CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Although pre-historical evidence, have not yet been found, historical evidence of indised stone artefacts bearing some primitive traditions found together with the individual brahmi characters datable to c. 2nd century A.D.) at Duboroni in the Doiyang Dhansiri Valley are strong indications of the development of an organised human society flourishing since c. 2nd century A.D. This evidence of social transition has taken back the date of the earliest formation of society in ancient Assam to c. A.D. Till this period the earliest date was confined to a late date of c. 5th certary A.D. based on the NKFSI and the Umachala Rock Inscription of ancient Assam. These inscribed individual letters bearing numeral characters make it certain that the mainstay of a section of people was maritime activity, which seem to have played a vital role in the social organisation and led to the growth of a monarchical kingdom in the Valley. The donative nature of epigraphical records e.g.the ATSI the ATCS the NKFSI, and existence of a class of village officials e.g. mahattara confirm that land was a source of revenue. It indicates that a sort of political and cultural identity of the Valley was slowly but surely in process of formation since the early Christian era, and remained strong throughout the ancient and early mediaeval period. Since the Valley was fertile and vielded good harvest of all varieties of crops, as recorded in the NKFSI, it is not without reason that the development of the cultural and material life of the people of the valley was also sustained by agricultural surplus.

The epigraphical records with names of Sri Ratnavarmana and Sri Vasundharavarmana, discovered by us confirm the existence of an independent line of rulers, different from that of the Varmanas of Kamarupa. This was hitherto unknown in the history of ancient Assam. We may accept that the Valley with its brick built fortified capital at Duboroni and setubandha harbour (pattana) on the bank of the Dhansiri with the additional (upari) region at least

extending to Tinisukia, might have been this *Uparipattana* of ancient AssamIt is possible that the *pattana* of Alichiga-Tengani, where the ATSI and ATCS have been found, was highly flourishing. If we go by this, it becomes clear that the region of *Uparipattana*, which did not form part of ancient Kamarupa or Davaka Kingdom, was ruled by this line of Varman rulers, not belonging to Pusyavarmana of Kamarupa Sri Ratnavarmana and Sri Vasundharavarmana found in epigraphical records, are the royal descendents belonging to this lineage. Existence of regional kingdoms, other than that of the ancient Kamarupa and Davaka during the Gupta period is indicated in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription (c. A.D. 350) of Samudra Gupta.

During c. A.D. 800 *Mahārājādhirāja* Sri Jivarā, and *Mahārājādhirāja* Sri Diglekhavarman were the kings of this kingdom.

The region of Uparipattana seems to have been annexed to the Kachari kingdom in the mediaeval period. The advent of the Ahoms seems to have been resisted by the inhabitants of this Kachari kingdom who had allegiance to the Kachari kings of this Valley. The shifting of the Kachari capital to Maibong in North Cachar after the Ahom occupation of Dimapur during A.D. 1530 seem to indicate that the territory formed part of the Kachari kingdom of the Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley. The Kachari kings adopted highly eulogistic royal titles of Hidimbesvara, or the lord of Hidimba, - the name given to their Kingdom at Maibong during mediaeval period. The Ahoms subsequently brought the Kachari territory in 1g-Dhansi -llev under their control and created a post of Morongi 1 Gohain to lk after the administration of this region.

The Valley is found to have fostered the growth of some regional characteristics in socio-economic and cultural life since ancient times. Due to geographical seclusion, a strong tendency of regionalism in cultural alignments developed. Art developed here in isolation and the sense of regionalism became strong. As such, art that developed in the Valley, although Indian in tradition in expression, was conspicuously regional.

Since the Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley had been inhabited by a number of heterogenous racial groups, the art styles in the region, manifests a tendency towards racial and cultural synthesis. Due to this blending and synthesising of the various social elements, its art combined in itself the diverse patterns of life into one entity. Not only the temple sculptures, even megaliths tend to show this blending. As such, the art that developed in the Valley appears to be complex in character. There is evidence to show a strong brahmanical manoeuvre that worked to bridge the social differences, and although social hierarchy in brahmanical order was established, the class or caste distinction was considerably liberalised in order to organise a strong social structure, which was possibly considered the prime factor for the establishment of a strong regional kingdom. The peasants and artisans on the other hand, being attached to their cultivable land stopped their movements from one region to another which promoted the sense of regionalism in the Valley. Such a socio-economic settlement possibly provided opportunity to the peasants and artisans, irrespective of their caste and creed, to take share in the economic growth of the monarchical kingdom that developed with regional identity in the Valley.

