.

69. Ptolemy's *Geography* (middle of the 2nd century A.D.) mention the name of Kamrupa as *Kirrhadia*. (Winternitz, M.: *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, 1927, p.465) Scholars like to define the term as a derivation of the *Kirata* population in Kamrupa.

Majumdar, S.N. : *Ancient India as describe by Ptolemy*, 1927, pp.191-92

70. An work of the last quarter of the 1st century A.D.

71. *Kautilya's Arthasastra* mention the name of various product from Kamrupa specially the *Tailaparnik* K.A. 2/11/61-65 (a resin which when burnt send forth a pleasant smell) Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) : Op-cit, Vol.I,1990, p.61 and other aromatic product of *Paralauhitya*, (K.A. 2/11/66), along with different silk product mainly *Ari* and *Muga*. (K.A.2/11/107-113). These products certainly have huge demand in Indian market, that means these were the item of exportable standard.

cities it is interesting that ancient Assam throughout the period of its history had witnessed the existence of four important cities which serve as the seat of government for the country in different times. These were namely Pragjyotishpur (during the tenure of *Varman* rule), Hadapeshwara (during the *Salastambha* tenure) Durjaya and Kamrupanagara (during the tenure of *Pala* rulers) Though the exact location of these capital cities yet to be ascertain, but still the eminent historian Lila Gogoi has made an interesting comment that most of these cities might have been situated on the northern bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra.⁷² Accordingly, Scholars now have arrived on an unanimous conclusion that the location of the city of Handapeshwara was in the modern city of Tezpur, on the northern bank of river Brahmaputra. On the other hand, the invincible character of the city of Durjaya rightly make an indication about the existence of this fortified city some where around modern Guwahati i.e. on the southern bank of mighty Brahmaputra. Similarly, though majority number of scholar tried to identify the famous city of Pragjyotishpur on the southern bank of river Brahmaputra, but still there are some scholar like L. Gogoi who would like to assign its location on the norther bank⁷³ probably because of its easy accessibility. Thus, the matter still remains uncertain and we now have no other alternative but to wait for future archaeological discoveries.

The last important city of the list which served as the seat of government for the *Kamrupi* king was the Kamrupa-nagara. Reference of this city has been found only in the Pushpabhadra

72. Gogai, L. : *Asomar Sanskriti (As)* (1994),2006, p.73.

73. Ibid.

grant of king Dharmapala.⁷⁴ Regarding location of Kamrupa-nagara, different scholar has put forwarded different views. Accordingly, N.N Vasu tried to identified it with Rangpur of modern Maymansing region of Bangladesh.⁷⁵ Similarly, depending on an interesting characteristic feature of this inscription that it refuse to mention any reference about the mighty *Lauhitya*, Scholar like P N Bhattacharyya in his famous book *Kamrupasasanavali*, tried to identify Kamurpa-nagara with Kamatapur.⁷⁶ On the other hand, K L Barua however surmises that the capital named as Kamrupa-nagara was at north Gauhati near the temple *Ashwakranta*.⁷⁷ His proposition is primarily based on a popular tradition as described in *Kamrupar Buranji*. The tradition goes like that the king *Dharmapala*, a *Kshatriya* of *Gauda* origin, establish his seat of government at *Godanta Parvat*.⁷⁸ The same *Buranji*, while describing the location of the *Kshetra Parvat* in and around Gauhati, has confirmed the exact place of *Godanta Parvat* near *Ashwakranta* i.e. in modern north Guwahati.⁷⁹ Apart from that, in support of his view, K L Barua has further tried to indicate some archaeological remains of Pre-Ahom origin as found in north Guwahati.⁸⁰ In this regard he mention the name of the places like *Raja Duar* (king's gate), *Rangmahal* (pleasure palace), *Sil-sako* (stone bridge) in the greater north Guwahati region as some of the

74. *Pushpabhadra grant*, v. 20.

75. Vasu, N.N. : *The Social History of Kamrup*, Vol.I, (Rp) 1990, p.174

76. Bhattacharya, P.N. (ed.) : *Kamrupasasanavali*, 1338, pp.29-34

77. Barua, K.L : Op-cit, 1966, p.93.

78. Bhuyan, S.K.(ed.) : *Kamrupar Buranji*, 1958, p.1.

79. Ibid., p.107.

80. Barua, K.L. : Op-cit, 1966, p.93.

other supportive archaeological evidence to his proposition. While supporting his view regarding the location of *Kamrupa-nagara* as in modern north Guwahati region here, we would simply like to add that the devastating defeat of muslim intruder headerd by *Bakhatiyar khilji* (1127 AD), in the hand of an unknown Kamrupa king has been recorded in the Kanai Barasi Bowa rock inscription. The very find spot of this rock inscription, in the fond memory of any important incident or occasion, are being preferably engraved in a place of public concern as well as in the area of permanent settlement.⁸¹ On the light of this observation it can also better be said that the very location or the installation place of the Kanai Barasi Bowa rock inscription (which had recoded one of the famous victory of *Kamrupi* king over a formidable power) must have to be an important place of people's frequent visit or a place of acute public concern. The existence of this famous inscription in north Guwahati, thus, have provided another ground to presume this region at least as a place of political importance or vigorous economic activities with a permanently settled population in and around this locality. It further enhanced the scope to consider this region as being a seat of royalty (the epicentre of all political and economic activities of a country). Putting a step forward the matter may be sum up in an another way that the inscription has found its installation at the glimpse of the famous highway, which

81. This idea is derived from the writing of Romila Thaper where she tried to mention about the location of Asokan Rock Inscription.

