

## **Chapter III**

# **Origin and Development of Koch Coinage (c.1496-1773)**

The present study is focusing on the coinage of Koch kingdom which was situated at the eastern part of India and particularly at the northern part of undivided Bengal, so before going into the core issue i.e. the origin and development of Koch Coinage we will first take a glimpse of the system of coinage and exchange system in this part of India from the earliest time to the foundation of the Koch Kingdom. It will help us to understand the currency traditions of this region and simultaneously help us to understand the perspective of the introduction of Koch coinage.

### **Monetary Scenario in Early Bengal:**

The territory known for centuries as Bengal is linguistically and to a great extent culturally a fairly homogenous unit.<sup>1</sup> Though intersected by rivers its major regions were linked in ancient, medieval times by political as well as cultural and commercial ties. Hence the territory concerned can be considered as a unit for study. Outstanding discoveries during the last few decades have established the numismatic history of Bengal as familiar with the coins and other forms of money in the early and proto medieval periods. These discoveries have developed our knowledge for the monetary history of eastern India.

The use of minted metallic coins as the medium of exchange mark a big forward step in civilization, especially in its economic aspects but how and when metallic coins were first introduced in Bengal is shrouded in mystery. But it is a proven fact that they were known and used several

centuries before the commencement of the Christian era. This is proved by some concurrent pieces of evidence. Firstly, the Mahasthangarh fragmentary stone plaque inscription,<sup>2</sup> discovered from ancient Pundravardhana on the bank of Karatoya at Bagura District in present Bangladesh, is the earliest inscription (c. 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.) of the undivided Bengal, contains reference to, two types of prevailing currencies (a) *Gandakas* and (b) *Kakanikas*, though their size and weight are unknown to us.

In the early literature and later inscriptions the coins were generally known as *Karsapana*, which is derived from the term *Karsav* and weight 80 *ratis* or 146 grin. *Karsapana* which made of gold was known as '*Suvarna*' or '*Niska*' and silver made *Karsapana* was known as '*Purana*' or '*Dharana*'. While copper made as '*Pana*' in 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter of *Arthasastra* it is stated that coins made of copper are classified in accordance with their value, and these are: (i) *Masaka* (ii) *Ardha-masaka* (iii) *Pada-masaka* (*Kakani*) (iv) *Arta-bhaga-masaka* (*Ardha-kakani*)

The *Kakanika* of the Mahasthangarh record possibly indicated *Pada-masaka* (or, *Kakani*) of Kautilya. *Masaka* or *Tamrapana* is equal to 80 *ratis*. Again in the monetary tables of Orissa and Bengal we notice the use of *Kadi* (or cowrie shell) from an early time and according to this table: 4 *Kadi* = 1 *Ganda*; 20 *Ganda* = 1 *Pana*; 16 *Pana* = 1 *Kahana* (i.e. *Kahapana* in Pali or *Karsapana* in Sanskrit). *Gandaka* of the Mahasthangarh inscription is possibly equivalent to 4 (four) cowrie shells. D.C. Sircar thinks that '*Gandamadha*' used in Kalinga was equal to *Karsapana*.<sup>3</sup> In India *Karsapana* was linked to the price of cowrie shells i.e. one *Karsapana* was equivalent to 1280 cowrie shells.

Secondly, the '*Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*' records that a gold coin known as '*Caltis*', was in vogue in the market town of Ganga (Tamralitpti) at about the first century.<sup>4</sup> But by far the most valuable evidence in this regard is furnished by the discovery of a large number of silver and copper punched marked and cast coin most of them dating back to the pre Christian epoch. These have been found sometime in large number in various localities of the province in the neighborhood of Bera-Champa (24 parganas near Manda, Rajshi),<sup>5</sup> in the highland close to the river-bed at Tamluk<sup>6</sup> and

Wari-Bator (Dhaka).<sup>7</sup> There are good reasons to think that these punched marked pieces<sup>8</sup> present the earliest coinage of Bengal as perhaps also of many other provinces of India served for centuries for the commercial needs of the people. The symbol punched on these coins<sup>9</sup> are often similar to those found other parts of India a fact which shows that from very early times Bengal followed the main currents of general Indian economic life.

The Kusanas brought new ideas in the coinage of India and a few coins of the Kusana kings have been discovered in Bengal but there is nothing to show that they were used as medium of exchange within the province. They might have come by the way of trade, along with pilgrims or in the trail of an invading army. In the first century A.D. commercial transactions were being carried on with south-western port of Bengal known as Ganga from the '*Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*'. The medium of exchange which was employed for such transactions were a type of gold coin known as '*Caltis*'.<sup>10</sup>

With the establishment of the Gupta Empire Bengal shared the currency system introduced and maintained by the Gupta rulers. The coinage of the Gupta monarchs were based essentially on gold and silver though copper was not unknown. The discovery of a large number of Gupta coins both of gold and silver, in almost every part of Bengal show that they came into fairly wide circulation within the province, though for ordinary transactions the cowries shells continued.<sup>11</sup> Extent specimens prove that the earlier gold coins of the dynasty followed the standard of their Kusana prototypes weighing about 122 grains. But from the time of Skanda Gupta onwards a deliberate attempt seems to have been made to revert to the old Hindu Suvarna standard of 146.4 grains.<sup>12</sup> The silver coins of the Gupta monarchs show considered variations in weight but those circulating in the central and eastern provinces of the empire appear to have approximated the standard weight of silver *Karshapana*, i.e. 36 grains.<sup>13</sup>

Epigraphic records belonging to the Gupta period mention two varieties of coins, viz. the *Dinara* and the *Rupaka* as media of exchange in purchasing land. It is generally held that the former

denotes the gold and the latter the silver coins of the Gupta monarchs. Concerning the rate of exchange between the two, we get valuable information from the Baigram plate. The epigraphic records show purchase of land at the price of 6 *Dinaras* for 3 *Kulyavupas* and 8 *Rupakas* for 2 *Dronavapas* in the area. The customary price in that locality being 2 *Dinaras* for each *Kulyavapa*. As already stated one *Kulyavapa* was equivalent to 8 *Dronavapas* in area. It is thus clear that the rate of exchange between the *Dinara* and the *Rupaka* coins was 1: 16.

But this rises an intricate problem as to the rate of exchange between gold and silver in Eastern India about the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Whatever may be the explanation of the rate of exchange of gold and silver in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the immediate successors of the Gupta monarchs minted coin. In Bengal however the minting of gold coins was restricted since the seventh century as the gold mine at Raichur was closed and Kolar remained operative in 700 A.D., as appeared through radio carbon dating analysis, the use of gold for temples and ornaments however became wider. It is possible that the Indian trade relation with Roman Empire though snapped India's cultural and commercial relations with south-east Asian countries increased.<sup>14</sup> R.S.Sharma has drawn our attention to the writing of Chinese writer Tan Chang where in it is stated that among the countries that exported gold to India besides the Roman Empire were southern China and south east Asian countries and for that reason perhaps following the trading of the Gupta kings a number of later kings<sup>15</sup> continued to strike coins in Gold. Among them Sasanka of Karnasuvarna was a ruler of remarkable personality and an important rival of king Harsavardhana. Sasanka is credited to have issued not only gold but also silver coins. Incidentally even Hiuen Tsang observed that for transactions both gold, silver, pearl and cowrie shells were used.<sup>16</sup>

The discovery of a number of post Gupta imitated Gupta Archer type gold coins with eight hundred deities on reverse from south eastern Bengal is also noticeable. Scholars believe that these common types of coins were issued by the successive dynasties like the Khadgas, Devas, Rats apparently at the behest of mercantile communities. Even the hoard of Sasanka also yield such

imitated gold coins indicating perhaps the practice continued even during the time of Sasanka.<sup>17</sup> Under this perspective the scholars are surprised not to find a single definite coin-type of the powerful rulers of the Pala and Sena dynasties. This phenomenon has been explained by Nihar Ranjan Roy as an expression of lack of business and increasing pressure on land during these periods.<sup>18</sup> Later on scholars like R.S. Sharma and other described this as an example of the growth of feudalism on Indian soil since the post Gupta period.<sup>19</sup> Following the debate initiated by R.S. Sharma scholars have put forward their arguments for and against the emergence of Indian feudalism.<sup>20</sup> But the matter still requires a thorough examination in order to assess the situation in a more objective manner. By following the arguments of N.R. Ray or R.S. Sharma we may suggest that under the Palas and the Senas foreign trade came to a sudden halt and this resulted in scarcity of metals like gold and silver and the rulers were obliged not to issue any coins.

Thus the above mentioned controversy regarding the coinage of Pala, Sena period we may say it is still an ongoing debate in Indian monetary history. We have to wait for the discovery of the coins of this period or we must have to reconstruct the history of this period with the help of the other supporting facts. But from the above mentioned discussion it is clear to presume that from very early period coins was in circulation in Bengal although it may not be the indigenous coins but it was of the major ruling dynasties of India. As far as our present study is concerned now we will turn our attention on the coinage of Koch Kingdom.

## II

The territory of Koch kingdom<sup>21</sup> originally formed a part of the ancient kingdom of Pragjyotish and Kamrupa<sup>22</sup> and had no separate existence of its own as a distinct principality prior to the abolition of the ancient Kamrupa Kingdom in the middle of the sixteenth century. So the early history of the state therefore legitimately belongs to the wider history of Kamarupa.<sup>23</sup> It cannot be clearly ascertained at what date or even in what century in particular the kingdom of Kamrupa or

Pragjotish was founded.<sup>24</sup> There cannot however be any doubt regarding its great antiquity. It is mentioned in the Mahabharata that Bhagadatta, the king of Pragjyotish was a contemporary and a powerful ally of Durjodhana and fell on the field of *Kurukshetra* fighting on his side.<sup>25</sup> There is also no definite information regarding the territorial extent of this ancient kingdom. The boundaries appear to have varied in different times.

