# Tracing the Sacred Geography of Kamarupa in Kālika Purān and Yogini Tantra

*Nilkamal Singha[1] & Oinam Ranjit Singh[2]*

**Abstract**

In the corpus of religious and Purānic literature of India, Kālika Purān (KP) and Yogini Tantra (YT) are two texts which deal elaborately though not exclusively with the Kāmarūpa (Assam) and its religious shrines along with their geographical features. The latter half of Kālika Purān and almost whole of Yogini Tantra is devoted to the shrines and geography of Kāmarūpa and Devi worship. However not every features were identified due to the reasons explained in the article but most of the religious shrines were identified along with the geographical features, which are referred for the identified shrines. The present article is an attempt to study the sacred geography and religious landscape of Kāmarūpa with reference to Kālika Purāna and Yogini Tantra.

**Keywords**: *Kālikā Purān, Yogini Tantra, Sacred Geography, Kāmarūpa, Kāmākhya, Brahmaputra, V (verse/s)*

**Introduction**

The earliest historical reference of Kāmarūpa came from the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Gupta king Samudragupta, where Kāmarūpa is mentioned alongside Samatata and Devaka as frontier kingdoms in 4$^{th}$ CE. Some scholars even opine that the name 'Prāgjyotisa' has some astronomical relevance. According to the Kālika Purān, Brahma made the first circulation of the stars in Prāgjyotisa which signifies the importance of the study of astrology and astronomy in the province in ancient times. However according to Banikanta Kakati, the topographical features of the land was responsible for the formation of the term 'Pagar Juh', meaning a region of high hills, which changed into 'Prāgjyotishpur' in later time. However the discourse remains inconclusive.

In the collection of religious literature of India, there exists eighteen Māhāpurān and eighteen Upapurān, of which one is Kālika Purān. In these literature various events of life and character of Shiva and Parvati is narrated. Kāmdev is an important *dev* in the context of Assam. Earlier Assam was known as Kāmarūpa, which was derived from name of lord Kāmdev. He was burnt by Shiva and regained his form at this place. Shiv Purān mentions Kāmdev being cursed by his creator Brahma to be burnt to ashes by Shiva because he used

his weapon (*madanāstra*) to Brahma himself which put him into a distressing situation. The sacred geography of Kāmarūpa is dominated by the River Brahmaputra and Kāmākhya hills, making it the most significant landmark of sacred landscape of Assam. All the inscriptions, Kālika Purān, Yogini Tantra and other records speaks of river Brahmaputra in very respectful and revered terms. Brahmaputra is the only male river in India and is believed to be son of Lord Brahma. Legends speaks that when Parasuram killed his mother with an axe on the orders of his father, the axe got stuck to his hand because he had committed a sin (*mahapāāp*) by killing his mother. He repented and tried to get rid of the sin. He succeeded when he came to Lohit river, main stream of River Brahmaputra. As soon as he put his hand in the pristine waters of the river, the axe was detached from his hand. Since then the site became significant and most sacred place of worship and is presently known as Parasuram *kūnda*. Kālikā Purān is a Sakta/Tantric literature, which refers to various secret practices related to the *sādhana* of Sati. Shiva narrates the Purāna to his consort Parvati and asks for secrecy. It contains 98 chapter and more than nine thousand *slokas* (hymns).This Purāna is dedicated to goddess Kāli and her various forms. The text speaks of the mountains of Kāmarūpa, rivers and Kāmākhya temple and other sacred places. The text records and explains the mode of worship of goddess Kali, Durga and Kāmākhya. It is the main book of *Sakta* sect and is also a *smriti* literature. The approximate period of their creation is supposed to be 10$^{th}$ century CE and thought to be composed at Kāmarūpa. It is one of the rare Hindu texts referring the term "Hindu". The holy text narrates the Naraka story and places. It describes Kāmarūpa as holier than Varanasi. The text also has references of Kālidasa and Magha of 7$^{th}$ century personalities. The extent of upper limit of Ratnapalas' reign as 10$^{th}$ century is made with reference in the text of Durjaya hill with Pragjyotishpur in the east. There is no definite information regarding the territorial extension of Kāmarūpa. Different texts suggest differently. In Ramayana it is described as situated near the sea and its ruler was called Sailālaya, dweller of mountains. Bhagadaṭṭ as territory is described as extended to the sea coast. According to the Vishnu Purgnthe country extends to hundred *yojana* on all sides from Pragjyotishpur. According to Yogini Tantra it is triangular and bounded on north by Kanjagiri and Dikshu on east; Karatoya on west and confluence of Lakshya and Brahmaputra on south. Detailed and elaborate description of Kāmarūpa is given in this article.

When Chinese traveller Huen Tsang visited the area in 639 CE, he estimated the circumference of Kāmarūpa to be 10,000 li or 1667 km.Yogini tantra divides Kāmarūpa into four *pithas* or sacred region, namely, *Ratnapitha, Swarnapitha, Kamapitha* and *Saumar pitha*. The Vrahadguvakastantra refers Kāmarūpa in three divisions *Ratnapith, Kampith* and *Saumarpith* (Shastri 1985). *Haragaurisamvada* refers four part of the kingdom, such as, *Ratnapitha* (Karatoya to Sankosh); *Kamapitha* (Sankosh to Kapili); *Suvarnapitha* (Rupika to Bhairavi); and *Saumarpitha* (Bhairavi to Dibang). According to the Kamrupar Buranji, the divisions were Ratnapitha (Maurang kingdom to Sankosh river), Kamapitha(Sankosh to Duimunisila).

Bhadrapitha (Kallang river to Kailash river), and Saumarpith (Duimunisila to Dikkaravasini) (Bhuyan, 1930). Sircar presented three versions first being Kamapitha (Karatoya to Sankosh); Ratnapitha (Sankosh to Rupahi); Suvarnapitha (Rupahi to Bharali); and Saumarpitha (Bharali to Dibang near Sadiya).The second being Ratnapitha (Karatoya to Manas); Kamapitha (from Manas to Silghat on the north bank of Brahmaputra); Bhadrapitha (south bank, south of Kamapitha); and Saumarpitha to the east and third being the one presented by Haragaurisamvada (Sircar, 1990). According to Kakati it was also divided into four parts Ratnapitha (river Karatoya to river Sankosh) western Assam, Kamapitha (river Sankosh to river Rupali), Swarnapitha (rupali river to Bharali river) mid Assam, Saumarpitha (Bhairavi to Dikarai river eastern Assam (Kakati, 1967).

**Kālika Purāna**

According to Hazra (2003), there existed a text that was older than the extant one, and that the origin of that text was in Bengal. This was denied by Shastri, who claims that the evidence provided by Hazra for an earlier text can be explained by other means, without invoking an older text. According to Shastri, the local descriptions explain the exposition of the myth of Naraka from whom all the dynasties of Kāmarūpa drew their lineage. The description of the myth of Brahmaputra river and the claim in the text that Kāmarūpa was holier than even Varanasi, points to the fact that text had been composed in Kāmarūpa. The explanation in the text for the *Mlechchha* population and the indication of a parallel explanation found in Harjaravarman's (CE815-CE832) Hyunthal copper plate inscription places the text closer to his reign. Thus, the text is dated to late 9th to early 10th centuries. The earliest printed edition of this text was published by the Venkateshvara Press, Bombay in 1829 Saka Era (CE1907), followed by the Vangavasi Press, Calcutta in 1316 Bangabda (CE1909).

In Kālika Purān and Yogini Tantra the state of Assam is mentioned variously as Kāmarūpa, Kāmarūpa, Kāmākhya pitha/tirtha, Pragjotispura, Lauhitya. Following excerpts are taken from Kālika Purān (Shastri, 2018) pertaining to Kāmarūpa/ Kāmākhya.

