

CHAPTER III

RELIGION

It is difficult to trace the history of religions of the people of Kāṁṁṁ-Koch Bihar from early times. It has, however, already been pointed out that they are part of the Bodo Community¹ who formed a section of the Tibeto-Burman race, and who came under the influence of Sanskritic culture in the early centuries of the Christian era.² With the contact with the non-aryan peoples, the sanskritic religion underwent radical changes in view of the adoption of deities, religious myths and cults derived from the races beyond the aryan domain. The popularity of Saivite religion among the different races of northern and eastern India may be noticed since the days of the Mahābhārata.³

The chinese traveller Hiuēn Tsang who visited Kāmarūpa at the beginning of the 7th century A.D. having crossed a large river identified with the Karatoyā, which has already been noted as the westernmost boundary of Kāmarūpa, did not come across any Buddhist monastries.⁴ Hiuēn Tsang noticed, however, that the people were predominantly followers of Brahmanical religions and believed in the efficacy of the sacrifices of birds and beasts at the temples.⁵

It is interesting to note in this connection that

Durlabhanārāyaṇa⁶ (C 13th century A.D.) and the rulers of the Khen dynasty (C 15th century A.D.)⁷ who had been ruling Kāmātā-Kāmarūpa region, were also champions of the Brahmanical religion. It is generally believed that Nīlāvara, a member of the Khen dynasty brought a large number of Brāhmanas and Kāyasthas into his kingdom from Mithilā and the neighbouring territories.⁸ The early records of Kāmarūpa contain references to immigration of the Brāhmanas from Madhyadesā.^{8(a)} The practice of inviting Brāhmanas for settlement in this region continued in later periods also.

The popularity of Śiva, however, never completely waned through the vicissitudes of time, and it reasserted its position at the time of accession of Viśvasiṃha, the founder of Koch Kingdom (C at the beginning of the 15th century A.D.). Like most of the founders of the ruling Hindu dynasties of India of this period, it was claimed that Viśvasiṃha sprang from Śiva, the God having taken the form of one of their ancestors and visited the queen who was herself none other than incarnation of Pārvatī.⁹

Viśvasiṃha took initiation into the Saiva tenet under guidance of a Brāhmana named Kālīcarana Bhattacharyya, specially brought for this purpose.¹⁰ In the Vaisāvalis of Koch Bihar and Darrang, he was considered to have been the son of Mahādeva, and so also in the Śāṅkara Carit of Rāma Carana Thākura (16th century).¹¹ Abul Fazl, the historian,

a contemporary of the son of Visvasimha was Hindu.¹² It may be mentioned here that Gunabhiran Barua in Asm̄ Burs̄i refers to a king named, Jalpesvara of North Bengal who introduced Siva worship for the first time in early Assam.¹³ 'There is a legend that a temple was originally erected on the site of the present Jalpesvara temple (in Jalpaiguri, West Bengal) by a king named Jalpa in whose time the lingam known after him (i. e. Jalpesvara) first appeared.'¹⁴ Again, the Skandha Purāna (Aventya-Khanda, Shatshastitamoḍhyāya records that the king, Jalpa was a Siva-worshipper. The river Jatodā has been shown to have passed by the Jalpeśa (possibly Jalpesvara) Linga in the Kālikapurāna.¹⁵ But the identification of Jatodā is not, however, certain.¹⁶

From the Kālikapurāna it is also known that Siva was regarded as the guardian deity of the province before Naraka introduced the cult of the Mother Goddess into Kāmarūpa.¹⁷ It is interesting note in this connection that the Jalpesvara Linga is being worshipped by the priestly families belonging to the Koch race from an early time. N.N.Vasu, however, draws our attention to a quotation of the Padmapurāna according to which a Brāhmaṇa is not permitted to worship the Siva-linga.¹⁸

Some of the subsequent Koch Kings were influenced by Saivism. Ripuñjaya Dāsa, in his Yamāvalī observed that Mahārājā Naranārāyana established Bānesvara Siva (in the Kingdom of Koch Bihar).¹⁹ There are temples of Banesvara Siva

in Bāra Bhujyān Mouza in the district of Darrang in Assam and in Uttarsaru Bangesvar Mouza, in the district of Kamarūpa.