Thapar, R.: Op-cit, 2002, p. 179.

supposed to have reached the capital city of Kamrupa, any where near the modern north Guwahati region.⁸²

On the light of the above discussion, we would now like to have some idea about the all possible reason behind the existence, construction, nature etc of the majestic temple complex of our concern at Madan-Kamdeva in the following stranzas of our study. As stated earlier, the temples are generally constructed at *a nodal point of exchange or trade or an administrative centre.*⁸³

In other word, a locality with an epicentre of a temple always be an important place of visit not only for the pilgrims, but also for the merchants and other visitors. Each individuals for the sake of their own respective interest often like stop over in these religious places.⁸⁴ That means people's visit and that too of divergent social status have not only enhanced the prosperity of the temple⁸⁵ but it also change the very character of its surrounding locality. There is enough prospect to convert these localities into business centre with occasional incorporation of some minor or major administrative activities in them. This led them to an ultimate conversion of an urban centre.

Similarly, the existence of a majestic temple complex like Madan-Kamdeva and different socio-economic activities that

82. However, there is a probability that the inscription was not installed on the side of the main highway but only on the nearby side of the major subordinate ways which were to connect or approach the capital city with the main highway.

83. Thapar, R.: Op-cit, 2002, p. 388.

84. The volume of the people's visit very according to the popularity of the country.

85. *The visitors brought not only devotion but also donation.*
Thapar, R.: Op-cit, 2002, p. 479.

suppose to have taken place in and around this locality, normally inspired us to presume it as being a temple *nagari* just at the outskirts of the capital city of Kamrupa. Regarding its consecration, a question generally came to our mind that why this specific site being selected for the construction of this majestic temple complex. It is known to all that a patron and a *stapati* of our age old time (even today also) while selecting a site for a temple or a religious monument first examine all requisite qualities of the site, or in other words they would like to investigate whether the site possessed all imperative attributes necessary for a Hindu temple as per the prescribed direction of Indian *Silpa* cannon.⁸⁶ Only after

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86. Among the Indian *Silpa* Cannon *Brihat Samhita* is the earliest datable source on *Vastusashtra*. (Kramrisch, S. *The Hindu Temples*, Vol.I, 1996, p.5). Compiled by Barahamihira in the middle of the sixth century A.D.. This book is based on the authority of master architect whose names are *Maya*, *Visvakarma*, *Garga* and *Manu*. (Ibid). The treatise prescribed that the temple should be erected *where there are water and garden, whether natural or artificial*.
Iyer, N.G.(tr.) : *The Brihat Samhita*, 1987, p.281.

According to *Vishnudharmottara Purana* the installation of the image of the god i.e. the construction of the temple should be made at the river side, in forest, gardens, at the side of the pond, on the hill tops and in beautiful valley.

Shah, P.(tr.) : *Vishnudharmottara Purana*, 1961, III/XC/II/25-31.

Matshya Purana mention the name of 18 *Silpacaryas* who were generally known as *Vastusastropadesaka* i.e. instructor in the science of architecture like *Bhrigu*, *Atri*, *Vasistha* *Visvakarma* etc. (M.P. 252/1-3). Works of a few sages like *Visvakarma*, *Maya* etc are now survived and all the others have already been destroyed by the cruel hand of destiny. A *stapati* has to go through 11 different stages before concluding its final stage of laying foundation stone of a temple. (Bose, P.N. : *Principle of Indian Silpasatra*, 1978, p.66). The selection of the site is an important stage of the entire process.

getting a satisfactory result they went for their construction. Thus, it can be said that as being a scion of Indian aesthetic tradition, Madan-Kamdeva have also to pass out of this systematic investigation procedure of our age old time, specially in confirming the location for the construction of this majestic temple complex.

However, apart from this traditional method of selection, there must have been some other subsidiary factors which seem to have played their role in consecrating a religious monument in a specific location. As for example, the location of Madan-Kamdeva (mainly its catch man area) might have been glorified as because of its nearness to the famous international highway of earlier mention. Putting a step forward it can further be said that this mighty temple complex might have found its location at least near to the point on which a provincial road coming from the side of the capital cities to culminate in the famous highway,⁸⁷ or the complex might have been situated near to a

87. Still there is a road connecting NH 52 with north Guwahati started from Bejera via Mandakata hill range, *Silsako* as indicate in the guide map of our study. This road seem to have a popular existence at one time specially in reference to the invasion of *Bakhtiyar Khiliji*. This invader might have used the road to make his march towards Kamrupa. As the popular story tells that after crossing *Silsako* he turned his head towards north i.e. towards *Kumarikata (Karamapatan)* via Rangia, Tamulpur as K. L. Baura cited from a study Mr. M Bhattasali. (Barua, K.L. *EHK*, 1988, p.146) After having stiff resistance from the hill tribes in the north, when he tried to retreat to his original route, he found the broken *Silsako* which made him desperate to take shelter in a nearby temple of *Silsako* which supposed to be on the *Narasimha Parvat*, near the present ruinous temple range of Madan-Kamdeva as stated earlier. Thus, the popular existence of the road can only led us to accept the conclusion of T. K. Sarmah.

turning point, from where the highway had changed its direction toward Kamrupa-nagara or other important localities of permanently settled population near to the capital city. The existence of a place named as *Deoduar* or *Devaduar*⁸⁸ (simply to mean an entrance gate to the abode of God) just on the other side of the hill range of Madan-Kamdeva, have provided us with a ground to presume the matter accordingly.