The Naraka narrative in Kālika Purān begins with chapter 36. The early part deals with the life and story of Daksha and Sati and praising of Brahmins, and there are other Purānic stories, specially of Saivite. The chapter 38 speaks of Kiratas and their tribal and uncivilized nature (*v.* 102). It also describes and narrates about great Kirata king Ghataka and how he was killed by Naraka and chased the Kiratas to sea. When Naraka asked about future course, *bhagwan* told him to chase and annihilate the fleeing Kiratas upto Dikkarvasini and protect those who submit (*v.* 103-117). Averse (*v.*118) speaks of the place with Karatoya in the west, Ganga on the east, where goddess Lalitakanta resides. Verse 119-120 refers Kāmākhya and river *Lauhitya* (Brahmaputra). In the verse 123 it was stated that at Pragjyotisa Lord Brahma created stars and constellations. Rehabilitation of Kiratas took place in the eastern sea coast (*v.* 125). The land from Lalitakanta up to river Karatoya is the region of Kāmākhya (*v.* 127). In

the verse 134-140 it speaks of elephants, horses, lion, tiger skin, jewels, precious stones lapis lazuli (cats eye) etc. as treasures of the region belonging to the Kiratas. In the verse 157-158 Naraka is told to become well versed with Vedas and worship goddess Kāmākhya on the high hill of Nilakuta.

Chapter 39 of Kālika Purān speaks of Naraka and his friendship with king Bana of Sonitpur. Under the influence of the latter he assumed demonic character and started atrocities upon common people and Brahmins, who were addressed as twice born. The verse 82-83 elaborated the city of Paragjyotisa being inhabited by the delightful and energetic people, full of herds of cattle, horses, elephants and free of calamities and looked like Amravati, the favourite city of the Indra. The later verses of the chapter narrate about Naraka and his battle with Krishna and his death and about his successor to Pragjyotisa. Chapter 40 is about the story of Naraka and elaborates the events of the life of Naraka. Chapters 56-62 are about the worship of Mahamaya Kāmākhya and elaborated the genesis of goddess Kāmākhya. Chapter 72 speaks of the glory of Kāmākhya and about situation of Kāmākhya on Nilachala (*v*. 2) and mentioned *Nilakuta* hill (*v*. 72, 83).

Chapter 78 deals with the description of sacred places, hills and rivers of Kāmarūpa. It is the most elaborate chapter dealing with the geography and topography of Assam.
The verses are given below:
*V*. 3: speaks of Kāmarūpa *pitha*.
*V*. 4: speaks of division of Kāmarūpa in three parts, namely north, middle and eastern.
*V*. 7: mentioned river named *Bahuroka* on the left of *Karatoya*. *Karatoya* flows on the north of it and on the east of this river is Kāmarūpa.
*V*. 8: mentions mountain *Surasa* in Kāmarūpa. The river *Bahuroka* rises from this mountain which yields many merits.
*V*. 10a: describes merits of taking bath in river *Bahuroka*.
*V*. 14-16a: mentions of Vasistha *kunda.*
*V*. 16b-17: mentions Mountain named *Krtivasa* on the east of the mountain *Surasa*. River *Chandrika* rises from this mountain.
*V*. 19-21: speaks of river *Chandrika* and merits of worshipping her and about river *Phenila*.
*V*. 24-26: speaks of river *Sita* and another river *Somadana* flowing two *yojana* (25 km) east of *Sita*.
*V*. 27: mentions these rivers flowing towards north and flowing east of the pitha of goddess Tripura.
*V*. 30: speaks of river *Bhadra* in the east of *Agada*.
*V*. 31: on the east of *Bhadra* is river *Subhadra*.
*V*. 32: further east of *Subhadra* is the river *Manasa*.
*V*. 34: speaks of *Vibhrata* Mountain.

*V*. 35: auspicious river *Bhairavi* was mentioned.
*V*. 37-38: mentioned river *Varnasa*.
*V*. 39-41: speaks of river *Madana* and god Aditya and about the hill called Tattva-Saila, where Sri Surya resides and on its east flows the river Trisrota and of two ponds called Kapota and Karana on the western side of the river.
*V*. 42-56: speaks of Sun god.
*V*. 58: speaks of river Trisrota.
*V*. 59: mentions river *Kasumamalini* and *Ksiroda* both flowing southwards.
*V*. 60: mentions river named *Lila*.
*V*. 61: mentioned of river *Chandika* emerging from mountain *Dhavala*.
*V*. 63: mentions of two Sivalinga named *Golaka* and *Shringi* situated at river *Chandika*.
*V*. 64-67: informs of merit of taking bath in *Chandika* river flowing south, of climbing Dhavala and touching Golaka Shiva; climbing down and worship Shivalinga Shringi and acquire a merit of performing *asvamedha* and also mentioned of mountain named *Gandhamadhana* located on south-eastern direction.
*V*. 68-69: mentions that on the western side of the region lies the *Gandhamadana* Mountain where Shivalinga named *Bhringesa* is located. At the end of the mountain lie two foot prints of *Bhringesa*.
*V*. 70-73: refers to an auspicious kunda *Antaralaka* and about merits of visiting it.
*V*. 74: refers that Brahma caused Lauhitya to flow betweentwo mountains *Manikuta* and *Gandhamadan*.
*V*. 75: mentions that on the south of *Varnasa* there is a lake called Lauhitya and in the east there is a hill *Manikuta* where god Hayagriva resides.
*V*. 81: mentions Vishnu residing in Manikuta hill which was extended 100 vyama (approx. 500 hands) in width.
*V*. 82: mentions that on the east of Manikuta hill, there is another hill, triangular in shape named as *Bhadrakama* and there is a Shivalinga on that hill called *Kalahaya*.
*V*.83-85a: speaks of *Apurnabhava* kunda, on the *Bhadrakama* hill on the bank of *Apurnabhava,* which a piece of stone slab called *Harabitthi*, which is Brahma himself in the form of the stone.
*V*.85b-87: speaks of *Gokarna* (a slab) on *Bhadrakama* hill, on the south-east direction of *Gokarna* located on the edge of the hill, where Sambhu called as *Kedara* resides.
*V*.88-109: speaks of merits and methods of worship at the *tirtha* located in the vicinity of *Manikuta* hill, which was compared with Varanasi in holiness and glory and served by Siddhas and Vidyadharas.
*Chapter 79* deals with places of pilgrimage in Kāmārūpa.
*V*. 1: refers to*Darpana* Mountain, where *Kubera* resides in the company of keepers of wealth.
*V*. 2: refers to a lake named *Rohita*.

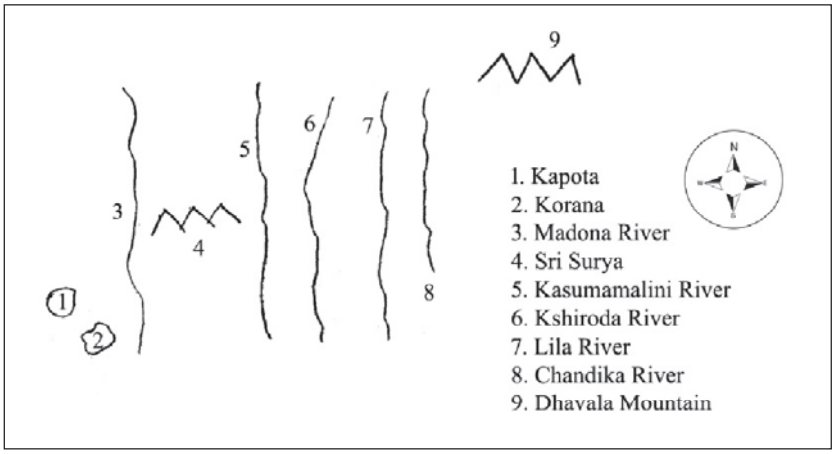



Fig. 1: Arrangement of features as narrated in Kālika Purān (none of the features could be identified)