On his way back from Āgrā Mahārāja Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa discovered the Lolārka Kunda in Varānasi and established a Lolārkesvara Śiva there.²⁰ The worship of Jalpesvara Śiva which had since long been discontinued was again revived during the period of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa who, however, due to his sudden demise could not construct a temple.²¹

Mahārāja Prānanārāyaṇa is said to have constructed or repaired the temples of Śiva known as Sandesvara and Bānesvara. He attempted to construct the temple of Jalpesvara bringing masons from Delhi but the work remain unfinished.²²

And the unfinished temple was later on constructed by Mahārāja Modanārāyaṇa who granted 44 jotes at its Devottara property. He opened an arrangement by way of which free food was distributed among the visitors and for the expenditure an annual payment of eleven hundred coins was ensured.²³

In addition to the temples of Bānesvara and Jalpesvara, the other temples which are at present in ruined states like that Batesvara or Jatesvara or the temples of Sodarkhai situated in the same belt testify to the extent of popularity of Śaivism among the people of Kamatā-Koch kingdom. The tribal deity, however, of the aboriginal Koch

tribe in North Bengal appears to have been identified with Rudra-Siva. King Naranārāyana is said to have offered worship to Siva according to Sāstric injunction on the eve of his expedition against the Ahoms.²⁴ The soldiers who accompanied the king in his expedition, insisted upon him to allow them to worship Siva according to their tribal customs. After King's approval, the Kachāri soldiers did the worship by the sacrifice of swine, buffaloes, he-goats, pigeons, ducks and cocks and by the offering of rice and liquor and the dancing of women (deo-dhāl). An edict offered by the King Naranārāyana on the bank of the Brahmaputra river gave a religious sanction to the performance of worship after tribal customs.²⁵ In this connection it may also be taken into account that the aboriginal Kirātas being the followers of Saivite religion confined to some gross form with wine and flesh.²⁶ Mukundaram Chakravarty narrates the story of infatuation of the Koch women for Siva.²⁷ The Saivism had its influence upon the folk songs of North Bengal. The worship of Lord Siva and performance of religious festivals started in different parts of the country. The foundation of folk-Saivism, says Ashutosh Bhattacharyya, is supposed to be erected in the in-the Koch peasants-society. It is found that even in the ancient literature of far off Bengal, Siva is associated with the Koch-women. In the prevailing folk-songs of Saivism in the whole of Bengal, the Koch women's infatuation towards Siva is well narrated.

Therefore, it is supposed that in the society of the Koch peasants where Śiva first appeared and then his character coming into contact with the features of the Koch-Society led to the emergence of a local and folk literary belief which ultimately spread over the whole of Bengal.²⁸ This also testifies to one thing that even today some of earlier tribal habits are still in existence. A curious practice of animal sacrifice is in vogue even now in Śiva temples of Koch Bihar (i.e. Cooch Behar) and Assam.²⁹

Mention has been made in the folk-songs viz. (Nil, Gāian, sarak and Gambhīra) of conferring salutation in the name of Lord Śiva. The Gambhīra folk-songs which flourished mostly in the Malda area were greatly influenced by Saivite thoughts. These Gambhīra songs also portrayed the picture of the society.³⁰

Even this Saivism was in vogue when the neo-Vaiṣṇavism was coming into limelight. It is said that Śankaradeva, himself took the name Śankara as he was born after the blessings of Gopēśvara Śiva of Singari.³¹

Śiva came to be closely associated with Sūrya in medieval period in eastern India and both stood for fertility symbol. This has explicitly been stated in the Sūrya-mangala. Pāñcālī, a literary product of the 18th century A.D. in which it is mentioned that Sūrya alias Śiva is taking stramonium and

his companions are sixteen hundred Gopīs. Sonārāy, the tiger God of Kāmatāpura did the same long before.³² This had led some scholars to believe that the Sūrya-śaṅkala-pāñcālī was influenced by the folk-song and folk-literature of Kāmatāpura.³³ It has also been suggested that the conception of Sonārāy is nothing but the admixture of Dharmathākura, Sūrya and Śiva.³⁴

In this connection we may refer to an interesting image of Sūrya, as signable to the 12th century A.D. known as 'Śiva-devāditya', now preserved in the Akshya Kumar Maitreya Museum, North Bengal University.³⁵