This inference, on the other hand, inspired us to presume Madan-Kamdeva as an important socio-economic transit point. Along with all circumstantial evidences, the discovery of different varieties of *Surya* Sculptures (as will explain later in Chapter III), structural relics of a Buddhist temple (a door lintel with arch) and other monumental relics have further aggravated our presumption in that direction. While trying to explain this hypothesis first we would like to state that the travellers from different parts of Indian subcontinent and from abroad when made their journey to Kamrupa through land route, certainly have come in contact of this place of sceneric beauty at Madan-Kamdeva. Like the land route travellers, the visitors who had opted riverine

88. Tracing back the historicity of the name of this place for more than a hundred years (as revealed during the time of our primary investigation), the dictionarical meaning of this Assamese term *Deo* is respectable person Sir, (Baruah, H.C. : Hemkosh,(1900), 2000, p.515). Similarly, the term *Deva* also used after the name or title of a respectable person to show reverence. (Ibid). Thus, the term in combine, where *duar* means gate, may have an implication that it was an entrance point, leading to the abode of some respectable person in the country, who preferably wanted to live in an administrative centre i.e. in the capital cities.

route of mighty Brahmaputra also had a scope to enjoy the beauty of this place, specially when we referred to a study made by colonel Shakespear and cited by eminent scholar Amalendu Guha. This study states that the courses of Brahmaputra between 1790A.D. to 1860 A.D. had been shifted for about fifty miles southward of its present course.⁸⁹ Thus, the matter may be summerised in the following words that if not fifty miles, at least some minor deviation to the course of Brahmaputra was there (this southward movement of mighty Brahmaputra still proactive in our modern times⁹⁰). This has not only push back the location of Kamrupa-nagara further north i.e. towards the direction of Madan-Kamdeva,⁹¹ but it also made this temple complex more accessible to our riverine visitors, however, not from the side of Guwahati, but from the side of Barpeta, Hajo and vise versa.

Under such circumstances, the visitor of different social statuses⁹² and from different parts of the country and abroad, when

89. Guha, A.: *Medieval and Early Colonial Assam*, 1991, p.10.

90. In recent past, the famous village Palasbari on the southern bank of Brahmaputra was completely destroyed because of erosions and the south ward movement of the river.

91. The information derives from *Pushpabhadra* grant, has instituted another supportive evidence to our presumption. Accordingly, the grant, while mention about Kamrupa-nagara (v-20) have made no reference to *Lauhitya*. This has confirm the location of Kamrupa- nagara not on the bank of river Brahmaputra.

92. Among the visitors, the pilgrims, merchants traders were the most important personals to visit Kamrupa, though incidental appearances of diplomatic mission along with weagon of the royal personals mainly the convoy of the princes were also their. The matter will be more appropriate when we referred to an important characteristic feature of the mercantile activities of Kamrupa. Kamrupa had a self sufficient economy and accordingly major trading activities were mainly generated by export and transit business.

made their journey to Kamrupa, either by land or by riverine route, certainly have come in contact of this beautiful locality on the bank of river *Swaswati*. Nature has sincerely contribute a lot to the scèneric beauty of this locality which impressed the visitor of this temple site, even today also. This imprintment have enough prospect to inspire those capable visitors of our age old time to contribute something to this temple complex, possibly in the fond memory of their visit to Kamrupa and thus intended to extract some religious merit out of their direct or indirect donation.⁹³ This on the other hand, helped Madan-Kamdeva to emerge as a centre of multidimensional aesthetic exposition. In other words, these are some of the main spirit which seem to have work behind the creation of this mighty temple complex. The discovery of the sculptures of different regional varieties (mainly the South Indian type) are the best prove illustration of this fact.

Thus, summarizing the matter, upto this stage of our study, it can be said that the mighty *Salastambha* rulers were the true initiator of the construction of this temple complex. And of them, it was only the Vanamaladeva who was known to be a great constructor as well as an empire builder had the capacity to lay the foundation or to plan about this lustrous temple complex. Like the great *Salastambha* rulers, the succeeding *Palas*, certainly of Ratnapala standard might have also contributed a lot in consecrating this temple complex to the public. Apart from that with the passes of time, the temples have also experienced more

93. We used the term direct donation to mean, complete donation for any major construction, and indirect donation to mean partial support or partial assistance to complex to complete a half done work.

people's involvement (of different socio-economic standard) mainly because of its nearness to the great international highway and its consequent effect as explained earlier. This not only enhanced the importance of this locality but also aggravated the process of developing this ground as a fertile tract for the exposition of multidimensional aesthetic ideals. The discovery of the ruins of the brick temples on the south-western slope of the Madan-Kamdeva are the best prove example of the people's participation in the construction of these temples.⁹⁴ Thus, the attachment of the people of different socio-economic standard (from different parts of Indian sub continent and even from abroad) certainly change the very character of this locality, which ultimately inspired Dharmapala to shift the site of his capital city to *Kamrupa-nagara* which was though not at Madan-Kamdeva but at least to the vicinity of this temple city. However, all these presumption are based on some indirect evidences and at present we have no other alternative but to wait for a systematic exploration, not only in the temple complex but also in the nearby localities, so to have more authentic explanation or to verify all those proposition made out of our investigation.

94. P C Sarma proposed that it was from the last part of 10th century A.D. to 12th century A.D Assam had witnessed a prolific stage of temple construction. It was during this stage the size of the temples became smaller and the construction was also surmised to lower quality stone and brick.

Sarma, P.C. : *Asomar Sesh Madhyajugar Mandir Sthaptya(As)*, 2005, p.3.

Brick has an utilitarian nature, it is economical comparing to stone. Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) : *CHA*, Vol.III,2003, p. 332. That means, the people of less economical efficiency has normally preferred brick construction instead of stone, specially because of its less financial involvement.