The entire country of Kamrupa is considered sacred by the *Puranas* and *Tantras* and its subdivisions are called *Pithas* or sacred tracts.<sup>26</sup> The ancient Kamrupa was divided into four *Pithas*. These are Kama-Pitha, Ratna-Pitha, Suvarna-Pitha and Saumara-Pitha. There were other minor *Pithas* besides this and they were included in one or other of the wider sub divisions. The western part of the country lying between the river Karatoya in the west and the river Sankosa in the east called the Kama Pitha. The Swarnakosa or Sankosa as it is popularly called roughly marks the eastern boundary of Koch Kingdom. The territory of Koch kingdom thus formed part of the Kama-Pitha and bordered on the Ratna-Pitha which lay on the east of the Sankosa and extended as far as the river Rupika.<sup>27</sup>

As far as the economic history of the Koch kingdom is concerned likewise the political history, the economic history cannot also be discussed without the Kamarupa's economic history as because prior to the abolition of the Kamarupa kingdom there was no sovereign existence of the Koch Kingdom and it was formed a part of the Kamarupa kingdom. So before going into the analysis of the coinage system of Koch kingdom it is important to discuss about the system of coinage in Ancient Pragjotish-Kamarupa. Though Koch territory earlier formed a part of the Pragjyotish-Kamarupa kingdom, so we can have a little idea about the exchange system in Koch territory prior to the establishment of the Koch kingdom in the first half of the sixteenth century.

### **Monetary Scenario of Kamarupa:**

The Mahasthangarh inscription<sup>28</sup> seems to suggest the inclusion of present North Bengal territory in Maurya Empire. But there is little information about the socio-economic life of Assam

during the pre-Christian period and about its relation with the Mauryas, but one cannot ignore the significant fact that we have not discovered in Assam any punched marked coin, which was the regular silver and copper currency of the Mauryas although such coins have been found in considerable numbers as far east of Bengal. Surprisingly it is the fact that we have not found in Assam any of the abundant issues of the Gupta even though we know that the province of Pundrovardhana or North Bengal formed a part of the Gupta empire from the fourth to sixth century A.D. and the ancient Assam or the Pragjyotish-Kamrupa country was separated from the Pundravardhana territory in the west only by the river Karatoya.<sup>29</sup> In the same context we have to remember that Pushyavarman of Assam and his successor appear to have had political relation with the Gupta emperor probably as subordinate allies of the latter and that it is difficult to accept complete lack of trade between Assam and Gupta Bengal especially when the spread of Gupta influence in Assam is evidenced by the use of Gupta years 510 (i.e. 829 A.D) in the Tezpur inscription of Harjaravarman.<sup>30</sup>

But more than fifty gold coins of the imperial Gupta type were found by the laborers while digging the earth near a temple at Paglatek on the south bank of Brahmaputra above fifteen kilometers west of Goalpara in Assam. These coins believed to be the oldest discovery of coins in Assam.<sup>31</sup> To comment on these coins D.C. Sircar suggested that ‘considering the practical lack of numismatic tradition in early Assam and the identity of the Paglatek coins in type and weight, with that of similar gold coins found in considerable number in Bangladesh and Tripura, the Paglatek coins would appear to have gone there from the adjoining eastern regions of Bangladesh where such coins were being issued for a few centuries after Sasanka’s death in the first half of the seventh century A.D.’.<sup>32</sup> Recently after re-examining the coins of Paglatek hoard at the state museum Mr. S.K. Bose have been deciphered as *Sri Kumara*. In Sy-yu-ki, Hiuen Tsang mentioned Bhaskarvarman as Sri Kumara. From literary and other sources we find that coins were in use in Kamarupa during Bhaskaravarman’s time but none of such has yet been found. It is claimed that the coins bearing legend Sri Kumara may be

issued by great ruler Bhaskarvarman of Pushyavarman dynasty of Kamarupa.<sup>33</sup> If the claim is accepted the existence of coinage in Assam may be pushed back to the middle of the seventh century. It may be mentioned that '*Kumara*' is the name of another ruler of Salastambha's house who ruled in Kamarupa during eight century. Much information about the '*Kumara*' is not available whose tenure was not as long as Bhaskaravarman allies Sri Kumara.

In the first half of the seventh century A.D., the great king Bhaskaravarman of Assam had very close relation with Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh not only as an enemy of Sasanka and a friend of Harshavardhana but also as a visitor of Karnasuvarna, Kajangala, Prayaga and Kanyakubja and must have seen the gold coins of Sasanka and the silver issues of Harsha. Still we have not discovered even a single coin of Bhaskaravarmana. The explanation must be that the bankers and traders men of seventh century Assam did not feel any necessity of coins because they could manage with barter and such media of exchange as cowries shells and produced of the field.<sup>34</sup> Thus even if Bhaskaravarmana issued any coins they were meant for use at particular occasions and were minted in small numbers.

The next numismatic development of significance which have undoubtedly proved the existence of metallic coin in Assam as back as in ninth century A.D., are coins from two other hoards, both are from tea gardens. The first lot of thirty three coins were unearthed in seventies at Dhulapadung tea estate near Tejpur. D.C. Sircar opined that 'these finds.....seems to suggest that these coins were issued on a particular occasions and limited number'<sup>35</sup> But subsequent discovery of 2089 coins, recently in a hoard at Tulip tea estate near Dhakiajuli and some more Nakuchi Bargaon in modern Kamarupa district have proved beyond doubt that coins were in use as money in Kamarupa much earlier than what have been believed so long.<sup>36</sup> These coins are roughly round shaped and their weight varies between 1.94 and 15.87 grms and their diameter between 2.5 and 3.1 centimeters.<sup>37</sup> The chief interest of the hoard is that the thirty three coins bear a blank reverse and show a single letter obverse legend which is *ha* on some specimens and *Va* on other. The letter *ha*, which might be assigned to the ninth century A.D., on paleographical grounds would suggest that the coins might be

ascribed to the same century. These types bearing *Ha*, *Va* and *Ta* in Brahmi script have so far been identified and linked with Harjavardhana, Balavarmana or Valavarmana and Tyagasimha all of the Mlechcha dynasty of Salasthambha who ruled in 9<sup>th</sup> century in this region. No other similar coins were known in this region or in any neighboring region before or after the period so they represent a unique numismatic phenomenon. The simple design of a single letter implies that there are no religious dimensions to the issue. The choice of copper and the fact that no examples have been found outside Kamarupa itself implies that internal use was intended. The fact that they have only been found in a few places rather than widely spread seems to indicate that they were used to facilitate trade in few markets rather than used as a wider store of wealth. Numismatist Nicholas Rhodes has some different clarifications regarding this copper coins. According to him trade seems the most likely reason. The Nan Jiao kingdom in south western China was growing in importance at this period and it was keen to acquire cowrie shells which formed the main currency of this region. Kamarupa may have identified a trading opportunity in the export of shells to china and the copper coins may have been issued to ensure that market traders at home were not inconvenienced by the consequent scarcity of cowrie shells available for local use.<sup>38</sup>

Though there is controversy regarding the use of coins but there is also unanimity among the scholars that besides coins, cowrie shells played an important role in trade and transaction in Kamarupa and adjoining areas for such a long time prior to the introduction of metallic coinage by the different regional powers. They were popular among the people because they were of a small enough size to be useful in making small daily perches. The earliest reference of using cowrie shells by a ruler of Pragjyotish is seen in *Harshacharita* which states that Bhaskarvarman presented Harsha with heaps of black and white cowrie.<sup>39</sup> The Tezpur inscription of 829 A.D. speaks of a fine of *Panchavattika* or 5 Budis, i.e. 20 cowrie shells. The continued use of cowrie shells in Assam is indicated by the Nilachal plates of Madhava who ruled in fifteenth century as the said record counts 320 *Gandas*

or 1280 *cowrie* shells as equivalent of one silver coin.<sup>40</sup> *Ganda*, equal to 4 cowrie-shells and 1/5 of a *Budi*, is also a measure of calculation on like the *Budi*.

