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KAMAKHYA

A TOWN OF ASSAM

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FOREWORD

As ancillary to 1971 Census, the Census Organisation has taken up a project of intensive survey of about 200 towns in different parts of the country. In the preparatory stage of this project, another project of collection of basic particulars in respect of a large number of towns in different parts of the country was undertaken in cooperation with scholars belonging to various academic bodies.

For discussing the entire approach to urban studies, a seminar was organised in Delhi in 1967. In the light of the recommendations of the Seminar, and also in consultation with Town and Country Planning Organization, Delhi and a number of experts in the field, a schedule for rapid survey of towns was drawn up. It was visualised that the scholars undertaking the rapid survey of a town would, in addition to canvassing the schedule, prepare a short running note highlighting the important features of the town.

I am happy that Prof. Sarma very kindly agreed to make a rapid survey of Kamakhya town. It was a labour of love on his part. In addition to canvassing the schedule he has examined a large number of original source materials, to provide information about the historical and socio-economic developments of Kamakhya. In the presentation of his material he was provided technical advice and guidance by my colleague Dr. B. K. Roy Burman.

I would like to thank Prof. Sarma for this useful report.

A. CHANDRA SEKHAR,
Registrar General, India.

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PREFACE

After completing my University Education, for a long time I was cherishing an ambition to write about the history and social and cultural life of Kamakhya, my home town. But due to many circumstantial limitations it was difficult for me to believe that one day my ambition would actually be fulfilled.

On 3rd March, 1968, Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Deputy Registrar General, India (Social Studies) visited Kamakhya, and on hearing about my academic background, enquired whether I would like to take up a project of socio-economic study of Kamakhya. This was a very unexpected opportunity for me and I readily accepted his offer. He provided the frame of the investigation and guided me in the presentation of the materials. Also, he has given an introductory note to bringing out the sociological implications of the various data provided by me in the monograph.

I am grateful to the Registrar General, India and to Dr. Roy Burman for giving me the opportunity to bring out this monograph. During collection of the various statistical and other information for the monograph, I have received unstinted co-operation from various official and non-official sources as well as private individuals. It would be invidious to mention names but I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of them.

MOHAN SARMA

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In the present monograph Shri Mohan Sarma has given a graphic account of the social and religious institutions functioning at Kamakhya and the changes taking place in them during the recent years.

It seems that though with improvement in the means of communication, the number of visitors to Kamakhya has gone up, a sense of loss of vitality is slowly creeping up in the place. This is perhaps the outcome of a long drawn historical process. In the pre-British period, Kamakhya flourished under the patronage of the Kings; during the British period rich zemindars and businessmen did not hesitate to contribute liberally for its upkeep. They supported the establishment here; in return, they sought shelter from all powerful mother goddess. The common people were also linked with the place through awe, love and devotion for the mother goddess and the innumerable local gods and goddesses. But it seems that, with the rise of new social forces away from metaphysics and heavily leaning upon technology those at the helm of affairs of the society, felt less and less impelled to seek shelter from mother goddess. A process of disenchantment also perhaps went on among general people, as a reaction to the litigations and internal strifes in which the establishment has been constantly involved.

The qualitative change in the nature of the attraction of an increasingly large number of persons coming to Kamakhya seems to be another factor which has contributed to the ennui of the old setting. Previously, when communication was difficult, more pilgrims used to come, out of devotion and desire to perform an act of piety; now more visitors come out of curiosity and desire for diversion. This is a crushing experience for the persons who used to serve pilgrims from the exalted position of the meciator between the world of mystery and the world of mundane existance, but who now serve the visitors as guides to the places of interest and to the performance of rituals which many of them agree to do only as a matter of good form.

The hovering sense of loss of vitality of the establishment is the outcome of few other factors as well. There is a rumour that the government might take over the management of the temple.

This has caused a great nervousness among the people of Kamakhya. To many, it means not only loss of secure means of livelihood, but also loss of roles which have become part and parcel of themselves for generations.

It, however, appears that the future of Kamakhya is not wholly bleak. As mentioned in the monograph by Prof. Sarma there are several spots at Kamakhya which find mention in the Puranas but which are still to be identified. Some of them could be located only recently. It seems not unlikely that Kamakhya may re-emerge as a place of great archaeological and cultural interest.

The question that would interest most, a student of society in Kamakhya, is whether the children of the Blue-hill are preparing themselves for their probable future role. It seems from the account of Prof. Sarma that there is a growing interest in modern education. It also seems that many are being drawn to modern occupations in Gauhati.

All these seem to mark an agonising adjustment to modern conditions for the sake of survival. But a creative response to the challenge of modernisation is something more. It would require infusion of new meaning and new values to the old institutions. In recent years, a number of clubs, libraries and social service organisations have come into existence in Kamakhya. It is difficult to anticipate, what will be their exact role in future. But it will not be surprising if through their functioning a leadership emerges out from the fertile soil of the Blue-hill, which will not only wistfully look backward, but will also look forward and not only accommodate the wind of change but draw succour from it. This is an urgent task, the task of reinterpretation of the ancient tradition to bring it in harmony with the spirit of modern man. It is hoped that systematic investigation of the institutions and social processes at Kamakhya will help in fulfilling the task and in this matter the present study will be recognised as a pioneer work.

B. K. ROY BURMAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS

I also like to express my gratitude to the Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, for allowing me to publish a few photographs of the Temple at Kamakhya.

MOHAN SARMA

INTRODUCTION

Kamakhya is one of the most sacred places of the Hindus. According to E. A. Gait, the eminent English authority on the history of Assam, "The temple of Kamakhya at Gauhati is one of the sacred shrines of the *Sakta* Hindus and the whole country is famed in Hindu traditions as a land of magic and witchcraft."[1] Dr. B. K. Kakati, the reputed Assamese Scholar, has observed in this "Mother Goddess Kamakhya", "Goddess Kamakhya is the most dominating name in early history of Assam. It was under her banner that the first empire in early Assam was built. It was over her emergence and recognition as the presiding deity of the State that the Saivites and the Vaisnavites went into silent conflict and Naraka, the builder of the state, lost his life. Later religious history also centres round her and other goddesses are recognised as her varied manifestation."

According to *Kalika Purana* the temple of Kamakhya near Gauhati was the centre of Kamrupa. In *Vismu Purana* it is stated that the kingdom of Kamrupa extended around this temple in all directions for 100 *Yojana* (about 450 miles). Some regard Kamakhya as the mirror of Kamrupa (*i.e.* Assam).

Kamakhya is situated in the State of Assam, the eastern-most corner of India. It is three miles west of Gauhati, the premier town of Assam. Assam is the land of blue hills and red rivers. Gauhati itself is surrounded by several such hills. Nilachal (Kamakhya is so named) is also one among them and occupies the highest position as regards height and area. With the mighty Brahmaputra flowing by its northern foot and surrounded by the lower blue hills and the landscape below, Nilachal offers to the onlookers a rare picturesque and panoramic view, which the visitors come across only in a few of places all over the world.

On the south and west of Kamakhya is situated Pandu, and the Headquarters of the Northern Frontier Railway.

The real name of the hill is '*Nilachal*' (Nil=blue; achal=that cannot move). But as it is the home of Mother Goddess Kamakhya, it is more

[1]History of Assam—E. A. Gait.

well known as Kamakhya. Nilachal actualy consts of three hills. They are Bhubaneswari, Kamakhya and Baraha. In the Kalika Purana, Bhubaneswari is known as Brahma, Kamakhya as Shiva and Baraha as Vishnu. Among the three hills Bhubaneswari is the highest and Baraha is the lowest. Kamakhya occupies the middle position. More than a score sacred spots are there at Nilachal and most of them are concentrated at Kamakhya proper. At Bhubaneswari there is only the temple of Goddess Bhubaneswari. At the top of Baraha, there is a small tank, which has some legend connected with it and at its foot, there is a temple of Lord Vishnu, known as Pandunath.

Most of the population here live at the top of Kamakhya. There is still no residential house either at the top of Bhubaneswari or Baraha. Again about twenty years ago, there existed practically no residential house at the foot of these hills, save four hermitages on the north-eastern and north-western sides. During the Second World War, these places which remained closed to the local people, stationed several military camps.

After the war, particularly after independence with rapid growth in the importance of Gauhati pressure on the lands at the foot of Kamakhya hill grew to an extent which could not be imagined before.

At present, residential houses and other households have spread on each side of the foot of Nilachal, except the north, which is shielded by the fury of the Brahmaputra.

Locational and Demographic Data :

The area of the township is one square mile. The total number of residential houses is seven hundred and nine and that of the households is seven hundred and twenty-four. The population of Kamakhya according to the census of 1961 stood at 4,359. Of these 2,621 were males and 1,738 were females. The number of persons belonging to the category of Scheduled Castes was 37. Among them 19 were males and 18 were females. None belonging to the category of Scheduled Tribes lived at Kamakhya.

Of the total population of the place, the number of literate and educated persons stood 2,198 in 1961. Of these 1,503 were males and 695 were females. The number of persons classified as workers was 1,599. Among them 1,472 were males and 127 were females.

Among the workers 12 persons were cultivators, 45 worked in trades like mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation, orchards and such other allied activities. Out of the latter category of workers 41 were males and 4 were females. 125 persons were employed in the household industry. Out of them 45 were males and 80 were females. In manufacture and other household industries there were 169 persons of whom 157 were males and 12 were females. Construction works accounted for 17 persons all males. There were 279 persons in trade and Commerce, out of whom 272 were males and 7 were females. Transport, storage and communication provided employment to 118 persons out of whom 116 were males and 2 were females, 834 persons were engaged in other services, of whom 812 were males and 22were females.

History, Origin, Myths and Legends about Kamakhya :

There are few places on earth which are so full of ancient myths and legends as Kamakhya is. Her name is found in most of the Puranas and Tantras and is connected with the history of Kamrupa, i.e. Assam. The great epic *Mahabharata*, the *Kalika Purana*, the *Yogini Tantra*, the *Rudrayamala*, the *Maha-Bhagabata*, the *Tantra-Churamani*, the *Debi Bhagabata*, the *Mahanila Tantra*, the *Kamakhya Tantra*, etc., contain the myths and legends of the origin of Kamakhya. But it is significant to note that there is no reference to Kamakhya in the earliest works of the Aryan culture, i.e., the Vedas.

Let us first see the origin of Nilachal hill and the Goddess Kamakhya in the light of the Kalika Purana and the Yogini Tantra. In the Sixty-second chapter of the Kalika Purana the origin has been explained thus: formerly there were three mountains as high as one hundred *yojana*, i.e., about 450 miles, which constituted the Nilachal hill. The name of King Daksha is familiar in Indian mythology. He is also connected with the origin of Kamakhya. His daugther was Sati. She died of vexation at the discourtesy shown to her husband Lord Siva by her father. Siva, then overcame with grief, wandered about the world carrying the dead body of His beloved consort on his shoulder. At this all the gods and goddesses got frightened and approached Lord Vishnu for the well being of the universe. Then, in order to put a stop to the penance of Siva, Lord Vishnu followed Him and lopped away the body of Sati piecemeal with his discus. It fell to the earth in fifty-one different places and wherever a piece fell, was held to be

sacred. Her organ of generation fell on Kamagiri, i.e. Nilachal. Lord Siva, seeing the genital part falling, held it over his breast on the top of that hill. Formerly, the colour of the hill was red. But due to the immensity of the weight of the falling object and of Siva, the colour of the hill become blue and it began to go down towards the centre of the earth. Seeing that, Lord Brahma (the God of creation) held the eastern cliff and Lord Vishnu, the western cliff. Still the three cliffs were going down. At last 'Mahamaya' (from whose ovary this Universe is created and who is the wife of Lord Siva) held all the cliffs together and thus prevented it from going down. The spot where the 'genital' organ fell came to be regarded as Kamakhya. The cliffs Bhubaneshweri, Kamakhya and Baraha represent the bodies of Lord Brahma, Lord. Siva and Lord Vishnu respectively. The goddess herself is called Kamakhya because she came there to satisfy her amour secretly with Lord Siva. Dr. B. K. Kakati writes, "the derivations of the Kalika Purana make the mountain both a grave-yard and a secret love-tryst of the goddess."

The Yogini Tantra gives a different account stressing the creative symbolism of the *Yoni* (the genital part). Mahamaya was curious as to who was Kamakhya and wanted to know it from Lord Siva. In answer to her query Siva replied that Kamakhya was same as Kali, who is regarded as the eternal form of Brahma, the god of creation. Siva's reply was thus: Brahma, after having created the universe arrogated to himself the supreme creative force. This arrogance of Brahma came to the notice of the great goddess (Mahamaya). She was displeased to see it and to teach a lesson to Brahma created a demon, named Kesi, out of her own body. The demon, as soon as he was born, rushed towards Brahma to swallow him up. Brahma, in terror ran to Vishnu who could not offer him any help and himself took to flight along with Brahma. Kesi built a city called after his name 'Kesipura' and began to harass Tribhubana (the three Worlds). There was only one echo, "Kill Brahma". Brahma cast aside his vanity and in the company of Vishnu offered a hymn of propitiation to Kali, for saving the worlds from the tyranny of Kesi. The Goddess was satisfied. She admitted that the demon was created by herself for punishing Brahma for his arrogance. She then uttered the syllable of destruction (humkar) and Kesi was burnt to ashes. Then she gave directions to Brahma about the method of his deliverance from the sin of ignorance and arrogance. He was asked to create a mountain out

of the ashes of the burnt demon. The mountain should be neither too high nor too low. It should be covered with edible grass for cattle. Brahma's sin would be deminished in proportion to the quantity of grass consumed by cattle. Besides saying this, she created a *Yoni* circle (genital part) out of her creative energy on the very spot from where Brahma and Vishnu had offered their prayer to her, then she behested them to regard this *Yoni* circle as the source of all things. Brahma was asked to go in for creation in future, only after paying his homage to the *Yoni*. He was, however, debarred from seeing the *Yoni* until by his penance he had brought down a luminous light from the sky and placed it on the *Yoni* circle.

It was this that *Yoni* circle of mother goddess came to be located at Kamrupa. Regarding this myth Dr. Kakati has observed as follows :

"The notable points in this myth are; (*a*) Kamakhya was a newgoddess unknown to the Devi herself. Siva establishes the identity of Kali and Kamakhya in that symbol of a *Yoni*; (*b*) the supreme creative force of Brahma is challenged, thenceforth. He could create only with the blessings of the *Yoni* as the sole creative principle; (*c*) in both the accounts of the *Kalika Purana* and the *Yogini-Tantra*, there is mention of a burial or cremation ground.

Thus the two scriptures put divergent interpretations about the *Yoni* circle as a symbol of sex and as a symbol of creation. Dr. Kakati is of the view that these may embody the views of two different sets of people who professed that cult in different periods of time.

The *Kalika Purana* harmonises amorous conception of the goddess with the dread goddess Kali by presenting the picture of a goddess in three fold aspects assumed in different moods. In her amorous mood the goddess holds a yellow garland in her hand and stands on red lotus placed on a white corpse. When her amour is gone, she takes up the word and stands on a bare white corpse. In her mood of benevolence (*Kamda*) she mounts upon a lion. So she assumed one form or the other according to whims (*Kamarupini*)—(Kalika Purana—60/55 et. seq.).

When Narakasura founded his kingdom in Assam he became the custodian of this goddess. According to *Kalika Purana*, Narakasura changed the name of the kingdom from pragjyotishpura to Kamrupa in conformity to the wish of the goddess.

The *Devi Bhagabata* gives the names of one hundred and eight places that were associated with the body of Sati one way or the other. Beside,

the tepmle of the Goddess Kamakhya, there are some other temples the origin of which is also given by the *Kalika Purana*. In the same chapter (sixty-second), Mahadeva is saying that the great Goddess (Kamakhya) is surrounded by several other goddesses. He utters the name of eight such goddesses. They are Gupta Kama, Shri Kama, Bindhya Bashini, Kotiswari, Banastha, Pad Durga, Dirgheswari and Bhubaneswari. These places originated with the fall of the 'Genital Part' of the great Goddess. As it was decomposed, therefore, some portions fell at different points at Kamakhya. Thus along with the Great Goddess, these goddesses were also born. Over and above these goddesses, Lord Siva, Himself exists at the place in five forms. The first is Siddheswar. Near it, are Gayakshetra and Amritkunda. *Kalika Purana* says that it was dug by Lord Indra and other gods for the pleasure of Lord Siva. On its left is Kameswar Siva immersed in Kamkunda. In between Siddheswar and Kameswar, there is Kadar-Kashetra, a place of Lord Vishnu. Lord Siva stays in his '*Aghor*' (dreaded) form to the south of Kamakhya. He is known as Bhairab. In the Sri-Bhaba Guha (cave), He stays in the form of Amrataheswar. He says that in this cave, the Goddess Durga stays with Him. The Ganges herself flows there for the pleasure of Him. Lord Siva stays in His 'Savar' form in a cave to the North of the great Goddess. He is known as Kutilings. To the West of the Goddess, is the abode of Lord Vishnu. At this place, he killed two great demon-kings, 'Madhu' and 'Kaitava'. Near it is Barah-Kunda. This was dug by Lord Brahma himself. The stone on which Lord Vishnu slayed the two demons is known as 'Pandu'.

Beside these, the names of several other gods, goddesses and places are found in the *Kalika Purana* such as, Brahmasakti-sila, Bhasmachal, Kubjika-pith, Triputa, Siva, Sarada, Kusmandi Jogini, Chamunda, (She killed two demons named Chanda and Munda), Puskar-kshetra, Bhubananada cave, Chandaghanta Jogini, and Skandamata Jogini.

At a little distance from the Kamakhya temple, there is a tank which is known as Saubhangaya Kunda. Reference of this is also found in the *Kalika Purana*.

Important Towns within Fifty Miles of Kamakhya :

Kamakhya is situated within a few miles of two most important towns of Assam. Gauhati, the premier town of not only of Assam, but of the whole

of the north eastern region of India is, only three miles east of Kamakhya. The area of Gauhati as in 1961 is 5.50 sq. miles. The population as stood in 1961 was 1,00,707. Another important town of Assam, Pandu is only one mile to the west of Kamakhya. The Area of Pandu is 2.50 sq. miles. Its population according to the census of 1961 is 31,173.