The art that developed in the Valley was also directed to serve contemporary socio-political objectives and vice versa. A powerful state must have a strong social basis. Apart from its military might, the aspirations of all sections of people had therefore, to be synthesised. It was this social synthesis, that led to the development of social solidarity and religious cult of syncretism in the Valley. The strong basis of social co-existence and localism, worked behind this development of regional polity. And here we find a basic reason for the emergence and manifestation of syncretistic art. It also served economic purpose in terms of territorial expansion of the kingdom in the Valley. Land grant in the regions inhabited by non-aryans became possible through religious perseverence which possibly added additional revenue to the kingdom.

Most of the composite figures are found inscribed either on their edges or on pedestal. In the development of syncretistic art, as discussed, it is remarkable that the composite characters are not only shown iconographically and epigraphically; even individual sculptures are shown to have possessed syncretistic character, by providing rare treatment in āyudhas. This development suggests the possibility of regional composition of some iconographical texts, without upsetting the basic loyalty to the legacy of the Indian classical tradition. In this art the pivot was the human figure. Full, round, young and sensuous, figures, whether male or female, are endowed with gliding lines, although, at times, angularity and folk elements emerged as general characteristics of some figures whether in stone, metal, wood or terracotta. Duboroni being a fortified capital was inhabited by artists and architects having knowledge in fine art.

The native vigour that we have described as the Duboroni School of Regional Art, became very popular and exhibited itself in a localised art movement in medium of terracotta, wood, stone and metal. Even the choice of stone remained distinct from the other parts of Assam. It is found that shale of Disang sediment was used in Duboroni School of Art, while granite was used at Deoparvat. The megaliths of Dimapur and Kasomaripathar, too, bereft of primitive megalithism, are found, with floral and geometrical ornamentations. The Kacharis, it seems possible, tried to revive some traditions of ancestral worship and tree worship by erecting these megaliths. Stone art developed here during the Ahom rule, found to be similar to those found in other parts of the Ahom kingdom.

The main innovation, partly responsible for the growth of culture in the valley since ancient period was perhaps the introduction of iron and the development of an indigenous smelting technology. Rahdhola pukhuri found with slag heaps, near Dhekial in Golaghat is one such evidence of an ancient iron extrating and smelting site. The local availability of iron must have encouraged its application in agriculture and other productive works, which had brought about tremendous economic development and material transformation in the lives of the people in the Valley since the early Christian

era. Iron, as such, continued to aid the process of social stratification and state formation. The economic stability thus attained led to the development of art and archaeology, evidences of which now lie in ruins. The Valley also maintained commercial persuits through river and overland trade. The principal habitational sites of Duboroni and Alichiga-Tengani are well connected with the Dhansiri by series of canals, and all the other archaeological sites flourished on the riverside. As such, one may view the development as the outcome of commercial intercourse with settlements of distant lands. Place names found with suffix hatta, in the Valley e.g. Kacharihat indicate the remote existence of market or trade fair. Land grant offered by the Ahom king Lakshmisingha at Kacharihat to supply drinking water to travellers signify to the existence of such traditional trade fair or hatta organised at Kacharihat during mediaeval period.

The knowledge gathered through commercial contact was applied to cultural and technical frontiers. As a result, the cultural mooring in the Valley was in tune with the ancient Indian cultural tradition. Technical knowledge acquired was applied in developing the fortifications such as water ditches, ramparts, watch towers, were raised in settlements on the riverside, where brick-built temples and secular apartments e.g. at Duboroni and Alichiga-Tengani. Remarkably, the layout of both these sites bear stricking resemblance of building sthaniya fortress and town planning, in conformity with the principles laid down in the Arthasastra of Kautilya.