Guha, A. : *Medieval and Early Colonial Assam*, 1991, p.10.

SECTION : 2.4

Causes of Its Destruction :

A) Kalapahar Episode and Earthquakes :

Like many other questions, uncertainty also roam around the causes of its destruction. But, as in cases of many other temples of Assam, the causes of its demolition have always been referred to the nefarious activities of great iconocluster of Indian history, *Kalapahar*.

Kalapahar was the general of nawab Sulaiman Kararani (1563 A.D–1572 A.D) of Bengal. The famous *Koch* King Naranarayan was the contemporary of Sulaiman Kararani. Naranarayan after establishing himself as an important power in this region, had made an aggressive move towards Gaur (Bengal) under the leadership of his brother Sukladhavaj or Chilarai. The commander in chief of Sulaiman Kararani, Kalapahar had not only resisted the invasion of *Koch* army, but also captured the leader of its army Chilarai and put him in prison. After that, Sulaiman Kararani, probably as a counter attack set out for the conquest of *Koch* Kingdom in 1568 A.D. The leader of this attack was Kalapahar who had successfully subjugated almost all the outlying areas of the kingdom except the capital city of the *Koch* kingdom and arrived almost to the vicinity of Tezpur, as there was no power to resist him after the defeat of Chilarai.⁹⁵ However, Kalapahar had made no attempt to take permanent possession of the country and returned to Bengal after demolishing temples at Hajo, Kamakhya and in other places.⁹⁶

95. Gait, E. Op-cit, 1992, p. 51.

96. Ibid.

However, there was another authority who tried to state that Kalapahar invaded Assam for two times and of them the first one was in 1553.⁹⁷ A.D. That means, the invasion of 1568 A.D. was his second attempt which seem to be more successful in nature when he proceeded successfully upto Tezpur, but this time also he had to make a hasty retreat without making any permanent arrangement in his conquered territory.⁹⁸ But, at the time of his return journey Kalapahar left a trail of plunder and rapine, ruining and desecrating several temples in Kamrupa.⁹⁹

Thus, the proceeding of the history of Kalapahar normally inspired the people to believe that the destruction of these temples at Madan-Kamdeva was the handiwork of Kalapahar. While examining the all possible effect of Kalapahar's invasions on the temple ranges of Madan-Kamdeva, it has to remember, first about a general belief of the people of Assam that Kalapahar was not the name of a specified person, but simply a title. There is a general tendency in the history of India that whenever a person engaged himself in the demolation activities of any Hindu temples, the history would like to call him as Kalapahar. As for example, the aunt of Bahlul Lodi was also known in the history as Kalapahar.¹⁰⁰

Secondly there is no such inscription which bear the testimony of his destructive campaign in Kamrupa. Even the scholars have found it very difficult to match the chronology of

97. Ahmed, K.C.A. : *Kochbiharer Itihas*(Be.), 1990(Re), p.42.

98. Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) : Op-cit, Vol.II,1992, p.86.

99. Ibid.

100. Ahmad, K.C.A. : Op-cit, 1990, p. 246.

Kalapahar's invasion with the reconstruction of *Kamakhya* temple.¹⁰¹

While explaining the matter, Assam is an earthquake prone area and it was from 1548 to 1897 A.D., the province had witnessed twelve massive earthquakes¹⁰² of them, the intensity of the earthquake that occurred in 1548 A.D. appeared to be more vigorous in nature. There is a popular saying that lava was extracted from the surface of the soil during the courses of this earthquake.¹⁰³ Under such circumstance of a mighty earthquake, it is quite difficult

101. *Kha Chouhdury Amanatullah Ahmed states that his second invasion was occurred in 1574* (Kochbiharerar Itihas, p.42).

There are two inscriptions affix to the walls of the *Kamakhya* temple which testify that this temple was constructed during 1565 A.D. Neog, M. : *Prashyasanavali*, 1974, p.17. This has directly refused the atrocities of Kalapahar on *Kamakhya* temple in 1568 A.D. Scholars like Vishwanarayan Shastri tried to state that Kalapahar's invasion should be occurred in and around 1564 A.D. and then only he can destroyed *Kamakhya* temple, as the reigning period of Sulaiman Kararani starts from 1563 A.D. Apart from this ill match chronological sequences, the reference of the *Yogini Tantra* Y.T. 1/12/53-54 also tried to refused the connection of Kalapahar with the destruction of *Kamakhya* temple as it has clearly stated that an earthquake of vigorous intensity had destroyed the temple. However, the case of *Hayagriva Madhab* temple is slightly different. This temple was reconstructed by the *Koch* king Raghudeva in 1505 saka i.e. in 1583 A.D. That means, the date of Kalapahar's invasion has found a peer matching with the reconstruction of this temple. However here also the probability of the effect of an earthquake can't be refused.

102. Sarma, D. : *Mangaldoir Buranji*(As), 1974, p. 45.

103. Gohain Barua, P. : *Asomor Buranji* (1976),2003, p.45.

to believe that any temple in the province, wheatear it was *Kamakhya* or the temple city of our discussion could survive without having any damaged to its construction. That mean, Kalapahar had little to do with the entire destructing procedure of these temples, the pronouncement of his name appeared to be an outburst of a general Assamese tradition, according to which people of this province often like to make him responsible for the demolition of the temples of their respective localities, probably to highlight the importance of their temples in collaboration of an icon cluster of customary repute.