Before 1958 these referrent towns were connected with Kamakhya with only two hilly tracks. Built of stone these stiff/stair-cases were the only means of communication between Kamakhya and the plains. In the pre-independence era, no effort was made by the alien government for the improvement of Kamakhya. In the immediate post-independence era also, no marked improvement was observed at Kamakhya either in the field of communication or any other matter. Everybody desiring to visit the temple of Mother Goddess Kamakhya had to climb those stiff hill tracks. The old and the disabled could only cherish the hope of visiting the temple, but the hopes of only a few were realised. Those who could afford, hired 'dooly' which was generally very much expensive.

Thanks to the interest taken by some of the ministers of the Union Government and the State Government of Assam, (among them, the name of Pandit Govinda Vallabh Pant, ex-Home Minister of India deserves special mention) the communication to Kamakhya improved very much some years after independence. Sri Pant appreciated the importanace of Kamakhya and favoured a scheme of connecting it by a motorable road. The then Chief Minister of Assam Sri B. R. Medhi also took an active interest in the matter. A scheme was finalised in 1956 and was immediately put into effect. On the eve of the sixty-third anniversary of the Indian National Congress which was held in Assam in February, 1958 the road was declared open by Sri Pant himself. So, an all weather motorable road now connects Kamakhya with the rest of the plains.

Kamakhya is mainly dependent on Gauhati and Pandu in regard to marketing, employment and other economic and social activities. Almost hundred per cent of marketable things are supplied to Kamakhya from markets in and around Gauhati and Pandu. Local production almost nil. For higher education also Kamakhya has to look to Gauhati. Formerly, there was an M. E. School only. So, students after completing thier studies in the M.E. School had to go to

Gauhati for high school and college education. At present, though there is a High School, students have to go down to Gauhati for college and university education.

The situations of Gauhati and Pandu are very vital to Kamakhya. Youths of Kamakhya, after completion of their studies have to depend mainly on these two places for their livelihood. The majority of the educated youths of Kamakhya are employed in different offices, either government or private at Gauhati and Pandu. Some of them are serving in different places in Assam and other parts of India as well. Again a few of them are holding high posts in countries like U.S.A., U.K., etc.

With reference to political, social and administrative activities, Kamakhya is a satellite of Gauhati. Any social or political upheaval in Gauhati has its impact in Kamakhya. Besides, Kamakhya is linked with the outside world through Gauhati and Pandu. Hence even the pilgrim traffic at Kamakhya is affected by the developments in these two places.

Kamakhya has also a net work of connections with places in the interior of Kamrup and Darrang districts landed property of Kamakhya is spread out in all these places. Hence in addition to religious interest the people of these places are tied by economic interests with Kamakhya.

Transport and Communication :

Kamakhya is within Gauhati Sub-division in the district of Kamrup. It has already been mentioned that this historic place is in the State of Assam. Shillong is the capital of Assam. Shillong is situated in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. It is a little more than six thousand feet high from sea-level and sixty-four miles south of Gauhati. The distance of Shillong from Kamakhya is sixty seven miles. Kamakhya is connected with Gauhati by an all weather motorable road. Shillong is also connected with Gauhati by a motorable road. There is Transport Service, run by the State Government between Gauhati and Shillong. Over and above this, there is a Tourists' Service and a large number of private vehicles always ply on this road. There is of course, no direct service between Shillong and Kamakhya and although no direct daily service is deemed necessary between Gauhati and Kamakhya at present, there is a demand at Kamakhya that the State Transport authorities should explore the possibilities of introducing at least some experimental

services during important celebrations like Ambubachi, Durgapuja, etc.

The nearest airport of Kamakhya is Borjhar, at a distance of eleven miles to the West. The railway stations nearest to Kamakhya are Galukbari (near Pandu) and Gauhati. During the British regime a railway station was opened at the Eastern foot of Kamakhya. But after the outbreak of the Second World War, the station was closed, as the authorities had to pay more attention to the movement of military traffic than to the visitors to Kamakhya. But even after the termination of the war, the railway station here, has not been reopened. The people of Kamakhya are pressing for the resumption of the function of this station. They point out that the number of vistiors to Kamakhya has increased manifold, they should be spared the trouble of travelling to Kamakhya by tax or other costly transport all the way from Gauhati.

There is a radio transmission centre at Gauhati, and Kamakhya being a part of Greater Gauhati is well covered by it.

Brahmaputra, the mighty river of Eastern India, the third largest water carrying river in the whole world, a source of great fear and trouble to Assam and other parts of Eastern India, flows by the north of Kamakhya and washes the feet of the Mother Goddess Kamakhya. Besides, it is helpful to its inhabitants in many ways.

Physiological Features :

Kamakhya hill or Nilachal dominates the hill complex surrounding Gauhati. Nilachal consists of three small hills. Of them, Bhubaneswari is the highest and Baraha is the lowest. Kamakhya is just between the two. The height of Bhubaneswari from sea level is 860 feet, that of Kamakhya is 770 feet and of Baraha is 630 feet. The length and breadth of the area are 3 kms. and 1.3 kms. respectively. But the area on which houses have been built uptil now at the top will not be more than half of one square-kilometer. The other portions of the hills are covered with jungles. Rainfall is sufficient and the average annual rainfall is 200 centimetres. The climate of Kamakhya is temperate and much enjoyable. The summer is of short duration and the winter is not.

Inside the three hills, there are several hillocks. Bhubaneswari consists of two hillocks. Of the two, Bhubaneswari is the highest. Some *Asrams* (hermitages) have been built at the foot area of the lower one. There are a few natural springs in this area.

There is no such natural spring at the top of Bhubaneswari. Except for a few summer days, high wind generally blows at the top of Bhubaneswari. Kamakhya consists of three hillocks. It is at the top of the Kamakhya hillock, that the people live. Most of the temples also lie scattered there. Baraha consists of two hillocks.

All these hillocks are connected by ridges. By the northern side of Kamakhya, the mighty river Brahmaputra is flowing. It has made the climate of Kamakhya temperate. On the top, there are several natural springs and a few tanks. But they are not perennial sources of water. The flow of water during the dry seasons, is not much. The tanks, except one, dry up.

Agricultural activities cannot be undertaken at all on the hills due to the scarcity of land and water. Its woods also do not supply any valuable timber. Mango, jackfruit and some other indigenous fruit trees grow here. Cocoanut trees also grow here and can be perceived as soon as one enters the Kamakhya Temple compound.

There is no wild animal in its forest, except some stray tigers which appear occasionally. They come along with the flood water in the Brahmaputra. Monkeys are, however, abundant in Kamakhya and they constitute a menace to the local population and the visitors. In the jungle area snakes are found. Occasionally, the king cobra is also seen.

The people of Kamakhya are mostly believed to be of Aryan stock. They are meidum built, healthy fellows. Generally, they are hard working and time has taught them to be more active.

Recognition of Kamakhya as Urban Area :

Kamakhya is now a township. Prior to 1956, it was held in the category of a village. But this classification was unreal, because no characteristic of the village life was present there. As at present, at the time also the inhabitants were well aware of all urban habits and customs, also they always came in contact with people from almost all parts of the country.

During the Census of 1961, the population of the township stood at 4,359. It appears that by now it has almost been doubled.

Town Committee :

A Town Committee was nominated by the Government of Assam. This body is now mainly responsible for allsorts of developmental works in and around Kamakhya. Of

course, within the temple compound, it is the lookout of the Temple Committee.

Important Public Offices :

At present there are only a few public offices like the Town Committee Office, the Post Office, Office of the Doloi (Manager) of Kamakhya Estate, Kamakhya Police Beat House, Kamakhya Samaj Kalyan Sanstha, Kamakhya Village Defence Committee, Kamakhya Food Committee and Kamakhya Co-operative Society. Relevant particulars regarding these institutions have been discussed one by one.

Kamakhya Town Committee :

The Office of the Kamakhya Town Committee is housed in a rented Assam type building. It is situated just outside the Kamakhya Temple compound. This Office was instituted on February 15th, 1956. It carries on all activities which are the concerns of a municipal body. Since its inception, several developmental schemes have been executed by this body. The jurisdiction of the Town Committee is just the area of the place, *i.e.* one square-mile. It includes the top of Kamakhya hill and the foot of it. The number of employees in the office is five. Of them one is an assistant and an other is a peon. Both of them are wholetime employees. The other three are sweepers. They are part-time employees. Besides these, some extra sweepers are recruited for emergency purpose during important celebrations at Kamakhya.

The Municipal Body itself is constituted of six members. They include one chairman and one vice-chairman. Uptil now, this body is being nominated by the Government. For several reasons, which will be discussed presently, no tax is imposed on the citizens of Kamakhya. As a result no municipal election was hled at Kamakhya and an elected body has not yet been a possibility.

The idea of declaring Kamakhya a township has a history which is also noteworthy. The problem of water had probably hastened the inception of the Town Committee there. It is proposed to discuss the problem of water at Kamakhya in a separate section, as it is considered a vital subject for the life there. Works for a water treatment and supply scheme began in 1956 and simultaneously work on the motorable road was taken up. It is in this context that the town committee was set up.

Though Kamakhya has been declared as a township, the civic life of the community seems to have

remained paralysed due to certain basic maladies. Firstly, no municipal tax has yet been imposed, because of the fact the inhabitants of Kamakhya are not prepared to pay house-tax. Though apparently it is difficult to justify it, the people of Kamakhya have strong argument of their own. Their economic conditions are far from being stable. About 98% of the households practically live hand to mouth on the basis of the payments received from the pilgrims. Again, Kamakhya is a part of Greater Gauhati. So, the inhabitants of the place fear that once house tax is introduced, it will be brought at par with Gauhati, which is impossible to be borne by them. Gauhati is the largest commercial and industrial centre in the whole of the north eastern region of India. On the other hand, Kamakhya is a holy place where a house is neither offered nor required for any rental purpose. These are the reasons for which the inhabitants of Kamakhya have not yet agreed to pay any house-tax. So far as water tax is concerened, they have agreed to pay it at reasonable rates. But according to municipal rules, no water tax can be realised without collecting house-tax.

As a result of the above complications the town committee is having a precarious existence without having any elected member.

Kamakhya Village Defence Committee :

This can better be regarded as a peace-keeping organization on the top of Kamakhya Hill. Prior to July, 1967, no such organization was there. But various issues which could disturb peace were dealt with by three societies, *viz.*, the Brahman Society, the Sudra Society and the Bhakat Society (the members of the last one are the followers of the great Sankardeva of Assam). These societies are believed to have been in existence, since times immemorial; and these are still in existence. In matters of social customs, etc., these societies act in mutual co-operation. But they are ineffective to deal with the problems relating to visitors from outside.

During the great festivals, some undesirable elements come to reap the benefit of unsocial activities. An incident took place during the Ambubachi gathering in 1967, in which one monk received severe injuries. Again Kamakhya is a shrine where most of the worshipping is done according to leftist cult (Bamamarg). In such worship, wine is also used. Taking advantage of this, some unsocial elements at Kamakhya and outside become active and carry on illegal wine trade. At one time it appeared that life at Kamakhya would

be thoroughly corrupted and social peace would be disrupted. So in consultation with the police officials, the Kamakhya Defence Party was set up. This organization now carries on all such activities, as are authorised by the Government of India under the Village Defence Scheme. Under the auspicies of the Party, prohibition is now strictly enforced.

The Office of the Party is at present housed in a room provided by the Temple authority within the Kamakhya Temple compound. It has no paid employee uptil now. The Office is run by a committee of thirteen members who are all elected by the public. The principal office bearers are the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Joint-Secretary. The number of volunteers is about one hundred. Most of them come from the youth section of the place. Its jurisdiction is the top of Kamakhya Hill, and it carries on its activities under the Office-in-Charge of Jalukbari Police Station.

Kamakhya Food Committee : (K.F.C.)

The supply of foodstuff has become a headache in every part of India. It is more than a mere headache at Kamakhya; as it has little food production of its own. For the supply of all sort of foodstuff, Kamakhya has entirely to depend upon the plains. And as the essential commodities are not freely available, the establishment of Kamakhya Food Committee became very much necessary. It was established in June, 1967. Its activities are mainly the procurement and distribution of essential commodities through fair price shops. Now all sort of foodstuff are distributed in Greater Gauhati through Fair Price Shops, which are under the control of the Deputy Director of Supply, Gauhati. Local food committees act in close co-operation with the Deputy Director of Supply. Under each food committee there are several fair price shops. There are five fair price shops under Kamakhya Food Committee. They are all situated at the top of the hill. The Kamakhya Food Committee is run by a committee of eleven members who are all elected by the public. It has a President, a Vice-president, a Secretary and an Assistant as its principal office bearers. The Office has no paid employees at present.

Kamakhya Samaj Kalyan Sanstha :

Before refering to the Kamakhya Samaj Kalyan Sanstha, it would be necessary to refer to some very older organisations which existed before the foundation of this Sanstha. The Kamakhya Natya Samittee, which is believed to be more than hundred years

old, carried on all activities related to social development. In the first decade of this century there was a division in the society. In 1930, some educacated youths of Kamakhya founded a club which was named as Bharat Bandhu Club and Library. The main concern of the club was to found a big library and at the same time carry on some activities beneficial to the society. Their sincere efforts did not go in vain. They gave concrete shape to the present Kamakhya Library. Moreover, they were the vanguard of modernisation among the people of Kamakhya. In the next decade, a different organisation took its shape which received the support and sympathy of all sections of the people of the place. The library in the later years was re-named as Kamakhya Library, the particulars relating to it will be supplied in a separate chapter.

Kamakhya Samaj Mangal Samitee :

Reference has been made to another organization, which was established in 1940 to carry on various types of social services. This body was mainly responsible for initiating a number of development activities, like construction of roads, clearing of water tanks, etc. It also took steps for prevention of crime at Kamakhya. It carried on its activities through a committee, the members of which were elected annually. The principal source of income of the Committee was the 'toll' collected from shops, tea-stalls, etc., which were opened during important celebrations.

The Samitee had no paid employees. It continued its activities till 1956, the year when Kamakhya was declared a township and statutory town committee came into existence.

It was believed that the Town Committee would be able to take over all the functions of the Samaj Kalyan Samitee but soon it was found that a mere municipal body was utterly inadequately equipped to tackle all its problems. The pressing social needs led to the creation of another organisation, Kamakhya Samaj Kalyan Sanstha in the year 1960. It was opened with the avowed purpose of taking up welfare activities which did not come under the jurisdiction of the Town Committee.

The Sanstha has two categories of members. One can become life member by paying a lumpsum amount of Rs. 50 or one can become ordinary member by paying annual subscription of Re. 1.

The Sanstha has an elected executive body of thirteen members, including a President, a

Vice-President, a Secretary and a Joint-Secretary. The offices are held for one year.

The Sanstha manages a pre-basic (montessori school), a maternity home and crafts-centre. It also maintain a children's park near the motor stand on the top of the hill.

The Sanstha took the initiative to organise two holiday camps for children. The first one was organised in 1963, at Tezpur with the participation of 50 boys; the second one was organised in 1965, at Darjeeling with the participation of 50 girls.

The permanent paid employees of the Sanstha are as follows :—

(a) Organiser cum Mistress. (A Montessori trained lady teacher has been appointed)
(b) Ayah. (Female child care-taker)
(c) Midwife.
(d) Craft Instructress.
(e) Music Instructor.
(f) Mali(gardner)
(g) Chowkidar(watch-man)

It is to be noted that the pay scales of the employees of the Sanstha, particularly those of the music instructor, gardner and watch-man are very low.

An important source of income for the Sanstha is the free collected from the students. There are also some voluntary contributions from the public. But the main source of income is the grant-in-aid received from Assam State Social Welfare Board and the Central Social Welfare Board. During 1961 to 1964, it received Rs. 25,000 from the Central Social Welfare Board, it received of Rs. 8,800 in 1965, and Rs. 6,600 in 1966, from the source. It received separate grants from the Assam State Social Welfare Board also. In 1960, it received a total grant of Rs. 8,000 in two instalments; in 1961, it received a grant of Rs. 3,000.

Since 1966, the Sanstha seems to be passing through a rough water. It has failed to secure any grant from the Central Social Welfare Board.

Cultural Institutions and Recreation Centres :

Kamakhya does not have any cultural institution worth mentioning. Several attempts were made in the past to establish cultural institutions and recreation centres befitting the reputation of the place. But these attempts have not met with much success. The small size of the population and limitations of fund are undoubtedly important reasons why cultural and recreational centres of any significance failed

to flourish here. But the general cultural climate of the region and the lack of certain minimum facilities; share a greater part of the responsibility. There is no public hall of Kamakhya where cultural performances can be organised. As regard the general cultural climate, it is to be noted that even at Gauhati there is no cultural recreation centre except for a few Cinema halls. Sometime back in a feature article in the Illustrated Weekly of India an author drew attention to the fact though in the day time there could be some sight seeing in and around Gauhati, life was completely dull after the dusk, with no enterainment and nothing of interests. It seems that the glorious cultural past of the region has an effect of soporific self satisfaction in the mind of the people and there is an all embracing cultural inertia today, which the youth of Kamakhya find it difficult to over come.

Religious Institutions :

Kamakhya is famous as one of the main centres of the 'Tantric Cult' a leftist sect of Hinduism. There is a society of the Tantriks at Kamakhya, named Bhairabi Tantrik Union. The origin of this Union cannot be traced back.

At different periods a number of veterans of the cult lived at Kamakhya, among them mention may be made of purnananda Giri and his disciple Brahmananda Giri who were living during the rule of the Ahoms. Among the present leaders of the cult mention may be made of Pramath Nath Sarma Sastri (deboi or manager of Kamakhya Estate) and Tantricacharyya Ramani Kanta Sarma.

A notable feature of this cult is that, it does not recognise caste or religious restrictions. A man of any caste or religion can become a *tantric* by undergoing *diksha*, (initiation into the cult). When they worship their desired 'god' or 'goddess' they generally form a *chakra* (a circle). Normally, eleven members sit together and when the circle (*Chakra*) is complete nobody from outside is allowed to join it. Inside the *Chakra*, there is no difference among the members. All the participants are equal.