However, the progress of the development in art was confined to the valley alone, and the surrounding hilly region is found dominated by the primitive method of shifting cultivation until recent times. The inhabitants of the Valley maintained a stable socioeconomic life, being attached to their agricultural land, and they followed improved method of agriculture under an efficient system of village administration. The existence of the class of mahattara, i.e. the village headmen, as indicated by the NKFSI, confirms the existence of an organised village administration similar to that of the Gupta Village administration during ancient period.

Brick and timber constituted the primary medium of architecture. The inborn faculties of talented people might have caused its development as their contact with other cultural forums in ancient India was not altogether lacking. The discovery of the pair of the Gupta type bronze coated architect's plummers the existence of setubandha (embankments) at Alichiga-Tengani, and certain similarities between some of the visnu figures found in the Valley and at Benisagar region of Bihar point to such possibilities.

Numerous brick mounds with temple sculptures connected with Vaisanavism, Saivisim, and Tantricism show a complete mastery over brickbuilt temple architecture. Here, too, the visual art seems to bear social importance. In other words the formation of a strong social organisation was the primary force that determined the style and composition in art and architecture. Art was conceived not for the higher class alone, rather it was popular among the common people. As such the temple sculptures were not only small and squat, but also attractive and found simple in gesture. The brick temple architectures were possibly smaller so that, one could afford to build for his individual or family worship.

Judging from the examples which have come down to us, the Valley seems to be one of the most active regions for sculptural art. The large majority of temples were built in brick. The main theme for sculptural art in stone, metal, wood and terracotta seems to have been cult icons. This apart, the use of burnt bricks in architecture reflects a tendency for raising durable structures. This factor suggests a relative economic prosperity, leading to the urbanisation of the Valley as early as c. 400-500 A.D. if not earlier.

During ancient period, bricks were chiefly employed in secular defensive architecture, such as remparts, brick-built fortified walls, watchtowers, and other secular architecture, evidence of which is revealed in BPD I and BPD II at Duboroni in Borpathar. The use of bricks in religious architecture during this stage had been meagre, but not altogether absent.

Employment of bricks in building secular apartments in the fortified capital at Duboroni, the ground plan of which was laid in rectangular alignment in a similar principal prescribed in the ancient Indian Silpasastras - the Arthasastra of Kautilya and the Manasara - is noteworthy. The brick architectural evidence at Duboroni not only shows the establishment of a permanent brick-built capital, fortified by brick-reinforced remparts and moats, but is also an index to the remarkable development of ancient urban culture in the Valley. The use of bricks as building material for raising square or rectangular ground plan (as found at Duboroni) firmly indicates a transition from the rural to urban settlement pattern. Extensive remains of a brick built fortified complex at Duboroni seems to prove that the fortress was constructed with the military objectives which possibly helped in the conquests of the upper Assam Valley. the adjacent hilly regions, and the contiguous southern tracts. It only lead to confirm the attainment of maturity and efficiency of brick architecture in a period contemporary to the Gupta Age, as ascertained from the ATSL and ATCS dated c. 4th - 5th Century A.D.

Application of bricks in rampart and in architecture raised at setubandha (embankment) surrounded by square ditch, that first flourished as pattana or harbour at Alichiga Tengani, and which was developed later into a pleasure garden arama, suggest that brick was initially used in defensive architecture e.g. rampart, and applied to both secular and religious architecture in subsequent period.

Although a sharp division can not be drawn at this stage of enquiry it can perhaps be said that a transitional phase in brick architecture emerged more particularly during the post-Gupta period. Possibly, after the completion of the brick-built capital at Duboroni and the commercial harbour at Alichiga-Tengani, a new phase of brick built religious architecture began which is corroborated by the extensive ruins of brick temple architecture.

Art and architectural evidences of the Valley convey the impression that the native art movement flourished with the fortunes of a ruling family

although to draw a precise line on the dynastic division of art at this stage is difficult. However, indications are there that political development of a kingdom in the valley determined the art styles, and its cultural frontier was pushed to distant region of Bengmara or Tinisukia in Upper Assam. In this respect, we venture to say that the entire conquests up to the region of Tinisukia was under the political hegemoney of the kingdom that flourished in the Valley.