The most of the people were self-sufficient in the necessities of life and urban communities were non-existent and limited market trading was facilitated by the use of cowrie enabled the traditional patterns of life to be maintained. The phrase 'only strangers need money, people who know each other can do without' applied. Strangers were rarely seen in the region and were actively discouraged by the Ahoms, who adopted in isolationist policy of discouraging outside traders to come to their country. The lack of a coinage helped to ensure a degree of social stability and indeed there was no incentive for those in power to allow coins to be used.<sup>41</sup>

Thus prior to the Muslim invasion in the early thirteenth century coinage in Kamarupa was conspicuous by its absence. Perhaps the reason for the lack of any state sponsored coinage during the centuries around the millennium can be found in the structure of the society and in particular it may have been that the interest of the ruling class would not have been served by a money based economy. Society was probably based on the largely self-sufficient village, with villagers strictly divided into occupational based castes and taxes would have been paid through labor or kind, with the rulers not needing to purchase anything. Without money the villagers were to a large extent deprived of physical mobility and with the caste system were also deprived of social mobility. A stable and structured community such as this with the rulers of the caste system enforced by priests is relatively easy to rule provided the authority of the king is recognized by the priests. The ruler may discourage the use of coins by the people because of the financial independence and hence physical mobility that such coins could give to sectors of the community such as traders.<sup>42</sup>

In the thirteenth century the situation changed in Bengal when the Muslim invaded and occupied political power from the Hindu ruling dynasty, the Senas. The Muslims introduced a coinage of fine silver<sup>43</sup> which may have had the effect whether intended or not of increasing the power and influence of the trading classes at the expense of the Hindu religious institutions. On the

other hand rulers who do not have the support of the priests may introduce coins in order to gain the political support of the secular population particular the traders, farmers or artisans and hence they can control the country in a very different way. The coins can be used by rulers to perches goods or service from the people and in that way the economy can be controlled. <sup>44</sup>

When Mohammed Bakhtiyar invaded and conquered Bengal in 1202, he has had just these ideas in mind when he introduced coins into the economy, limiting production to large silver and gold pieces. As a Muslim he could only hope to gain lasting control over the Brahmin priests and gaining the support of at least some of the Hindu population. The Muslim invaders may have decided that by encouraging trade and allowing the Hindu trading and banking community to enrich them, they would gain their support and ensure that they were able to exercise stable political control over the newly conquered territory. The introduction of a silver and gold coinage may have been part of the strategy through which Bengal was successfully ruled by the Muslims. <sup>45</sup> Thus in this way Muslim system of coinage introduced in this part of the country.

Another very important political development of fourteenth and fifteenth century is that side by side of Muslim intervention in eastern India and also due to the abolition of the Kamarupa kingdom a regional state formation process started and most of these new powers were dominated by the Hindus. We must keep it in mind that from time immemorial India was mostly predominated by the Hindu religion and its followers, so when the Muslims assume in the power in India, the Hindu population did not took the align culture whole heartedly and a sense of discontent prevailed in their mind and it was reflected in the form of revolts in various occasions in the Muslim period. <sup>46</sup>

At the time when Muslim invaders started to expand their empire in the eastern side of Indian subcontinent the Brahmins of the Gangetic valley and also from Bengal were feeling threatened and unvalued in territories that had become increasingly Islamicised and some of them started migrating eastward. <sup>47</sup> A process of Hindu state formation commenced in the eastern India when one or more Brahmins or Brahmin groups convinced a local tribal leader to embrace Hinduism. The Brahmins

provided the rulers with a genealogy appropriate to a Hindu monarch and in exchange the Brahmins received valuable patronage. The new Hindu state formation process also involved a degree of social stratification which may have made the tribal aristocracy feel more comfortable with the stability of the regime. Furthermore the new Hindu states provided a more secure ideological barrier to the eastward spread of Islam, which must have been a factor that worried both rulers and the Brahmins.

### III

The kingdom of Kamta Koch Behar was a direct consequence of this Hindu resistance of Islam, likewise the other Hindu principality namely Ahom, Tripura, Kachar etc. in other parts of North Eastern India. Koch Behar was a small kingdom situated just south of the great Himalayas controlling the main route up the Brahmaputra river from Bengal and Bihar to Assam. The state was founded about 1496 in the vacuum created after the collapse of the Kingdom of Kamarupa and Kamta. Though some other minor dynasties ruled in the kingdom prior to the acquisition of power by the Koch but no significant development in the economic sphere took place because of the political unpredictability. It was under the Koch who first stabilized the political condition by suppressing the other tribal groups and also initiated for the economic stability of the kingdom and took concrete steps to give the kingdom a strong economic footing.

Before entering into the core issues of the Koch coinage it is important to give the salient features of the Koch coinage. Koch coins were die-struck and round in shape. They were struck in a comparatively broad and thin flan in imitation of the *Tankas* of the Sultans of Bengal and were about 172 grains (11.15grams) in weight. They did not bear any device but have like their prototype, legends on both sides. These legends were in Sanskrit and were written in Bengali characters.<sup>48</sup> The obverse side of the Koch coins bore the name of the king and the date in Saka era and the phrase '*Sri Sri Sivcharana Kamala Madhu Karasya*' inscribed in the reverse. This particular phrase was engraved

in most of the coins of the Koch rulers. The coins of the Koch kingdom were not only known as *Narayani Mudra* after the title Narayan assumed by the rulers but also as '*Sihvatanka*' as the association of Siva with the people of the kingdom was very deep rooted.<sup>49</sup> These Narayani rupees were the most dominant currency for circulation in both Koch kingdom itself and the neighboring areas of Assam and Bihar. But there is no historical evidence as when coins were first used in the Koch Kingdom. The oldest surviving coin of Kamtapura was of Samsuddin Ilias Saha<sup>50</sup> in 759 *Hijri* (1358) with the inscription of *Kamru* as *Chaulistan* which was recovered with other coins from Kamarupa (Gosanimari) in 1863.<sup>51</sup> Besides this large hoard of 13,500 coins spanning the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, coins were found in other places of Koch Behar also.<sup>52</sup>

### **Monetary Scenario in Kamatapur under the Khan:**

Likewise the political history of the Koch Kingdom before Visvasimha the evolution of money economy also lays in deep mystery. For the lack of proper historical information, it is unknown to us that when and how coinage came to replace the system of barter mode of exchange. Though some other dynastic coinage like those of, Maurya, Gupta, Sultanate Bengal etc. have been found within the territory of Koch kingdom but with those little amounts of coins it was hardly possible to run a full-fledged kingdom's exchange system. Before the establishment of the Koch dynasty the *Khen*<sup>53</sup> was the major political power of this area centering the Kamtapura (Gosanimari) as their capital. Nilambar<sup>54</sup> was the most powerful king of the Khen dynasty. Nilambara attained great power and extended his rule eastward to the Bara Nadi and westward as far as Karatoya. He also included within his dominations the north eastern part of the tract which previously belonged to the Islamic rulers of Bengal.<sup>55</sup> But Nilambar or the other Khyan rulers did not take any step to introduce coins or issued any coins to commemorate their political victory over the region as the archeologist yet not found any coins belonged to the Khyan kings.

Though archeologically we have no specimen of Khyan coins but we have some literary reference of coins during the Khyan times. As for example Radha Krishna Das Vairagi in his book ‘Gosanimongal’<sup>56</sup> which was written in poetic style mentions the introduction of ‘Mohur’ or gold coin by king Kanteswar a king of the Kheyan dynasty. He wrote....

*“Mama Nama Khudi Koro Mohur Taiar*

*Kanteswari Mohur Boli Hoibe Prochar”<sup>57</sup>*

This means.... king Kanteswar orders to introduce gold coin on which his name must be engraved and that will named as Kanteswari Mohur.

Again in another place it is referred.....

*“Sonar Mohur Bande Hajare Hjar*

*Sakat Purilo Nia Andar Vitor”<sup>58</sup>*

But these are only literary references until any discovery of the coins of Kanteswar it is not to be taken as an authentic reference. But in Kamtapura ruins a mint is discovered by the Archeological Survey of India and which can be treated as a reference that in that mint Khyan coin might be minted at that mint.

### **Visvashimha (c.1496-1533):**

After Nilambara the last king of the Khyan dynasty of Kamtapura, Visvasimha of Koch clan became the ruler of Kamtapura. Visvasimha during his first few years of reign was busy in consolidation his position to the north of the Brahmaputra. After the departure of the Muhammadans<sup>59</sup> the whole country was ruled by a number of petty independent chiefs. Visvasimha seized this opportunity and in course of time made himself the master of the country west of the Bara Nadi.<sup>60</sup> Visvasimha assumed the title of Kamteswra and declared himself as an independent king after his formal coronation in 1496. It was the usual practice among the Indian rulers to issue coins in their own name, the moment they felt themselves independent and powerful enough to do so. But

unfortunately no coins have so far been discovered. Neither Darrang Vamsavali nor Rajapakhyan <sup>61</sup> of Koch Behar says anything whether Visvasimha struck coins. This may lead to us to believe that unstable political condition of the time might have prevented Visvasimha from issuing any coins in his name.

Though archeologically no coins of Visvasimha have been found yet but in some literary sources both from Assam and Koch Behar inform us about Visvasimha's coins. The Assam *Burunji* by Rai Gunabhiram Barua informs us that the predecessors of Visvasimha did not issue any coins. <sup>62</sup> In another words the author of the Assam *Burunji* wants to suggest and emphasis the point that Visvasimha was the first ruler of Kamtapura, who issued coins in his own mane. Again Ripunjoy Das in his *Rajavamsavali* says that Visvasimha enthrone himself in Saka 13 and struck coins in his own name. <sup>63</sup> From the *Burunji* of Rudrasimha <sup>64</sup> we learn that one Ahom ruler sent an expedition against Visvasimha in about 1405 Saka i.e.1483. Visvasimha who was only consolidating his position at that time, acknowledged the suzerainty of the Ahom king with many presents which have not been specified in the book. But Mjumdar refers to a meeting between the Ahom king Suhunmun and Visvasimha in Saka 1419 (i.e., 1497) and the latter's presentation of 500 of pieces of struck coins and five horses to the former. <sup>65</sup>

*“Suni Visvasimha bhupa Mahananda mane  
Apana jarava tada kori sehi kshana  
Pancha sat a mudra dila pancha turangama  
Manojava gati tara drishti haya bhrama”*

This means....Hearing this king Visvasimha with his mind filled with great delight immediately presented a parse of a coin struck in his own name. He gave 500 coin and five horses

The coins of Visvasimha so much impressed the Ahom king that he wanted to make similar coins in his own name. He is also said to have admitted that none of his thirteen predecessors had any coins.