Any Tantric can be a life member of the Union by paying a fee of eleven rupees at a time. A committee of two men consisting of the President and Secretary performs the executive functions of the Union.

Under the auspices of the Union, various rites related to the cult are performed. These rites and practices are closely guarded secret among the members. One may, out

of curiosity join the cult and wish to disclose before the world about it. But once one becomes a member, one is seen to try to keep the secret.

Many of the Tantriks have written books interpreting various aspects of the cult. Most of these were in manuscripts and were lost in course of time. One Chandra Nath Bhattacharyya wrote Kali Tantra, Barada Tantra and Kaularchan Paddhati. Purnananda Giri wrote 'Tara Rahashya'. Brahmananda Giri worshipped the goddess Tara according to the Tibetan customs. Many legends are connected with the name of this great exponent of the cult. Not a single image of any god or goddesses is found inside the temples of Kamakhya, save the image of the goddess Tara. This image was carved out of stone by Brahmananda Giri. It is said that originally the great tantrik was worshipping the goddess Tara, outside Kamakhya, somewhere inside Assam. The goddess feared that by the strength of meditation, he might compel her to leave her abode at Kamakhya, so she appeared before the then king of Assam (probably some Ahom King) in a dream and informed him that if he failed to drive the monk away, she would no longer stay in his kingdom. Three times the *Paiks* of the king tried to send him away. At last out of vexation, he threw a stone over a heap where all the wastes of Kamakhya were accumulated and carried on his meditation. The goddess failing to drive him away, wished to grant him a boon. The monk also wished to punish the goddess. He asked her to carry that stone with him. The goddess finding no way out, sent one of her maid-servants with him to carry his stone wherever he went. When it became almost impossible for the girl to bear the heavy load any more, he brought it back to Kamakhya and with his own hands, carved out the image of the goddess Tara.

Brahmananda Giri wrote 'Saktananda Tarangini'. But along with many other valuable manuscripts this was lost, when a fire broke out at Kamakhya in the third decade of the present century.

At present the Bhairavi Union is trying to build a Tantrik Library at Kamakhya and collect all sorts of manuscripts available at the place. If it becomes successful, it will be a landmark in the history of the Tantric Cult at Kamakhya. Sri Pramath Nath Sarma Sastri and Tantricha-charya Ramani Kanta Sarma have represented the Union in various religious councils held at different places of India. Save the Tantric Institution

there is no other sectarian institution at Kamakhya. There is of course a Society called the 'Bhakat Society' the members of which are the followers of the great Sankardeva of Assam. A mention has been made of this society while writing about the Village Defence of Kamakhya.

Dasnami Akhara of Kamakhya:

This is not a functional institution, but can be regarded as a residence for monks. It is inside the Kamakhya Temple compound, and is said to be founded by Sankaracharyya, the great religious reformer of India. There is a stone image of a pair of feet inside the Akhara. They are said to be the feet of God (Guru-Paduka).

During the time of the Assam kings, landed property was donated for the maintenance of the Akhara. The total landed property of it was eighteen hundred bighas. Monks living there could be supported by the income of this property. Besides there a share in the 'Bhoga' (the food-offerings) of the Goddess Kamakhya, was to be given to the Akhara for feeding the monks, who put up there occassionally. Of course, no monk was allowed to live there permanently except the 'Mahanta' (like the abbot). On enquiry, I came to know the names of two men who were Mahantas till the out-break of the Second World War. They were Mahanta Balgir and Mahanta Narayan Puri. Uptil now none from Kamakhya has ever become a Mahanta of it. The Mahantas were appointed from among the visiting monks. After the war, the income from the landed property was not enough to maintain the 'Abbey' and now it is managed by a committee under the Kamakhya Temple Authority. A few years ago, the landed property of the 'Abbey' was given in auction by the Government for the non-payment of the revenue and it fetched only three thousand rupees. The amount has been deposited with the State Bank of India, Gauhati. A priest has been appointed for carrying on the worship and for that he is given a sum of Rs. 50 (Rupees fifty only) annually. The houses of the Akhara are now in a dilapidated condition.

Important Relics :

Since the beginning of the History of Assam, the name of Kamakhya is found to be directly associated with the names of Kings and other historical events. But as it is a religious place, there are some relics connected with it only. To our knowledge, no king made Kamakhya his capital, nor any

battle was ever fought there. Yet many things of the past which draw curious visitors from many parts are found there.

Among those, the name of the temple of Mother Goddess Kamakhya comes first. According to the legend, the first builder of the Temple was Kamdev. Madan (Kamdev) was reborn in Kamrupa by the boon granted to his wife Ratidevi and Ashutosha (Lord Siva). The name Kamrupa originated from this. Rati Devi and Madan offered worship to the Goddess and they at first thought of building the Kamakhya Temple. The first King of Assam according to History 'Naraka', worshipped the Goddess. To him the construction of the four stony paths, and many other things is attributed. Studying the structural feature of the Temple Sri Rajata Nanda Das Gupta arrived at the conclusion that the Adisthana (the base-ment) was built not earlier than the 8th century and not later than 13th century. It is a temple of the Nagara style with a Sikhara or tower over the Garvagriha. From the stone inscription in the Kamakhya temple it is known that Bisva Singha had the original stone-built temple excavated from the debris and surmounted it with a new Sikhara in the closing years of the 15th century as a gesture of thanks-giving towards the Goddess, who graced him with victory against the Ahoms. Local traditions point to the Brahman renegade and iconoclast the general of t Nawab of Gaur, Kalapahar as the destroyer of Hindu Temples and images. It is said that he, in one of his iconoclastic raids, destroyed the renovated temple while Narnarayan and Chilarai, the sons of Bisva Singha, were busy in fighting with the Ahoms. The pious king at once took up the reconstruction work and entrusted this work to one Mahat Ram Baisya. But he was soon removed because of misappropriation of funds. Then Megha Makdum was given the charge of completing the work. Thus the upper portion of the temple was completed in 1565 A. D.

There are three parts of the temple, (*a*) the main temple (*b*) the Nat-Ghar. There is a class of people known as 'Nats' who were to dance before the Goddess at the time of worshipping during the rule of the Ahom kings. This Hall (Nat-Mandir) was used for that purpose. (*c*) Tam-Ghat, this is a low-roofed shed on wooden pillars. The roof was made of an egg-shaped Tam (copper) plate. The sides are open. The roof of the Nat-Mandir is also oval. Only the original Adisthana of the temple is built of stone. Except this, other portions are made

of brick and mortar. The Nat-Mandir and the Tam-Ghar were built by the Ahoms. The exact time of building the former is not known, the latter was built in the last part of the eighteenth century by Kalia-Bhomora Baraphukan of Gauhati.

Besides the Kamakhya temple there are temples of other gods and goddesses. The names of them are as follows:

(a) *The Bhubaneswari Temple* :—It is situated on the top of the Bhubaneswari hill. This is a structure of brick and mortar. At the top of the temple there was vessel made of gold which was stolen in 1960. In this connection it may be mentioned that the gold vessel over the portion of the Kamakhya temple under which the Chalanta Thakurani rests was also stolen by some miscreants a little before that. After the construction of the motorable road there is less security of life and property at Kamakhya. Formerly, no such untoward happening ever occured at Kamakhya.

(b) *Kali Temple:*—This is just at a hundred yards distance from the Kamakhya temple. It falls on the way to the temple of the principal goddess. This is brick structure with a tin-roofed shed attached to the main temple, where there is only a sacrificial fire.

(c) *Tara Mandir* :—It is only at a distance of twenty yards from the Kamakhya temple. It has a gate at the entrance of the temple. In the other temples, there is no image of any god or goddess. But in this temple there is an image of the Goddess Tara which was carved out of a piece of stone by one Brahmananda Giri, a Tantrik devotee of the Goddess.

(d) *Chinnamasta Mandir:*—It is the temple of the goddess Chinnamasta. It is situated near the present motor stand at the top of Kamakhya and is at a distance of about 150 yards from the main temple.

(e) *Kameswar Temple:*—It is one of the five places of Lord Siva at the top of Kamakhya. This temple is within the same compound of the Chinnamasta temple. The structure of this temple is quite different from the other temples. This resembles the style in which the Ahom kings built their palaces and Rang-Ghar at their capital. It is a brick and mortar construction.

(f) *Bhairabi Temple* :—It is about two hundred yards away from the main temple. It is situated towards the south of the Kamakhya temple compound.

(g) *Dhumabati Temple* :— It is the abode of the Goddess Dhumabati. The position of the temple is in between the Kamakhya and the Bhairabi temple.

(h) *Tokeswar Mandir* :— It is one of the five places of Lord Siva at the top of Kamakhya. It is about three hundred yarda from the temple of the Goddess Kamakhya and is situated towards the western part of the place.

(i) *Kedar Mandir* :—This is a temple of Lord Vishnu situated close to the present motor stand and only a few yarda from the Kameswer and the Chinnamasta temples. It is very small in height and area compared to the other temples of Kamakhya.

(j) *Kamaleswar Temples* :— It is also a temple of Lord Vishnu. One noticeable thing is that it is within the Kamakhya temple compound and the situation is something peculiar as Kamakhya is a Sakta Goddess and within her compound there is a temple of Lord Vishnu.

(k) *Siddheswar Temple* :— This is a temple of Lord Siva situated to the east of the Kameswar Temple.

(l) *Cave of Kauti-Linga* :— This is one of the places of Lord Siva. Unlike other temples, it is a cave formed by a few big rocks. There are several natural springs near it. But in dry-season the flow of water is very low on the body of the rock, covering the front side of the Cave, there is an image of a cow carved on stone which is known as the Kamdhenu. Reference of this is also found in the Kalika Purana (sixty-second chapter).

The main temple of the Goddess Kamakhya has two parts as already stated, *viz.*, the basement made of stone, the construction period of which has not been ascertained yet and the sikhara, built of brick and mortar by Narnarayan and Chilarai in the middle part of the sixteenth century. The other temples were built by Ahom Kings in between seventeenth and eighteenth century. One thing to be noticed is that all of these temples are surrounded by 'Prakara' *i.e.* by a compound. They are all made of brick and mortar. There was no temple for Goddess Bagala and she was left under the open sky. In the second decade of this century the Maharaja of Durbhanga visited the Kamakhya Temple and it was he who erected a 'tin-shed' over the goddess. The Maharaja of Durbhanga had also repaired some temples and the *Prakaras* which

remained unrepaired since the fall of the Ahoms. The place of the goddess Lalita Kanta remained undiscovered till the fifties of this century and when it was discovered, she was covered by a tin-shed. The goddess Banadurga and Joydurga were also found recently. When Joydurga was found she was covered by a similar tin-shed and one Marawary Tradesman erected a modern temple on the side of the goddess Banadurga. Many of these temples have been damaged and they require huge sums for repair. In 1966, the Birla Trust carried on some repair works of the main temple of the Goddess Kamakhya. The praise-worthy work done by them is the reconstruction of the temple Kamaleswar, the temple of Lord Vishnu within the compound of the Goddess Kamakhya.

Other Relics of the Past :

There are many relics of the past other than these temples. They remain spread hither and thither at Kamakhya. Firstly, some beautifully carved stones, stone-pillars are to be found which appear to be blown off the original temple by the bombardment of Kalapahar. There are some stone-images which lie scattered on the body of the temple and other big rocks. Among these the images of a 'mother and child', several images of Ganesha, of Hanumana and some other gods and goddesses are very attractive. At the eastern and the western parts of the main temple there are two gates known as *Singha Duar* and *Bagh Duar*. Actually the temple is surrounded by four gates but these two are more important. The *Singha Duar* is made of stone, while the *Bagh Duar* is of brick and mortar. The *Singha Duar* is three hundred feet below the Kamakhya Temple. The western gate of the surrounding 'prakara' is called *Hanuman Duar* where the image of Hanumana remains on guard of the Mother Goddess. Another thing that makes one curious is that there is an image of the great Buddha carved on a stone which remains unguarded on the way to the top on the eastern part. Out of these so many relics only three have been classified as protected monuments. One is atop the Bhairabi temple where there is a stone image called 'Bala-Bhairabi'. The second is a big image of Ganesha on the way from Pandu. The *Singha Duar* is just atop this image. The third is a stone-inscription of King Siva Singha at a place called Cutting a few yards from the point where the motorable road to Kamakhya and the Assam Trunk Road are connected.

The temple of Pandu Nath : It is at the foot of the Baraha

hill. It is a temple of Lord Vishnu. The Kalika Purana says that Lord Vishnu killed the great demons *Madhu* and *Kaitabha* here and the Pandavas in their exile worshipped the Goddess Kamakhya praying for her blessings in getting their kingdom back. This temple is of brick and mortar built by the Ahom King.

The Na-Math :—When the preceptor of King Siva Singha was installed as 'Seva-Cholowa' at Kamakhya, a 'Math' was built where they worshipped their family goddess 'Kali'. It is a brick structure. Inside it, there was an image of the goddess 'Kali' made of gold which was stolen by a mad Brahman. However, it was given back by the same Brahman and it is now under the custody of a mill-owner of Gauhati. The 'Math' is now in a dilapidated condition. It is inside the Kamakhya Temple compound. The front decoration is very artistic.

The stone inscriptions and copper plates :

(a) *The Stone inscription of Narnaryan and Chilarai, the Koch King* :—It is inside the Kamakhya Temple and refers to the construction and dedication of the temple. It is dated 1565 A. D.

(b) *The stone inscription of the Ahom King Rajeswar Singha* :—It is inside the Nat-Mandir of the temple. The time mentioned is 1759. It was carved on the occasion of his visit to the temple.

(c) *The copper inscription of King Gaurinath Singha* :—It is a plate of the year 1782. On the occasion of King Gaurinath Singh's visit to the Temple one hundred thousand sacrifices were made to the Goddess for the well being of the king and his subjects. It is inscribed on a big copper plate and embedded on the wall of the Nat-Mandir.

(d) *The Stone inscription at Cutting*:—It is at the point where the motorable road to Kamakhya and the Assam Trunk Road meet. It has been classified as a protected monument as I have already mentioned. The date is 1732 A. D., the year when King Siva Singha fortified the area for the protection of his kindgom.

(e) *The stone inscription of King Pramatta Singha* :—It is inside the temple of Amratakeswar (Tokeswar) at Kamakhya. The temple was constructed by Pramatta Singha in the year 1744 A. D., and by this plate the temple was dedicated, to the God Amratakeswar.

(f) *The Stone inscription of King Rajeswhwar Singha* :—King Rajeshwar Singha built the Kedar Temple at Kamakhya in the year 1951 A. D. and by this stone inscription

it was dedicated to the God of the same name.

Over and above there are a good many copper plates with many families. Most of them relate to the land-gifts to Brahmans and temples by kings or their viceroys. I gave one such to Dr. Maheswar Neog, Nehru Chair Holder, Gauhati University, and he prepared a reading of it.

(g) *The stone inscription of the Koch King Raghudev*:—The son of Sukladhwaj (Chilarai), Raghudev became the master of the eastern part of the Roch Kingdom. He built the temple of Pandunath in the year 1583. It is written in this inscription.

Hermitages at Kamakhya :

There are several hermitages at Kamakhya whose number at the time of writing this book was five. These hermitages were founded not by any man from Kamakhya. Neither they were established by any Assamese. These five hermitages were established by some Bengali monks. Their particulars are furnished below:

(a) *Kalipur Asram*:—Kalipur *Asram* is situated at the the eastern side of the foot, facing Gauhati. It was founded by one Swami Purnananda in the year 1922. The aim of the *Asram* is to practise, Joga Brahmabidya (knowledge of the universe) and wisdom. It was founded with the help of one Promod Chandra Roy, a former Excise Superintendent. Now it is run with the monthly subscription of the desciples of the hermitage. It cannot provide accommodation to anybody as it does not have any 'dharamsala'. From this *Asram* the books written by Swami Bhumananda are published. The present Swamiji Prakashananda manages the hermitage. It is situated on Kamakhya Temple land which was leased out to the *Asram* for 99 years.

(b) *Umachal Asram*:—This is situated at a distance of about two hundred yards from Kalipur *Asram*. It was founded by one Swami Umananda Saraswati in the third decade of the present century from the donations of the desciples. It is now managed by the monthly subscriptions of those desciples. It has a 'dharamsala' and everybody is allowed to live there. The main objective of this *Asram* is to establish a Jogic College. It has already started a Jogic School and a Hospital. For this purpose, this *Asram* has received a sum of Rs. 2,000/- by way of grant from the Government. A number of books about jogic practices and exercises have been prepared and published by this *Asram*. It is run by Swami Sivananda Saraswati at present.

It is also situated on Kamakhya Temple land which was leased to it.

(c) *Bijoykrishna Asram*:— This *Asram* is situated towards the north of the foot of the hill. It was founded in 1959 (1366 B. S.) by one Swami Parmananda Saraswati by the contributions of his desciples. He dedicated the *Asram* in the name of the late Bijoykrishna Goswami, the religious preacher of Bengal. Swami Parmananda Saraswati is still living and he manages the affairs of the *Asram*. The *Asram* site is exquisitely beautiful. The land for it was leased from Kamakhya temple. Several modern design R. C. C. buildings have been erected at the *Asram* site. It is managed by what it receives by way of donations from its desciples and others. It cannot be said to be a sort of 'dharamsala', but any body willing to stay there is allowed for few days. Its main aim is to preach religion.

(d) *Nigam Topoban* :—It is situated at a little distance from *Umachal*. The great Jogic-Guru Swami Nigamananda lived there. It consists of a hut only. Till recently, an Assamese monk, Khageswar Brahmachari who was a desciple of Swami Nigamananda lived there. He died five years back.

Swami Nigamananda wrote several books on joga and Tantricism. Khageswar Brahmachari published some books and many saw him selling those books near the D. C.'s Court at Gauhati. After his death the Topoban was taken over by *Umachal Asram*.