*V*. 3-7a: refers to river *Darpana/Darpat* rising from Himalayas.
*V*. 7b-11: speaks of mountain named *Agnimala* on the east of *Darpana*.
*V*. 12: speaks of a pond named *Varuna* and a mountain nearby called *Kamsakara* on the east of the Agnimala.
*V*. 17b-19: speaks of *Vayukuta* Mountain to the east of *Varuna* Mountain.
*V*. 20: mentions that in the east of Vayu hill lies the *Chandrakuta* hill, which is triangular in shape.
*V*. 23: speaks of lake called *Somakunda* towards the east of *Vayu* hill.
*V*. 26-28: speaks of *Chandrakunda* and *Chandrakuta* hilsl and *Nandana* Mountain on the banks of *Chandrakunda*.
*V*. 30: mentions that towards the south of *Chandrakuta* hill is another hill *Jangrdhana* and on its southern part is *Aswakranta* Lake, which is most sacred pilgrimage of the world.
*V*. 31-33: refers to *Chandrakuta* and *Nandana* hill.
*V*. 34: speaks of *Bhasmakuta* and *Urvasi*.
*V*. 38: speaks of a *kunda* lying in between *Urvasi* and *Bhasmakuta*.
*V*. 42: speaks of great mountain Manikuta located on northeast of Bhasmakuta where *Hara* in the form of *Manikarna* resides.
*V*. 44: refers to *Bhasmachala* and *Manikarneswara*.
*V*. 49-50: speaks of an auspicious river Sumangala rising from Himalayas flowing smoothly east of Manikuta.
*V*. 51-52: speaks of mountain *Matsyadhvaja* in the east of *Manikuta* where *Madana* was burnt by *Sambhu* and also regained his form. Kama in the shape of a fish resides here, hereby getting the name *Matsyadhvaja.* Possibly the site may be the temple of Madan Kāmdev, located

near Guwahati.
*V*. 53: speaks of river *Sasvati*, flowing in the valley of *Matsyadhvaja* towards south.
*V*. 54: speaks of Lake *Kamasarovara* on *Matsyadhavaja* Mountain.
*V*. 55-58: speaks of *Sukanta* Mountain to the east of *Gandhamadana* Mountain and *Vasavakunda* by the side of Sukanta. Another mountain named *Raksahkuta* in the east of *Sukanta*.
*V*. 64-68: speaks of god *Pandunath/ Madhava* and hill *Pandunath*. *Madhava* in the form of big stone is located towards the east of *Raksahkuta* and it narrates about the lord *Pandunath*.
*V*. 69-70: towards the north of *Pandunath* is the lake *Brahmakunda* created by Brahma, one hundred *vyama* (two hundred extended arms) in length and half of it in breadth.
*V*. 74-75: mentions that towards the east of *Pandunath* is *Chitrahara* hill. Beyond this is *Nilakuta* hill, the abode of Kāmākhya.
*V*. 76-77: speaks of *Brahmagiri* Mountain to the east of *Nilachala*.Towards east of *Brahma Saila* in *Kāmākhya yoni mandala* resides the goddess *Ugratara*.
*V*. 92: speaks of *Ganesha* (*Agnivetala*) located at the eastern gate of *Kāmākhya* (*Dwargorilla*).
*V*. 113: mentions that a mountain named *Karpata* lies towards the south of *Bhasmakuta* mountain.
*V*. 120-121: refers to the hill on the east of *Karpota*, called *Chitra* situated on the edge of eastern part in south eastern direction and to a stone slab called *Brahmagrava pitha* located on the hill called *Prag-parvata* (the eastern hill), nine planets reside there as per their will. It is the present *Navagraha* temple.
*V*. 143: speaks of *Kajjala* hill located on the east of *Chitrashaila*.
*V*. 145: mentions of another hill named *Subhaparvata* on the east of *Kajjala hill*.
*V*. 146: mentions that towards the east of *Subhaparvata* flows river *Kapilaganga*.
*V*. 147-148: mentions that in the east of *Kāmākhya* towards south is a very big charming lake of twenty five yojana in extension (possibly a reference to *Deeporbeel*), from there rises a river of white water.
*V*. 151: mentions that to the east of *Kapilaganga* is the river *Damanika* of black water, which suppresses sins.
*V*. 152: mentions that to the east of *Damanika* River is another river named Vriddha, equal to Ganga in merit.
*V*. 154-155: mentions that to the east of *Damani* River is another river *Divyayamuna*, equal to Yamuna in granting merit. It rises from southern hills and flows to Brahmaputra.
*V*. 156-157: speaks of a big mountain *Durjaya*
*V*. 160-161: speaks of river *Bhairabganga* and of a pond *Bhairab sarovar*. On the east of *Durjaya* mountain is a city named *Varasana.* Towards the south of this is hillock named *Ksobhaka*.
*V*. 162: mentions that on the hillock of *Kshobhaka* is five yonis called *Panchapuskarni*.
*V*. 164-165: mentions that towards the east of *Ksobhaka* hill flows a big river named *Kanta* which flows to Brahmaputra travelling northward initially. There is a big lake called

*Divyakunda* on the slope of *Ksobhaka*.
*V*. 172: mentions that on the south eastern direction of *Panchpuskarini* is Sivalinga of stone called *Heruka*.
*V*. 175-180: mentions that in the northeast direction of *Ksobhaka* is the mountain *Sandhyachala* where Vasistha practiced austerity and *Sandhya* River emerges from an auspicious lake nearby.
*V*. 181-182: mentions that on the east of *Sandhya* mountain is River *Lalita* which emerges from Brahmaputra and on the eastern bank of the river *Lalita* is a hill named *Bhagavan* caused by Mahadeva.
*V*. 185-186: mentions that all the rivers mentioned are north flowing and flows to Brahmaputra and prescribed bath in these rivers after visiting *Kāmākhya* and to take a dip in water of *Urvasi*.
*Chapter* 80: The description of Holy Rivers and places of pilgrimage of *Kāmārūpa*.
*V*. 1: speaks of river Dipavati on the east of river Sasvati.
*V*. 3: speaks of on the east of river *Dipavati* lies Sringata Mountain.
*V*. 4: speaks of river *Siddha Trisrota* flows to south sea/ Brahmaputra through the foot hill of *Sringata* emerging from the same hill.
*V*. 9: speaks of on the east of *Shringata* flows *Vrdhavedika*.
*V*. 10: speaks of beyond *Vardhavedika* is big river *Bhattarika* emerging from Himalayas.
*V*. 12-17: refers *Natakashaila* Mountain and a lake on it and from this lake three streams emerges and flows to south sea/Brahmaputra from eastern, middle and southern part of lake. The river *Dikkarika* emerges from the western part of the lake, from middle part *Vrddhaganga* and from eastern part is stream *Svarnasri*.
*V*. 29: refers that on the east of *Svarnasri* flows the river Kama. On the east of the river *Somasana* is the river *Vrsodaka*.
*V*. 30: speaks of *Kāmārūpa* pitha on the east of *Vrsodaka* River where Mahamaya the mother of the world in the form Dikkaravasini resides.
*V*. 33: speaks of *Dikkaravasini* located on ground occasionally submerged under the water.
The chapter 81 is about curse of Vasistha on *Ugratara* and others and speak about the Malecchas of Kāmarūpa (*V*. 17-27).