Fourthly, there is another conclusion regarding the invasion of Kalapahar in Assam that Kalapahar had used the upstream of Brahmaputra to invade Assam.¹⁰⁴ This he did possibly to avoid the impediment to his campaign set forth by his enemies from their hide out.¹⁰⁵ Under such circumstances there was every probability that Kalapahar had destroyed only those temples which were situated on the two banks of the river Brahmaputra. Madan-Kamdeva is situated far more away from Brahmaputra which might have left it free from the atrocities of Kalapahar. His hurried return to his country also provide him little time to destroy more temple situated on the inner side of the Brahmaputra valley.

Thus, the whole matter may be sum up in the following word that it is now quite difficult to ascertain whether Kalapahar had created any havoc to this temple city or not. The Kamrupa-nagara, that seem to be developed at least to the vicinity of this

104. Gait, E. : Op-cit(1905), 1992, p.51.

105. Saikia, M.K. : *Assam Muslim Relation and its Cultural Significance*, 1978, pp.105-106.

temple city had lost its original importance and by the time of Kalapahar's invasion it became almost an abandon city. It is yet to be ascertain how long Kamrupa-nagara remain as a seat of active polities. Scholars have tried to state that upto the reign of Jayapala or to the end of 12th century, Kamrupa-nagara remain as the capital city of the country. The death of Jayapla, the last ruler of Brahmapla dynasty led to the emergence of number of local rulers and of them Vaidyadeva and Vallabhadeva had maintained their rule in the old Kamrupa principality during the 2nd half of 13th century A.D. In this regard K. L. Barua had made an interesting comment that one *Kamrupi* king named as Sandhya removed the seat of government from Kamrupa-nagara to Kamatapur primarily because of the pressure of the *Kacharies*.¹⁰⁶ That means, by the time of 13th century A.D., the centre of political activities of Kamrupa was shifted towards western side, by leaving the old city Kamrupa-nagara and the temple city at Madan-Kamdeva almost in an abandoned state of condition.

Under such situation it can be said that no attraction was left to the temple city for Kalapahar as it already became an abandon site. Apart from that, just on the eve of Kalapahar's invasion, a disastrous earthquake in 1548 A.D. had also demolished the major part of this temple complex. With all these evidences, there is little to belief that the nefarious activities of Kalapahar ever touch the soil of Madan-Kamdeva, rather the earthquakes¹⁰⁷ have done the major damage to this temple *nagari*.

106. Barua, K.L. : Op-cit, 1988, pp.163-165.

107. Twelve major earthquakes occurred i) in 1548 ii) 1598 A.D. iii) 1601 A.D. iv) 1642 A.D. v) 1660 A.D. vi) 1696 A.D. vii) 1732 A.D. viii) 1759 A.D. ix) 1770 A.D. x) 1838 A.D. xi) 1842 A.D. xii) 1897 A.D. Sarmá, D. : Op-cit, 1974, p.45.

B) Some Other Factors :

Apart from that, there are some other occurrences which seem to have inflicted fatal blow to the existence of this mighty temple complex at Madan-Kamdeva. Accordingly, the second *Muhammadan* invasion, headed by Ghiyasuddin Iwaz Khaliji was occurred in 1227 A.D. Depending on *Gachtal* stone pillar inscription of 1149 saka i.e. 1227 A.D.¹⁰⁸ some scholar tried to state that this invasion had caused serious blow to some of the religious sites of the country as it has referred to a king Visvasundaradeva who asked one Chandrakanta to repair the damage of the *Siva* temples done by *Mlechhas* or by the Muslims in the army of Iwaz.¹⁰⁹ King Visvasundara being identified by S. L. Barua as the real name of Prithu¹¹⁰ At the same time, in reference to the description of Minhajuddin, Barua has further stated that Iwaz had followed the same route of Bakhtiyar Khilji.¹¹¹ The route, as already described, had normally brought Iwaz in contact of this temple *nagari*. With these references it can be said that Iwaz had created havoc to all those temples which had come to his route and accordingly, Madan-Kamdeva had also not been left out of his atrocious activities. This on the other hand, gives a signal to an another proposition that even in 13th century A.D., some renovation works might have taken place to the temple complex at Madan-kamdeva.

108. Call it as a misnomer as he tried to state that the date of this pillar inscription is saka 1284 A.D. not saka 1145 A.D.

Choudhury, P.C.: Op-cit, 1987, 256-257.

109. Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) : Op-cit, 1992, Vol.II, pp.3-39.

110. Barua, S.L. : *A Comprehensive History of Assam*, 1985, p.174.

111. Ibid.

In the very next year i.e. in 1228 A.D. Kamrupa had to face another *Muhammadan* invasion headed by Nsiruddin. It has been said that this time the invader had dethroned the *Kamrupi* King Prithu who in search of his respect threw himself into a tank and died.¹¹² However, no literary or other evidences are there to support the conclusion, it was only a traditional belief which further stated that Nasiruddin have caused serious damage to the city of Kamrupa-nagara which was situated at least to the vicinity of Madan-Kamdeva, as propose earlier.

However, the most fetal blow to the city of Kamrupa was happen to the invasion Ikhtyar-uddin Yuzback during the later half of 13th century A.D. i.e. in 1257 A.D. The king of Kamurupa at that time was Sandhya (1250 A.D.-1270 A.D.). He found it very difficult to resist *Muhammadan* invasions which ultimately compelled him to shift the site of his capital city to Kamatapur. The absence of King or a real authority encouraged the invaders to move upto *Barnadi*.¹¹³ It is also popularly said that Yuzback even deared to construct a mosque in the capital city of Kamrupa.¹¹⁴

Thus, enough scope are there to presume that these *Muhammadan* invasion have cause serious blow not only to the capital city of Kamrupa but also to the prosperity of this mighty temple complex. But these blows were repairable and not so destructive in nature, as the temples suffered during the courses of the earthquake occurred in 1548 A.D.