The worship of Śakti was predominant throughout Eastern India. Like the worship of Śiva, the worship of Śakti was equally widespread. In the words of Eliot 'the Saktist form of worship originated in Bengal and Assam. It is true that a goddess who requires to be propitiated with human victims has temples in most part of India, but Saktism in the sense of a definite sect with scriptures of its own, if not confined to the north-east corner, at least has its headquarters there'.³⁶ Traditionally the Śākta cult is considered to have its Centre in Kāmarūpa with its chief temple at Kāmakhyā.³⁷ The Kālikāpurāna supplies us with a detailed information as to the mythological background of the origin of the Yoni-pītha of Kāmakhyā.³⁸

R.P.Chanda has showed that the Saktism³⁹ originated

from various non-aryan cults. Eliot⁴⁰ thinks that the aboriginal cult of Assam which committed to the worship of Goddess with human sacrifices and a number of rites is related to Saktism. The worship of Mother Goddess was associated on certain occasion with human sacrifices among the primitive tribes of North Eastern region including the Koches.⁴¹ Gait quotes the authority of the Haft Iqlim that during every annual festival of a tribal Goddess called Āi, some Ahoms used to offer themselves for sacrifices at her alter. Such people were known as Bhogīs. It is said that those persons were allowed to do anything after their likings and supplied with nourishing food so that their body would become plump, as the Goddess was supposed to have been specially pleased with such victims.⁴² The custom of offering human sacrifices among the Koches was in vogue.⁴³ It is believed that some members of the Darrang Rāja family used to sacrifice human victims annually to the Goddess.⁴⁴ Some⁴⁵ gives detailed account of the offering of human sacrifices before the Goddess which was in practice among the Kashāris, Chutiyaś, Manipuris, Jaintiaś, Khāsis and the Tipperaś. It appears that this Saktism had on it an obvious impact of tantricism. The Buddhist ideas vis., Vajrayāna, Tantrayāna etc. fell a shadow on the śākta-Śaiva tenets. There was a great resemblance with the nature of various forms of tantricism among these sects.⁴⁶

The Devī was worshipped in various forms in different places, for instance in Kānarūpa, Kūmakhya, Bhottadesa etc.⁴⁷

The antiquity and importance of Kāmākhyā, it has rightly been pointed out, surpasses most of the shrines in other parts of India and particularly of the Eastern part.⁴⁸

But it is interesting to note that there is hardly any reference to the Śakti worship in the inscriptions discovered in Kamarūpa in earlier periods.⁴⁹

Before the advent of Neo-Vaiṣṇavism the Bāro-Bhuyāns and the ancestors of both Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva were staunch Śāktas. The worship of both the ten armed and the eight armed forms of the Devī are mentioned in the Caritas.⁵⁰

The King Nilāvara, the last ruler of Khen dynasty is said to have credited with the construction of a Matha for offering worship to the image of Goddess Bhagavatī which was recovered from a pool called Kajili Kunda.⁵¹

Viśvasiṃha is said to have worshipped Mother Goddess Durgā while he was a boy. At this, the Goddess became very much pleased and gave him a boon. He was told that he would be the King of the country. Curiously enough, after attaining the age of sixteen he defeated the Bhuyān Chiefs and became the ruler.⁵² According to a tradition Mahārāja Viśvasiṃha found an image of ten armed Durgā in a forest and brought it home.⁵³ There appears to be no difference in the forms of this image as described in the manuscripts of Vaiṣṇavalis from that of the images of Durgā that is being worshipped in Koch Bihar at

present.