(e) *Abhoyananda Asram*:— This *Asram* is situated on land leased out by Kamakhya Temple to it. Unlike the other *Asramas*, it is situated on Kamakhya proper. It was founded by one Swami Abhoyananda, a Bengali monk. The exact date of the foundation could not be obtained. However, I came to know that it was established in the second decade of the present century. His aim was to provide shelter to monks and other pilgrims and it was a sort of 'dharamsala'. But after his death a section of his desciples got possession of it and acquiring control, they have almost made it a shelter for a section of people only.

Educational Institutions :

Kamakhya is not such a big place and as such, the hope for establishing a University or a College cannot be cherished. It is situated near Gauhati and is a part of greater Gauhati. There are several colleges including an Engineering and a Medical College at Gauhati. An Engineering Institute and an Industrial Training Institute are also there. Again the University

of Gauhati is itselt situated there. These institutions offer opportunity to the students of Kamakhya to prosecute their higher studies. However, there are some educational institutions, which can provide some facilities at least at the basic level to the local students. I am going to give details of them one by one.

Kamakhya Balak Primary School (Boys' Lower Primary):

Till the advent of the British, there was no proper school at Kamakhya. Nevertheless, there was a kind of 'Home Teacher' (just like the private tutors of the present day, who gave regular coaching to young boys from house to house in 'Kaithali Script' and 'Kamrupy Language'. In 1862, an Aided Village Primary School was opened with the permission of the British Authorities. In 1878-79, the School was raised to the level of Higher Primary, teaching students upto standard V. The medium of instruction was Assamese until then and from that time lessons began to be given in Bengali. In 1902, the Educational Authorities gave an order for introducing Assamese as medium of instruction in all the Schools of Assam and it was only in 1908, that Assamese was introduced as medium of instruction at the Kamakhya Higher Primary School. In 1915, the School became an M. V. School. In 1918, it was taken over by the School Board of Assam. Since then an English Section was opened and in this way the School made considerable progress. In 1960, a High School was established at Kamakhya and after that in 1963 the M. V. Section of it was abolished. Since then it has been working as a Boys' Primary School.

It is exclusively a school for boys. The number of students is 230 and that of the teachers is five. They are all male teachers. It is situated near the present motor stand at the top and has a building of its own.

Kamakhya Balika Vidyalaya (Girls' Primary) :

Till 1941, there was no girls' school at Kamakhya, though from the second decade of the present century, some guardians sent girls to take their first lessons at the Kamakhya M. E. School. By the end of the third decade, the number was growing considerably and the need for a separate girls' school was keenly felt. Arrangement for accommodating the school could not be made until 1941-42. In that year a tin-roofed wooden house was erected with the donations received from M/s. Badridas Radhakishan of Gauhati and a separate girls' L. P. School

was a reality. Since then the School is progressing day by day. The number of girls reading in the school at present is 200. The number of teachers is three. Of them one is a lady.

Kamakhya High School :

As the population increased, the number of students grew day by day. The number of students completing their L.P. and M. E. School courses was adequate for starting a High School. Formerly, the students had to go to Gauhati for prosecuting their studies in Secondary and College level. Of course, the students were all boys and the number was small. The girls did not get any chance for carrying on their studies as it was not possible for them to go down to Gauhati always. In the case of the boys also, it was not an easy thing to go down to Gauhati always to prosecute their studies and for this reason most of them became weak-bodied and a good number breathed their last due to exhaustion. In 1959, the M. E. Section of the former M. V. School was separated and was raised to High School in 1960. At present, the school has been running through its ninth year. Everything can be said to be complete as regards the School save some minor disadvantages. The number of students is 350. The staff consists of eleven male teachers.

The school is running through its ninth year, it has not been brought under 'Deficit System' by the Government on because of departmental procedural reasons. About fifty per cent of the students are girls. Before the establishment of this school, the girls of Kamakhya did not get any chance to carry on their studies beyond the middle school level. Very few fathers could afford to send their girls to Gauhati on foot as Kamakhya is situated on a hill. It is estimated that only one per cent of the total number of girls received secondary education, and no girl could go upto the Post Secondary Level. Through the earnest efforts of some persons, a high school came into existence at Kamakhya in 1960. It symbolises the spirit of sacrifice of the people of Kamakhya. For the construction of the buildings it received generous donations from the local people as well as some persons belonging to Gauhati. The Kamakhya Estate donated a sum of Rs. 50,000 (Rupees fifty thousand) for the construction of the ground floor of a R.C.C. building and a further sum of Rs. 25,000 (Rupees twenty five thousand) for the first-floor of the building. The people of Kamakhya are making voluntary contributions even now for the maintenance of the school.

Kamakhya Sanskrit Tol :

The study of Sanskrit is necessarily a part of the daily activities of the people of Kamakhya as it is a famous Hindu Shrine. But there was no institution for teaching Sanskrit at Kamakhya till the beginning of the present century. Learners were to begin their first lessons at home under someone and after acquiring some knowledge, they had to go to Varanasi for higher studies. There are still several men who had gone to Varanasi for the purpose.

After the first decade of the present century, the great Sanskrit Scholar of Assam, Dhireswaracharayya came to live at Kamakhya. He is popularly known as '*deo*' at Kamakhya. It was under his supervision and guidance, that the Kamakhya Sanskrit Tol was established and he introduced the discussion of Panini here. The Institution did not receive any grant from the Government till recently. The grant at present being received is only a small amount; it is not enough for maintaining the tol at a good standard. Because of lack of official patronage and also because of the fact that the present generation is more interested in western type of education, the tol could not flourish. At present it has one Sanskrit teacher with ten students. It is housed in an old, tin-roofed, mud house, which was built for it at the beginning. The land was donated by a local man.

Jiban Ram Balikata Durga-Sarobar L. P. School :

It has already been stated that, though the number of people living at foot of Kamakhya was very small in the past, it is quite considerable at present. About 20% of the total population of Kamakhya now live at the foot of the hill. The people living there can avail of the educational facilities of the town. A Primary school was, however, established at the eastern corner of the foot of the hill in the year 1962 has been named after name of the donator of the land to the school. At present 80 pupils have been enrolled in the school—of whom 41 are boys and 39 are girls. The number of teachers is 2. One of them is male and the other is a female. The School receives grants under deficit system from the Government.

Shikshayika (Kamakhya Tutorial home) :

Till the middle part of this year, there was no Tutorial Home at Kamakhya. In June this year (1968), some educated youths of Kamakhya, wanted to open a Hig Venture School to provid

educational aids to such students who could not succeed in various examinations. In July 1969, a Tutorial Home name "Sikshayika" has started functioning at Kamakhya. It has twenty students at present of which 14 are boys and 6 are girls. They are all candidates of the High School Leaving Certificate Examination. The classes are held in the evening at Kamakhya Balak Primary School. It has five part-time coaches including a Sanskrit and a Geography teacher. It has not received any grant from the Government uptil now.

Hospital and Dispensary :

There is no hospital at Kamakhya. Other medical institutions like the Health Centre, Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, etc., are also absent. There is only a State Dispensary at Kamakhya. It was started in 1940 as a Subsidiary Dispensary. That was quite inadequate to provide necessary medical facilities to all the sections of people. The public of the place moved State Government several times to allot one fully equipped hospital at Kamakhya, as not only the inhabitants, but a considerable number of vistors require be looked after here.

After numerous representations, the subsidiary dispensary was made a State Dispensary in October, 1965, with the following staff.

(a) One A. S. (grade I) medical officer.

(b) One pharmacist.

(c) One nurse.

There is no medical social worker in the dispensary. On the other hand, as it is not a hospital, the nurse actually performs tne works of medical-social staff.

There is no para-medical staff also. But there is one chowkidar who helps the medical officer and pharmacist in various ways.

Statistics of the incidence of diseased treated in 1967-68 :

(a) The total number of patients treated were 4769. None among these died in the year of reference. The

nature of diseases were as follows :—

Disease	Number	Number ended in mortality
1. Fever	1,188	Nil
2. Dysentery	940	,,
3. Influenza	1,854	,,
4. Diarrhoea	59	,,
5. Ear-disease	180	,,
6. Eye-disease	177	,,
7. Sprain	244	,,
8. Minor wounds	127	,,
TOTAL .	4,769	

Over and above, these, all maternity cases, some cases of child disease were treated in Gauhati. There were four cases of cancer also. They were treated in Gauhati, Calcutta and Vellore, of Madras. All these cases ended in mortality.

The greatest difficulty of the people of Kamakhya at present is the absence of a Maternity and Child Guidance Clinic. At the time of delivery, the expectant mothers are taken down the hill to Gauhati. It is something risky, particularly because no vehicle can be obtained during odd hours of the day.

Family Planning Centre :

As the population is increasing rapidly, there is a felt need for family palnning centre. In fact 39 out of 178 married Brahman women of child bearing age residing on the top of the Kamakhya hill have already got themselves sterilised at Gauhati. Religious orthodoxy did not stand in the way of adoption of family control measures. Another about 15 women are reported to follow either rhythmic method or other indigenous practices. On the other hand there are about 50 women with more than three children each. If the family planning clinic is set up in Kamakhya, such prospective mothers can be persuaded to limit the size of the family.

Municipal Administration :

Kamakhya is a small township with about five thousand people. It has already been noted that Kamakhya was formerly held as a village. On February 15th, 1956, it was declared a Township. A Municipal Committee of six members was nominated by the Government. The same committee has been running the municipal administration at Kamakhya as no election has been held uptil now. The reasons have been observed earlier. Tax has not been imposed at Kamakhya yet. For, the inhabitants of Kamakhya have not yet agreed to pay the house-tax. Therefore, no municipal election has yet been held at Kamakhya. The nominated body have been doing all the activities of the civic-body.

Since it is not yet a full-fledged civic-body, its activities are also limited. As there is no elected member or of any special category, there is no distribution of functions between the elected, nominated or members of special categories. There is no paid executive also. The Town Committee does not have any operative department. The number of employees are five which have been already stated on an earlier occasion. As regards income also, it has solely to depend upon what it receives from the Government by way of grants. Because it does not earn any income from other sources as it does not have any. Neither it has any property like market and others. As regards expenditure also, it is not so much expanding in amount. Uptil now the committee has carried out only a limited programme. Its principal expenditure is incurred in the following items:

(a) General administration.

(b) Public safety.

(c) Drainage and beverage.

(d) Conservancy (it does not, however, include cleansing and watering of public roads and latrines).

(e) Construction and maintenance of roads.

Except these few, the Town Committee has not done anything remarkable. As regards public health, water supply, land development, remunerative enterprises, public instruction, sewerage, and other, the Kamakhya Town Committee does no have anything to do. Nor does the Municipal body has framed any rules as regards public-health, control and supplies of food and adulterated stuff, construction of houses, latrines, disposal of nightsoil and garbages, etc. Thus its functions are very much limited. An analysis of

its principal nature of functions have been given below:

Receipt of the Committee :

Government's grants	Year 1966-67	Year 1967-68
	Rs.	Rs.
1. General purposes	3,500·00	3,500·00
2. Special purposes (it includes grants for urban development, communication grants and motor vehicle grants) . .	7,593·00	3,310·00
The total receipts excluding the opening balance	11,093·00	6,810·00
Total receipts including the opening balance.	28,156·51	19,694·18
Expenditures :		
1. General administration	4,824·89	5,109·04
2. Public safety(lighting)	290·48	565·04
3. Drainage and beverage	8,296·60	4,022·60
4. Conservancy	569·94	316·75
5. Construction and maintenance of roads .	2,566·50	68·00

The supply of water and electricity to the town is given by the Assam State P. W. D. and the Assam State Electricity Board. The supply of electricity and water have been dealt in separate chapters. Among the notable things done by the Town Committee, mention may be made to three under-drains with concrete culverts over them, the total length of which is 840 feet and construction of three small roads with boulder and soiling, measuring 922 feet. The total length of the roads under Kamakhya Town Committee is 10.5 Km. approximately. Thus the achievement of the Town Committee is almost negligible.

In so far as the road lighting, it can clearly be stated that it is insufficient. Only the Temple compound and the road to it from the motor-stand has been lighted. The number

of light posts is ten. For each point the Town Committee has to bear a monthly expenditure of Rs. 4.80. Still no norms have been set as regards the distance between each light-post. Hours of lighting have not also yet been fixed. Again the Town Committee has not acquired any land for future public works.

Problems of water at Kamakhya:

The supply of water is actually a responsibility of the Town Committee and it should have been discussed alongside the Town Committee. But as it is the most vital problem of Kamakhya, it would be discussed here separately.

The problem of water at Kamakhya is not of today, it is age-old. Formerly, the people did not feel the scarcity of water so much because of two things. Firstly, the number of people living there was very small, secondly, the people would not think of machines to supply water to Kamakhya. There are several tanks and natural springs. Formerly, water used to be supplied to the inhabitants and hundreds of visitors from these sources. The supply of water was inadequate. It was unhygienic and dirty. Many people died every year from water-borne diseases. Again, in the dry season these sources of water used to dry up and the people had to face insurmountable difficulties.

Since the beginning of the present century, when the population was increasing, the problem became acute. But it was difficult to move to action the alien government in this matter. The native princes, zemindars and other wealthy persons who visited Kamakhya as pilgrimage could have done something, but actually they also did not do much. In the second decade of this century, a Society named Kamakhya Jalakasta Nibarani Samitee was formed. This Society began to raise funds from the local people and visitors to the Temple. But the fund raised was very meagre for the purpose. In the fourth decade, Babu Raja Ram and Jagannath Prasad of the Hanuman Cotton Mills, Calcutta, promised to give the necessary sums for the construction of a water works at Kamakhya. But it never materialised. The growing scarcity was felt day by day. Very hopefully, the people concentrated themselves in their drive for fund collection. Several plans were drawn up for a water supply scheme, but not one of them became successful. The only substantial assistance that was received, Rs. 50,000, from Ram Krishna Dalmia, here it is note worthy that from Birla Home an amount of

Rs. 11 only was received. In the year .... the total collection from the public and the visitors which amounted to Rs. ... was handed over to the Government of Assam. The then Chief Minister of Assam took an active interest in the matter and the State P. W. D. was asked to draw up the necessary plan for setting up a water works for Kamakhya. Work for it was started in the last part of 1957 and was completed in the early part of 1960.

Now the major source of water supply in the town is Kamakhya water works which is, of course, still run by the State P. W. D. and not by the Town Committee of the place. The reason for it has already been described. But this water works serves only sixty per cent of the total people and only forty per cent of the area. In fact only the people living at the top of the hill get the benefit out of it. People living at the foot area, still do not get any supply of water from this. The total supply of water per day is 25,000 gallons. The source of the supply is the Brahmaputra. The distance from the source of the supply to the town by the hilly road is about one mile. The total storage arrangement capacity is 50,000 gallons. It has two tanks of 25,000 gallons each. The treatment of the water is natural consisting of stone, sand and alum at different stages. For distribution, there are fourteen sub-tanks which are also called service reservoirs. The capacity of each of these sub-tanks is 400 gallons. They are situated in different areas and from them the supply of water is made. A four inch steel pipe of two thousand and five hundred feet form the main conduit. The distribution pipes are of various diameters, varying from three inches to half inch pipes. The total length of the distribution pipes is 7,500 (seven thousand and five hundred feet) of different size. There is only one pumping station with three pumping sets of fifty H.P. each. The duration of water supply is 4 hours, which is generally supplied in the morning hours.

As the people have not agreed to pay the house-tax, it has not been possible on the part of the Town Committee to take over the water supply from the P. W. D. and give house connections. At the same time, it can not be expected that the P. W. D. will always give free supply of water to the people of Kamakhya.

Other sources of water supply :

Besides the water supply of the P. W. D. there are some other sources which were in use till the construction of the water-works. There are six tanks and eight natural springs. During the rainy

season, they become full with rain water. But water is dirty and carries germs of many diseases. Out of these six tanks, one has almost dried up. The water of the others also begin to dry up with the advent of the dry season. The water of four tanks is still used for ordinary purposes. But the springs have almost dried up due to non-use and if water supply fails someday due to the disorder of machines, considerable difficulty is faced by the people.

Electrification of Kamakhya:

Kamakhya has been electrified since 1958. Two years before that it was declared a township. The electrification of Kamakhya was hastened by the installation of the water treatment plant. The agency responsible for the service is the Assam State Electricity Board. The source of the power is hydel. It is connected to Umtru-Umium grid. The power is generated in two places. They are Umium and Umtru. The distance of Umtru from Gauhati is 25 miles and that of Umium (Barapani) is 60 miles. A good number of important towns and some villages of Assam are supplied with electricity from this grid. The capacity of the grid is ..... mega-watt.

But at Kamakhya only about 9% of the houses have been electrified. The number of connections is only 65. The rate per unit as given by the State Electricity Board Assam is as follows :

1. (a) Domestic light :—	first 30 mts.	@ 0·40 paise	(per kl. Wt. Hour)
	next 60 mts.	@ 0·38 ,,	,,
	balance	@ 0·36 ,,	,,
2. (b) Domestic power :—	first 50 mts.	@ 0·21 ,,	,,
	balance	@ 0·19 ,,	,,

The electrified houses at Kamakhya are not concentrated in one particular area; these are scattered all over the town. In the year 1967-68, the total consumption of electricity, according to the statistics given by the Gauhati office was 31,000 units. The total charges due for it is Rs. 11,859.54. Of it Rs. 9,135.59 has been collected so far. It is stated that if additional people are to be served then additional load will be required.

It is to be noted that though in the villages of Assam, electric connection is given to residential houses on instalment basis, the same facility is not provided to the people

of Kamakhya, as it is an urban area. On the other hand due to their poverty most of the people of Kamakhya are not in a position to meet the initial cost of extending electric connections in their houses.

Master Plan for Kamakhya :

It has already been mentioned that though Kamakhya has been declared a township, yet due to some reasons, it has not been able to draw any developmental plan for the place. The Town Committee does not have any master plan of its own. But Kamakhya is a part of Greater Gauhati and as such it is included in the master plan for Gauhati. In the master plan for Gauhati, the foot area of the southern part has been shown as general commercial area. Beside this, there is no other developmental plan for Kamakhya as such. It is, however, understood that very soon the master plan for Gauhati would be revised and a 'Riverbank' development scheme would be included in it, in which the entire bank of the Brahmaputra river from Gauhati to Pandu would be included. In that case the northern part of Kamakhya would also be developed. Besides this, a part of Kamakhya (the Bhubaneswari hill) is likely to be developed into a city park.