The brahmanical attempt at conversion of non-aryan tribes to aryan fold was, however, continued in the valley through the process of sanskritisation. The ancient tribal abodes of mother goddess were converted into *Devithan* and enshrined with brahmanical goddesses like Durga. The *Deopanithan*, the *Kaka-Gosanithan*, the *Kotohagurithan* the *Burhi Gosanith in* are the examples, where tribal people constitute a large section of devotees, who offer red animal sacrifice.

During the Ahom rule, from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century, a policy of revivalism of the age-old cultural legacy of the Valley was followed. As a part of this policy, brick-built temple with mediaeval feature were raised at the early mediaeval temple-sites, and land grants were offered for their maintenance. The Negheriting Siva Temple at Dergaon is a living example of continuity of early mediaeval tradition. The material progress also led to the development of minor arts. Metallurgical craft, wood carving ivory art, manuscript paintings, maintained parity with the development in other parts of the Ahom kingdom.

Doubtless, the region of Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley has unique contribution to the development of Indian art. Art and archaeological remains of this Valley bear strong stamps of the movement of Indian cultural heritage.

GLOSSARY:

Achala linga : Immovable Siva linga

Adhisthana : A base; the foundation of a temple or the pedestal of a

sculpture

Aditya : The Sun; one of the twelve sons of Aditi

Aduka : Water fort

Agni : Hindu God of fire

Akshamālā: A garland made of dried fruit known as Rudraksa

Ālaya : A temple; a house

Amalaka : A flat and fluted myrobalan-shaped member of the

sikhara of a temple.

Amrtaghata : Necter-vase

Angasikhara : A decorative miniature sikhara attached to the

main sikhara of a temple.

Añjali-hasta : A pose with the palms of the hands cusped jointly

upwards

Ananda lahari : One stringed musical instruments of mendicant

Antariya : Hanging drapery between the two legs of a male

Ārāma : A pleasure garden; a garden house; an orchard

Ardhanāriśvara: Composite form of God Siva and his consort Parvati

Ardha-candra : Crescent moon

Asana : A seat, a throne, a sitting posture

Attālaka : An apartment on the roof, watch tower, a military post

Avatara : An incarnation of God

Āyudha : A weapon; a symbolical object peculiar to a deity.

Bāndhanā : A band dividing the jangha of a temple into horizontal

divisions

Bārhoi : Wood carver and artist

Bañkañhi : Dish on stand

Bhāwanā: An Opera of the Neo-Vaisnavites of Assam

Buranji : The Chronicles of the Ahoms

Bhāravāhaka: AtlantisBicani: Hand fanBarpirā: Large flat seatBar perā: Large chest

Biri : Drum shaped ornament for neck

Cakra: Wheel or disc of Viṣṇu
Cala linga: Movable Siva linga

Chatur bhuja: The Vyūha doctrine is one of the tenets of earlier

Bhagavata (vaisnava) cult.

Changtatto : Tattoo made on the neck of warrior
Chaturmukhalinga: Siva linga with four human faces
Chungā : Round tube of bamboo, ivory etc.

Damaru : Small musical drum carried by God Siva

Daksa : The father of Sati, the consort of Siva

Danda : A Staff, carried on as ayudha by some deities; name of

Yama attending Surya.

Davā : A musical drum of conical shape

Dol : Generic Assamese term for Deul or temple

Devakostha : Niches for sculptures in the walls of a temple

Dhekiyaliā kalah : Ovoid shapped erthen pitcher with elongated neck

manufactured at Dhekial.

Dheki : Traditional household grinding apparatus

Dagdagi : Metallic water pitcher having stand

Dbekor : Iron frame for litters

Dugdugi : A kind necklace worn by women Ekamukhalinga : Siva linga with one human face

: Mace a symbol of some Gods especially of Visnu

Galpatá : A kind of necklace
Gágari : Large water pitcher

Gajavyāla: A vyala (lion) taming a gaja (elephant)- a motif normally

to be found on the body of a temple.