112. Barua, K.L. : Op-cit, 1988, p.149.

113. Barpujari, H.K.(ed.) : Op-cit, Vol.II, 1992, p.39.

114. Ibid.

SECTION : 2.5

Madan-Kamdeva in 12th Century A.D. :

Thus, the discussion have made it clear that these temple have survived at least to the year of 1548 A.D., when the occurrence of an earthquake of vigorous intensity have cause unreparable damage to this mighty temple complex. That means, the periodical renovation or construction works in the very temple complex must have been going on for centuries. However, all those construction possibly after 12th century A.D., have lost the original vigor and showed a sign of deterioration. The discovery of the ruins of brick temples as well as crude natured sculptures (some of them are now conserve to the site museum) are the best proved example of this fact(Fig 12.7).

Scholar like R.D. Choudhury have tried to confirm the date of construction of the main temple at Madan-Kamdeva as in 12th century A.D. His proposition is primarily based on the stylistic evidences of the sculptures affix to the surviving plinth of the main temple.¹¹⁵ However, this conclusion is quite difficult to accept specially in reference to the prevailing political situation and its consequences to the plastic activities of the country.

Throughout the 12th century A.D. there were three important kings to rule in Kamrupa and they were Jayapala, Vaidyadeva and Vallabhadeva. The date of all these three kings have been described differently by different scholars. Without entangling ourselves in this confusion, we can safely ascribed the date of Jayapala and Vaidyadeva as in the first half of 12th century

115. Choudhury, R.D. : *Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam*, 1985, p.230.

A.D. while the date of Vallabhadeva to the last quarter of the 12th century A.D.

Though not a great conqueror, Jayapala was a great ruler who had successfully maintained the extension of Kamrupa to Pundravardhan and Sravasti. According to the Silimpur stone slab inscription, *Kamrupi* King have maintained their sway over this region upto 1120 A.D.¹¹⁶ Pundravardhan was always regarded by the *Kamrupi* king as a significant possession of their military glory and it always remain as a born of contention between Kamrupa and Gauda. Kings from both side tried to issue land grant from this tract to commemorate their military glory.¹¹⁷ Whatever might be the fact, the Silimpur inscription have further stated that King Jayapala of Kamrupa constructed a *Siva* temple in which a *Brahman* named as Prabhasa built an image of *Amarnath*.¹¹⁸ It is now quite difficult to identify the specific temple constructed by Jayapala, but still it has made an indication that Jayapala was a builder and a believer of Saivite philosophy.

Kamrupa-nagara still remain as the capital of the country and under such circumstances there is every probability that the King like Jayapala might have contributed something to this temple complex of our discussion at the vicinity of his capital city.

The death of Jayapala marked the formal ending of the rule of *Brahmapala* dynasty. After his death, King Ramapala of Gauda invaded Kamrupa who might have outstated the weak

116. Choudhury, P.C. : Op-cit, 1987, p.246.

117. Barua, S.L. : Op-cit, 1985, p.130.

118. Choudhury, P.C. : Op-cit, 1987, p.246.

successor of Jayapala to the southern bank of river *Brahmaputra* and one of the representative of this outstated line of *Brahmapala* dynasty was Samudrapala of Ambari inscription.¹¹⁹ Though, it is now quite difficult to ascertain the intensity or Ramapala's invasion but still it can safely be said that there was a tremendous pressure of Gauda army on the capital which ultimately compelled the successor of Jayapala to abandon the capital. To commemorate his victory, Ramapala might have constructed a temple¹²⁰ or other monument some where around the capital city, if not by himself but under the supervision of his representative Tingyadeva, Vaiyadeva. Further research would shed more light on this subject.

Some other authority has stated that the death of Jayapala resulted the emergence of local kings, of whom Vaidyadeva and Vallabhadeva are supposed to have rule over parts of old Kingdom during the 2nd half of 12th century A.D.¹²¹ In between Jayapala and Vaidyadeva, there was local a feudatory chief in repute, known as Tingyadeva whose capital was Kamrupa-nagara.¹²² He was the tributary ruler of later *Palas* of Bengal. Tingyadeva was defeated by Vaidyadeva who establish himself in Kamrupa as a vessel ruler but ultimately became an independent King¹²³ and assumed the title *Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Paramabhattacharaka*.¹²⁴ K.L.

119. Sarma, D. : *Pragjyotishar Itihas(As)*, 2002, p.93.

120. It is a general practice of Indian King, to construct any monument to commemorate any victory.

121. Sarma, S.N. : *Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Medieval Assam*, 1989, p.14.

122. Barua, K.L. : *Op-cit*, 1988, p.127.

123. *Ibid.*, p.131.

124. *Kamauli grant*, vv. 47-48.

Barua has made an interesting comment that Prithu was one of the distant successors of Vaidyadeva.¹²⁵ The scholar has further stated that there were at least two successors of Prithu who had continued their rule from Kamrupa-nagara.¹²⁶ That means, from the time of Dharmapala to the middle of 13th century Kamrupa-nagara served as the seat of active politics.

Whatever might be the fact, Vaidyadeva was a great ruler who had started his career as an illustrious minister in the ministry of Kumarapala of Gauda and ultimately by taking the opportunity of the weakness of *Kamrupi* King he established himself as the ruler of Kamrupa. He was the first man from the side of Gauda who not only conquered Kamrupa but also establish here an independent Kingdom.¹²⁷ His Kamauli grant has mention about a city named as Hamsakonci.¹²⁸ It appears that this city was the seat of his government¹²⁹ wherefrom Vaidyadeva granted the charter to brahman named Sridhara. However, Hamsakonci was not the permanent seat of his government as it being often referred simply as a victorious camp. Under such circumstances Kamrupa-nagara seem to be the real seat of his government.