Viśvasiṃha established various images all over Koch Bihar and brought learned Brāhmanas from Mithilā and Kansaj for conducting their worship.^{53a} The Brāhmanas belonged to the gotra of Vasīṣṭha. It was possibly because of this reason that Viśvasiṃha himself took the gotra of Vasīṣṭha.⁵⁴ At the request of the Chief Priest Sārvaṅgama, Viśvasiṃha appointed Narahari Dāsa, the descendant of Sridhara Thākura, the minister of Mithilā to the post of Prime Minister. Previously Narahari Dāsa was said to have been living in cognito at Kānākhyā.⁵⁵ It is said that Viśvasiṃha brought Vallabhāchāryya, son of Vasudeva Āchāryya of Kanyakubja, from Śrīkṣetra and appointed him as the priest of the Kānākhyā temple.⁵⁶ Viśvasiṃha is said to have built a new temple of the Goddess Kānatesvārī with brick and stone and the same was ^{said to have} destroyed by the early Muhammedan invaders.⁵⁷

It appears that Narasārāyaṇa brought Brāhmanas from Bengal for worship of the Goddess Kānākhyā and granted them Brahmottara Lands. He made a grant of sufficient Devottara land to meet the expense of the temple, and for the maintenance of the Servants.⁵⁸ It is interesting to note in this connection that the King Narasārāyaṇa constructed a Matha named Nalkhāṇṇ in which an image of a Goddess was installed and a Kachhāri was engaged as Deori (or worshipper). The Bhutiyās of Sāt Duar (Dvār), the Bhutiyās and principal subjects of Bijni and

Fulguri were summoned and an order was promulgated.⁵⁹

With the help of Śukladvaja, Mahārāja Naranārāyaṇa constructed the temple of Kāmākhya.⁶⁰ After the completion of the temple and during its consecration, Mahārāja Naranārāyaṇa with his consort Bhānumatī, and Śukladvaja with his wife Cendrapabhā and the ladies married in Gauda, went in state to Nilācala.⁶¹

At the first great worship of the Goddess, many offerings were made, servants and sebahits were engaged and the various landed properties dedicated.⁶²

In the chamber adjoining the temple, where the movable images were kept, the stone images of Mahārāja Naranārāyaṇa and Śukladvaja still stand. King Prānārāyaṇa raised the temple of Bhavānī, known as Kāntesvari at a place Gosānimāri in Kāmatapura.⁶³ It is, however, interesting to note here that according to a tradition the members of the royal family of Koch Bihar were not permitted to visit either the goddess Kāmākhya of Nilācala or the Goddess of Bhavānī (another name of Kāmākhya) of Gosānimāri on account of a curse of the Goddess.⁶⁴

It has been narrated by some⁶⁵ that the contemporary religious picture showed a steady decline or the disappearance of religious faiths like Buddhism, Jainism, Islam or orthodox Brahmanism in India.

Side by side, with the worship of Śiva and Durgā,

Vaiṣṇavism also made a great headway amongst the people of Koch Bihar. Śaṅkaradeva, a resident of Kāmarūpa, was born at a time when the country was infested by evil tantricism and superstitions.⁶⁶ He sharply reacted to the prevailing forms of religion. He was thus encouraged to propagatē the neo-vaiṣṇavism and make an attempt to bring all sections of people in its fold.

It may be mentioned that during the period of Śaṅkaradeva the whole of India had been experiencing a religious revolution in the form of Bhakti movement under such great saintly personalities like Chaitanyadeva of Bengal (1485-1533), Vallabhaṅkārīya of Andhra and Vrajmaṅḍala (1470-1531), Kabīra of Vārāṅasī (1398-1518 or 1425-1492/1519),⁶⁷ Nanak of Punjab (1469-1539) and Tulsīdāsa of the United provinces(?) (1523-1583).

The concept of bhakti preached by the medieval saints, was developed to a large extent by the Vaiṣṇava sects during centuries of the Christian era. The basic traits of the Bhakti Cults are intense love for, and a belief in one God. Prior to the arrival of Śaṅkaradeva, as we have already seen, the land of Kāṅṣṭā-Koch Bihar was under the thorough influence of tantricism. The observation of Eliot in this respect is worth quoting, "Tantricisṃ is a system of magical or sacramental ritual, which professes to attain the highest aims of religion by such methods as spells, diagrams, gestures and other physical exercises. One of its basis is the assumption that man and the

universe correspond as microcosm and macrocosm and that both are subject to the mysterious power/^{to words} ~~humans~~ and letters".⁶⁸ ✓

In this gross form of worship was also included the offering of blood to the Devi. Kālikāpurāna contains a list of sacrificial animals to Candikā and Bhairava.⁶⁹