From the above excerpts of the Sri Kālika Purānam it is surmised that the narrative was basically around three locations namely (i) *Kāmākhya* and Manikut hill, (ii) Durjaya and Sandhyachal (iii) Dikkaravasini temple. An open ended exercise for the identification is based on the information in the narratives of Kālika Purān. It is arduous to identify the geographical features as mentioned in Kālika Purān. As long time has elapsed since it was written and the region had gone through major geographic and geological changes since then. The second problem being the heavy use of adjectives and synonyms in Sanskrit languages in respect to geographical locations and religious places which sometimes poses problem, whether it is

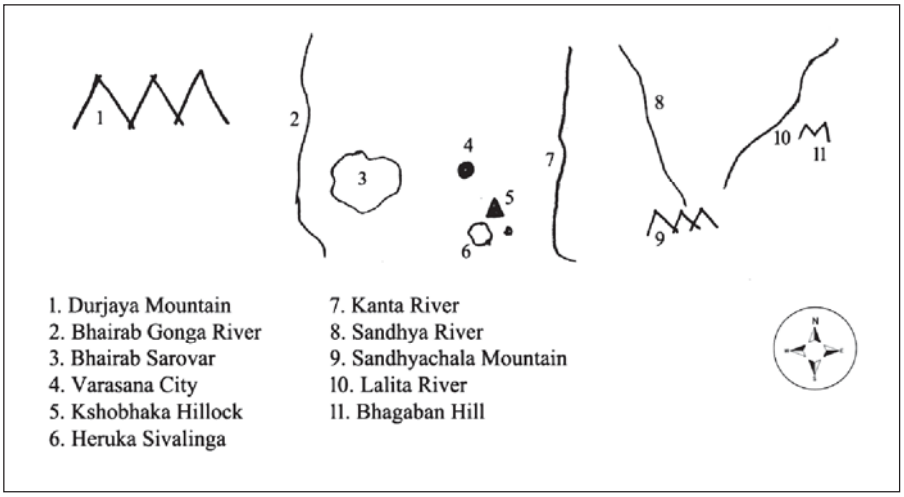



Fig. 2: Arrangement of features as narrated in Kālika Purān

used for the supposed location or any other location. Being a Devi centred text, the theme basically centres on the method and glorification of Devi worship.

The locations as narrated in Kālika Purān about *Kāmākhya* and Manikuta hill consist of locations both on north and south bank. On the north bank from west to east is Golaka Shiva in the westernmost part with Varnasa River, Manikuta hill, Gokarna, Bhadrakama, Kedara, Manikarneswar, Sumangala River, Chandrakut hill and Janardhan hill. Chandrakunda, Nandana and Aswakranta Kunda on a west-east alignment following one after another. On the south bank beginning with Gandhamadan hill and located south of Manikut hill on western most part is Sukanta mountain, Vasavakunda, Raksakuta mountain, Pandunath Madhava, Chitrahara hill, Nilachala hill, Brahmagiri mountain, Ugratara temple, Urvasi kunda (an island in Brahmaputra), Bhasmachal (another island in Brahmaputra), Karpata mountain, Chtrachala hill, Kajjala hill, Subhaparvata, Kapilaganga river, Damanika river, Vriddhariver, Divyamuna river and Manikhalya hill are on a west-east alignment following one after another. The Durjaya Mountain as narrated in the text is possibly also located on the southern bank. On the western side is the Durjaya Mountain. On eastern side is Bhairabganga river, Bhairab sarovar, Varasana city, Divyakunda and Kshobhaka hillock, Heruka pilgrimmage, Kanta River, Sandhyachala Mountain, Sandhya River, Lalita River and Bhagaban hill on a west-east alignment following one after another.

The arrangement made in Fig. 2 is based on tentative identification of Sandhyachala mountain with Basishtha hills located on Assam-Meghalaya border towards the southern side of the present day Guwahati city where the Ashram of *Basisthamunin* is still present at the confluence of Kanta, Sandhya and Lalita Rivers. Taking Sandhyachal as a point of reference we can

approximate Heruka Sivalinga to be Bheema Shankar or Bhimeswar Jyotirlinga. Varasana city and Durjaya mountain could be somewhere in Guwahati.

In another narrative, the location of Dikkaravasini temple is explained. The geography so narrated seems similar to the eastern quarters of the northern bank of Assam. In the description on the westernmost part are Saswati river, Dipawati river, Sringata mountain, Siddha Trisrota river, Varadha vedika river, Bhattarika river, Natakashaila mountain, Dikkarika river, Vriddhaganga, Svarnasri river, Kama river, Somasana river and Varsodhaka river on the easternmost side is the shrine of Dikkaravasini on a west–east alignment following one after another. Few places so mentioned in Kālika Purāna are easy to locate and some cannot be located successfully at the moment. The places are tried to be located with reference to other well-known sites and their tentative location with reference to nearby sites. Sometimes this chain of reference is lost therefore leading to identification of three centres only. Possibly these are contiguous sites but some links are missing because of abrupt closing of the narration. The places narrated in the Kālika Purāna (KP) are as follows:

**Table1: Geography of Western Assam as narrated in Kālika Purān (KP)**

| Name as in KP (alphabetically) | Remarks/observation |
|---|---|
| Agada river | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south,on the east and west are Rivers Bhadra and Somadana. |
| Bahuroka river | Emerging from Surasa mountain, it flows to south, east/right of Karatoya, west of river Chandika |
| Bhadra river | Its location as given in Kālika Purān as o west of river Subhadra and Manasa and east of Agada, possibly present Manas river in western Assam. A river with the same name also exists in Karnataka rising from Gangamoola, also known as Varaha parvat. |
| Bhairavi river | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Varnasa and Manasa river |
| Chandika river | Cannot be identified exactly, flows east of Bahuroka and west of Phenelia, seems originate from Dhavala mountain, but there was a river by the name in Orissa, now dried up but the bed isidentified |
| Darpana river | The river cannot be identified, it is been told that Kubera the god of wealth was residing on Darpana mountain, however Kubera worship is not known/popular in Assam. He is popular in south India particularly Tamil country |
| Dhavala mountain | Located on east of Chandika river |
| Kapota | A pond near Madana river |
| Karana | A pond near Madana river |
| Karatoya river | Supposed to be western boundary of early Assam, flowing left/east of Bahuroka river, emerging from Surasa mountain |
| Kasumamalini river | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west is Sri Surya hill and Ksiroda river |

| | |
|---|---|
| Ksiroda river | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Lila and Kasumamalini river |
| Lila River | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Chandika and Ksiroda river |
| Madana river | Flows towards south and west of sri surya on tattva Shaila hill. |
| Manasa river | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Bhairavi and Subhadra river. The present Manas river in Barpeta fits the scheme |
| Phenelia river | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Sita and Chandika river |
| Sita/ Sitaprabha river | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Somadana and Phenelia river |
| Somadana river | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Agada and Sita river |
| Sri Surya | Located on a hill between Madana and Kshiroda rivers |
| Subhadra river | Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Manas and Subhadra river |
| Surasa mountain | Mountain in Kamrup, located west of Krtivasa mountain, with river Chandika emerging from it |
| Trisrota | Literally meaning three channels |
| Varuna pond | Not identified |
| Vayukuta mount. | Not identified |
| Vibhrata mount. | Big mountain near Himalaya (B C Law) |

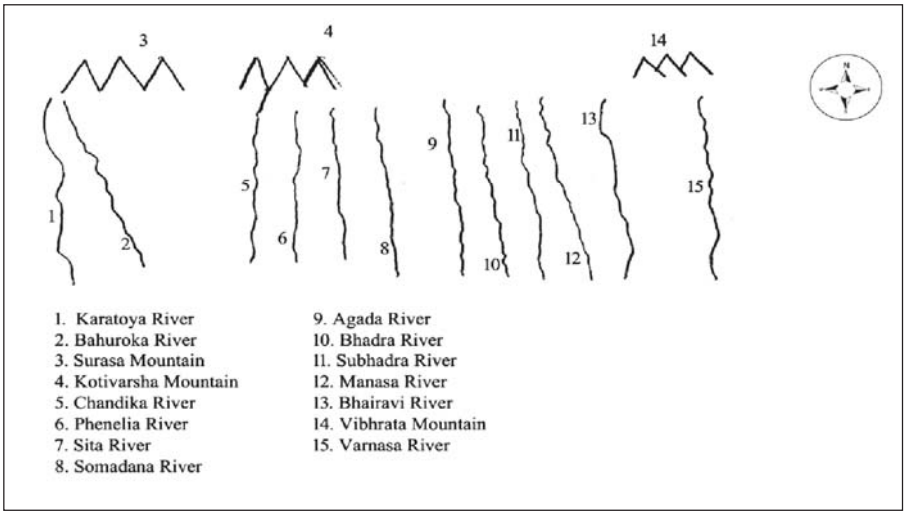



Fig. 3: Arrangement of natural features of western Assamas narrated in Kālika Purān.