Types of houses at Kamakhya :

According to the census of 1961, the number of houses at Kamakhya is 709. But the number has increasd a little since then. As regards type, it can be said that, like every other town, all sorts of structures from R. C. C. buildings, to ordinary thatched cottages can be found at Kamakhya. Before 1897, the houses at Kamakhya used to be mainly of mud-wall and straw-roof. In 1897, a severe earthquake destroyed most of these houses. The number of houses were also not more than one-third of the present number. Again, there was no residential house at the foot of Kamakhya then. New types of houses began to be constructed from that time and the number has also increased. The types of houses by age are as follows :

(a) Number of houses by type of material used in the plinth, wall and roof :—

1. Mud-wall, Kuchha-floor tin roof	from 0 to 5 yrs. old	123 nos.
2. Mud-wall, pukka-floor tin roof .	from 0 to 5 yrs. old	168 nos.
3. Mud-wall, Kuchha-floor tin roof	from 5 to 20 yrs. old	69 nos.
4. Mud-wall, pukka-floor tin roof .	from 5 to 20 yrs. old	23 nos.

5. Cement wall, pukka-floor tin-roof	from 5 to 20 yrs. old	64	Nos.
6. Mud-wall, pukka floor tin-roof.	above 20 yrs. old	17	,,
7. Mud wall, Kuchha-floor tin-roof	above 30 yrs. old	43	,,
8. R.C. C. buildings . . .	from 5 to 20 yrs. old	18	,,
9. R. C. C. buildings . . .	above 20 yrs. old	5	,,
10. Thatched cottages . . .		220	,,

Out of these, about 150 houses are used for commercial purposes. But most of them are concentrated in the foot area, specially, the southern portion of the town. Only 15 houses are used for commercial purposes at the top of Kamakhya. Again the houses at the foot of Kamakhya have been built mostly by outsiders on leased lands.

Number of houses by storeys :

1. Single storey . . .	(Tin structure)	406	Nos.
2. Double storey . . .	(Tin structure)	101	,,
3. Single storey . . .	(R.C.C.)	16	,
4. double storey . . .	(R.C.C.)	7	,,
5. Single storey . . .	(thatched cottage)	220	,,
6. Three storey . . .	(tin structure)	11	,,

Most of the double storey houses at Kamakhya are wooden structures. Some of the noticeable things about these houses are that, these houses have been built without proper planning, inner roads are very much narrow; the houses in most cases do not have adequate ventilation and sanitary arrangement. The striking feature of the character of the people of Kamakhya is that, they do not know to repair their houses and once a house is built, it has to wait for an auspicious ceremony like marriage, before any repair is undertaken. Sometimes it remains in completely dilapidated condition without any repair. It, however, appears that some change is taken place in the attitude of the people in this matter, in recent years.

Hotels and Dharmsalas :

As an important place of pilgrimage Kamakhya is expected to have many hotels and dharamsalas. But in fact there is no hotel on the top of Kamakhya. It appears

that there is some inhibition among the local people to enter into hotel-business. If a visitor wants to stay at Kamakhya for a few days, he is readily accommodated by the priests. He is not charged any thing by way of house-rent.

However, there are a few hotels at the foot of the hill and they are mostly concentrated on the southern part of the area, facing, the Headquarters of the N. F. Railway. All of them are housed in single storey, Assam type houses. Their total number is six but only two can offer lodging facilities. In one of these, the dwellers live on monthly bassis. It can provide accommodation to fifteen persons. Each dweller has to pay Rs. 65/- (Rupees sixty five) per month for food and lodging. The other can provide facilities to only six persons. The monthly charge for each seat is Rs.6/- (Rupees six only). The name of the former is Kamakhya Diary and Hotel and that of the latter is Kamrup Diary. The remaining four hotels are just eating houses. These are not associated with any religious, linguistic, caste or community group. The average meal charges are as follows:

1. Fish-rice . .	Rs. 1·75 p.
2. Mutton-rice . .	Rs. 2·00 p.
3. Chicken-rice . .	Rs. 2·50 p.

Of course, not more than one per cent of the visitors to Kamakhya are served by these hotels. Their daily customers are the workers in the Railway and some outsiders who generally come to the Railway Head-quarters for some sort of work.

From outside, the standard of sanitation of most of these hotels and eating houses does not appear to be very impresive There is much scope for improvement.

Dharmsalas :

There are two dharamsalas at Kamakhya, One of them is situated on the Top of Kamakhya, on the western side of the Kamakhya Temple. The name of this dharamsala is Abhoyananda Dharamsala. It is situated on small, separate hillock. It was established by one Swami Abhoyananda in the second decade of this century. The dharmsala consists of six independent quarters. The roofs of these houses are built of tin-sheets. They are built on wooden pillars. Side walls have been made of wooden planks. The flooer of every room is pukka. In one, the side walls have been made of C. I. sheets. Each quarter is big enough to house a sizable family. At a little distance, there is a six-room brick-built latrine. A little down towards the south, there is a natural spring flowing by it. The place is solitary and

beautiful and surely a suitable place for a dharamsala. The land of the dharamsala was obtained from the temple by a lease agreement. A small sum was donated by the said Swami Abhoyananda to the Temple Committee. The interest from it would be spent in the repair work of the dharamsala.

But since a few years, a section of the desciples of the Swamiji got control of it and the dharamsala has lost its former character.

The other dharmasala is situated at the foot of Eastern Kamakhya. The area is also known as Durgasarobar. The name of the dharamsala is Shri Dharmasala. It was built by Surajmal Hari Buksh Agarwala of Gauhati, in the year 1920. The dharamsala has two big rooms. The side walls are made of brick. The roof is covered by tin-sheets and the floor is pukka. There is a big cooking-shed and attached temple. For water a deep pukka well has been dug. The dharamsala is, however, in a dilapidated condition at present. After the outbreak of the Second World-War, this dharamsala closed its doors as no pilgrim dared to stay there for fear of life.

Thus, though there are two dharamsalas at Kamakhya, none of them has been functioning normally for some time.

Tea-Stalls :

There are in all 22 tea-stalls at Kamakhya. Out of these, three are situated at the top, two at the eastern part of the foot, and the remaining 17 are situated at the south-western part of the foot. These stalls are only standard tea-stalls. No classification can be made between them. Again, there is no restaurant, properly so called. On one of the sign-boards, it has been shown as a restaurant, but it is no better than any of the stalls there.

Among these tea-stalls, only the three at the top and the two at the eastern part of the foot, get out-side customers. The other seventeen at the south-western part of the foot serve mostly local customers. These stalls are not associated with any particular religious, linguistic, caste or community group. Everybody is allowed in these tea-stalls. The average daily sale is Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 approximately. As regards, observations about cleanliness, general sanitation, ventilation of rooms, standard of furniture, etc. it can be said that there are scopes for improvement.

Sweet meat shop :

There are only three sweet meat shops at the top of Kamakhya. They are of the

same category. Uptil now no licence has to be obtained for opening one such sweet meat shop. They are not situated in permanent buildings and are housed in sheds within the Kamakhya Temple compound. The sweet meat they offer for sale is not for the immediate consumption of anybody, but it is offered to the gods and goddesses as 'bhoga'. The general sanitation arrangement is satisfactory. Though the Hindus generally visit the Temple and the sweet meats are sold to them mainly, yet people of other religions are also allowed to purchase sweet meat in these shops. The average sale per day ranges between twenty five and thirty rupees.

Trade and Commerce :

Kamakhya is not a trading centre but a religious place and as such it has got little importance from the point of trade and commerce. But it has to feed at least seven thousand people a day. The number of population is five thousand approximately and above this, it has at least two thousand visitors per day. Within the area, there are three consumers' Co-operatives, nine Fair Price Shops and a few Retail Sale Eestablishments. There is no Wholesale trading in the area. The commodities offered for sale are mainly food stuffs and other day to day necessities. Besides these, there are fourteen shops selling stationary goods. Within the area there are seven shops selling cloth. The cloth dealing shops, the stationery goods dealers and some other ordinary goods dealers are mainly situated in the southern part of the foot of the hill. There are at least twenty ordinary shops dealing in vegetables. Food stuff is mainly supplied from Gauhati, part of the cloth and vegetables are also supplied from the markets of Gauhati. Cloth is also obtained from other important centres of the country, like Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, etc. Vegetables are again obtained from adjacent areas.

The principal food requirement is rice. Of course, as rice has become scarce, people have formed the habit of eating wheat and other food matters. The traders are mainly Assamese, Bengali and Hindi speaking people.

Ware house facilities :

Kamakhya is neither a big commercial area nor an agricultural area, so the warehousing facilities is not so much required here. But within the area of Kamakhya there are at least five big godowns. They all belong to the Marwari traders of Gauhati, and do not serve the people of Kamakhya in any way. There is, of course,

one big ware house at the southern part of the foot. It is a ware house of the Central Ware Housing Corporation of the Government of India. The total area of the land within it is 4 acres approximately. The plinth area of it is 27,300 sq. ft. The total capacity is 5,000 bags approximately. It offers ware housing facilities to all.

Factories and Industrial Establishments :

There are no big factories and other industrial firms within Kamakhya area. But as it falls within Greater Gauhati, some small industries have been established within the area. At the top of the hill, of course, there is no such industrial establishment. All of them are situated on the eastern and the southern part of the foot. All the industries fall within the category of Small Industries. The toal number of such industries is seven. Among them, four are saw-mills, two are printing presses and one is brass-metal industry. Particulars of them have been given below :

1. *Kamakhya Saw Mill* :— It was established in the year 1952. Its main products are cut-wood of different shapes and sizes. It is situated at the edge of the eastern part of the foot. The number of workers varies from twelve to sixteen. Approximate acreage under the establishment is 1.0. There is one administrative and supervisory personnel. The number of skilled labour is two. Others are unskilled labourers. They cut about 30,000 to 35,000 cubic feet of wood very year. An Assamese is the owner of this mill.

2. *Manmatha Saw Mill* :— It is also situated at the eastern corner of the town. The number of workers are fifteen. The acreage under the establishment is 1.0. The number of administrative and supervisory personnel is one. The number of skilled labourers is two and of unskilled labourers is eight. It cuts approximately 25,000 to 30,000 cubic feet of wood every year. It is owned by a Bengali of Gauhati.

3. *D. B. Saw Mill* :—Itis owned by a Punjabi who has made his habitation there. It is situated near the Manmatha Saw Mill. The acreage under it is 1.0. It has ten workers working under it of whom two are skilled. The number of supervisory staff is one and the administration is done by the owner himself. The total output in the year is 25,000 cubic feet of wood.

4. *Shri Ganesh Saw Mill* :— It is situated at the southern part of the foot. The owner of the mill is a Marwari. The acreage under the mill is 1.6. In all eleven persons are working in the mill of whom two are

skilled. For supervising there is one person and the administration is done by the owner himself. The total output in the year is 30,000 cubic feet of wood.

5. *Natun Assamiya Press* :— It is adjacent to the Kamakhya Saw Mill. The owner of it is an Assamese. The important daily 'Natun Assamiya' (Assamese) is published in this press. Besides this, the press publishes books and other things. The total acreage covered by the press is 0.5. The total number of workers is 69. The total annual income in 1967-68 was Rs. 1,80,880.00 from the news paper and Rs. 2,52,681·00 from advertisement.

6. *Shri Guru Press* :—It is situated at the southern portion of the foot area. It is owned by the famous Dutta Baruah Company of Assam. The total land covered by it is 0.3 acre. The principal work of it is to print books and other things. At present a weekly news-magazine named 'Nilachal' is being published by this press. It has a plan of publishing a daily news paper. The total number of workers in the press is 120. The total output in the year 1967-68 was valued at Rs. 2,00,000.00. This and the Natun Assamiya Press are the two most important presses of Assam.

7. *Siotia Brass Metal Industry* :—It is also situated at the southern part of the foot and adjacent to Shri Guru Press. Its owner is the Radha Kishan Dinadayal Firm of Gauhati. It is a small scale industry. Its main products are brass circles and brass sheets. It is, of course, a seasonal factory and remains active only at a certain period of the year. It generally runs for three to six months a year. The total acreage covered by the industry is 0.5. The number of workers is 16. The total output in the year was 56 metric tons.

Employment Exchange :

Kamakhya is a small town and as it is a part of Greater Gauhati, it does not have a separate Employment Exchange of its own. The big Employment Exchange at Gauhati serves the Greater Gauhati area. Again the job-seekers at Kamakhya have not yet formed the habit of approaching the Employment Exchange to help them in finding a job. Whoever is ready for some sort of employment seeks direct appointment through personal contact it was found that most of the men in search of job had not registered their names in the Employment Exchange at Gauhati. Of course, educated unemployment is not so much rampant here at present; but the problem of uneducated employment for the persons is there. Formerly, any Brahmin boy, if he failed

to procecute higher studies, could recourse to priesthood. But now, the circumstances have completely changed. They are now compelled to find some other means of livelihood. A good many of them have taken to shopkeeping and other such business.

It seems that the employment exchange authorities have not taken adequate steps to make the people conscious of the service that they can render even in an important place like Kamakhya which visited by large number of persons daily, not a single signboard as Employment Exchange will be found. People would have easily attracted if publicity was better than at present.

Transport :

There is no direct public transport service to the top of Kamakhya Hill. Buses plying from Gauhati to Pandu go via. foot hill of Kamakhya. After reaching there the people climb to the top on foot or taxi. This causes great difficulty to the visitors. It also serves as a deferrent to many prospective visitors. As there is an all-weather motorable road, it seems that there should not be much difficulty to start a public transport service. Recently, the people of Kamakhya have formed a Transport Society on Co-operative basis, and have obtained the permission from the Government to put a vehicle on the road. But this is still to be done.

News papers and Journals :

As a good part of the population of Kamakhya is educated, the habit of reading news papers and other journals is very wide spread. The newspaper 'Natun Assamiya' an important Assamese weekly is published from the area. Of course, the population of Kamakhya consist of mainly two linguistic groups, they are Assamese and Bengali. The top and the eastern part of the town are mostly inhabited by the Assamese speaking people and the southern and the western part of the foot are inhabited by the Bengali speaking people. So, English, Assamese and Bengali newspapers and magazines are mostly read in the town. The total circulation of newspapers and Magazines is 356. The break up of the same is as follows :

	Copies
1. English Dailies .	75
2. Assamese Dailies .	68
3. Bengali Dailies .	44
4. Hindi Dailies . .	6
5. English weeklies .	29
6. Assamese weeklies .	67
7. Bengali weeklies .	23
8. English monthlies .	12
9. Assamese monthlies	14
10. Bengali monthlies .	12
11. Others . . .	6
Total .	356

Marketing :

There is no market place, strictly so called at Kamakhya. The vegetable sellers, fish sellers, sweet-meat sellers and the goat sellers (he-goats which are required for sacrifice) sit within the temple compound. Other shops are in the vicinity of temple. At the foot areas, there is no such place earmarked for market place. However, the southern part of the foot hills is the main business centre of the town and it has been shown as such in the Master Plan for Gauhati. It is the general commercial area without any particularity or, any special local product for sale. The market area inside the Kamakhya Temple compound is called 'Kamakhya Bazar'. There is another place at the western part of the foot where there is a cinema hall and ordinary, day-to-day consumption goods such as vegetable goods, fish and others are sold there, it is known as cinema hall market. The total number of sellers in both the markets varies between 40 to 50. In the Kamakhya Market some temporary tin-sheds have been erected, and in the cinema hall market sellers sit by the side of the open street. The hours of marketing are generally the morning and evening.

Post and Telegraph Communication :

The importance of Kamakhya was recognised by the British and a Post Office was opened at Kamakhya in the early part of this century. It was a branch office and in this status it remained till the year 1962. Since then it has become a sub-post office under the Central Post Office of Gauhati. Now it is regarded as Gauhati-10.

The number of employees in the post-office is four, consisting of the sub-post-master, the post-man, the runner and the packer. During festival periods extra-staff is engaged to cope with the volume of work.

A statistics of the sale of postal stationary during the year 1967-68 is given below:

1. Sale of Postal stationary: Rs. 6,768.80

2. During 1967-68 altogether 13,253 money orders amounting to Rs. 100,509.65 were received. 95% of these money orders were received from different places in Assam and West Bengal; only 5% were received from other parts of India. Most of these money orders were sent by the devotees

to the priests for performing puja. During the same period 146 money orders amounting to Rs. 27,907.33 were issued by the Sub-post Office.

The other particulars about the functioning of the Sub-post office are as follows :

Telegrams received	128
Telegrams issued	156 (charges Rs. 249·70)
Registered letters issued	3,100
Registered letters received	1,942
VPLs received	211
VPLs issued	203
Parcels issued	890
Parcels received	690
VPPs issued	27
VPPs received	170
The number of radio-licences issued	37

3. There is no separate telephone exchange at Kamakhya. It is a part of the Greater Gauhati telephone system.

The telephone exchange at Gauhati is an automatic one with ten thousand connections. A line has been extended to Kamakhya also. But save the public-call office at Kamakhya, no private connection has been granted uptil now, though there are some several applicants for the same.

In the year 1967-68, the number of local calls was 901 and the gross revenue received from the same was Rs. 181.70. The number of trunk-calls was 99 and the revenue received from the same was Rs. 302.80.

Credit Organisation :

There is a branch of the United Commercial Bank of India, within the jurisdiction of the town, at the foot-hill. But it hardly carried on any transaction with the commer-

cial and other establishments within the town. It mainly serves the Railway Headquarters at Maligaon. As there is not much of commerce at Kamakhya, the need of credit organisations is not so keenly felt. Some persons of Kamakhya, who commute to Gauhati in connection with various jobs have however accounts in different banks in Gauhati. Besides, a few small industries have been set up within the jurisdiction of the town with finance obtained from institutions situated outside. It is interesting to note that there are a few individuals in the town who carry on money lending business with the agriculturists in the neighbouring villages.