125. Barua, K.L. : Op-cit, 1988, p.131.

126. Ibid., p. 130.

127. Baruah, S.L. : Op-cit, 1985, p.130.

128. *Kamauli grant*, v. 18.

Depending on the suffix *konci* of the term scholar like K. L. Barua tried to confirm the location of this place somewhere around Kamrupa district.

129. It was a victorious camp as the term *Jayaskandavara* indicate. (Sarkar, I, Aspects of Historical Geography of Prgiyotisha Kamrupa, 1991, p.163).

M.M. Sarma also translate the term as 'victorious royal headquarter', (Sarma, M.M. Op-cit, 1978, p. 286).

Initially Vaidyadeva was a devotee of Vishnu,¹³⁰ but later he became an ardent worshipper of *Kamesvara Mahagauri*.¹³¹ Scholars often tried to identify *Kamesvara Mahagauri* or *Mahagauri-Kamesvara* as *Kamakhya*.¹³² While accepting this view we should have to keep in mind that these two terms being used to highlight the popularity of the Tantric consecration of *Siva Sakti* in this land as we will explain in the later stages of our study. Madan-Kamdeva is one of the most prominent places in Kamrupa where this combination of *Siva Sakti* being popularly worshipped even today also. Apart from that the description of Kamauli grant has also made an indication that the Kingdom of Vaidyadeva comprises of present Kamrup district on the northern bank of river Brahmaputra. This has normally increased the scope to presume that Vaidyadeva might have contributed something to the temple complex at the cross road to the capital city of Kamrupa. When he shifted his centre of activities from Bengal to Kamrupa there must have been some associates and *Silpakaras* who in turn might have contributed something to the aesthetic heritage of Kamrupa. The image of *Uma Maheshwara* in the stela now kept in the *garbhagriha* of the main temple plinth at Madan-Kamdeva can be regarded as one of the best possible exponents of this imbibed aesthetic concept from the side of Bengal.¹³³

130. *Kamauli grant*, v. 18.

131. Barpujari, H.K. : *Op-cit*, Vol.I, 1990, p.163.

132. *Ibid*.

133. This is the best surviving image in Stela form at Madan-kamdeva, Stela is an unique aesthetic ideal of *Pala Sena* art form of Bengal.

There are some other angles to look the matter of Vaidyadeva. The rise of regional power throughout the period of 12th century A.D. had created a class of less important rulers who thought it appropriate to use *What was once an imperial title, Maharajadhiraja, and this was generally embedded in a mass of eulogistic and bombastic phraseology.*¹³⁴ That means, a mere title Maharajadhiraja used by the king Vaidyadeva did not imply that he was a great king. By the time of Vaidyadeva, the concept of feudalism seem to have found its full form growth in Kamrupa. The epigraphical evidences of both *Salastambha* and *Pala* have frequently made the references about the suppression of some unnamed enemies who were nothing but some powerful feudatories of that time.¹³⁵ The political condition of Assam at that time was very much supportive one for the growth of feudalism. The extinction of powerful *Pala* line of rulers had provided an opportunity to the Assamese feudatories to declare their independence in their specific localities. The rise of *Bhuyans* during the early part of 13th century A.D. is the best prove evidence of this fact.¹³⁶

Under such circumstances, the ruler like Vaidyadeva, who had started his career as a minister in the country of Gauda, than as a vessel ruler of the same in Kamrupa, though ultimately have attained an independent status, but it is quite difficult to accept him as being a ruler of imperial status. It was the troublesome character of *Kamrupi* politics which compelled him to shift the

134. Thapar, R. : *History of India*, Vol. I, 1990, p.247.

135. Barua, S.L. : *Op-cit*, 1985, p.133.

136. *Ibid.*, p.134.

centre of his political activities to Hamsakonci. There is enough possibilities that he had constructed Vaidyargarh which is still found in north Kamrup. This type of fortification have normally made an indication about the trouble some character of *Kamrupi* politics. The construction of *garh* was a war tactics, popularly used by the Ahom rulers in the later stages of the history of Assam.

With all these, it is now quite difficult to presume that Vaidyadeva have got enough time to construct an ornamentated monument like the main temple at Madan-Kamdeva as he has to consume major span of his life in Kamrupa for his self defence. The construction of Vaidyargarh and shifting of his capital are two of the best available support of this fact. Similarly, it is also difficult to believe that Jayapala, the last ruler of the *Brahmapala* dynasty, ever have the capacity to propose or to make investment for the construction of any in lustrous monument. His power seem to be on the verge of extinction, because history had witnessed sudden collapse of famous *Brahmapala* dynasty with his death. That means he somehow managed the integrity of his Kingdom. There is no doubt that he was constructor, and he might have contributed something to the temple city of our discussion at the vicinity of his capital. But still it is hard to believe that the quality of his construction ever reached the level of the main temple complex at Madan-Kamdeva as this type of illustrious construction would need time, money and man power certainly of huge amount to complete such a mega project. Apart from that the reigning period Jayapala includes only the very early part of 12th century A.D., in other word, if we rely on the conclusion of D.C. Sarkar as mention earlier, his raining period concludes just on the eve of 12th century A.D.

under such circumstances it is quite difficult to believe that Jayapala ever had any opportunity to make any illustrious contribution to this majestic temple complex at Madan-Kamdeva.