There are numerous streams between river Karatoya and river Varnasa (possibly flowing a little west of Manikut hill, Hajo in Kamrup District). Among the rivers only Manasa is flowing presently bearing the same name therefore it is arduous and will be folly to identify them without any known feature of reference.

**Table 2: The identification of features connected with Kāmākhya**

| Feature around Kāmākhya | **Remarks/observation** |
|---|---|
| tirtha (alphabetically presented) | |
| Aswakranta Kunda (N) | Possibly backwater of Brahmaputra, on southern side of Aswakranta temple |
| Bhadrakama (N) | Possibly Poa Mecca hill |
| Bhasmachal | An island in river Brahmaputra in hill shape, also known as Umgnanda |
| Brahmagiri mountain (S) | Likely the Kalipur hill near Kāmākhya hill on its west |
| Brahmakuta pond (S) | Lake on the north of Pandunath possibly a horseshoe lake of Brahmaputra |
| Chandrakunda (N) | Cannot be identified |
| Chandrakut hill (N)<br>Chitrachal (S) | Cannot be identified<br>A hill in Guwahati where the Navagraha temple is located. |
| Chitrahara hill (S) | Pandu hill in Guwahati |
| Damanika river (S) | Not identified possibly Pokoria river |
| Divyamuna river (S) | Flowing east of Kapili and its tributary, likely Yamuna or Jamuna merging with Kapili at Jamunamukh? |
| Gandhamadan hill (S) | Not identified |
| Gokarna (N) | Not identified |
| Golaka siva (N) | The shrine cannot be identified |
| Janardhan hill (N) | A hillock in north Guwahati, Aswakranta temple is located here. A Vishnu image in eternal sleep also present here. |
| Kajjala hill (S) | Cannot be identified exactly, possibly Noonmati hill in Guwahati |
| Kapilaganga river (S) | Kapili river, attaining the name possibly due to draining of Akasi Ganga river |
| Karpata mount. (S) | At present Sukreswar hill also known as Itakhuli hill, a big stone can be seen on river side, Sukra the preceptor of demons is mentioned in the verse 79.127 |
| Kedara (N) | A Shiva temple in Madanachala/Matsyadhvaja hill in Hajo |
| Manikarneswar (N) | Manikarneswar temple/ Manikut hill/Manikhalya hill |
| Manikut (N) | Manikut hill of Hajo, in YT it is connected with Haygriva |
| Manikut hill (N) | Hill in north Guwahati upon which Manikarneswar temple resting |
| Matsyadhwaja mount. (N) | On east of Manikut hill, cannot be identified |
| Nandana hill (N) | Hill near Gauripur area |
| Nilakuta hill (S) | Kāmākhya hill upon which famous temple is located |

| | |
|---|---|
| Pandunath Madhava (S) | Present Pandunath temple in Guwahati at Pandu |
| Rakshakuta mount. (S) | PossiblyJalukbari hills, where temple of Lankeswar temple is located connected with Lankesh/Ravana a *rakshasa* (demon) king. |
| Sasvati river (N) | Flowing in the valley of Matsyadhwaja |
| Subhaparvata (S) | Chandrapur riverside hill? |
| Sukanta mountain (S) | Cannot be identified |
| Sumangala river (N) | Mangala/ sumangala river presently Barnadi |
| Ugratara temple (S) | Present Ugratara temple in Jor Pukhuri in Guwahati |
| Urvasi | A small island south west of Umgnanda |
| Varnasa river (N) | Its location is told to be west or near Manikut hill, Puthimari river fits the scheme perfectly |
| Vasava Kunda (S) | Cannot be identified |
| Vayukuta hill (S) | Foothills of Pandu hill in Guwahati |
| Vriddha river (S) | Possibly Akasi Ganga stream of Hojai area? |

(N) North bank, (S) south bank

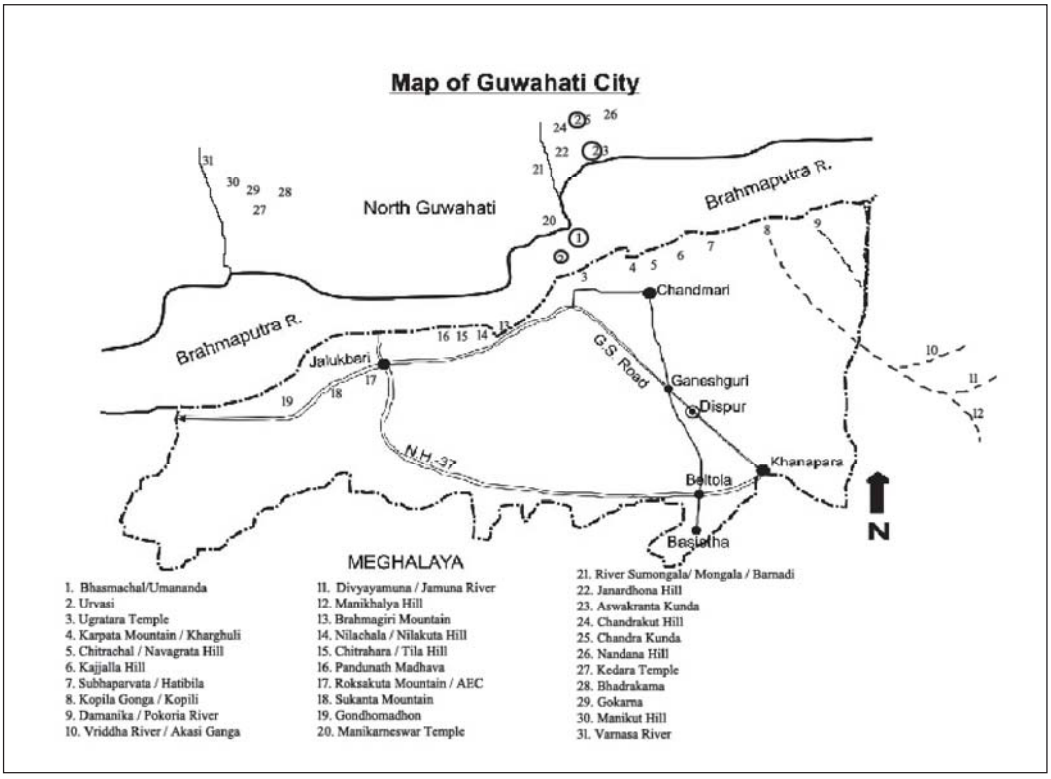



Fig. 4. Map of Kāmākhyatirtha as narrated in Kālika Purān

It includes mostly the religious sites in and around present Gauhati city, also known religiously as Pancha tirtha due to the presence of five sacred shrines. Most of the features mentioned in the Kālika Purān were located on the bank of river Brahmaputra or on a hill (Fig. 4).