*“Turanga dekhiya mama ranga atisaya  
Apara jarav a dekhi haila vismaya*

*Bale 'mama Vamsa-madhya traya-dasa jana  
Rajatva kariya svarge karila gamana  
Tathpi jarava nahi kare kona bhupa  
E jarava dekhilama ati aparupa  
Ehi mata alochiya Assam Isvara  
Brahmana pandita ani rachila mohura.' ”<sup>66</sup>*

This means....After seeing the Koch coins the Ahom king was so astonished and impressed and thought why his thirteen predecessors not minted coins. Ahom king then called the Brahmins and ordered to mint his own coins.

The above statement make two points absolutely clear, first Visvasimha issued coins in his own name and secondly, the Ahom ruler got inspiration from these coins to strike coins in his own name and Ahom rulers were generally influenced by the coins of the Koch kingdom. But no coins of Visvasimha have been discovered yet so the matter still needs thorough investigation.

### **Nara Narayan (1533-1587):**

After the death of Visvasimha Malladeva ascended the throne after expelling Nara Simha and assumed the name Nara Narayan.<sup>67</sup> Although there may be speculations as whether Visvasimha issued coins or not but it was unquestionably credit of his son Nara Narayan who struck coins and his coins are discovered plenty in number from Koch Behar and adjoining areas. He issued numerous types of die struck coins, among them full rupees are very plentiful but only a few specimens of half and quarter rupees are known.<sup>68</sup> All his coins are of the same design with an invocation to Siva on the obverse and the name of the king and the date 1477 (1555) on the reverse.<sup>69</sup> It is probably that this merely represents the accession year and the coins were struck on several occasions and perhaps even in the several mints throughout his reign.<sup>70</sup> (Plate No. I-III).

To expand the frontier of his kingdom and to get wealth Nara Narayan started the aggressive warfare initiated by Visvasimha against the tribal states of North East India together with his brother Sukladhvaja whom Nara Narayan appointed as his commander-in-chief. Nara Narayan continued the

policy of expansion initiated by his father Visvasimha through aggressive warfare. The analysis of his military campaign will light on the amount of silver that Nara Narayan is reputed to have obtained as booty and tribute as he extended his kingdom and secondly it will give us some clue as to when and where Nara Narayan's army had struck coins. Valuable information can also be obtained from certain hoards that have been discovered containing coins of this king.

Nara Narayan started to plan a military attack towards the Ahom kingdom of Assam fairly early in his reign in view of aggressive policy of Ahom king Sukenmung.<sup>71</sup> In course of these operations the Koch constructed an embankment road the whole way from their capital in Koch Behar to Narayanpur, in the south west of what is now the north Lakhimpur subdivision, a distance of some 350 miles. The work was carried out under the supervision of Gosain Kamal, the king's younger brother; parts of it are still in existence and are known to this day as Gosain Kamal's road.<sup>72</sup> This great undertaking was completed in 1547 and the Koch then created a fort at Narayanpur. Sukenmung struck in behind them and entrenched himself on the bank of the Pichala river. He thus cut off their supplies and forced them to assume the offensive. The result was a disastrous defeat for the Koch. Many were slain in the assault and a large number of fugitives were subsequently surrounded and killed.

This decisive defeat led to a cessation of hostilities for some years, but in 1562 a fresh attempt was made by Nara Narayan to overcome his powerful rival. According to one of the *Ahom Burunji* this war arose out of a dispute in connection with Nara Narayan's invasion of the Kachari country, in the course of which he is said to have devastated some villages inside the Ahom frontier. A force was sent up the Brahmaputra in boats as far as the mouth of the Dikhu, where an engagement took place in which the Ahoms appeared to have been worsted. In the following January the formidable Chilarai<sup>73</sup> himself took the field with a large force and, in a second engagement near the Dikhu inflicted an overwhelming defeat on the Ahoms. Their king and his chief nobles fled to Charaikharang in Kamrupa and the Koch entered their capital Garghaon in triumph. After this resounding military

victory a treaty was agreed in July 1563 whereby the Ahom king presented Nara Narayan with among other things a large store of gold and silver coins and the whole of the north bank of Brahmaputra passed under Koch rule.<sup>74</sup> Kumar Kamal Narayan was appointed *Uparaja* or representative of the king in Morang country (in the district of Lakshmpur).

Nara Narayan annexed Kachar after conquering Assam. After the defeat of the Ahoms Sukladhva advanced towards Maibong the capital of the kingdom of the Kachar. The Kachar king quickly submitted and presented Sukladhaja with many valuables and twenty-eight elephants. He acknowledged to Nara Narayan and promised to pay an annual tribute of 70,000 silver coins, one thousand gold coins and 60 elephants. Sukladhaja established a colony in Kachar.<sup>75</sup>

Manipur was the next kingdom acknowledged Koch suzerainty. The king of Manipur feeling himself too weak to oppose so powerful Koch without resistance. His tribute was fixed at an annual tribute of 20,000 silver coins, 300 gold coins and 10 elephants.<sup>76</sup>

The kingdom of Jayantia was next attacked and in the battle that followed the king was killed by Chilaray with his own hand. His son was placed on the throne after acknowledging the authority of Koch kingdom and promising to pay regular tribute. The tribute was fixed at 10,000 silver coins together with some horses and weapons. It is said that the one of the conditions imposed on him was that he should not in future strike coins in his own name. This seems to imply that Jayantipur had struck coins prior to this date but it is also possible that the story was invented later as an explanation as to why virtually all Jayantipur coins even up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century did not have the name of the ruler.<sup>77</sup> From Jaintipur Sukladhja advanced to Sylhet and extracted an annual tribute of 3,00,000 silver coins, 10,000 gold coins 100 elephants and 200 horses before turning his attention Tripura.<sup>78</sup>

A fierce battle was fought probably in the plains of Kachar near Khaspur, north of Silchar and the king of Tripura was apparently killed together with eighteenth thousands of his troops.<sup>79</sup> His son was set up in his place and undertook to pay tribute of 10,000 silver coins, 100 gold coins and 30 horses.<sup>80</sup> There is no mention of this war in the Tripura chronicles and the only corroboration of the

Koch *Vamsavalies* is found in an Assamese *Buranji* of uncertain date. This is not sufficient to establish it as an historical fact.<sup>81</sup>

Subsequently an annual tribute was fixed at 9,000 rupees and a body of soldiers was stationed in Brahmapur (now Khaspur) to maintain the authority of Nara Narayan. Later his brother Gohain Kamal became an independent ruler of Kashpur and his descendants ruled the area until the early eighteenth century.<sup>82</sup> It is possible that coins may have been struck by Gohain Kamal in the name of Nara Narayan as part of the process of the formation of this site.

The king of Khyrim then offered submission and tribute and apparently managed the Koch authority that trade was important to his kingdom and asked permission to strike coins. Agreement was given on the understanding that the coins were in the name of Nara Narayan and that they had the symbol of a mace to distinguish them from the normal Koch Behar coins and the king then set up a mint.<sup>83</sup> Annual tributes were fixed at 900 gold coins, 15,000 silver coins 50 horses and 30 elephants.

Though this wars which led to the defeat of rival neighboring powers in the region the Koch kingdom emerged as a strong state with tribute paying subordinate allies. This in turn enabled it to raise a substantial amount of surplus from the region and strengthened further. Continuity of 'aggressive warfare' under the commandership of Chilarai further extended the territory of the kingdom. These military expeditions resulted a collection of indemnity totaled Rs. 380000, 22100 gold, 264 elephants 370 horses and other valuable goods.<sup>84</sup> The first installed of total Rs. 3,80,000, from subordinate allies and the promises of an annual tribute of Rs. 42,2000, 22,200 gold coins, 320 horses, 260 elephants and other valuable commodities significantly contributed to the economic development of the Koch kingdom. It also accelerated the state formation and consolidation of the economy.

By the mid 1560's Nara Narayan became unquestionably the most powerful ruler in the North East, although it is not clear far how long he managed to retain his empire. The Koch chronicles are silent over whether the promised annual tribute was collected and if so for how long. The chronicles

of the defeated kingdoms are silent over the Koch conquest. The most likely scenario seems to be that the extended Koch Empire did not survive for longer than a year or two and after the defeat by the Muslims at Gour the other tributary rulers quickly forgot their treaty obligations which Koch kingdom was in no position to enforce. However some territory north of Brahmaputra and east of the Sankosa river became part of the Koch Behar and control of this newly conquered region was delegated to Sukladhvja. However the amount of tribute recorded in the chronicles may well have been paid to the Koch Behar army at the time of the initial campaign, even if it was not paid yearly thereafter. Apart from Tripura and to a very limited extent Kachar and Jayantipur none of the tributary kingdoms had a coinage of their own so it is probable that any tribute in the form of coin would have been paid in coins of the Sultans. Coins of the Muslim rulers had been present in Assam since the thirteenth century and the local rulers probably had large hoards of them in their treasuries as stores of wealth. From such tribute and other booty acquired Nara Narayan would have obtained the new material for his coinage, so it is very likely that many of his coins were struck either during or soon after his military campaign.

As far as the source of silver <sup>85</sup> is concern trade was a major way of accumulation of metal. As there are no silver mines in northern Bengal or in the Himalayas it is worth considering the source of the silver used by the Koch Behar for this large coinage struck in the last half of the sixteenth century. During this period there was a major trade route between and Tibet, passing through Koch Behar and Bhutan. <sup>86</sup> This trade route was recorded by the English merchant and traveler Ralph Fitch in 1583, who noted that musk, wool, agate, silk and pepper were purchased. As he mentions no major exports it is not unreasonable to assume that the imports were paid for with silver, some of which was converted into silver coins in Koch Behar. It is not clear from any historical source whether this trade route was being used in the first half of the sixteenth century, although there are some numismatic evidence to suggest that around 1540 trade from Bengal to Tibet passed through the Dalakha <sup>87</sup> in the Kosi valley, and hence not through Koch Behar. Indeed the evidence of the coins of Koch Behar

would seem to suggest that the trade was probably minor in volume prior to the reign of Nara Narayan, and expand significantly sometime after his accession in 1555.