"The Kathā-Guru-Carita gives an account of one Koch official named Govinda who worshipped the Devi at the cost of everything of his belongings. He then used to take out his blood with a small clipper and offer it to the Devi in Shells of snails as a result of which his body turned as white as cotton".⁷⁰

"This was also accompanied by wine drinking and divination by ripping open the entrails of Pregnant women. The Tanresvari Temple ~~was the~~ was the Centre of dreadful sacrifices. Amongst her delicate offerings were included strong spirituous liquor, human sacrifice, modaka, flesh curry, coconuts and sugarcane'.⁷¹ As a result of successive Muslim invasions since the days of Bakhtiyār Khilji (13th century A.D.) and internal dissensions in the royal family during Khen period, the Koch central authority became weakened. The Ahom hostility with the Kāmata-Koch power continued during the reign of Naranārāyana with attempts of peace at intervals through matrimonial alliances.

A reference made here to the hostility between the Bhuyāns of Kāmārūpa and the Bhutiyās which made the situation

complicated.⁷² During the period of Śankaradeva who belonged to the family of one Bhuyān chief, the process of disintegration and decay of the power of the Bhuyāns had already started. Śankaradeva at a tender age took the charge of office. But before long he incurred displeasure of the Ahom king, and managed his escape and came to Barpetā where he got shelter under the Koch Kings of Kāmarūpa.⁷³ Śankaradeva not merely sharply reacted against the prevailing forms of religion like Tantricism, Nathism etc., as noticed earlier but he decried the supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas. He was not therefore liked by the contemporary Brāhmaṇas.⁷⁴

In regard to the prevalence of Vaiṣṇavism it is said that this religious creed flourished long before Śankaradeva in Assam. The history of Vaiṣṇavism may be traced from as early as the period of mythical king Naraka, son of Viṣṇu. 'The worship of Viṣṇu in the form of Hayagrīva originally associated with Agni and was probably prevalent in this region, at least in the temple of Hājo at Manikutā and probably at Kānākhyā'.⁷⁵

The Umākhala Rock inscription (C 6th century A.D.) of Maharāja Surendra Varman records the dedication of a temple to the God Balabhadra-Svāmīn, i.e. Viṣṇu.⁷⁶ Later rulers of Kāmarūpa like Dharmapāla also patronised Vaiṣṇavism.⁷⁷

In spite of the great respect shown to Vaiṣṇavism

in earlier periods, Śaṅkaradeva had to leave home and hearth for his devotion to Viṣṇu. Even in his new place at Kāmatāpūra he was, however, not at first cordially received by the Kāmatā Brāhmaṇas and the then king Naranārāyaṇa. The main allegation levelled against Śaṅkaradeva was that among his followers Kaivartas, Kalitās, Koches, Brāhmaṇas and others assembled and dined together.⁷⁸ But somehow, he became friendly with Cilārāī, the brother of Mahārāja Naranārāyaṇa, and saved himself from the persecution at the hands of the Brāhmaṇas and the Mahārāja himself.⁷⁹ Śaṅkaradeva, however, by his scholarship and his performance impressed the king Naranārāyaṇa who extended all facilities for propagating the cult of Vaiṣṇavism by Śaṅkaradeva.⁷⁹⁽¹⁾ The king further requested him to preach the gospel of Hari to the people so that the commoners, through their continuous association and devotion towards Hari may take their last breathes.⁷⁹⁽¹¹⁾ During the last few years of his life he had to keep liaison with the Koch Court which indirectly helped his religion.^{79a} He lived in Kāmatā-Koch Bihar for two years and a half.^{79b}

It is surprising to note that the Brāhmaṇas who did not welcome Śaṅkaradeva at the Kāmatā-Koch Court during the period of Naranārāyaṇa, subsequently, however, admitted his qualities and praised Śaṅkaradeva before the king saying that the religion as preached by Śaṅkaradeva was relevant to the contemporary society.^{79c}

The main philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva's neo-vaishnavism was based upon the concepts of Sravaṇa, Kīrttana, Smaraṇa, Paśa-syaṇa and Ātma-nivedana.⁸⁰ He inaugurated a society of devotees called Bhaktas and formed the worship called nāma-kīrttana or congregational worship. All classes of people irrespective of castes could join such congregations.⁸¹ He composed also the Kīrttana Kāvyaś and illustrated the teachings through the stories of the Bhāgavata. He was deeply impressed by the tradition of the Bhāgavata and considered it to be the fountain source of his cult.⁸² In several places Śaṅkaradeva relied on the authority of the Vedānta for exposition of his faith.