**Table 3: Geography of Dikkaravasini**

| | |
|---|---|
| Bhattarika river | Ranganadi? mentioned as big river, tributary of Subansiri |
| Dikkarika river | Possibly Dikorai? |
| Dikkarvasini | Tamreswari temple at Sadiya also known as Sri Sri Kesaikhati Maa |
| Dipawati river | Cannot be identified |
| Kama river | Cannot be identified as numerous river flow between Subansiri and Dibang |
| Natakashaila mount. | Eastern Himalaya? |
| Saswati river | Cannot be identified |
| Shringata mount. | Singri hills in Dhekiajuli, Sonitpur district |
| Siddha tristotra | Sessa river? |
| Sitaganga river | Cannot be identified |
| Somasana river | Cannot be identified as numerous river flow between Subansiri and Dibang |
| Svarnashri river | Subansiri river, a trans Himalayan river emerging from Mount Porom |
| Vardhavedika river | Dikrong river? |
| Varsodhaka river | Dibang river, tributary of Lohit |
| Visvanatha | Gupt Kashi or the Pani Devaloy which remain in water for six months |
| Vriddhaganga River | Buri Gonga river of Biswnath, present Borgong seems to be the river, which changed its course, a tributary of Brahmaputra |

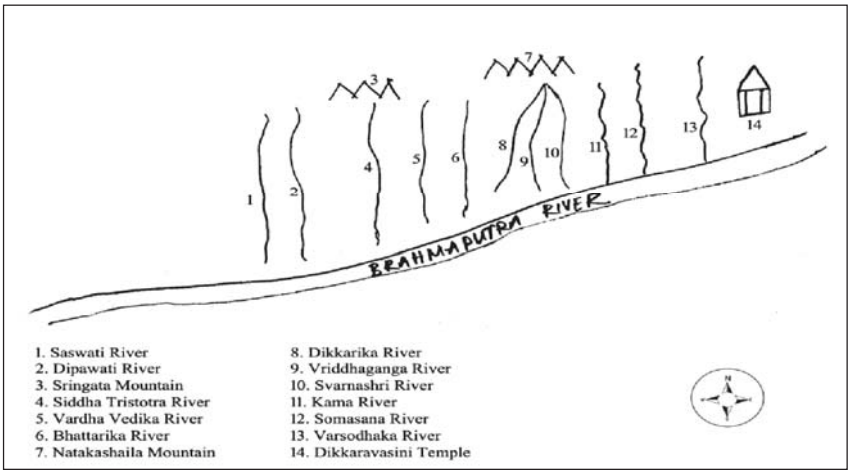



Fig. 5: Arrangement of features around Dikkarvasini temple as narrated in Kālika Purān

The identification of the features is done with reference to near accurate identification of Tamreswari temple, Subansiri River and Visvanath temple.

**Yogini Tantra**

The Yogini Tantra is a 16th-17th century tantric text by an unknown author from Assam or Bengal dedicated to the worship of Hindu goddesses Kali and Kāmākhya. Apart from religious and philosophical themes Yogini Tantra contains some historical information also. The Tantra is especially important for the Vamachara form of tantric worship.

It is a narration by Shiva to Parvati, beginning with goddess Kali.The goddess is very popular in eastern India. The three cities/tirtha which are extensively described and mentioned are; Varanasi, Gaya and Kāmākhya. The following excerpts are from Yogini Tantra pertaining to Kāmarūpa/Kāmākhya by Pt. Harihar Prasad Tripathi in Hindi.

*Chapter 11.* Narration about Kāmākhya peetha.

*V.* 17-18: first reference of Goddess Kāmākhya appeared in this chapter.It is been told that worshipping in Kāmarūpa Kāmākhya will fulfil all *Siddhis* and wishes. It is asserted that the place is frequented by Saktas, who worship *siddhas;* mention is of *Kanchangiri* from Nepal. The location and extent of Kāmarūpa was narrated. Kāmarūpa was extended from *Karatoya* on the west to *Dikkarvasini* on on the east and Kanchangiri on north. On the west of Karatoya is the sacred pilgrimage site of Dikshu nadi. Kāmarūpa extended on east upto Girikanya and on south upto the confluence of Brahmaputra and Lakshya rivers.

*V.* 19-20: describe whoever happily pays his dues to father, sages and god are able to reach closer to the goddess Kāmākhya and anyone who reaches this pilgrimage gets boon of *ashwamedha* at every step.

*V.* 21-22: in these verses it is told that Kāmarūpa is triangular in shape with length of 100 *yojana* (400 *kosa*) and 30 *yojana* in wisth. Kedara on *Isanakon* i.e. on the northeast, Gajashasan on *Vayavyakon* i.e. northwest and south upto the confluence of Brahmaputra and Lakshya river.

*V.* 23-30: mention Kāmarūpa as triangular in shape, where all god and demons were greeted; the inhabitants of the place are godlike, the water bodies of the place are like tirtha. Nine pithas were mentioned in these verses namely *Upavithi, Vithi, Upapitha, Pitha, Siddhapitha, Mahapitha, Brahmapitha, Vishnupitha* and *Rudrapitha*. These *nava* pithas is also famous as *nava* yoni and praised stating that worshipping at the place brings boon. Karma performed in these pithas gives twice result; worshipping and chanting here brings *siddhis*. Kāmākhya yonimandala is also known as Navayoni and it is famous. Also speaks of a place called Panchakrosi. which was best place for spiritual self-annihilation for even gods.

*V*. 31-32: anyone who visits Panchakrosa attains *moksha* and gets released from the cycle of birth' It also mentions sacredness of the place and the people living there are immune from the atrocities of Shanideva.

*V*. 33-40: anyone who visits Panchakrosa attains moksha and gets released from the cycle of rebirth. Here best of the *sadhaks* (hermits) performs *mantrapuja* and *japa*. Worshipers here attain eight *siddhis; namely, Anima, Mahima, Laghima, Garima, Prapya, Prakamya, Ishitwa,* and *Vasitwa*. In this yonipitha there is a radiant mountain named Nila which bears the potential of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti. Also mentions that there exists a forest named *Manobhav* where *Kotilinga* abounds. It also mentions a pond named *Karanasagar* and merit of dipping and performing shraddha there.

*V*. 41-45: mention various devis *Chinnamasta, Bhairavi, Dhumavati, Bhuvaneswari, Matangi, Kamlalaya, Bhakilatra, Bhagdhara, Bhagandhari, Durga, Jayadurga and Mahisamardini*.

*V*. 46-62: mention a pitha named *Ugratara* and a place called *Brahmamukhasheya* pitha and two aspects of this pitha are told. Firstly, is secret (*gupta*) the other as revealed (*vyakta*). Worshipping in secret pitha gives greater merit than *vyakta*. This *gupta* pitha is very rare and mentions a forest named Manobhav and pitha named Mohagra. A Ghora, a form of Kali resides here. Canting here gives fast result. Fruit produced in this pitha is double compared to at *Jalandhara* and four times more than those at *Uddiyana*. Also mentions Nilakantha Mahadev of Nepal.

*12th Sarga/ Chapter*

*V*. 1: speaks of importance of Kāmākhya

*V*. 4-5: speaks of Naraka, his birth and making of king of the fertile kingdom of Kāmarūpa by Vishnu. This narrative also appeared in Kālika Purān.
*V*. 6-7: Naraka, after defeating Kiratas became an important ruler, impressed Vishnu, who gave him city named Pragjyotishpur in Kāmākhya *yonimandala.* After the coronation Vishnu attached the powers of king to Naraka.
*V*. 8-34: is the story of Narakasur, Vasistha and Kāmarūpa. HowVasistha) cursed Kāmākhya, as he was denied entry to the temple by Naraka and her efforts to get rid of the curse.
*V*. 42-43: speaks of Kāmarūpa being ruled for12 years by Yavanas. Also mentions that during the period of curse there will be chaos in Kāmarūpa and Yavanas, Kuvach, Saumar and Pallav will rule Kāmarūpa.
*V*. 58-59: speaks of migration of elites from *Saumar* and *Kamruppitha* to *Bhumhiripuchulvaka* when the water in Brahmaputra will recede after 16 years.
*V*. 60-61: speaks of war between Mallechas with the western invaders.
*V*. 62-63: is about the iconography of the *yoginis*.
*15th Sarga/ Chapter*

This chapter peaks about the coming of Kali in the form of Kāmākhya. Basically this chapter speaks of the demon Kesi and his killing.

*21st Sarga/ Chapter*

*V*. 12-14: speaks of various mountains including *Udyachala,* a mountain in the east. Even today a small hillock exists of the same name at the middle of the Guwahati city in Christian *basti* (slum) area.

V. 15: speaks of *Kosala Bhairava* meditating at *Kāmākhyapitha* for 25 lakh years.

**Part II**

*1st Sarga/ chapter*

This chapter is specially dedicated to Kāmākhya.