Silver was also obtained as booty or tribute during the successful military campaigns initially by Visvasimha while he was establishing a viable political entity and subsequently by Nara Narayan as he expanded his influence over the whole of the region. It seems likely that the initial impetus for the coinage may have been a demonstration of political power and independence from Muslim suzerainty. The existence of the coinage and the power and political stability of the new state would then have oiled the wheels of commerce and trade with Tibet through Bhutan and with Assam and this trade would in turn have provided an ongoing source of silver for the coinage.<sup>88</sup>

### **Lakshmi Narayan (1587-1627):**

After the death of Nara Narayan his only son Lakshmi Narayan ascended the throne and Raikat of Bykunthapur and other ministers of the state brought their *nuzars* to the king in the newly coined money.<sup>89</sup> The rupees are identical in style to the late coins of his father, but half rupees are also commonly found struck with rupee dies on smaller flans apart from these pieces, single examples of quarter and half rupees struck with special small dies are known and two rare varieties of rupee exist, one with the legend in a square and the other with an ornamental border of fourteen arcs.<sup>90</sup> All the coins have the accession date of 1509 RS, but both rupees and half are found with a date in the Koch Behar era below. (Plate No. III-V). Usually this date is clearly 98 RS (1608), but on a few pieces it may perhaps be read as 92 RS.<sup>91</sup> Most probably this date represents the actual date of issue of the coin, while the *Saka* date of 1509 was retained as the accession year. Exactly why this date should have been celebrated by the issue of coins is not certain as this period the first decade of the seventeenth century was one of considerable unrest. It may well be that it was Lakshmi Narayan's intention to date each coin with the year of issue following the Mughol custom and this year 98RS, was the only one in the later part of his reign when coins were struck. Lakshmi Narayan was a rather

weak ruler and in about 1596 he gravely offended many of his subjects by declaring himself to be a vassal of the Moghuls.<sup>92</sup> He encouraged a rebellion and he sought help from his Mughol allies after a period of increasing Mughol influence in Koch Behar in 1614 Lakshmi Narayan left his country to visit the Moghul Governor of Dhaka.<sup>93</sup> Once there he was detained and was able to return only after about four years having spent one year in Dhaka and three years in and around Agra, during which time he met emperor Jahangir near Ahmadabad in 1618. He was permitted to return to his country only after he had presented *Peskash* of about 80,000 Narayani coins to the Emperor.<sup>94</sup> According to one source during his period of detention Lakshmi Narayan agreed to strike coins only of half size,<sup>95</sup> but this does not seem to have been the case and the story may have been invented later to explain why Koch kingdom alone among the Indian states only issued coins of half rupees size after the middle of the seventeenth century.

### **Vira Narayan (1627-33):**

Vira Narayan succeeded his father Lakshmi Narayan to the throne in 1621.<sup>96</sup> His reign was marked by loss of martial glory and rapid falling of territories. A few rare rupees and half rupees are known of this king, dated 1548 S and 117 RS, corresponding to the early months of 1627.<sup>97</sup> These coins are unique in the series having an invocation to Krishna, rather than to Siva and Parvati (Hara Gauri). (Plate No. V). But there is a good deal of controversy among the scholars regarding the coins of Vira Narayan centering on the legend and the issuing date of these coins. The matter needs careful examination. It is believed that Lakshmi Narayan the father of Vira Narayan was alive up to the beginning of Saka 1549 and accordingly the same Saka year is considered to be his son Vira Narayan's installation year.<sup>98</sup> This supposition is based on an extant letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 1627 AD, (1549 Saka) written by a Portuguese Jesuit named Stephen Casella. It was stated in the letter that Casella met King Lakshmi Narayan at Hajo in September 1626 AD, (1548 RS) on his way to Bhutan.<sup>99</sup> Casella resumed his journey from Behar to Bhutan on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1627 AD (1528 Saka). At that

time Gabur Saha the son left Behar, Lakshmi Narayan died and his son Kumara Vira Narayan was duly installed as the king.<sup>100</sup>

From this evidence it is evident that Lakshmi Narayan died sometime between 2<sup>nd</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> October 1627. However as there is no other point to the exact death year of Lakshmi Narayan in the Saka era, this is because both Saka 1548 (ending in mid-April) and Saka 1549 (beginning from mid-April) were forced in the year 1627. The date of Lakshmi Narayan's death in the History of Cooch Behar is therefore only a conjecture.<sup>101</sup>

Now with the help of the dated coins of Vira Narayan we can come to the conclusion that Lakshmi Narayan died some time in between 2<sup>nd</sup> February and mid-April 1627, when the Saka year 1548 was in force. Kumar Vira Narayan ascended the throne in the same Saka year and coins were struck with the date Saka 1548 on it, according to the traditional system of the royal family. We regard these two full coins as coronation coins because the Koch Behar era- *Rajasaka* 117 inscribed on these coins corresponds to the *Saka* year 1548.<sup>102</sup>

The epithets inscribed on the reverse of all the coins of the Koch Behar rulers, described as either *Sri Sri Siva Charana Kamala-madhu Karasya* or *Sri Sri Hara Gouri Charana Kamala-madhu Karasya*.<sup>103</sup> But an exceptional example is the epithet on the coin of Vira Narayan, where he was described as *Sri Sri Krishna Charana Kamala-madhu Karasya*.<sup>104</sup> This change to a Vaishnavite epithet during Vira Narayan's reign is corroborated with certain historical facts which we would like to state here.

The Vishnava religion obtained a strong footing in the country during the later part of the reign of Lakshmi Narayan the father of Vira Narayan. Madhavadeva (the disciple of Sankardeva) and Damodardeva, the two Vaishnava reformers, left their native country because of the oppression of the Ahom king and reached the kingdom of Kamta.<sup>105</sup> Lakshmi Narayan received them with favor and offered them shelter. Prince Vira Narayan and many ladies of the royal family were charmed by his qualities and became attached to Madhavadeva. The religion preached by Madhavadeva was

considered as the royal religion. Vaishnavism received official recognition when Lakshmi Narayan enrolled himself as the disciple of Damodardeva, who became the royal *Guru*. Under the instruction of Damodardeva animal sacrifice was prohibited for a time in the state worship. On the issue of greater importance of Vaishnavism some scholars argue that the coins of Vira Narayan were not actually coins but medallions issued in honor of Lord Krishna during the life-time of Lakshmi Narayan.<sup>106</sup> This explains also the paucity of this type of issues which were naturally not minted in large number.

Vira Naryanan's coins are important from another point of view. It is recorded in the *Rajopakhyana* that Lakshmi Narayan promised to the emperor Jahangir that he would only mint Narayani half coins and historians have accepted this story.<sup>107</sup> The story has however been doubted on the ground that in the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* which preserves an account of the meeting of Lakshmi Narayan with Jahangir (1618) there is no such hint in relation to the restriction imposed on minting. Moreover the full coins of Prana Narayan grandson of Lakshmi Narayan were struck when Sahajahan was ruling.<sup>108</sup> The full coins of Vira Narayan thus establish a doubtful character of the evidence of the *Rajopakhyana* and the subsequent chronicles of Koch kingdom.

### **Prana Narayan (1633-65):**

On the death of his father Prana Narayan succeeded to the throne in about 1633. Seals and new coins were prepared bearing the name of the new king and the funeral rites of the late king were performed according to family custom under the new ruler's direction.<sup>109</sup> A large number of Prana Narayan's coins have been discovered. (Plate VI, XII, XII). Prana Narayan seemed to have changed the earlier system of striking coins. On the coins of Prana Narayan under the *Na* of *Narayan* symbol was something added, such as a cross or a crescent moon, with or without a dot. The coins of the new ruler differ from those of his predecessors in respect of its date as they no longer have fixed dates but have the actual date of striking initially 1653 RS or 155 RS but later both the full rupees and the half

rupees have a three digit date in the Rajsaka era. The half rupees were struck with rupee sized dies so the date which appeared at the bottom of the reverse design was usually off the flan and hence illegible. Perhaps the most remarkable coin of the period is a gold coin of which only a single example is known. This is of particular interest as the date is written as 753, which must be the Nepal *Samvat* era that was used by the Malla dynasty in Nepal.<sup>110</sup> This is probably the only time this exclusively Nepalese era was used outside Nepal and must have been something to do with the fact that one of Prana Narayan's sisters Rupamati Devi married Pratap Mallao of Kathmandu.<sup>111</sup> The coin is also unusual in that it weighs 6.9 gm., which does not conform to any of the well-known local weight standards. It is possible that the weight was intended to correspond to a Tibetan weight standard, as small bags of gold dust weighing about 7gms. used to circulate in Tibet as a form of currency.<sup>112</sup> During Prana Narayan's reign Bhutan had a strong leader in Shabdung Rimpoche who came from Tibet and established the rule of the Dugpa sect of Buddhism. At this time trade between Koch Behar, Bhutan and Tibet probably flourished and the half rupees of Prana Narayan are among the most common of all Koch Behar coins. The full rupees, by contrast are very scarce. It is worth noticeable that it was during this reign that the Ahoms in Assam began to strike coins, showing that there was a general flow of silver into the North East, coinciding with a change in Moghul North East frontier policy which was for a limited period centered more on trade than on conquest.<sup>113</sup>

In the reign of Prana Narayan the Koch rule came to a sudden halt for a little period because of the short lived victory of the Mughol army over the Koch kingdom. Mir Jumla the commander of Mughol army while directing his army towards Assam, invaded the Koch kingdom in 1661 and occupied the state. The Mughol occupied the kingdom for two years. The Mughol general Mir Jumla used Koch kingdom as military base for his ultimately disastrous expedition into North East India. During the Mughol occupation, Prana Narayan had to seek refuge in Bhutan and stayed there sometime and returned only in 1663.<sup>114</sup>

At this time Mir Jumla changed the name of the kingdom as *Alamgirnagar* and a half coin made of copper was struck bearing the name of Aurangzeb in Bengali script but this did not contain any date.<sup>115</sup> (Plate No. VIII: 55). A mint was established in Koch Kingdom where from the new coins were minted. The new coins were exactly similar to the half rupees of Prana Narayan with the legend in Urdu, but written in Bengali script. A symbol of cross was assigned to these coins to identify the coins distinctly and the symbol also bears some historical significance. These new coins were a new addition to the Koch numismatics.