Domestic Animals and Livestock :

Though Kamakhya is a town, still it retains some of the characteristics of the village life. Raising of domestic animals is one of them. Many households own cows and goats for getting a regular supply of milk. At present, the number of cows is estimated to be around three hundred and that of the goats, one hundred. But not a single one has been registered either with the Town Committee or any other similar organisation. At the foot-hill, some Nepali graziers have raised cows for commercial purpose and they sell their milk in Gauhati, Pandu and Kamakhya. It, however, appears that the scope of extension of such activities is limited as there is not enough grass either on the slopes or at the foot-hill.

Trade Unions :

As already stated there are a few small scale and medium scale industries within Kamakhya area. But in no one of these units, there is any trade union. Only some of the workers of the Shri Ganesh Saw Mill have enrolled themselves as members of the Kamrup Mill Majdur Sangh. They, however, do not have any separate organisation for their unit. Formerly, the workers of Natun-Assamiya had a Union called Ramdhenu Natun Assamiya Press Workers' Union. It. however, could not consolidate its position and was dissolved sometime ago. It is understood that they are now trying to form another union.

On the whole the industrial relations in the small and medium sized industries located in the town are peaceful. No industrial dispute or strife, worth mentioning has taken place, here.

Clubs, Libraries, Cinema Halls, etc. :

There are several cultural and sports organisations some of them are more than hundred

years old. Though their activities are mainly limited within the town area, they occasionally give performances outside also.

Among the cultural organisations, the name of Kamakhya Natya Samiti may be mentioned. It is more than hundred years old. Formerly, it was ranked among the leading theatrical organisations of Assam. Of late there has been a decline in its standing. Now the youngman at Kamakhya are spending more time for education, their occupations have also been diversified. Hence they do not have enough leisure to cultivate their skill in the artificial art. Among the other important cultural organisations mention may be made of Tarun Sangha, Godadhar Opera Party, Durga Sarobar Milit Sangha, etc. In 1960, a few of the talented young men of Kamakhya formed a cultural organisation called Kaumudica Cultural Union. They have a plan to start an Institution of arts and culture at Kamakhya.

During the Durga Puja of 1968, Kamakhya Natya Samitee staged two dramas, Tarun Sangh and Godadhar Opera Party performed one jatra (open air dramatical performance) each. During the same year Kaumudica Cultural Union staged two modern dramas. These were performed on ordinary days, without any religious association, just for the sake of recreation.

Some of the sports organisations at Kamakhya are also quite old. Among them mention may be made of the Tara-Champion Club, the Modern Comrades's Club, the Free India Club, etc. Among the newly established clubs, K. N. C. Club and the the Jolly Zeal Club are more important, must be mentioned. There are another eight sports organisations at Kamakhya, out of which four are meant for the adolescents in their early teens.

Library :

The most important library of the town is Kamakhya Library and Club. It is considered that it was founded in the first decade of the present century, but the actual date is not known. It is one of the oldest libraries of Assam.

In 1930, some of the youths of Kamakhya founded another library, named Bharat Bandhu Library. By the end of the decade, the Kamakhya Library and the Bharat Bandhu Library merged into one under the name Kamakhya Library and Club.

Once the library had a good stock of many Sanskrit

books and old manuscripts. Most of them have been lost at present. It seems that due to the absence of a trained librarian, the library is not being maintained properly. Particularly, the system of classification of books and issue of the same is far from satisfactory.

There are about 3,000 books in the library, of which about 75% are in Assamese and Bengali and 25% are in English, Sanskrit and Hindi. The United States Information Service has also donated a corner in the Library. Besides, the Assam State Social Education Board is annually donating books worth Rs. 70/- to the library. The library does not have a building of its own and is located in a small private house.

Cinema Hall Professional Theatre :

Within the town area of Kamakhya, there is a Cinema hall named Orient Cinema. It is located at the foot area of the western Kamakhya. It was built during the second World War (1943) for the military personnels. After the war, it was purchased by a contractor of Kamakhya, who run it for several years. In 1954, he leased it out to a Punjabi. The building is an Assam type hall with brick walls and R. C. C. frontage. The floor space is 1,718 sq. ft. and the area of the gang-way is 994 sq. ft. The projection length from the projector to the screen is 72 ft. There are four categories of seats, special, first class, second class, and the third class. The rates and the number of seats in each class are as follows :—

Class	Number of seats	Rate	
1. Special	55	Rs. 1·40	excluding entertainment tax.
2. First	232	0·90	Do
3. Second	114	0·80	Do
4. Third	51	0·50	Do

The number of shows held daily are three, the matinee show, the first show and the second show. The timings of them are 2.30, 5.30 and 8.30 p.m. in the Winter. During the Summer, shows are held half an hour later than these timings.

In 1967-68, about seventy films were exhibited. About sixty of them are Hindi and Bengali films. The remaining, ten are English and Assamese films. The places of production of Hindi, Bengali and Assamese films are Bombay and Calcutta. English pictures were produced in England and U. S. A. No film specially for the children was shown. The total sale proceeding of the tickets excluding the taxes amounted to approximately Rs. 2. lakhs.

Law and Order situation :

There is a police beat house in the town. It is under the Jalukbari Police Station. A Sub-Inspector of Police is Incharge of the beat house. There are one Havildar, one Lance-nayak and eight Constables under him.

During the year 1967, there was no major crime was committed within the jurisdiction of the town. There were only six cases of minor thefts and two cases of suicide. But on the 26th January 1968, when there was some trouble in Gauhati involving some sections of people from outside Assam, a few houses at the foot-hill were set on fire.

Other particulars of Sociological importance :

Though a few individuals have enrolled themselves as members of different political parties, there is no branch of any political party at Kamakhya.

Though some areas within the town are comparatively underdeveloped there is no slum properly so called. Other symptoms of social pathology, like juvenile delinquency, prostitution, etc., are not found at Kamakhya.

Kamakhya Estate and its Management :

Kamakhya is a very old shrine and it received sympathies of all the monarchs of Assam. Naraka, the first Aryan King of Pragjyotispura worshipped the Goddess. After the reign of this Naraka dynasty, the importance of the Goddess was a little reduced. This was probably due to the general deterioration of Hinduism as Buddhism received royal patronage, in most places of India. The place remained in obscurity till the beginning of the Koch reign in the western part of Assam, in the early part of the sixteenth century. Since then, it is ever growing in importance. Even the Ahom Kings, after they embraced Hinduism, showed considerable interest in the worship of the Goddess and in the later period of their reign, Goddess Kamakhya was regarded as the state deity.

Besides Kamakhya, there are several other goddesses at Kamakhya who are also considered to the manifestations of the Supreme Goddess herself. More over there are five places of Lord Siva. There are shrines of some other gods also. The former rulers of Assam, donated to these temples and shrines land and other valuables for conducting the day-to-day worship and the special festivals etc. All these constitute, the Estate of Kamakhya.

The structure of management of the estate has evolved over a period of time. When Naraka came to Kamrup, he brought some Brahmans with him, evidently for the purpose of worshipping the goddess. Next, the Koch King Biswasingha brought some Brahmans from Kanj (Kanyakubja). The present Brahman community of Kamakhya are considered to be the descendants of the Brahmans who came from Kanauj. There are five main families of the Brahmans at Kamakhya. They are known as Bura Bardeori, Deka Bardeori, Hota, Bidhipathak and Brahma. Of these, the family of Brahma became extinct about century and a half ago.

The Bura and Deka bardeories were probably of the same stock. It seems that they were the original priests of the deity. Even now they enjoy a few special prerogatives. During the special festival day, listed in the schedule 'A' the Bardeories (high priests) of the Bura and Deka families alone can perform the worship of the Goddess Kamakhya.

For the purpose of carrying on the duties of the Bardeories in a systematic manner, they have 'Palas' or (daily turn for worshipping the Goddess). Each of the Bardeories perform the 'seva' (service) and Puja (worship) of the deity according to his respective 'pala' (turn), and enjoy the profits obtained on that day.

Over and above the special festivals, there are some days in the month which are regarded as Pancha Parvas. They have been shown in the schedule 'B' as well as on a few days indicated in schedule 'C'. On the Pancha- Parva days as well as on a few days indicated in schedule 'C' the Bardeories of the Bura and Deka families only are entitled to worship the Goddess.

In addition to worship by turn, there are some functional differentiations among the different families. Since the time of the Ahom rulers. As mentioned earlier the Bura and Deka families had the prerogative of worshipping the deity. This prerogative continues on special days. The right of performing *Homa* (fire sacrifice) belongs the High family, the right of counting the number of *Homas* belonged to the

Brahma family, till its extinction; now it is distributed among the remaining families. During this redistribution of rights, 2/3rd share was given to the Bura and Deka families and 1/3rd share was given to the rest. The right of reading the scriptures (bidhi) pertains to the Bidhi-pathak family.

As indicated in schedule 'D', the Bura and Deka families get a larger share of the *dakshina* (fees paid to the priests by the devotees).

The Daily Worshipping of the Goddess :

The daily worship of the Goddess is known as 'Nitya Puja'. *Nitya Puja* is divided into a cycle of ten days. Of this ten-day cycle the first two days fall to the Bura, the second two days to the Deka, the third two days to the Brahma, the fourth two days to the Hota and the last two days to the Bidhipathak. Thus the cycle of ten days is complete.

Already mention has been made of the special pujas and *pancha Parvas*. In case, such ceremonies overstep the 'pala-day', a Hota or a Bidhipathak has to make room for a Deka or Bura by taking his 'Pala' shifted to the next available day. According to calculation, the total 'Palas' of the Buras and Dekas come to 110 days to each in a year and 70 days to the Hotas and Bidhipathaks each. This allotment includes the share of Brahma. As regards the 'palas' for the *Pancha Parvas*, the Buras and the Dekas perform them by rotation n alternative months.

A priest without initiation (Diksha) cannot perform worship in the Kamakhya Temple. A new priest should undergo a preliminary training before he is allowed to perform the worship independently. When such a 'novice' comes to perfom the worship, he is watched by several elderly priests. Again a priest cannot perform the worship during the period of 'Asouch' (impurities by death or birth).

Schedules:

Schedule 'A' :—(Special and highly valued Pujas)

The Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Durga Deul, Madan Chaturali, Basanti Puja, Shyama Puja, Maroi Brat, Punshaban, Sivaratri, Ratanti Shyama Puja, Janmastami, Uttarayan Sankranti (the summer solecistic), Dakshinayan Sankranti (the winter Solecistic), Jalavishuva Sankranti, Mahavishuva Sankranti.

Schedule 'B' :—(Pancha Parvas)

1. 2 days of Astami during the month, *.e.* the eighth day after the full and new-moon.

2. 2 days of Chaturdashi, *i.e.* the fourteenth day after the full and the new-moon.

3. The Sankranti, *i.e.* the last day of the month.

Schedule 'C' :

This relates to Saradiya (Autumnal Durga Puja) Saptami (the seventh day after the new-moon), Saradiya Navami (ninth day after the new-moon), the Puhan Biya (the Pungsavan of the Goddess).

Schedule 'D' :

(This schedule was observed during the reign of the Ahom Kings. Now, though it is not observed exactly, yet *Dakshina* is paid in proportion to it).

	Rs.	anna	ganda
1. For performing the puja (Bura & Deka) in gold, silver, rupee in all. . . .	39	5	3½
2. For performing the Homa (Hota) . .	9	7	18½
3. For reading of scriptures (Bidhipathaka) .	21	2	13½
4. Fees to Brahma for assisting in the performance of 'Homa'	6	13	6

Management of the Kamakhya Temple :

Officers, Shevaites and other workers in the Temple :—

A list of the officials connected with the temple and also of their functions is placed below:

1. The Dolois (managers) :

There are two dolois. They are the highest officials of the temple.

The main function of the two Dolois is to supply articles for the day-to-day and special pujas (worships). This supply is made from the profits of the temple. They are to manage the properties of the temple, realise rents, supervise the duties of the Shevaites and other menials, prosecute suits of the Estate.

Remuneration of the Dolois:—

By virtue of being a Doloi, there is no change in the original status of a priest. But he gets an additional share (Bhag) in respect of prasad (food offierings to the deity).

Moreover, they are entitled to get the following :—

(a) Two sacrificed goats per month.

(b) A naibedya (offerings in kind) of three poas of rice daily.

(c) One plate of Bhoga (food offerings).

(d) One pice (now three paise) per head of pilgrim entering the temple. This is known as 'Matha-ganti' of this fifty p.c. goes to the Temple fund.

(e) Six anna share of the Rajya-Doloi Fund. (Now this fund does not exist).

(f) 1½ anna share of the Naibedya offered by pilgrims.

One notable thing is that, the Doloi s have no religious functions to perform.

The office of Doloiship has been a subject of manifold controversies in the past, the particulars of which are furnished at Appendix.

(Priests and Others) :

2. Pujaree (Priest) :—They are the members of the five families of high priest and they worship the Goddess according to their turns. As already mentioned names of the five families are Bura, Deka, Hota, Bidhipathak and Brahma.

3. Supakara (Cook) :—There are a few families whose duty is to cook the 'Bhoga' (food offerings) of the goddess.

4. Astaprahari :—'Astaprahar' means the whole day. They are a class workers at the temple whose duty is to wait upon the Goddess, for the complete day and night. They also do the bathing of the Goddess early in the morning.

5. Duary :—Sanskirt term 'dwari'. They are to be at gate of the temple round the clock.

6. Panieri :—The etymological meaning of the word is water supplier. Tney are to supply water for the purposes of bathing of tne Goddess and cooking offerings for Her.

7. Siteniar :—They are responsible for cleaning the inside of the temple and the Bhog-ghar (Cook-shed).

8. Kharidia :—Kharidia or wood supplier upto the fourth decade of the present century they used to supply the necessary wood, but now-a-days they do not do it.

9. Kaur-Khenia :—They are to drive away crows and other ugly birds.

10. Gayan :—They are to sing during the hours of the worship.

11. Bayan :—On important occasions they are to beat the drum and the 'mridanga'.

12. Nat :—They were to dance at the time of the worship. Now the practice has been given up.

13. Dhulia :—They were appointed for beating 'dhol' (a king of drum-dun-duvi).

14. Nanan Dewlia :—A number of other priests and 'Astapraharist' are appointed for conducting worship and bathing other gods and goddesses at Kamakhya. They are called Nanan Dewlia.

15. Bali Kata :—There is a class of people who are to cut the goat and other animals for sacrifice.

16. Bheru-Sankha badak:—They are to blow sankha.

17. Danda-Chatradhari :—In some festivals, the Chalanta Thakurani is taken out for a 'walk' (Bhramana of the Devi). Then these men have to hold 'danda' and 'chatra' during her round.

For Office management :

18. Bharali :—He is incharge of the 'bnandar', *i.e.* store of articles, and other things required for worship.

19. Bhander Kayastha or Kakati :—He has to prepare various records such as accounts of receipts disbursements etc.

20. Mudair or Khajanchy :—He functions almost like a modern treasurer.

21. Kahara-Dhara Tekela:—He is like a 'body-guard' of the Doloi. He has to be along with the Doloi in various works particularly when the Doloi goes to the 'muffassil' for Collection of rents and other matters.

It is stated that during the Ahom rule there were many other subordinate workers, whose designations are now forgotten. It is to be noted that the rights of holding the above offices pertain to specific families with large number of branches. The individuals belonging to the families concerned take up their work by turn.

Properties of the Temple :

Kamakhya is enjoying the reputation of being a very important centre of Hindu religion for several centuries. It is stated that it flourished even during the reign of Narakasura. However, in recorded history it came into

prominence during the Koch rule for the first time. Since then it has been receipient of royal patronage. Most of the landed property of the temple was received as donation from several Ahom Kings. It is interesting to note tnat some land was donated by the Mughal rulers included the generals of Aurangzeb. During tne course of the present study one came to the notice of the investigator. He had given a portion of the water of the Brahmaputra to some priests of Kamakhya.

The movable and immovable properties of Kamakhya temple have been estimated as follows: (this assessment was made in connection with Aiyar Commission).

The total landed property of the temple is 22,500 (twenty two thousand and five hundred) bighas. The value of this, in terms of money has been fixed at one lakh rupees. The quantity of gold in the form of ornaments and bullion is ten seers. Other golden articles available for daily use is valued at four thousand rupees.

The land was donated principally for supplying rice to the temple. A huge quantity of rice is required for the day-to-day consumption. Upto the outbreak of the Second World War, the supply of rice was adequate, but since then it is dwindling. Again a big slice of the landed property has been taken away by the Northern Frontier Railways for constructing the Headquarters and other offices.

The General Expenditures of the Temple (a glimpse only) :

The maintenance of the Temple is a big affair and more than score of people always work there. There is no paid worker in the Temple. All have fixed shares in the profits of the 'Pala' (the daily turn for worship). There is a custom that if a visitor pays one rupee to the priest, he shall have to pay 0.75 paise to the 'Dwari' and the 'Astaprahari'.

Following is an estimate of the expenditures incurred by the Temple on various occasions:

Daily Expenditures :

Things required for daily worshipping	Quantity	Approximate cost	Remarks
1	2	3	4
		Rs.	
1. Rice	1 md.	60·00	
2. Dal	5 seers	8·00	Upto the Second World War, 1 maund and 11 seers of rice was required per day.
3. Ghee	1½ poah	5·00	
4. Mustard oil . . .	3 seers	12·00	
5. Beetle nut . . .	2 poahs (180 nos.)	8·00	
6. Beetle leaf . . .	2 goats (about 600 leaves)	5·00	
7. Dadhi (curd) . . .	5 poahs (1,250gms.)	2·00	
8. Earthen pots . . .	12 nos.	6·00	
9. Salt, spice, etc. . .		2·00	
10. Gur (molasses) . .	250 gms.	0·75	
11. Incense and others . .		0·75	
12. He-goat	1 no.	20·00	
13. Cloths	2 saries	15·00	
14. Contingency . . .		10·00	
Total .		154·50	

(Rupees One hundred fifty four and Fifty paise only)

Expenditure during big festivals :—

	Rs.
1. Ambubachi Mahamela	3,000·00
2. Debadhwani and Maroi brat	1,500·00
3. Durga Puja	7,000·00
4. Basanti Puja	7,000·00
5. Durga Deol	1,500·00
6. Lakshmi Puja	300·00
7. Ratanti Shyama	150·00
8. Gopal Deol	150·00

It can easily be imagined that a considerable sum of money is spent for unforseen exigencies over and above these expenditures. Again scores of suits are to be filed in different courts on behalf of the Temple. Thus the normal expenditure of the Temple comes to about Rs. 80,000.00 (rupees eighty thousand) per annum. A large sum of money is again spent for the maintenance of the Temple. A few years ago some development works were also introduced by the Temple Committee for the benefit of the 'Shevaites' (priests and menial). For instance an amount of Rs. 50,000·00. (rupees fifty thousand) was granted to Kamakhya High School for the construction of a R. C. C. building, and a further amount of Rs. 25,000.00 (rupees twenty five thousand) was sanctioned for the construction of the first floor of the said building.