*V*. 2-3: Parvati asks Shiva, "I have heard from you about the pilgrims at Uddiyana etc. now I want to know about the Kāmākhyapitha which is known a *punyamaysthan* (holiest place) in kali yuga".

*V*. 6: speaks the boons of worshipping Kāmākhya in kaliyuga. This verse speaks of importance of *Uddiyana* in *satyuga*, *Purna shail* in *tretayuga* and *Jalashail* in *dwaparayuga*.

*V*. 12-14: speaks of location of *Bhadrapitha* on the west of *Madyadesa.* On the west is *Jalandhara* and on the east is *Punyapitha*. Kāmarūpa is situated east of the northeast (*Ishan*) side. On the northwest is *Jalandhara*, *Kolhapur* on north, *Bihar* on northeast, *Mahendra* Mountainis located on the north and on east is Srihatta. However, it is inconsistent with present Assam.

*V*. 15-32: Shiva describes about complete Geographical details of India with their name and physical setting.

*V*. 34: describes Kāmarūpa as having six sides and it is in the shape of a perfect womb.

*V*. 35-36: Kāmarūpa consist of 9 vyuha (blocks) and 3 mandala (circles). The centre of the vedica consists of ten mountains and speaks of residence of lord Kameswar (Shiva) in the pitha and speaks of a river named Champavati flowing near the pitha. It is probable that there flowed a river nearby or a stream flowed from Nilachal of the same name. Kameswar temple here refers to Kameswar temple located on the Nilachal hill.

*3rd Chapter/ sarga*

Speaks of *Kamaruppitha* being located in a deep cave. Possibly it refers to Kāmākhya temple which is located under ground.

*4th Chapter/ sarga*

Speaks of geographical features of various parts of India including *Pushkar tirtha* (Rajasthan); *Gaya* (Bihar);

*Kanyakubja* (Uttar Pradesh); *Brigukaccha* (Gujarat); *Cauvery, Nandipuri, Prabhas* and *Suvarna* River (Karnataka).

*V*. 5-6: speak of *Kameswar* Shiva of *Nilachala* and *Bhasmachal* (Umgnanda Island).

*V*.7: speak of *Aswakranta* tirtha and *Janardhan* (probably the present day Aswakranta temple at north Guwahati).Mythological legend of the temple says that Lord Krishna had camped

there with his army, before finally overpowering and killing the evil demon Narakasur. The *Asvakranta* Temple is associated with the story of Lord Krishna and his wife Rukmini. It is also believed that the spot where the temple is built is exactly where Lord Krishna's horse was surrounded by enemies. Some hoof marks of horses on stone can be seen at the site.
*V*. 11: speaks of *Hayagriva* temple at *Manikuta* hill, presently located in the Hajo town on the northwest of Guwahati.
*V*. 12: addresses Brahmaputra as *Parmesthi* (Supreme Being)
*V*. 23: speak of nearby locality of Aswakranta.
*V*. 30: describe *Aswatirtha* (Aswakranta) as the best holy place of *kaliyuga*.
*V*. 35-38: Shiva tells his wife Parvati that Aswakranta tirtha was famous / well known among the tirthas and *Aswakranta* was is the best place for worshipping. The same place is also called as Parbrahma and Parampada. It even says that Narayan is best among the devas; Mahesh among ishwaras; Aswakranta among the tirtha is best (*shretha*).
*V*. 39-42: speaks of rare yoga and mukti found in aswakranta at Aswakranta all the sins gets washed and even term it greater (*uttam*) than *Kurukshetra*, *Gaya* and *Pushkar*.
*V*. 43-46: state the merit of *Aswakranta* as higher than *dana, tapasya, yagya* and *vidya* and even higher than *Agastya* tirtha. The tirtha is so holy that one can get rid of sin like *brahmahatya*.
*V*. 47-50: at *Aswakranta* small *dāna* (donation) is equal to huge *dgna*at other tirtha. One day's fast equals thousand years fast; donation of crore cows at other tirtha equals here one day's fast and equals to whole month of *maghasnana* at *Prayaga*. It is one of the most holy Hindu pilgrim centre.
*V*. 51-60: speaks of merit and sin washing (nirvana) features of *Aswakranta;* speaks of insects, mosquitoes, flora, fish, frog etc. found at *Aswakranta,* which turns to form of Shiva after death. The verse speaks of *panchatirtha* and merits of worshipping at *panchatirtha* and of bath at Aswakranta and demise at *panchatirtha.* With these people earn the merit of proceeding to *brahmaloka* (heaven).
*V*. 61-70: speaks of Brahmasarovar; Aswakranta and *Sidhakunda* are located on its west and.
*V*. 71-80: speaks of Brahmasarovar, *Indrakut* Mountains, *Ramakshetra*/tirtha.
*V*. 81-90: speaks of Sitatirtha, Vijaytirtha, Yogatirtha and Muktitirtha.
*V*. 108-138: Speaks of Gayatirtha located at present Bihar.
*5th chapter*
*V*. 49-50: speaks of Bhasmachal (Umgnanda Island).
*V*. 51-52: speaks of *Urvasi* tirtha, where taking a dip is worth *aswamedha* yajna. Probably it is the present Urvasi island (also known as peacock island).
*V*. 63: speaks of pond named Kāmākhya.

*V*. 141: speaks of high rock on southern side of Urvasi.
*V*. 162: speaks of *Aswakranta*.
*V*. 164: refers *Bhasmachala* and its sacredness.
*V*. 169: refers *Bhasmachala* Mountain and *Pishachamochana* tirtha.
*V*. 170-171: refers *Pishachamochana* tirtha and *Bhasmachala/kuta*.
*V*. 230-31: refers *Jangrdhana* and *Sukreslinga* (Sukreswara in Guwahati).
*6th Chapter*
*V*. 2: speaks of Lauhitya tirtha, on whose south on Vayukon (north-west), there was KolMountain and on west there is the place of Mahabali Pandunath.
*V*. 86 & 141: mentions *Lauhit*.
*V*. 91: mentions *Aswakranta*.
*V*. 149-50: describes that worshipping in land or water in Kāmarūpa have equal merit and worshipping Devi in Kāmarūpa gives highest merit. It is said that Kāmarūpa is a land of Devi and elsewhere Kāmākhya is rare but at Kāmarūpa she is in every house.
*V*. 151: mentions *Kāmākhya*.
*7th Chapter*
*V*. 139-150: mention *Kāmākhya* and *Nilachala* Mountain.
*8th Chapter*
*V*. 63: mentions that stream from *Kāmākhya* is equal to Ganga.
*V*. 68: speaks that at *Dharmaranya*, visiting (*darshan*) of Kotilinga gives godliness.
*V*. 69-70: states location of *Kotilinga* Kunda to be 30 *dhanush* towards north of Kamagiri/ *Kāmākhya* Hill and describes merit of *Kotilinga* Shiva.

**Parisisth (Supplementary)**

*V*. 13-14: states Kaladharma of Yoginipitha was different from Jalandhara (Pakistan). At Yoginipitha the religion of Kiratas are in vogue. Sanyasa is longest at Kāmarūpa and meat eating is not practiced. Brahmacharya also is not prescribed.
*V*. 15-16: at Kāmarūpa there is no restriction on dharma and karma for women folks or any restriction and she can always have tambul (betel). At Kāmarūpa consuming duck, pigeon, tortoise and pork is not prohibited but those who do not have has to face misery (*durgati*).
*V*. 19: speaks of surplus rice production at *Srihatta*.
*V*. 120: speaks of *Manikuta* hill and a tirtha named *Vishnu Pushkar* on its eastern side at a short distance.
*V*. 123-124: speaks of *Manikuta* hill and *Haygriva* Vishnu and eight thousand hills nearby.
*V*. 206: refers to *Manikuta* hill and its merit.
*V*. 209-12: speaks of *Manikuta* hill, about *Haygriva* and way of worshipping Vishnu.
*Manikuta* and *Haygriva* appears together sometimes making us think that it is in reference to *Haygriva* in modern town of Hajo in Kamrup district.