After Vaidyadeva, Vallabhadeva was another important ruler to rule in Kamrupa during the last quarter of 12th century A.D. The history of his origin is quite confusing in nature. His Assam plate declared him as being a person belonging to *Chandra* dynasty and mention the name of three persons, Bhaskara, Rayarideva and Udaykarna as his predecessor.¹³⁷ History remain quite silent about the identity of these three persons and the matter still remain as a born of contention among the scholars. K L Barua has made an impression that like Tingyadeva, the predecessors of Vallabhadeva, were the feudatory chief perhaps under the later Kamrupa Kings as there is no room to adjust them as the royal personals between Vaidyadeva and 1185 A.D., the date of Vallabhdeva's inscription.¹³⁸ On the other hand, there is an another impression which would like to state Vallabhadeva as an independent ruler.¹³⁹

With these two extreme conclusion, the matter may be summerised in the following word that the predecessors of Vallabhadeva were actually the feudatory chief of an untrace line of Vaidyadeva's successors. The Assam plate described Rayarideva as one of his predecessor as a valiant warrior who fought on the side of Kamrupa against Vanga.¹⁴⁰ This incident perhaps enhanced

137. *Assam Plate*, vv. 3,4,6.

138. Barua, K.L. : *Op-cit*, p.129.

139. Sarma, M.M. : *Op-cit*, 1978, p.300.

140. *Assam Plate*, v. 5.

the prestige of the family of Vallabhadeva and ultimately by taking the opportunity of the weakness of central line of power, Vallabhadeva established himself as an independent ruler if not in entire Kamrupa but at least in some part of it.

Among the seven donated villages of *Vallabhadeva*, as Assam plates has mention, the name of one of the village was *SamsrahiKoncika*.¹⁴¹ This village has been popularly identified with modern village of Sangsari¹⁴² just at the outskirts of Madan-Kamdeva. This normally inspired us to presume that the *Chandra* dynasty, mainly the Vallabhadeva might have some contribution in erecting this mighty temple complex here at Madan-Kamdeva. But this time also, the political situation of the country seen to have provide him little opportunity to invest his time, money and power for any illustrious construction.

While explaining the political situation of Kamrupa during the 12th century A.D. it is generally believe that the death of Jayapala have created an atmosphere of disintegration. The absence of strong power in the centre, have provided ample opportunity to the feudatory rulers in Kamrupa to declare their independence. It is known to all that the rulers of the *Varman* dynasty were the true initiator of feudalism in Kamrupa. As the time went on, the system of granting land, the prime ingredient for the rise of feudalism, have caught the momentum, which in its turn accelerated the process of feudalism in Kamrupa. The feudal lords always act as an independent ruler in their respective territories and their prime obligations to the King was restricted

141. Ibid, vv. 18-19.

142. Sarma, M.M. : Op-cit, 1978, p.300.

only to the supply of an annual ransom to the royal treasury as share of their product and soldiers to the kings army at the time of the necessities of the King.¹⁴³ But, when the central authority became weak, they emerged almost as the real independent rulers as they now deared to reject any obligation to their higher authorities. The death of Jayapala and sudden collapse of the *Brahmapala* dynasty have led to the absence of mainstream rulers and thus created an atmosphere of limited obligation to the feudal lords of Kamrupa. Under such circumstances, Vaidyadeva an alien ruler normally have to spend lot more time with arms to carve out a place for himself and to survive here in Kamrupa. The condition of Vallabhadeva was also not so good. The *Kamauli* grant of Vaidyadeva and the Assam plate of Vallabhadeva though have reflected their strong existence here in Kamrupa, but is can easily be imagined that under the changing political scenario of Kamrup, they have to work as a warrior rather than as a construction.

Despite of creating all political discomfort to the royalty, the rise of feudalism, however have a great contribution to the history of Indian aesthetics as never invested their surplus wealth *in craft production or trade, but used for conspicuous consumption. The palatial homes of the feudatories were richly ornamented and much of their income was spent in building magnificent temples.*¹⁴⁴ This has normally led us to presume that in the development of this magnificent temple city at Madan-Kamdeva, the feudal lords of Kamrupa certainly have made some contribution. As for example, the *Bhuyans* one of the best known clan of feudal lords in Assam

143. Thapar, R. : Opc-it, 1990, p.228.

144. Ibid.

during 13th century, also seem to have contributed something to this majestic construction at Madan-Kamdeva. The geographical extension of their ruling territories serve the purpose of presuming their contribution to the site. Act almost as the independent rulers their territory extended all along the northern bank of river Suansiri in the north along with some part on the bank of river Kapili in modern Nowgaon district of Assam.¹⁴⁵

SECTION : 2.6

Summarizing Note :

Thus, the whole matter may be concluded in the following points first the construction of this temple complex might have started if not from earlier but at least from the time of Vanamala varmadeva i.e. from the last quarter of the 9th century A.D.. This construction procedure was continued throughout the period of *Palas*. With the passes of time and with the increasing importance of the locality, specially because of its nearby highway, the construction procedure of this temple complex have received new dimension with an all Indian aesthetic exposure.

The destruction of this complex was not the work of Kalapahar, rather it seems to be suffered from disastrous natural calamities like earthquakes. It was the earthquake of 1548 A.D. which had caused first serious damage to the entire construction. Later as according to a popular saying of the locality, great Ahom ruler Siva Simha constructed a temple here but that also vanish to a soil because of earthquakes that occurred either in 1770 A.D., 1838 A.D. or 1838 or 1842 A.D., or in 1897 A.D..

145. Devi, L. : *Asom Desor Buranji*(As), 1987, p.110.