Visitors to the Temple :

There is a sort of lasting *Jajmani* (patron-client) relationship between the priests and the pilgrims at Kamakhya. Each priest maintains a record of his clients and whenever a pilgrim avails of his services, he puts his signature and address in the record book. Thus, a permanent relation is built up. Later on if any family member of that client visits Kamakhya he is expected to avail of the services of the same priest. Such relationship tends to continue for generations. On great festive occasions like Ambubachi, Durgapuja, Navaratra, etc., the priest sends the blessings of the diety to his clients. This type of permanent relationship is, however, is on the decline now-a-days.

There are three priestly families at Kamakhya which claim special rights in respect

of the Nepali, Punjabi and Manipuri visitors respectively. But such claims are not acceeded by all.

Till recently, due to bad communication, the number of visitors to Kamakhya was limited. With the improvement in communication the number has been increasing in recent years. At present, the number of visitors on the average is 1,000 daily. On Sundays it ranges between 2,000 to 3,000. The number goes down in the months of July, August and September. After that, it again rises. The largest number of visitors come during the Ambubachi festival. The size of congregation is estimated to range between 15,000 to 25,000. The visitors to the Temple is around 5,000 during the Devadhwani and Pungsaban Melas.

If the number of visitors is analysed on the basis of linguistic affinity, it will be seen that the Assamee and the Bengali visitors constitute the majority (approximately 70%). About 10% of the visitors are Hindustani and about 10% are from different parts of India. The remaining 5% are military personnels belonging to different language groups.

Important Festivals of Kamakhya :

As an important Sakta Shrine, all the religious ceremonies of Sakti Cult and some other local festivals are celebrated at Kamakhya. Their particulars are furnished here.

1. **The Ambubachi Mela of Kamakhya :**

According to the Indian astronomy, the mother earth attains the period of menstruation during the fourth part of the star 'Mrigashira' and the first part of the star 'Ardra' (last part of June). As it is believed that the genital part of the Mother of the Universe fell at Kamakhya, the period of menstruation if observed here. Three days are observed as the period of impurity and the Temple of the Goddess remains closed on those days. This celebration originated from the fact that just after the period of menstruation every woman is ready to bear child, the mother earth also becomes ready for cultivation as soon as the rainy season starts. The celebration falls just after the beginning of the rainy season. After remaining closed for three days, the temple opens on the fourth day. This day is considered to be a very auspicious one for offering worship to the omnipotent Mother. More than twenty thousands of persons flock at Kamakhya on this day.

2. **Maroi-brat and Devadhwani :**

This is a peculiar festival of Kamakhya. Besides the

people of the Goddess Kamakhya, there are several temples of other gods and goddesses at Kamakhya. During a certain period of the year some persons are believed to remain under the spell of gods and goddesses. The fact that they are under spell can be known by some unusual signs. They can not take meat, fish and other such diet and remain away from women. They are often seen to vomit food and make heart-rending sounds during their sleep. Their offerings under possession are called Devadhavani. On the 1st and 2nd days of Bhadra (Mid August) they become restless and begin to dance. On this occasion a fair called Devadhwani Mela takes place.

These Debadhwanis are sometimes of the nature of Oracular revealation about the past or the future. Thousand of devotees congregate at mela to ask questions about themselves. On this occasion the goddess 'Manasha', the mother of the snakes, is also worshipped.

3. Durga Puja :

Quoting the *Kalika Puran*, Dr. Jogiraj Basu, an eminent Sanskrit Scholar of Gauhati University says that Durga Puja originated at Kamakhya. One interesting thing to be noted here is that no image of any god or goddess is worshipped at Kamakhya. Even during Durga Puja no image is made. There are a few other peculiarities about Durga Puja at Kamakhya. It is a fifteen-day celebration here, starting from Krishna Navami day (ninth-day after the fullmoon in the autumn) to the next Sukla Navami (ninth-day after the new-moon). The worship is done for the benefit of the subjects of Kamrup, irrespective of caste and creed. In worshipping the Goddess Durga the methods followed are as directed by the following books :

Brihat Nandikeswar, Debi-puran, Kalika-puran, Matsya-sukta, Damar, Matrika-bhed, Barabanal Tantra, Rudra-Jamal-Tantra, Maha-kal-Samhita, Nigam-Kalpa-Latika, the Devi-sukta and the Saraswati-Sukta of the *Rigveda* and the Sri-sukta of the *Yajur-veda* The methods practised at Kamakhya are mostly of the Tantrik cult. Except the first three and the last two books, the others depict the methods of worshipping by the leftist cult.

Punshaban or Puman Biya :

It is an old Aryan custom to observe a ceremony called 'Punshaban' in the eighth month of the first pregnancy of the wife. That is a ceremony welcoming the first child coming to them. In the same

way the Punshaban of the Mother Goddess is observed at Kamakhya. It is actually the Punshaban of the mother earth, which means the season of harvest. It is celebrated in the month of 'Pouch' *i.e.* December-January. On the second and third day after the full-moon or new-moon, when the star 'Pushya' falls, this festival is celebrated. It is a two days celebration. Several thousand people, mostly Assamese, gather to witness the celebrations.

Ratanti Shyamapuja :

There is a legend connected with the festival. After killing Ravana, Rama was bragging before Sita what a great hero he had killed and, therefore, what a great hero he himself was. At this Sita got offended and told him that it was impossible for Rama to kill Ravana (Sataskandha Ravana having hundred heads). But seeing the difficulty of her husband, Sita appeared in the battlefield in the form of Kali and it was because of her help, that Rama could kill the great Ravana. Rama understanding his ignorance, began to worship the goddess. It was on the fourteenth day after the new-moon in the month of 'Magha' that the goddess was born. So on that day, the goddess is worshipped at Kamakhya, the home of the Mother Goddess Kamakhya. Reference of this may be found in the Brihannila Tantra (Saptam Patala).

Durga-Deol :

Just as Lord Krishna observed the festival of colour, the Goddess is believed to observe the festival of colour with the coming of the spring. On this occasion a four day festival is celebrated at Kamakhya commencing from the 2nd day after the new-moon to the 5th day in the month of Chaitra (March). On the first two days Lord Shiva also plays with colour. On the third and the fourth days, the Goddess is taken out for a walk.

Basanti Puja :

According to Hindu mythology, King Suratha was the first to worship the Goddess Durga. He performed the worship in the month of Chaitra (March) during the spring-time. That puja was known as Basanti Puja. The celebration of Durga-Puja in the autumn was introduced by Ramchandra, at Kamakhya both Basanti and Durga Pujas are performed. Unlike the Durga Puja lasting for fifteen days in the autumn, Basanti Puja is performed only for three days from the seventh day after new-moon to the ninth-day, in the month of Chaitra. A great rush of pilgrims takes place in this festival also.

Madan Chaturali :

Madan, the god of love of the Indian mythology (Kamdev) tried to change the mind of Lord Siva who was in deep mediatation after the death of his wife Sati. Lord Siva being disturbed by Madan, was enraged and looked towards Madan with his third eye and Madan was burnt to ashes. Then Rati Devi, the wife of Madan, tried to pacify Lord Siva by her prayers. At her sincerity, Lord Siva was pleased and wished to grant her a boon. Rati Devi begged that her husband be revived to life again. It was by the boon of Lord Siva, that Madan (Kamdev) got back his life in Kamrup and the name of the district is supposed to be derived from that. In honour of Madan (Kamdev) a festival, called Madan Chaturali is performed at Kamakhya every year. This festival is called Madan Chaturali. This festival is held for three days, beginning from the thirteenth day from the new-moon, to the day of full-moon in the month of Chaitra (April). The actual 'puja' is held on the fourteenth day from the new-moon.

Rajeswari Puja :

It is a ceremony confined to the Tantriks only. The common public do not participate in it. It is celebrated for fifteen days commencing from the first day of the new-moon to the day of full-moon in the month of Chaitra (March). The rituals are performed in seclusion, and the Universal Mother (Bhubaneswari) or Raj-Rajeswari as they call it, is worshipped.

Socio-Economic Changes at Kamakhya :

Kamakhya being in the centre of Assamese civilization since the earliest days of known history, has a dimension of Changelessness about it. But it is only apparent. In reality, a lot of changes has taken place in the life of Kamakhya, even during the last few decades. For the purpose of the study of the change at Kamakhya, only the people at the top of the hill would be considered in this report, the people of the foot hill are mostly recent migrants and are not organically related to the life of Kamakhya.

Till the thirtees of this century, the main source of livelihood for all the inhabitants of Kamakhya was Kamakhya Temple, itself. This is true not only for the members of the Brahman community, but also for those of the other communities living at the top of the hill. Here it is to be noted that all the Brahmans living at the top of Kamakhya, do not have say in the management of the temple. Only five families who

were brought by the King in the 16th century are connected with the management of the temple. Other Brahmans, who settled there later on, used to earn their livelihood by serving the pilgrims. The people of the other castes living on the hill top were mostly temple servants. The main factors for change at Kamakhya during the recent years are three. Firstly, the pilgrims at Kamakhya are not willing to spend as liberally as in the past. Secondly, the population has gone up and hence the limited income is to be shared among a larger number of persons. Thirdly, a vast tract of land has been acquired by the Railways and the compensation paid has been proved to be adequate to prevent economic dislocation of the population dependent on landed property at Kamakhya. As a result of these changes in the material condition, the people are sending their children for better education to a much larger extent. Now not less than 100 youngmen of Kamakhya, have jobs of various nature outside Kamakhya. Some have even taken up jobs of electrician, mechanic, etc., which were considered to below occupations by the Brahmans of Kamakhya in the past. A good number of persons have also taken to shopkeeping. There are some families who have alsmost given up priestly duties.

Not only the professions are changing, but along with the same other social customs are also changing. Formerly, the Brahmans of Kamakhya gave more emphasis on learning Sanskrit; but now they are more eager to learn English. Even the girls are being sent to schools and colleges. Till now no Brahman girl of Kamakhya has taken job outside, but there is no doubt that soon this will be found in outdoor jobs as well. Marriage of the girls before they attained puberty was the *norm* even a few years ago; as a result to avoid public censure. Sometimes the parents used to marry off the girls even with unsuitable persons by paying high dowry. Now child marriage is no longer in vague and some of the consequented social evils have also disappeared.

In case of dress, a marked change is to be found. Formerly, the people of Kamakhya used to wear only 'dhoti' and did not put even a shirt. They used to cover their body with cotton *shawls* in the summer and woollen *shawls* in the winter. They could not probably dream of wearing trousers and other kind of modern dress. But at present, most of the young men wear western dress.

A change is rapidly taking place in the house-type. The old houses were mostly low

roofed buildings without adequate arrangements for lighting, ventilation and other sanitary requirements. Now, only a few houses are of this type. The new houses are being built with modern designs.

Another important change has taken place in tne investment pattern. Previously, the people of Kamakhya used to invest their surplus mostly in land. But now land is considered to be more of a headache. The Brahmans of Kamakhya do not plough the lands themselves, they get them cultivated by others on share-cropping basis. Now the cultivators are demanding larger share. Besides, due to the rapid expansion of Gauhati town and establishment of the Railway Headquarters at the foot-hills land has become scarce. Fragmentation of shares among the rapidly growing population is also another disincentive against investing in agricultural land. Some, however, have purchased small plots of homestead lands in Gauhati town. Some have invested to start a small-scale industry in Gauhati. Hardly any one has invested his saving to build up assets at Kamakhya except for constructing new houses or repairing old houses.

APPENDIX

It appears that during the Ahom rule, the Temple was under the direct management and control of the State. There was a special officer of the Crown, called *Sevacholowa* who used to supervise the regular worship of the temple and look into the discipline and regularity of service of the priests and menial employees. This post was created round about 1715-16AD, as a mark of special honour for Krishna Kanta Bhattacharya, who had given *diksha* (religious imitation) to the Ahom King Siya Sinha and also who was installed as the *Parabatiya Gosain* at Kamakhya. This post of Sevacholowa was continued till the advent of the British. During the Ahom rule there was another post, namely Doloi or manager. Towards the close of the Ahom rule, one Ganga Prasad Sharma of Bura Bardeori family was the Doloi. When the Mans (Burmese) invaded Assam, the fleeing King Chandra Kanta Sinha, asked the Doloi of Kamakhya to accompany him with the Chalamtu Thakurani (the movable goddess). During his absence, his elder brother Umadatta was appointed as a Doloi by the Seva Cholowa, when Ganga Prasad returned to Kamakhya, Uma Datta refused to vacate the post in his favour. They had to go into litigation. After-wards faced with another complication Ganga Prasad made a compromise with Uma Datta whereby six annas share of the profit of the office was given to the latter.

The other complication mentioned above arose out of the facts that during the Burmese invasion, a non-Bardeory, named Bishnu Datta was appointed as a Doloi of Kamakhya Temple, by the the Barphukan of Gauhati. Shortly, after this appointment Bishnu Datta was dismissed from his office by the Barphukan, whereupon Bishnu Datta sought the intervention of the Burmese General. There is claim to have confirmed the appointment of Bishnu Datta as Doloi. After the Burmese were driven away by the British, and captain Scott, who was in overall command of the operation in Assam, started the settlement of the various claims, he was faced with the claims for the office of Doloiship from two quarters,—one was that of Burdeory family, and the other was that of Bishnu Datta.

At first Captain Scott decided to recognise the claim of the Bardeory family only and by a "Sanad" appointed Ganga Prasad and Uma Datta as Dolois. But as Bishnu Datta persisted in lodging his claim, the issue was reopened by Captain Scott. One after another two panchayats were appointed by Captain Scott to consider all the aspects of the claim.

The first panchayat decided in favour of fifty-fifty share of profit for both the parties. But this did not satisfy either of them. So a second panchayat was constituted to consider their appeals. The members of the panchayat were Sheristadar Pasupati Bhattacharya (Chairman), Baluram Sharma and Kameswar Sharma. The issues under consideration were as follows:

The fact of this claim of Bishnu Datta originated during the rule of the Man (The Burmese). The fact of Baburam Barphukan having appointed during the while ... "The fact that how can one become a Doloi who was not got even the power of (or Office) touching or handling the Goddess. The desirability of taking into the 'Kaipyat' of this meaning from reliable persons of this country, he, the above Sahib (*i.e.* Captain Scott) going to annual his own order in that suit having torn off his own signature with his own hand, had issued permission for sending to the First Panchayat for the purpose of full and complete ascertainment."

The Second panachayat upheld the decision of the first panchayat. But as the parties were not satisfied, on an appeal from Bishnu Datta, another panchayat was constituted in 1833 by Robertson who had in the meantime taken over the command from Captain Scott. The members of the panchayat were Digambar Sharma Deka Barua, Padmadhar Sharma, Bidya Bagish and Amritlal. The panchayat came to the following conclusion. "That although the Second Panchayat in their own opinion have written half share as the right of the plaintiff (Bishnu-Datta). Still this view is not entitled to being accepted as the plaintiff, save and except the fact of obtaining title from the Man Government (the Burmese), cannot bring forward any other proof whatsoever in regard to his claim. And the fact is that the above named plaintiff has not been appointed in a completely permanent and fixed manner in the situation of the Shevaity and Doloiship, during the Rule of the Man, which was but a few years. And whoever be so appointed, cannot thereby afford a ground enough and reasonable for consideration

for the purpose of the ascertainment and proof of right and title. And the court has no reliance on the fact of his holding on the 'Sanad' of the Barpukan of the Man, an occurance of commotion in that province, none from amongst the inhabitants of the place in such manner as to amount to a final proof. And it is also not possible that during the time of the Man any body would come to the Man for the purpose of obtaining his right and adjudication of the redress. Moreover, it is apparent from the plaint of the plaintiff that the Defendant Ganga Prasad, who belong to the five houses of the former Dolois of the 'Chalanta Thakurani', remained during their own flight through fear of the Man, in company of the Raja at Jogighopa. And the truth is that people had looted and plundered and put into considerable disorder many 'Deuls' and 'Dolois', gods and goddesses and ancient places. And for this reason, the plaintiff does not belong to the 'Five houses' of Brahmans whom the former Raja of Assam had appointed for the purpose of performing 'Puja' of the Kamakhya Goddess; but on the other hand he is a man belonging to a quite different Doloi. And from the opinion of the said Panchayat, it is also clear that save and except the aforesaid Five Houses, the work of Doloiship and Shevaity cannot be conferred on any one else who has not got even the power of touching the Goddess. And agreeably thereto, from the commencement of the occupation of the British, former Dolois have been appointed from amongst those five houses only, in the situation of the shevaity have been continuing performence and management (puja etc.). For these aforesaid reason, the claim of the plaintiff does not seem just and proper in any manner." Mr. T. C. Robertson, however, gave his confirmed decision of the First and the Second Panchayats. But Bishnu Datta made an appeal to the Governor-general who referred the case to the Provincial Commissioner, Mr. Francis Jenkins, Mr. Jenkins also ordered that one-half share of the profit of the office of Doloi should be given to Bishnu Datta.

But in 1836, Ganga Prasad and Uma Datta preferred an appeal to the Sadar Dewani Adalat, Calcutta, against the order of Mr. Jenkins.

The acting Justice of the Sadar Dewani Adalat of Calcutta Mr. John Ross Higgs, found no justification for the claim of 'Bishnu Datta' and ordered that the appeal of the apparants be decreed and the Respondent's (Bishnu Datta's) claim be dismissed and the present

Commissioner's (Jenkin's) decision be set aside. He further ordered that the respondent be dispossessed from the other-half share of the 'Doloiship' immediately. (1st August, 1838).