Towards the end Vishnu appears frequently showing the increasing popularity of Vishnu.

**Table 4: Geographical features of Yogini Tantra (YT)**

| Name as in Yogini Tantra | Remarks/ possible identified location |
|---|---|
| Kāmākhya | temple on the Nilachala hill of goddess *Kāmākhya* in Gauhati |
| Kanchangiri | Kanchanjunga mountain in Indo-Nepal boundary |
| Manobhav forest | forest on the western side of the *Kāmākhya* temple |
| Kotilinga | temple of Shiva on the foothills of Nilachala |
| Nila hill | sacred hill of Kāmarūpa where *Kāmākhya* temple located |
| Karanasagar pond | cannot be identified |
| Mohagra pith | |
| Ghora | Kali shrine |
| Saumar | |
| Bhumiripuchulvaka | |
| Udyachal | possibly a hill in Guwahati near Ganeshguri area |
| Kameswar | Shiva temple at Nilachal hill |
| Champavati river | |
| Bhasmachal | Umgnanda island |
| Aswakranta | temple adjacent to Gauhati in north bank |
| Janardhan | hill on the north bank |
| Haygriv temple | temple dedicated to Hayagriv Vishnu at Hajo |
| Sukres linga | temple of Sukreswar Shiva |
| Pandunath | temple at pandu area in Gauhati |
| Kol mountain | Situated north-west of Pandunath, not identified |

After Buddhism and Shaivism, Shakta cult penetrated or rather originated from Assam. Shakta cult became popular among certain population especially among the tribes. It never became mainstream because of its esoteric, occult and obscene nature. Few of the practices associated with Shakti cult were something not considered appropriate in Indian philosophical thought. Charwahaka thought that it always looked down upon as mean and material unlike the mainstream thoughts based on personal sacrifice; control/subduing of the the senses and simple living in view of the peace in next world. The tantric-Sakta cult is the blending of tantrayana Buddhism, shaivism and local tribal practices. The seed of Sakta cult lies in the Purgnic narrative of Sati.

## Conclusion

Historically the process of sanskritisation of Kāmarūpa was set in motion with its inclusion in Mahabharata and other religious texts and structurally and archaeologically established at Baitbari and Ambari. Most of the places, rivers, ponds, mountains etc. mentioned in Kālika Purān and Yogini Tantra, cannot be identified independently. They can be identified only in

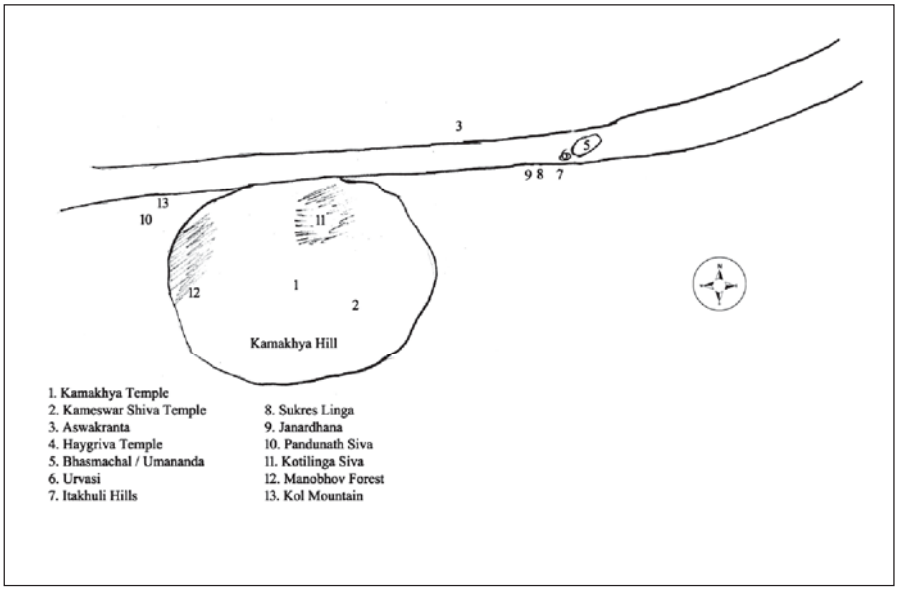



Fig. 6: Sacred geography in and around Kāmākhya temple, Guwahati, Assam

reference to a well-known identified site/shrine. The reason that the natural features could not be identified is due to their naming in Sanskrit. It is evident that the natives do not follow the language and the features have popular native names, which do not comply with the Sanskrit nomenclatures. Therefore the Sanskrit names were never popular among the masses except for the few important religious shrines, but remained in written records.

In Sanskrit the features are perfectly encoded and nicely explained with adjectives which any individual with the knowledge of Sanskrit could identify and understand the mentioned feature. Many generic terms and suffixes were used to name the places like 'dhavala' for high mountains covered with snow, as *dhavala* means white in Sanskrit. Suffixes like *nadi, parvata, pushkara* were used to denote rivers, mountains and ponds. Most of the features named during the period or in text has religious connotation like Bhairavi, Manasa, Madana, Bhadra, Chandika, Kapilgganga etc. for rivers; Urvasi for an island; and Jangrdhana, Gandhamadana, Kedara etc. for hills. The names of every place and feature of KP and YT have religious connotation thereby preparing the premise of sacred geography.

Sanskritisation of names has played a crucial role in spread of Brahmanical Hinduism. Such practices were always used by dominant groups to establish psycho-historical claim on the landscape and sometimes on community as well. It is evident that during the time the concept of tirtha was also emerging all over the subcontinent. In Assam some of the shrines were designated as tirtha, namely, Dol Gobinda, Manikarneswar, Dirgeswari, Kāmākhya and Umgnanda. Apart from them Hajo Haygriva shrine, Tamreswari temple, Tezpur temples, Hojai and Golaghat temples also command respect and reverence equal to them. All the

religious places were connected with Purānic narratives. Therefore forwarding of psycho-religious situation for these shrines established a claim of their presence. By the close of 12th century the entire landscape upto Lakhimpur and Golaghat are sanskritised. However in common practice the areas and features retained their native and Bengali names.

It is evident from the ruins that during 10th-11th century temples were raised on all the religious placesmentioned in the respective texts. Due to the negligence and decline of royalty, not much up keeping of the structures were executed, resulting in decay and disintegration of the structures. However looking into the importance of the sites and its dilapidated condition Ahom rulers rebuilt most of the structures and issued copper plate for endowments of land and servitors to most of the temples.

**References**

1. Shastri, Biswanarayan. 2018. *The Kālika Purāna* (Trans.). Nag Prakashan. Delhi.
2. Tripathi, Harihar Prasad. 2018. *Yogini Tantra* (in Hindi). Choukhamba Krisnadas Academy. Varanasi.

**Secondary sources**

3. Bhuyan, S. K. 1930. Bhuyan, S. K. (Ed.). *Kamrupar Buranji (in Assamese).* Assam: Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies.
4. Kakati, Banikanta. 1989. *The Mother Goddess Kāmākhya A Study of Mother Cult of Assam.* Publication Board Assam, Guwahati
5. Shastri, Biswanarayan. 1985. "Tantra: A Neglected Source for Materials for History of Assam". *Journal of the Assam Research Society* 28: 94–104.
6. Sircar, D. C. 1990, "Pragjyotisha-Kgmarpa", in Barpujari, H. K. (Ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol.I.* Publication Board, Assam, Guwahati.

**Bio Profile of Author:**

[1] Assistant Professor, History, Bodoland University, Debargaon, Ranghalikhata, Kokrajhar, Assam-783370, E-mail: onilkamalsingha@gmail.com

[2] Professor & Head, Ancient History, and Archaeology, Manipur University, E-mail: ranjitoinam09@gmail.com