### **Mada Narayan (1665-80):**

After the departure of the Mughol army from the Koch kingdom once again the Koch rule established in the territory and Moda Narayan son and successor of Prana Narayan ascended to the throne and he ruled from 1665-66 to 1680-81.<sup>116</sup> A large number of full and half rupee coin was minted in his reign but no full rupee coin of Moda Narayan has been discovered. (Plate No. VII). A number of half coins of this ruler are supposed to have been issued in different *Rajasakas*. Mada Narayan continued to strike half rupees with a *Rajasaka* date that appears to read illegible.<sup>117</sup> One such half rupee has a date that appears to read 179 *Rajasaka* equivalent to about 1689, or eight years after Mada Narayan's death. Two possible explanations may be derived from this. Some coins may have been struck in subsequent reigns retaining the name of the former king or perhaps more likely the dates which are so rarely visible had become meaningless and merely symbolic. Besides this like all other previous rulers the term *Sri Sri Siva Charana Kamala Madhu Karasya* in *Nagri* script is engraved on the reverse side of his coins.

### **Vasudeva Narayan (1680-82):**

After Moda Narayan Vasudeva Narayan ascended to the Koch royal throne and coins were struck at the time of installation of the new king.<sup>118</sup> (Plate No. VII). The half rupees of Vasudeva

Narayan are among the rarest coins of Koch Behar. On the obverse *Sri Srimat Vasudeva Narayansya* and on the other side *Sri Sri Siva Charana Kamala Madhu Karasya* were engraved in his coins. The half rupee coin of Vasudeva Narayan is a very rare variety of coin and not easily available. Only few numismatists have Vasudeva's coin. Numismatist Nicholas Rhodes has few of Vasudeva's coin in his custody.

### **Mahendra Narayan (1682-93):**

On the occasion of the death of Vasudeva Narayan without any lineage Mahendra Narayan, the great grandson of Prana Narayan was declared King.<sup>119</sup> Coins were struck at the installation but no coins of Mahendra Narayan have been surfaced yet now. It is very likely that half rupees were struck and that they will surface one day. Only limited numbers of coins were struck in the time of accession to fulfill the ancestral ritual and perhaps due to the internal chaotic condition of the state due to the growing rivalry between king and the nazir, Mahendra Narayan did not get the chance to mint coins for commercial purpose. Besides this the king was minor at the time of his accession and died only at the age of sixteen so he got little chance to consolidate the transaction system by issuing new coins. In Mahendra Narayan's coins the term '*Sri Srimat*' included to raise the prestige of the king where as most of his predecessors used only '*Sri Sri*'. Like his predecessors the epithet *Sri Sri Siva Charana Kamala Madhu Karasya* was engraved in his coins.

### **Rupa Narayan (1693-1714):**

On the death of Mahendra Narayan his brother Rupa Narayan raised to the throne.<sup>120</sup> At the time of his accession coins were struck among them a few half rupee coins have been surfaced. (Plate No. VII). Rupa Narayan like his brother was trying to consolidate his political authority in view of the growing power of the *Nazir* so he perhaps did not get opportunity to mint coins for commercial purpose except the ceremonial coins at the time of his accession. Rupa Narayan also uses the term

*Srimat* before his name in his coins. During the reign of Rupa Narayan silver half coins were struck in much the same pattern as under Prana Narayan. Coins of Rupa Narayan are relatively scarce but not rare. His coins are now preserved in the British Museum and in the custody of Nicholas Rhodes.

### **Upendra Narayan (1714-1763):**

Rupa Narayan was succeeded by his eldest son Upendra Narayan. Coins were struck in the occasion of his accession.<sup>121</sup> (Plate No. VII). His coins are relatively common. It seems that production of his coins had increased during the latter part of his tenure. For this increase, growing trade between India and Tibet may be a probable cause. The trade relation between India and Tibet increased considerably after 1754 because of the siege of the Nepal valley by Prithvi Narayan Saha. Upendra Narayan's half rupee coins are preserved in the British Museum and Fitzwillium Museum. The term *Sri Srimat Upendra Narayansya Sake Karasya* is engraved in the obverse side and *Sri Sri Siva Charana Kamala Madhu* is engraved on the reverse side of his coins.

### **Devendra Narayan (1763-1765):**

After the death of Upendra Narayan his son Devendra Narayan still a child was placed on the throne, and the government was carried on by the chief ministers of the state.<sup>122</sup> (Plate No. VIII) On the occasion of his coronation half rupee coins were minted and in the obverse side of these coins *Sri Srimat Devendra Narayansya Sake* and in the reverse side *Sri Sri Siva Charana Kamala Madhu Karasya* is engraved. His coins are now preserved at British Museum, Fitzwillium Museum and in the custody of Nicholas Rhodes.

During the reigns of the above three kings half rupees were struck with close resemblances with the coins of Prana Narayan. The Coins did not have any date and many do not have the letter to the left of "ndra" visible so it is often not possible even to attribute them to the correct reign. Having said that coins of Rupa Narayan are relatively scarce while those of Upendra and Devendra are relatively

common so it seems that production increased during the latter part of this period. This increased production occurred most probably after 1754 when transit trade between India and Tibet through Nepal virtually ceased because of the siege of the Nepal valley by Prithvi Narayan Shah.<sup>123</sup> Koch Behar and Bhutan were able to benefit because they provided a viable alternative route for trade between India and Tibet. The coins of Devendra Narayan are particularly common and are found quite often in Bhutan. This is consistent with the fact that during this reign the influence of the Bhutanese in the affairs of Koch Behar increased and a representative of Bhutan together with an armed escort was based there and had a significant role in the administration of the State.<sup>124</sup> This Bhutanese influence over Koch Behar continued during the reign of Dhairyendra Narayan but the latter incurred the displeasure of the Bhutanese and in 1770 he was deposed and taken as prisoner to Punakha in Bhutan.

### **Dhairyendra Narayan (1765-70 & 1775-83):**

After the assassination of Devendra Narayan in 1765, Dhairyendra Narayan proclaimed as king.<sup>125</sup> But internal disputes were prevailing among the officials and in 1770 Rajendra Narayan placed to the throne. After Rajendra Narayan's death Dharendra Narayan was made king again supported by the Bhutanese. Though still there were some disputes regarding the re-accession of Dhairyendra Narayan in the throne but Dhairyendra Narayan was regarded as the rightful ruler by many people and to check the Bhutanese attack in the kingdom an appeal was made to the British to intervene. With an eye on the lucrative Tibetan trade the British agreed to provide assistance and a troop of the Company under Captain Jones was dispatched. As the price for this assistance Koch Behar became a tributary to the British. The Bhutanese were soon driven out of Koch Behar and under one of the terms of the treaty negotiated in April 1774, Dhairyendra Narayan was released. Dharendra Narayan remained as king but on his death in the following year Dhairyendra Narayan was restored to the Throne.<sup>126</sup> He was however very disillusioned with state affairs as he did not approve of the fact that his predecessor

had signed away his independence to the British. Strangely although it clear from British records that the Koch Behar mint was striking coins in large numbers during the years around 1780 only a few have the name of Dhairyendra Narayan. Accordingly it is possible that only coins with the legend Rajendra Narayan were struck during the second reign of Dhairyendra Narayan. (Plate No. VIII).

### **Rajendra Narayan (1770-72):**

Rajendra Narayan was installed on the throne with Bhutanese support but only ruled for two years until his death in 1772.<sup>127</sup> His coins are rather common and are readily identifiable as they have a cross to the right of the letter '*ndra*' rather than the normal dot. Interestingly sometime this cross is defaced by a small circular countermark making it look like dot.<sup>128</sup> (Plate No. IX). His coins are now kept in the British museum and Fitzwillium museum.

So from the above discussion we may come to this position that the system of currency in this part of the country was in vogue since from the beginning of the early centuries of this millennium. From the discoveries of the various currencies of mainstream dynasties of Ancient India we can prove the numismatic history of this region. Though due to the political as well as economic compulsions the system of currency never got an organized shape until the emergence of the regional kingdoms in sixteenth century but we can freely say that people of this region were accustomed with the use of currency from very early times. This habit of using currency in day to day transaction paved the way of introduction of Koch Kingdom's own coinage and also helped a lot towards the free acceptability of the Koch coinage among the people of the Koch kingdom and also other territories of its spheres of influence.