Garbhagrha: Sanctum of a temple.

Garuda: Mythical bird associated with God Visnu at His vehicle

Gavāksha : A window

Gämkhäru : Bracelet worn by man
Gosäighar : A prayer house ; a temple

Gopura : A gate-house at the entrance of a temple

Gachā : Lampstand

Gūdha britti : Secret underground staircase in afortified areas

Sopanā

Hāţţa : Market, trade fair

Hātaniperā : Hand-chest for Keeping valuables

Hengul : Vermillion

Haitāl : Yellow arsenic

Harm ya : Palace
Hāra : Necklace
Hetā : Large spoon

Hinayana : A Buddhist religious sect.

Jatāmukuṭa : The crown of matted hair usually tied over head like

a crown or mukuta

Jaṭā : Matted hairlock Jakā : Large saucer

: A spinning wheel latar

Juria-Pukhuri : A pair of water tanks

Ionbiri : A cresent-shapped pendent

Kākoi Comb and scratcher of ivory, bamboo etc. : A tradition headgear or headdress for man Kosāpatiyāpāg

Kalah Water Pitcher

Keyura : Armlet worn on upper arm

Kundala : Ear ornament Khanikar : Class of artists

: Wooden vessel for milk Kariā

: Large stone placed near the gate of on Angami Nagas Kepuche

village, which is a subject of veneration

Kālamakara : Javanese counterpart to Indian kirttimukha or design Kalasa

The pitcher like member or design of the mastaka of a

temple, a pitcher

Kalpavrksa : A tree motif- wish fulfilling tree. Kamandalu Waterpot with a handle and a spout

Kațisutra A decorative girdle

Kamarabandhā Waist band to fasten the lower garment on the waist Kapāla Severed head of a man or cup of a bowl made of a skull

Kankana Bangle, bracelet

Karandamukuta A vase-shaped mukuta Khadga A kind heavy Sword

Kirita-mukuta Jewelled conical crown-a kind of crown usually meant

for images of Visnu and Surya

Kirttimukha : The grinning lion face popularly used as decorative

motif or auspicious symbol on temple and sculptures

Kumna : Tortoise Korāpat : Gate-way of Vaishnava Sattra

Krta Silpa : Fine arts

Kurmāsana : Tortoise shaped pedestal

Katibandhā : Kativastra

Kumār-māti : Potter's-clay

Kundatdiyā : Lathe-turned

Lalitāsana : A sitting posture in which one leg usually the left leg is

tucked up on the seat, while the right one dangles

gracefully from the seat.

Linga: Aniconio form of Siva

Laghustambha : Pilastar

Lotā : Small water pitcher

: Ear-ring with motif of pigeon, worn by males

Longkeru: Clove shapped ornament for ears.

Mayurasana : An asana or throne flanked by four Peacock on four

sides

Māko : Shuttle for loam

Mahattara : The Headman of village

Mahārājālilāsana : A sitting posture on a throne with one leg pendant

touching tree ground and the other leg placed lying on

throne.

Mandala : Magic circle containing mystic symbols and diagrams

and figures of gods and goddesses.

Makara : Crocodile

Mandapa : A hall in front of the principal shrine of temple

Matsya : Fish Mayura : Peacock

Mudrā : Pose, Generally gesture of hands

Mukuta : Crown

Mudgara: Hammar, a heavy club

Muktāvali : Necklace

Matamani : Necklace of beads

Nagabandha : Water tank felled with wooden cylindrical pipe with

connecting ground water.

Nagini : Female celestial serpent with semi-human form

Namaskār : Gesture of joining two hands with raised fingers parallel

to chest and the hands slightly bent.

Nāmakiriṭana : Devotional prayers
Neothani : Carding machine.

Nupura : Anklet

Nandi : Bull vehicle of God Siva

Narasimha : A half-man half-lion incarnation of Visnu

Nagara: Capital or city

Nämghar : A vaisnavite prayer hall

Nagaravidhana : Town planning

Ozhā : Master

Panchamahāvādya: The five chief musical instruments

Panchamakāra: The ritual governing five ma's e.g. madya, mamsa,

matsya, maithuna and mudra.