Śaṅkaradeva believed in the doctrine of non-dualism and he admitted that the nirguṇa Brāhmaṇa was the ultimate reality and Jiva to be one with Brāhmaṇa. In his opinion Brāhmaṇa is indeterminate (nirviśeṣa) changeless (avikāri) and eternal (nitya).⁸³

The principal schools of Vaiṣṇavism like Śrī, Brahmā, Rudra and Saṅkādī-Saṃpradāyaś generally rejected the doctrine of maya, regarded God as personal, and the soul as a sufficiently distinct individual, and looked forward to fellowship with God as more desirable than an absorption in him.⁸⁴ Māyāvāda has been emphasised in Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy. In his religion Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇukṛṣṇa-Rāma has been depicted as eternal Brāhmaṇa and people's worship and devotion for this God was stressed by him. The Jiva, being different from God is

always in the circle of māyā and as such the need of worshipping God with the love of his heart and external rites were prescribed.

Hence, the attainment to the state of Brāhmaṇa occurs as a natural outcome of release from the bondage of māyā and cycle of rebirths.⁸⁵

He was generally against idol worship, and also animal sacrifice.⁸⁶ Śaṅkaradeva never followed the Rāgānuga theory of meditation. His theory of meditation was like that of Uddhava i.e., Parābhakti theory.⁸⁷ His theory of Bhakti is the bhakti of Nārada of Purānas.

In Śaṅkaradeva's Vaiṣṇavism the bulk of non-Hindu population found an opportunity to embrace Hinduism. They adopted a disciplined life as advocated by Śaṅkaradeva.⁸⁸ All men of Koch Bihar from the highest Brāhmaṇa to the lowest Chendāla came to regard him as an incarnation of God and followed his doctrine.^{88a}

It is said that Śaṅkaradeva lived in the village Kāgajkutā when he came to Behar (i.e., Kanata-Koch Court).⁸⁹ Śaṅkaradeva, according to another view lived for some time in the town of Behar.⁹⁰ He also lived happily in Bhelā (Bhelādāngā) after opening a Satra. According to another authority Śaṅkaradeva opened a Satra at Baikānthapura and

remained there for some time.⁹¹

Mādhavadeva, the chief disciple of Śaṅkaradeva, was originally, a Tantrik by faith, but afterwards he became a devout Vaiṣṇava under the influence of Śaṅkaradeva, Mādhavadeva made a comprehensive collection of the principles of different philosophical treatises and wrote Nam Ghosa and Bhakti Ratnāvalī. 'All his spiritual findings and achievements have been inserted in his Holy "Nam-Ghosa".' He realised the God-head as follows :

"Krishna is one without a second, the Ruler of time, maya etc. the one lord who destroys all sufferings. There is no other lord superior to Him, none, never. Besides Him there are none who create, preserve and destroy the universe - know that in all the universe, Vishnu is the root and essence of all"⁹² He further says "I do not belong to the four castes nor to the four Ashramas. Neither am I pious, giving gifts and visiting sacred places. But surely do I become the servant of the ^{Lotus Feet of The} Lord of Gopis

(i.e. Krishna)⁹³ He is said to have selected one Nārāyaṇa, a person of low caste as his spiritual friend and followed his Guru's sayings - "In Bhakti there is no distinction of castes. Everybody has equal rights to chant "Hari Nama". So the temple of prayer is kept open ^{to} all. Congregational prayer known as the Hari-Prasaṅga is open to all. Anybody and everybody including female folk could join in the congregational prayer and chant the Hari-name clapping his hands in union with the musical time of the 'Tal' (symbols). This practice of unification uprooted the vanity of both".⁹⁴ The Namaghosa of Mādhavadeva

records that the Gāros, Bhūtjās, Muslims, Miri, Ahoms and Kachāris were brought to the fold of Vaiṣṇavism.⁹⁵ At the later part of his life Mādhavadeva remained at Koch Bihar and propagated his creed. He was appreciated very much by the people of Koch Bihar and a large number of them were initiated by him.⁹⁶ The king Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa helped him to set up a satra,⁹⁷ at Bhelāṅga in the state of Koch Bihar at the instance of his mother (Āidhā).⁹⁸ The gradual predominance over the people of Koch Bihar perhaps enabled him to foster a spirit of love to human as well as animal being. This slowly transformed the religious spirit of the Koch people as it has been attributed to the Koch people by Ralf Fitch, the English traveller.⁹⁹