After its commencement by King Nara Narayan in the mid of sixteenth century Narayani currency became an acceptable media of transaction in the Koch kingdon, not only so it succeeded to establish its acceptability to the greater mass of the entire North East India. From the time of Nara Narayan to Rajendra Narayan the currency was in circulation and hugely popular among the masses

of the region. Until the reign of Rajendra Narayan its production of Narayani currency depended upon the will of the Koch Kings and the currency was produced accordingly. But in the last quarter of the eighteenth century its production came to a sudden halt due to the British intervention in the kingdom. The political events of that period is discussed elsewhere but we must have to mention here that after the treaty with the British in 1773 the external influence on the Koch Kingdom increased harshly and the free minting of the Narayani currency also hampered greatly. The course of events regarding the issuing coins by the successive rulers and its gradual decline will be discussed in the next chapter.

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2. D.C. Sircar (ed.), *Select Inscriptions, Vol. I*, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 70-80.
3. D.C. Sircar, *Studies in Indian Coins*, New Delhi, 1968, p. 64.
4. W.H. Schoff, (tr.) *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, London, 1912, p. 47.
5. *Annual Report of Archeological Survey of India*, ASI, 1922-23, p. 109.
6. *ibid.*, 1930-34, p. 225.
7. *ibid.*, 1921-22, p. 74.
8. D.C.Sircar, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-6.
9. Punched marked coins bear numerous symbols like bird, animal, human figure, tree, hill, river, sun, crescent, wheel, etc. The exact significance of many of the symbols is still remains uncertain.  
*ibid.*, p. 6.
10. W.H. Scholff, *op.cit.*, Section 63. The city of Ganga is placed by Ptolemy to the southern east of 'Thamalites' (Tamralipta?). There were gold mines in the vicinity. We know nothing of these mines though R.C. Majumdar refers to the existence of 'Gold District' (*Suvarna Vithi*) of a Faridpur grant. R.C.Majumdar (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.45.
11. H.C. Raychaudhury, *Political History of Ancient India*, New Delhi, 2006, p. 558.
12. This is only a general statement and must not be taken too literally. For a detailed study of the metrology of the Gupta coins, see John Allan, *Catalogue of the coins of the Gupta Dynasties and of Sasanka King of Gauda*, New Delhi, 1975, Introduction, pp, cxxxi-cxxxv.
13. *ibid.*, p. cxxxiv.
14. We may refer to the inscription (5<sup>th</sup> century) of *Mahanavik* Budhagupta found in Malayasia. Budhagupta hailed from Raktamrittika Mahavihara (near Karnasuvarna, capital of Sasanka) (*Mahanavik Buddhaguptasya Raktamrittika vas...(ta vasya)*, Nihar Ranjan Roy, *Bangalir Itihas, Vol. I*, Calcutta, 1980, pp. 201-202.

15. Among these rulers the name of Samaccaradeva (*Ghugrahati* plate), Sasanka (John Allan, *op.cit.*,; also *JNSI*, XLII, 1980), Jayanaga (*Vappaghosavata* charter from Karnasuvarna), Devavarmana (possibly Devakhadga), Su-dhanvaditya (or Vasuvarman). Rajabhata, Balabhata, Jivadharanarata, Vangalamrganka, Annadadeva, Prthuvira and others. M.H. Rasid, 'The Mainamati Gold Coins' in *Bangladesh Lalitkala*, No. 1, 1975; B.N. Mukherjee 'Numismatic' in *Numismatic Studies*, Vol. 2, New Delhi, 1992, p. 31; B.N. Mukherjee, *Media of Exchange in Early Medieval North India*, NewDelhi, 1997; and *Coins and Currency System in Gupta Bengal*, New Delhi, 1992.
16. J. Barthelemy and Saint Hilari, *Hiouen –Tsang in India*, New Delhi, 1952.
17. P.K. Bhattacharya, in *JNSI*, Vol. XLII, 1981.
18. Nihar Ranjan Roy, *op.cit.*, pp. 209-11.
19. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, Calcutta University, 1980.
20. The theory of Indian feudalism has been strengthened by archaeological evidence of the decline of many major Gangetic cities as indicated of de-urbanization since post-Gupta period onwards; R.S.Sharma, 'Decay of Gangetic Towns in Gupta and post Gupta Times', *Proceeding of Indian History Congress*, 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, 1972, pp. 92-104; B.D. Chattopadhyaya however does not consider the trend as conclusive as he thinks the establishment of new cities during this period may have balanced the decline of old ones; B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Trade and Urban centers in Early Medieval India", *Indian Historical Review*, (1-2), 1974, pp. 203-19. A comparative study of 'feudalism' is aimed at an international seminar at the University of Sydney, which resulted in an exciting publication on feudalism. Edmond Leech and Others, (ed.) *Feudalism: Comparative studies*, The Sydney Association for Studies and Culture, Australia, 1985.
21. The name Koch Behar is a compound of two words *Koch* and *Behar*. The term *Koch* is a corrupted form of *Coch* or *Koch*, being the name of a race of people inhabiting a large tract of country in the north east of Bengal and *Behar* are more properly *Vihar* denotes abode or sport. Thus the

- term 'Koch Behar' means the abode or land of the Koch. H.N. Chaudhuri, *Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue settlements*, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 1.
22. Icchimuddin Sarkar, *Aspects of Historical Geography of Pragjyotisha Kamrupa (Ancient Assam)*, Calcutta, 1991.
23. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *Cooch Beharer Itihash, Vol. I*, (Bengali), Cooch Behar, 1936, p. 6-8.
24. *Kalika Puranam*, edited by Tarkaratna Panchanan Acharyya, Calcutta, 1384 B.S., ch. 40, vs. 108-125, pp. 349-50.
25. K.L. Barua, *Early History of Kamrupa: From the Earliest Times to the end of the Sixteenth Century*, Shillong, 1933, p. 34.
26. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p. 6.
27. *ibid.*, p. 7
28. D.C. Sircar, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-80.
29. D.C. Sircar, *Studies in Geography of Ancient Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 159.
30. D.C. Sircar, *op.cit.*, pp. 289-90.
31. H.K. Barpujari, *Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol. III*, (Article: S. Chattopadhyaya), Guwhati, 1994, pp. 55-56.
32. D.C. Sircar, *Early Indian Numismatic and Epigraphical Studies*, Kolkata, 1977, p.48.
33. *Coin*, 1999, note L: S.K. Bose.
34. Nicholas Rhodes., *The Coinage of North East India*, (unpublished manuscript), Kent, 1994, pp. 3-9.
35. H.K. Barpujari, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.
36. *Numismatic Digest, Vol.18*, (article: S.K.Bose), 1994, pp. 121-133.
37. J.P. Singh and N. Ahmed (ed.), *Coinage and Economy of North Eastern State of India, JNSI*, Varanasi, 1978, p.4.

38. Presidential Address given by Nicholas Rhodes in *NEIHA* Conference, Shilong, 2004, pp. 3-4.
39. H.K. Barpujari, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
40. D.C. Sircar, *op.cit.*, p. 47.
41. Nicholas Rhodes, *op. cit.*, pp 4-5.
42. *ibid.*, p. 3.
43. For a catalogue of coins of Sultans of Bengal see, Stan Goron, J.P.Goenka and Micheal Robinson, *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates*, New Delhi, 2001, pp.135-266. For an analysis of the coins in a historical context Syed Ejaz Hussain, *The Bengal Sultanate, Politics, Economy and Coins (1205-1576)*, New Delhi, 2003.
44. Nicholas Rhodes, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
45. *ibid.*, p.4.
46. To know more about Hindu Culture see, Sir Monier Williams, *Brahmanis and Hinduism, Religious Thought and Life in India*, New Delhi, 2004.
47. F. Hamilton, *An Account of Assam* (collected during the year 1807-1809), edited by S.K.Bhyun, Guwahati, 1987, pp. 51-52.
48. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal, Medieval Period*, Calcutta, 1973, p. 282.
49. Bijoy Kumar Sarkar and Debajit Dutta, '*A Rare Gold Coin of Koch Kingdom*', *JNSI, Vol. LXXIII*, Varanasi, 2011, pp. 68-70.
50. Wright H.N., *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1894, p.152.
51. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p. 279.
52. E. Thomas, 'The Initial Coinage of Bengal' *JRAS, Vol. II*, 1866 and *JASB*, 1867, p.1.
53. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp.36-48.
54. E.A. Gait, *A History of Assam*, Calcutta, 1963, p. 45. It may be mentioned that *Rudra Simha's Buruniji* (1634, now preserved in the office of Director of Ethnography, Assam) contains the accounts of rulers of Kamta previous to Visvasimha.

55. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp. 44-48.
56. Radha Krishna Das Vairagi, *Gosanimangal*, edited by N.N. Pal, Calcutta, 1992.
57. *ibid.*, pp. 100-101.
58. *ibid.*
59. The date of complete of evacuation of the Mohammedans is not known with any amount of certainty. But the last known date of the coins with the legend - Sultan (Hussain Saha) the conqueror of Kamaru, Kamta, Jajnagar and Orissa is *Hijri* 979 i.e. 1513; A.W. Botham, *Catalogue of Provincial Coin Cabinet of Assam*, Assam, Ahallabad, 1930. But it appears that Visvasimha's authority was well established in this part of Kamrupa even before 1513.
60. Khan Chawdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp. 87-88.
61. Munshi Joynath Ghosh, *Rajopakhyan*, edited by Biswanath Das, Kolkata, 1989.
62. *aru veharate visvasimha rajar purve kono taka na chhila*- this means....Before king Visvasimha there was no coin in vehara, Khan Chowdhuri Amantulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p. 280.
63. *13 (tera) Sakaya maharaja Visvasimha Simhasana prapta haiya apana name chhirka jarap kariyachhilen*, this means...*After assuming the royal throne King Visvasimha issued coins in his vown name*, Ripunjay Das, *Raja Vamsavali*, Manuscript preserved in NBSL, No 4, also edited by N. N. Pal, *Bishay Cooch Behar*, Calcutta, 1994, 16 patra.
- It may be mentioned here that the *Rajavamsavali* is considered to be the Second importance only to the *Rajopakhyana* as the source of the history of Cooch Behar, Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *ibid.*, p. 281.
64. *The Burunji of Rudrasimha*, 17 Patra; Khan Chowdhuri Amantulla Ahmed, *ibid.*, pp. 87, 281.
65. *ibid.*, pp. 280-283.
66. *ibid.*

67. In some of the old religious writings he is called Malla Narayan. In Blochman's paper on Cooch Bihar and Assam he is called *Bal Gosain*, but the proper reading should be Mal Gosain, as in Elloit and Dowson, *History of India as Told by its Historians*, Allahabad, 1964, Vol. VI, p. 591.
68. A similar situation is found with the coinage of the Sultans of Bengal, which is almost entirely confined to rupees and gold *mohur*'s favoring the large and powerful traders, so that it never became a true coinage of the people. In this way the coins of Nara Narayan were following the precedent set in Bengal, although they may have played a function as a symbol of political power a source of revenue for the state and perhaps as a convenience for the traders, it is doubtful if the coins ever circulated much among the people. Fitch writing about 1585 mentions that 'their small money is almonds which often times they use to eat'.
69. It is interesting to note that certain rupees of Islam Saha with no mint, but clearly struck in Bengal perhaps at Tanda, have a 'pseudo date' 1477 in Arabic numerals above the reverse. These pieces are dated 952-60 AH (1545-1552), whereas 1477 *Saka* - 1555 or three years after the end of Islam Saha's reign. These pieces may either be posthumous issues with pseudo AH dates, struck by Nara Narayan, with his accession year indicated or it is possible that '1477' has some meaning other than AH date. Nicholas Rhodes, 'The 1477 Type of Islam Saha Suri', *ONS Newsletter*, No 148, Spring, 1996, pp. 21-22.
70. After 1581 the kingdom was divided with Nara Narayan's brother Sukladvja and his descendants ruling the territory to the east of the Sankosa River. Coins were struck in this area by Raghu Deva dated 1510 *Saka* (1588), showing that at least at this time there was more than one mint in the region.
71. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp. 103-110; Debajit Dutta, 'King Nara Narayan's Military Campaigns in North East India: An Analysis through Numismatics', in *The NEHU Journal*, Vol. XI, No. 1, January 2013, pp. 34-43.

72. During the Ahom regime in Assam 'Gohai' signified a high officer of state. The '*Kumara*' of the Visvasimha's dynasty were also called 'Gohai' (Gosain?). In the Akbarnama we find the names 'Mal Gosai' and 'Sukal Gosai' and in the Baharistan-i-Ghaibi' the name 'Surya Gosai'.
73. Sukladhaja attacked his enemy suddenly like birds, and for this he was named 'Chila Rai'.
74. Details of the campaign are to be found in Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp. 103-110. 1, and in E.A. Gait, pp. 50-52.
75. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p.110.
76. *ibid.*
77. The subject is discussed by J.P. Singh "Jayantia Coins and the Koch Historical Tradition: An Examination", *N.I. Bulletin*, May 1988, pp.112-116.
78. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp.110-111.
79. Numismatic evidence proves that Vijaya Manikya of Tripura died in about 1564, but the *Rajmala* indicates that the king died of smallpox and no mention is made of any invasion from Cooch Behar.
80. The impressive gold *mohur* dated 1486 *saka* (1564 A.D.) with the lion type of Tripura and in the Name of Nara Narayan published by Vasanta Choudhury and Parimal Ray, *JNSI*, 1975, pp. 144, is considered to be a forgery, Nicholas Rhodes and Michal Mitchiner, *Spink's Numismatic Chronicles*, March/April, 1981.
81. E.A. Gait, *op.cit.*, p. 54.
82. J.B. Bhattacharjee, 'The Koch Principality in Kachar' in *Social and Polity Formations in Pre-Colonial North East India*, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 106-22.
83. G.C. Barua,(ed.) *Ahom Burunji*, Calcutta, 1930, p.40, quoted by N.C. Shadap, *The Origin and early History of the Khasi-Synteng People*, Calcutta, 1981, p. 157. The Khyrim chief at the time was either Viryavanta or Gunilanta.
84. Rup Kumar Barman, *From Tribalism to State*, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 86-87.

85. Nicholas Rhodes, "Silver in the Himalayas" *Mudra*, Vol. VII, No. 1, for a wider ranging discussion of the correction between silver coinage in the Himalayas and the Trans-Himalayan trade links.
86. A. Dab, "Cooch Behar and Bhutan in the Context of Tibetan Trade", *Kailas*, Vol. 1, 1973, pp. 80-88.
87. Undated Shimha *tankas* were struck by Jaya Indra Simha of Dalakha (c.1540-48). Nicholas Rhodes, Gabrisch and Valadettaro, *The Coinage of Nepal*, London, 1986, pp. 65-66.
88. Pranab Kumar Chattopadhyay and Gautam Sengupta, *History of Metals in Eastern India and Bangladesh*, New Delhi, 2011, pp. 110-124.
89. H.N. Chaudhuri, *The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlements*, Cooch Behar, 1903, p.241.
90. Nicholas Rhodes, "A Remarkable Rupee of Cooch Behar", *Mudra*, Vol. VII, 199, no.1.
91. The date of 1549 S published by prof. P.K. Bhattacharyya 'On the Dates on the Coinage of Cooch Behar', *JNSI*, Vol. XXXIV, Pt.I, 1972, pp.93-6 & pl. IV, was wrongly read. The coin published is of 1509 S with the *Rajsaka* year 92 below, but as the die has been damaged, at this point the date is not easy to read.
92. H.N. Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, p.241.
93. *ibid.*
94. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p. 145.
95. *ibid.*, p. 144.
96. *ibid.*, p. 153.
97. Nicholas Rhodes and S.K.Bose, *The Coinage of Cooch Behar*, Dhubri, 1999, p. 19.
98. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp. 153-54.
99. C. Wessels, (ed.), *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721*, The Hague, 1924.

100. *ibid.*, In Cooch Behar *Cabur* is used in the sense of ‘yuva’(young) and *Shah* in the sense of *Raja* (king), or in other words, the would be king and this has been represented as ‘*Gaburrasa*’ by Stephen Casella in his letters.
101. Vasanta Chowdhury and Parimal Roy, ‘Hitherto Unknown Coins of Cooch Behar of Vira Narayan and Mahendra Narayan’, *JNSI, Vol. XXXIII*, part I, 1971, Varanasi, pp. 129-132.
102. *ibid.*
103. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p.290.
104. Vasanta Chowdhury and Parimal Roy, *op.cit.*, p. 131.
105. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp. 63-65.
106. P.K. Bhattacharyya, ‘On the Dates on the Coinage of Cooch Behar’, *JNSI, Vol. XXXIV*, Part I, 1972, p. 93-96.
107. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p. 144.
108. *ibid.*
109. *ibid.*, p.154.
110. This coin was first published by V.V. Mirashi, ‘A Gold Coin of Prana Narayan’, *JNSI, Vol. III*, p. 93. The fact that Prana Narayan struck gold coins was mentioned in the *Padishahnamah*, H. Blochmann, ‘Koch Bihar, Koch Hajo and Assam in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries According to the Akbarnamah, the Padsahanama and Fathiya-i-Ibriya,’ *JASB*, 1872, p.68.
111. A quarter *mohur* of Kathmandu struck in the name of Rupamati Devi in 669 NS (1649 A.D.), describes her as *Vihari Rajkanya*, (Princess of Behar).Nicholas Rhodes and Gabrisch and Valadettaro, *The Coinage of Nepal*, London, 1986, Coin No.262, p.87.
112. Nicholas Rhodes, ‘The Coinage of Cooch Behar’, *ONS Information Sheet*, No.10 1974.
113. S.N. Bhattacharyya, *A Mughol North East frontier policy: Being a Study of the Political Relations of the Mughol Empire with Koch Bihar, Kamrup and Assam*, Calcutta, 1994.
114. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p. 158-59.
115. R.D. Bannerji, ‘Alamgirnagar, A New Moghul Mint’, *JASB, Vol. XXXIII*.

116. H.N. Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, p. 244.
117. Nicholas Rhodes and S.K. Bose, *op.cit.*, 21.
118. Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p. 173.
119. H.N. Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, p. 246.
120. *ibid.*, p. 247.
121. *ibid.*, p. 249.
122. *ibid.*
123. Nicholas Rhodes, "Silver in Himalayas", *London Numismatic Club Newsletter*. Jan. 1989,  
reprinted in *Mudra, Vol., VII*, 1990, No.1, p.6.
124. H.N. Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, p.250.
125. *ibid.*
126. *ibid.*, p. 253.
127. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *op.cit.*, 201.
128. It would be interesting to analyze the silver content of these coins, to see if the changed mark signaled any reduced fineness. In that case, any defacement of the mark may have been an attempt to have the coin accepted at higher standard. Nicholas Rhodes and S.K. Bose, *op.cit.*, p. 23.