Padama : Lotus

Pāda-vinyāsa : Ground plan

Padmāsana: A sitting posture with the legs in a crossed position

Pāguritemā : Rests for headdress.

Pattana : A commercial town port or harbour accessible by water

ways.

Pancayatana : A temple complex with five shrine

pañcopāsana : Worshipping of five principal deities

Parasu : Battle axe

Puspakuṇḍala : Ear-ring made of flowers
Patrakuṇḍala : Ear-ring made of leaves

Pralambapada : A sitting posture in which the feet rest on ground and

the knee stretches upward; the "European style" sitting

posture.

Parikhā : Water ditch for fortification of ancient cities or capital

Pāli : Assistant

Pāleng : Large bedstead (Sans palanka)

Parikrama : Frame work

Perā : Chest

Pirā : Small flat seat

Pik bān : Spitton Patidharā : Mat

Pranāla : An outlet

Pramotha : A dwarfish mythical figure

Prajapati : The proginator of mankind indicating Brahmana

Prabhawali : Halo Prabhamaṇḍala : Nimbus

Rāngoli-māti : Potter's clay used as colouring agent

Rekhā-deul : A towered sanctuary with vertical salients

Repanidiya : Act of painting a wooden object fixed on a lathe with

the help of heated cane piece. Also called rewadiya.

Samapadasthanaka: Straight standing posture in which is body without any

bent in it faces front

Samvakara : Connical

Sankha : Conch shell , normally an ayudha of Gods, especially

Visnu

Sastra : Treatise on law, religion or science

Srivtsa : The Imprint of the foot of Bhrgu on the chest of Visnu

Sudra : Hindu lower caste

Suparna : It is a Hindu mythical bird with human face Śarāi : Tray on stand use for offering objects in rituals

Safurā : Covered mineiature Śarāi

Sonāri : Goldsmith

Simhäsana : Lion featured alter or asana in prayerhall

Setubondha : Embankment raised for habitation as defensive measure.

surrounded by ditches

Siruvarttana : Rounded top of a Siva linga

Sălpiră : Bed stead Sthapati : Craft master

Sattra : Neo-vaishmavite monastery of Assam

Silpasastra : Text book on principle of art and architecture
Sankrama : Bridge connecting water fort with outward bank

Saptamätr kä : Seven mother goddess

Saraḥ Sams - : Class of artisan who supervised excavation of water-

-thapanë vidyan. -tank.

Sutraka : Garments between two legs.

Sarpa : Serpent hood

Sankha Kundala : Earning of Sankha (conch)

Shiv Barāi : A cractus type tree with five ridgeo worshipp by the

Bodos as Shiv Barai.

Tāmuli pirā : Respectable seat

Temā-Temi : Small casket, lime casket etc

Tula Chalani : Balance for weight and measures

Urāl : Mortar

Uttkatikāsana : Seated in squatting posture

Tribhanga : Triple flexion of human body in standing posture

Trisūla : A trident Trimukha : Three faced

Than : A place of worship

Thaga : Rests or keeping manuscripts

Valaya : Thick circular bangle

Varadamudra : Handposture indicative of conferring loom (vara) with

palm outward.

Varāha : Boar Incarnation of Visnu

Vipani : Commercial shap

Vāstuka : Fortified cities on confluence of rivers

Varada mudra : Posture of hand

Vanamālā : Garland

Vāhana : The vehicle of a deity

Viśwapadma : The double-petalled lotus motif

Vaijyonti : Long garland of flowers worn by Visnu

Yajñōpavita : Sacred thread

Zhum : Shifting Cultivation associated with full tribes.

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- 6 Bisrampur Stone Image Inscription, Kasomaripathar
- 7 Visnu Image Inscription, Deopani, Sarupathar
- 8 Harihara Stone Image Inscription, Deopani, Sarupathar
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- 12 Inscribed letter from Negheriting, Dergaon
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