At the initial stage, the East India Company Government followed the practice of the Ahom rules regarded the Kamakhya Temple as a Government Institution. But in 1842, the Executive Officers of the British Government were directed not to interfere witn the managements of the temples and religious institutions. It was also decided that disputes relating succession etc., would be decided in ordinary courts of law.

In 1854, a dispute came up before the civil court in which the court observed as follows.

"The manner of filling up a vacancy being clearly by election or nomination which under the old Assam Government required the sanction of the Ruling Power to make it valid which custom was continued under the British Government until prohibited in 1842." The court further observed ".. the right of election belong to Bardeoris."

Since the assumption of the Government in Assam by the British, and the declaration by the Government of India of the policy of non-intervention in religious matters and temple affairs, a somewhat modified procedure evolved gradually. It has already been mentioned that during the early part of the British Rule, the post of *Sevacholowa* was abolished. So the Bardeories rose into prominence and were gradually acquired more and more powers. They as a class became the Supreme 'Trustees' of the temple and the endowments and the Doloi were reduced to the position of their manager. The Bardeories acquired the powers not only to elect a Doloi, but also to exercise control over him by enforcing submission of accounts and if necessary to discharge him.

It can also be noted that no Doloi had been in past selected from Hota and Bidhipathak group, and a dispute arose in 1932, which was decided in the Court of Special Sub-Judge for Assam Valley Districts. The court observed as follows:

"the non-exercise of this right cannot create a special custom, that a Doloi must be selected exclusively from the Bura and the Deka family. That the fight of the majority of the Bardeories to elect a Doloi from amongst the qualified persons of the 'Panch-Ghar' (the five ancient families of high-priests) was never challenged before." The court decreed that anybody from the com-

petent persons of the above five families and the right to be elected a Doloi and to have a voice in the management of the temple.

In addition to the controversy relating to the visits of the different Bardeori families to hold the office of Doloi, controvers has from time to time cropped up about the manner of management of the affairs of the temple. In 1927, one case was brought by eight non-Bardeories before the Court with the permission of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup district (who, under section 93, C. P. Code, exercised the powers of the Advocate General). The case is known as 'Scheme' case of 1927 and object was to have a 'Scheme' framed for the management of the temple and its affairs and the preservation of 'Debottar' properties, for taking of accounts of trust property and their dealings with the same for the past years and for the removal of the functioning Dolois who were the managers and superintendents of the trust.

It took several years for the case to be decided. The decision was as follows :

"Following the precedence of the Court Case of Madras of 1928 and of the Allahabad Case of 1929, the Judge came to the conclusion that the Court will not be justified to intervene in the present management of the Bardeory Trustees and that the suit must be dismissed with costs. If at any future time a suit is brought against the Bardeories as defacto and dejure trustees or to supress or supercede them or if a group of Bardeories come forward to demand a Scheme pleading their own incapacity to deal with the Temple affairs, then the matter may be tried from another standpoint."

Problems of Kamakhya :

Though with improvement in the means of communication, the number of visitors to Kamakhya has gone up, it seems that a sort of loss of vitality is slowly creeping up in the place. This is perhaps the outcome of a long drawn historical process. In the pre-British period Kamakhya flourished under the patronage of the kings, during the British period rich zemindars and businessmen did not hesitate to contribute liberally for its upkeep. They supported the establishment here; in return, they sought shelter from the all powerful mother goddess. The common people were also linked with the place through awe, love and devotion for the mother goddess and the innumerable local gods and goddesses. But it seems that with the rise of new social forces, away from metaphysics and heavily leaning upon

technology, those at the helm of affairs of the society, felt less and less impelled to seek shelter from mother goddess. A process of disenchantment also perhaps went on among the general people, as a reaction to the litigations and internal strifes in which the establishment has been constantly involved. The qualitative change in the nature of the attraction of increasingly large number of persons commonly to Kamakhya seem to be another factor which has contributed to the *muni* of the old setting. Previously, when communication was difficult more pilgrims used to come, out of devotion and desire to perform an act of priests; now more visitors come out of curosity and desire for diversion. This is a crushing experience for the persons connected with the temple, who used to serve the pilgrims from the exalted position of the links between them the world of mystery and the world of mundane existence, but who now serve the visitors as guides to the places of interest and to the performance of rituals, which may of the visitors agree to do only a matter of good form. Tne hovering sense of loss of vitality of the establishment is the outcome of a few other factors as well. There is a rumour that the Government might take over the management of the temple. This has caused great nervousness among the people of Kamakhya. To many, it means not only loss of role, but also loss of secure means of livelihood.

Next the roads and drainage system has not improved such. Because it is a hill area, and the supply of water inadequate, the drainage system is improper. The clearing of garbage is a big problem. Standard of living is very low and the people have not yet learnt what is decent living. Roads are very narrow and the municipal committee has enacted law about the construction of houses and the use of lands. Nor any land has been acquired uptil now for future public uses.

In the field of education, the Kamakhya High School is the only hope. Very few can manage to obtain high education. The girls of Kamakhya can prosecute their studies to the secondary level, because of the High School. But after the ninth year of its inception, it has not been given grants under deficit system. The public have been contributing a large sum to keep it alive. The Central Government, after the visit of Mr. L. O. Joshi, Jt. Secretary, Union Ministry of Education, proposed to make it Higher Secondary School, as far our knowledge goes, but why this proposal

was dropped, is still a mystery. If it was raised to Higher Secondary Level, the girls section of Kamakhya would get greater benefit; because very few of them after passing High School Leaving Certificate Examination, can afford to carry on studies in the college.

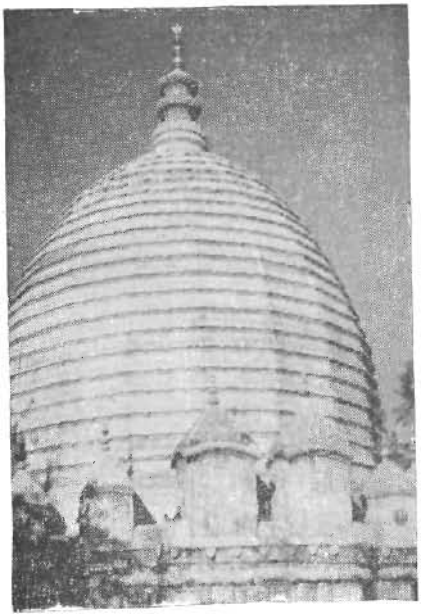
Absence of a maternity-ward and a Child Welfare Centre is another drawback of the place. Only recently the former subsidiary dispensary was made a State dispensary which is not full fledged yet in many respect. Only one Asstt. Surgeon gd. I, was placed at Kamakhya, but they can be described as 'migratory' visitors to Kamakhya as nobody of them has served to the expiry of the term. Practically half of the year goes without a doctor. It does not have any family planing unit at the Dispensary. What is astonishing is that the building has not been electrified after the five years of its construction, though the electric station is only a stone's through from the dispensary.

Also the absence of a public building and a play ground have prevented the local people from taking part in sports and cultural activities. The youths of Kamakhya do not get any facility for training in such activities because of the absence of such things. The State and the Central Governments have allotted large sums of money at many places for such activities, but Kamakhya has not uptil now got a single farthing for this.

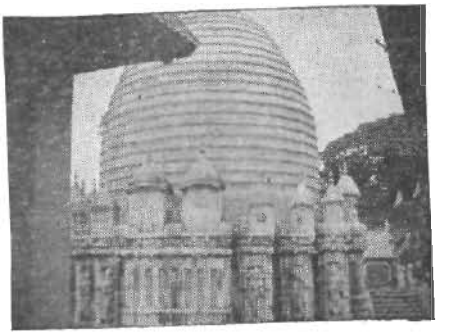
Again, after the Railways have acquired the land, many of the families have been put into great difficulties, because these families lived upon the income from land. The Railways should have over and above paid adequate compensation, offer employment facilities to the youths and those families whose lands they had acquired. Because what the Railway had given by way of compensation was not sufficient to acquire permanent assets by those families.

Lastly, we like to point that the Government always gives publicity that Kamakhya is a place of tourists' attraction. But what has it done for the improvement of Kamakhya except constructing the motorable road? No doubt, it is a big shrine, it is a very old place where, there are temples of several gods and goddesses. That is so because the old kings of Assam built them. But temples, buildings, etc., cannot

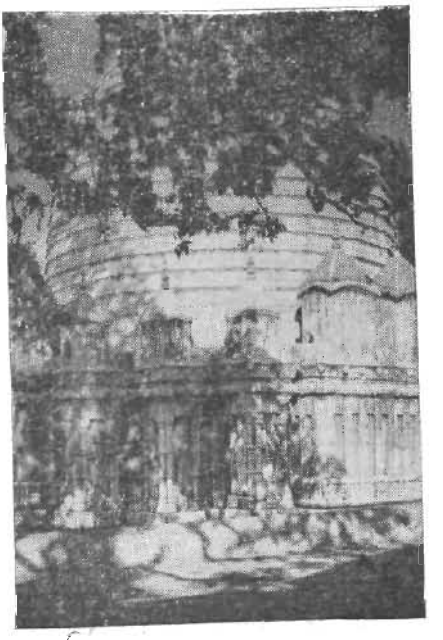
be permanent institutions until measures are taken to make them permanent. Again there are further avenues of improvement. Areas of Kamakhya can be developed into beautiful parks etc. But it is lamentable to the Kamakhya has received no sympathy at all. So, we like to urge the Government to take a little more interest in it and really make Kamakhya a place of tourist's attraction.



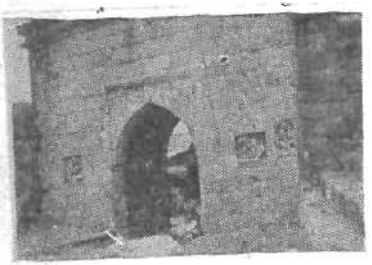
The historic Kamakhya Temple The lower portion is built of stone. It contains beautiful sculputure. The exact date of the construction of this portion has not been fixed yet. The upper portion, *i. e.*, the dome is made of brick. This portion was built in the latter part of the 15th century by King of Cochbehar.



The main Kamakhya Temple— The Dome.



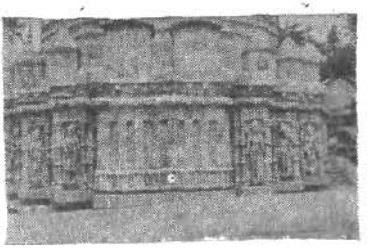
The basement of the main Kamakhya Temple, built of stone, with beautiful cuttings and images, of which the age has not been ascertained properly.



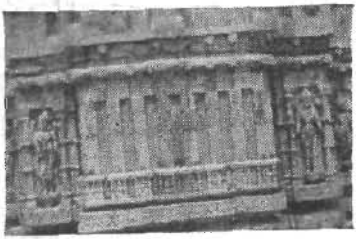
The western gate of the surrounding compound of the main Kamakhya Temple. It is known by the name of Hanuman Duar. It is built fully of stone, contains a few stone-cut images. On the right is the famous sculpture of a mother and child.



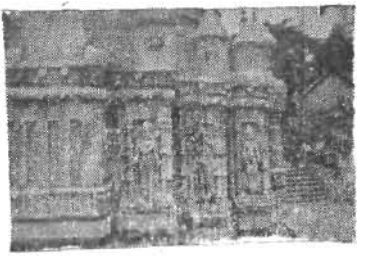
The entrance to the Kamakhya Temple. This is made of painted marble.



The southern part of the main Temple.



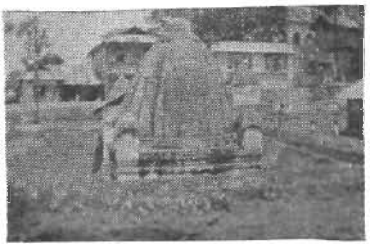
Fine sculptural work on the body of the main Temple.



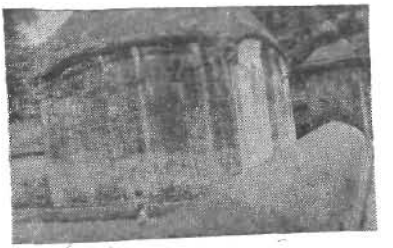
Stone images cut on black stone, on the body of the main Temple.



Chinnamasta Temple and Kameswar Temple.



The Chinnamasta Temple near the present motor stand at Kamakhya hill. On the background the Kamakhya Boys' L. P. School.

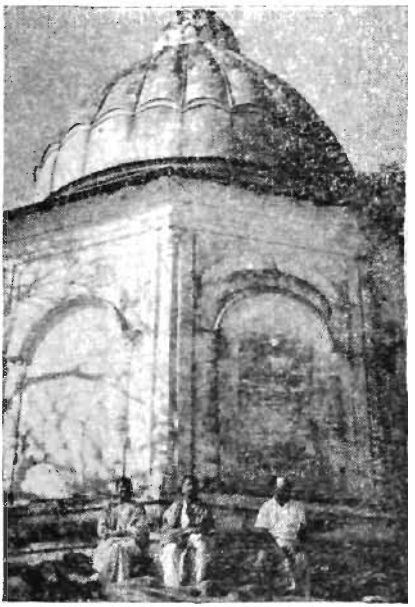


The Kameswar Temple, a Temple of Lord Siva, within the same compound of the Chinnamasta Temple.

Plate IV



The Bhubaneswari Temple on the Bhubaneswari Hill.



Bhubaneswari Temple.



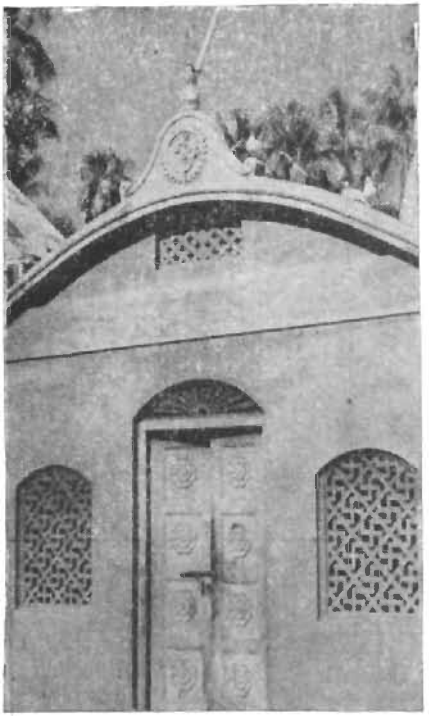
The motorable way. On the background the Bhubaneswari Hill. The dilapidated Durbhunga Building can also be viewed on the hill-top.



Gauhati town and a portion of the mighty Brahmaputra as viewed from the top of Bhubaneswari Hill.



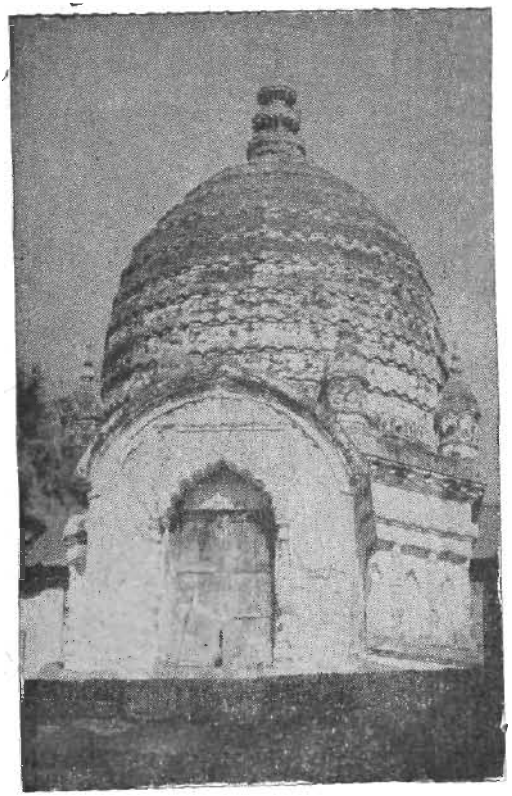
The Bhairabi Temple and the Centre of Bhairabi Tantric Union.



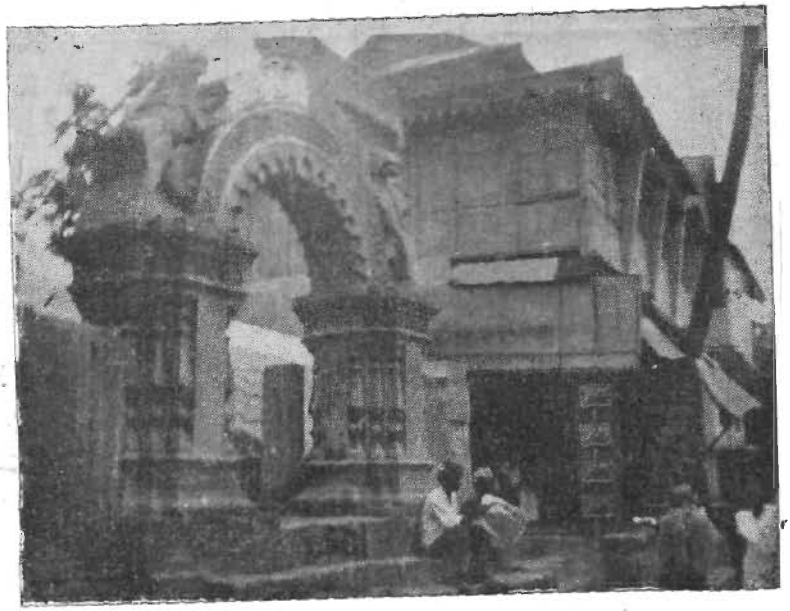
Kamaleswar Temple.



The Children's Park with its entrance. On its right is the Kedar Temple, a temple of Lord Vishnu.



Temple of the Goddess Tara.



The gate of the Tara Temple.



Siddheswar Temple.



The R. C. C. Wing of the Kamakhya School. A portion of the Assam type building is seen towards the right side.

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