The king Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa said, - "All people of my kingdom should follow the tenets of Mādhava. Give up all those previously followed by you, for I have come to know that the teachings of Mādhava are very pure".^{99a} It is said that the king desired to be initiated by him. But Mādhava ~~de~~ could not accept the offer.¹⁰⁰ He passed away in 1596 A.D. at Bhelāṅga in Koch Bihar.¹⁰¹

After him Dāmodaradeva, son of Sadānanda was born in village Nalchā near village Baradoyā, the place of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva, and the latter gave him the name Dāmodara. He was banished from the territory of king Parīkṣītīnārāyaṇa for his unflinching devotion to Kṛṣṇa, but was rather cordially received by the Mahārāja Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa, and constructed his

residence at Baikunthapur,¹⁰² Dāmodaradeva had a deep influence upon the people of Koch Bihar. At the advent of Dāmodaradeva in Koch Bihar, the king Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa was so delighted that he summoned all nobles and the people for expressing his pleasure on the occasion.¹⁰³ With the help of the king Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa, Dāmodaradeva constructed a satra at Bhitavudhap which ultimately came to be known as Baikunthapura.¹⁰⁴ He became the royal Guru and advised Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa not to allow slaughter of animal being in his kingdom. This animal sacrifice was prohibited for some time.^{104a}

Under the patronage of king Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa people of different walks of life of Kānata-Koch kingdom accepted vaishnavism as preached by Dāmodaradeva. In order to popularise religion, the king gave lands to potters, barbers, washermen and Goldsmith for settlement.¹⁰⁵ The king himself along with queens and ^{the} princes were initiated by Dāmodaradeva.¹⁰⁶ The city dwellers are also said to have approached Dāmodaradeva in large number for getting themselves initiated into Vaiṣṇava religion.¹⁰⁷ However, Dāmodaradeva was not a prolific writer. He is, however, known to have composed some Bargits.¹⁰⁸

Mahārāja Naranārāyaṇa is said to have been much impressed at the erudition and qualities of Śaṅkaradeva. He is said to have refuted all the charges that were brought against him by the Brāhmaṇas with great ease at a debate held in the court of King Naranārāyaṇa.¹⁰⁹ King Naranārāyaṇa wanted

to be initiated by Śaṅkaradeva. In reply, Śaṅkaradeva said that the king could not be initiated because he ^(the King) had to offer animal sacrifices to Gods and Goddesses. ¹¹⁰

Durgadas Majumder says that Mahārājā established an image of Viṣṇu under the advice of Śaṅkaradeva, and entrusted Ananta Kandalī with its worship. He gives the name of this image as Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa. ¹¹¹ In the Mahāpurāṇiṣya Vaiṣṇavism as preached by Śaṅkaradeva, Lakṣmī or Rādha is not worshipped with Nārāyaṇa as Śakti. The image of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa (known as the image of Modangmohana) in Koch Bihar also, is still being worshipped alone. The name 'Narayana' was supposed to be the presiding deity of Kāṁṣṭā-Koch kingdom. ¹¹² It is presumed that this image or substitute for it later came to be known as Modangmohana. ¹¹³

The rulers following Viśvasiṅha embraced Vaiṣṇavism even though they had inclination towards Śaivism which has also been shown in the coin-legends, describing, the rulers of Koch dynasty as 'bee to the lotus feet of Śiva' (Cf. Śiva-Caraṇa-Kaṁala-Madhū Karasya). ¹¹⁴

Śaṅkaradeva and Caitanya

It is interesting to note in this connection that Śaṅkaradeva made pilgrimages to different holy places of India where it is said that he had talks with religious personalities

and exchanged his views. His association with Caitanyadeva, the great Vaisnava reformers of Bengal may be discussed in the light of available evidence. ^{114a}

In the recent times Kali Ram Medhi, a celebrated writer of Assam is supposed to have made the following observation in his articles published recently by Assam Sahitya Sabha. ¹¹⁵

'Sri Sankaradeva happened once to see Sri Caitanyadeva from a distance in Puri during his second pilgrimage at the age of about 85 years; but he had no talk with him. In the circumstances Sankaradeva had no occasion or opportunity to receive Prema-Bhakti or any inspiration from Caitanyadeva. During his second pilgrimage his principal follower, Sri Madhavadeva with hundreds of Bhaktas accompanied him. He had begun preaching his Bhakti cult many years before this period. During his first pilgrimage which commenced in his 25th year Caitanyadeva was not born'.

'Sankaradeva was born in 1449 A.D. and Caitanyadeva in 1486 A.D. i.e. the former was 36 years older than the latter'.

Another historian of Assam, Maheshwar Neog also mostly supports the thesis of Medhi and considers the meeting of Sankaradeva with Caitanyadeva, as suggested by some biographers, as 'only a figment of pious imagination'. ¹¹⁶

Some scholars also hold a similar view as they believe that Caitanyadeva was born after Śaṅkaradeva's first pilgrimage and died prior to his second sojourn.¹¹⁷

S.K.Dey holds that the absence of the name of Śaṅkaradeva in Vaiṣṇava literature of Bengal may justify the assumption that Śaṅkaradeva never met Caitanyadeva.¹¹⁸ It is, however, possible that Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism developed an indifferent attitude towards the Assamese Vaiṣṇavism which accepted Kṛṣṇa and discarded Rādhā, while the former had advocated the Rādhā Cult in most laudable terms.

It is generally believed that Śaṅkaradeva was born in 1449 A.D. It may be noted here that the Caritapūthīs of Rāmacaraṇa, Daityārī, Bhūṣaṇa, Rāma Rāya or Nīlakaṇṭha do not supply us with any specific information about the incident.

Dāmodaradeva,¹¹⁹ a disciple of Śaṅkaradeva, as noted earlier, ^{Spent} the last seven years of his life at Baikānthapura.¹²⁰ After the death of Dāmodaradeva his other disciples decided to perform his Śrāddha ceremony at Pāṭbānsī in the Brahmaputra Valley. But having heard this news Vīraṇārāyaṇa, the heir-apparent, brought the persons before the king Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa who then ordered to perform the Śrāddha in his kingdom. It appears that Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa spent most of his time outside his kingdom and also at Hājo. He perhaps returned to his kingdom (Koch Bihar) not long before his death which occurred in 1626-27 A.D. and

might have been present in his kingdom at the time of Dāmodaradeva's death,¹²¹ Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa's son and successor Vīranārāyaṇa ascended the throne after his death possibly in 1548 Śaka (1626-27 A.D.) when he struck his coin.¹²²

Dāmodaradeva is said to have lived for 110 years, hence his date of birth may be placed around 1518 A.D. It is generally believed that Śaṅkaradeva was senior to Dāmodaradeva by 39 years¹²³ and this will take the date of Śaṅkaradeva's birth to c. 1477 A.D., which, however, incidentally coincides the date of Śaṅkaradeva's birth as postulated by Edward Gait.¹²⁴

Śaṅkaradeva set out on his pilgrimage for the first time when he is said to have been 32 years old.¹²⁵ He spent twelve years for this purpose during when he visited Puri. He perhaps met Caitanyadeva in Puri and returned to Kāmarūpa before 1535 A.D.¹²⁶

Caitanyadeva, incidentally, was born in 1485-86 A.D. and he renounced the world and became an ascetic at the age of twentythree. He went to Puri in 1510 A.D. after becoming an ascetic.¹²⁷ He spent most of his time in Puri from 1515 A.D. till his death in 1533 A.D.¹²⁸

There is thus every possibility that both Śaṅkaradeva and Caitanyadeva met together at Puri. Their meeting has actually been taken notice by such contemporary writers as Rāma Carana, Daityāri and Bhūṣaṇa. We come across a detailed

description of this meeting in the Deva-Dāmodara-Carita, although the venue of the same has been stated to be in Nadiyā :

Cf. Kato belī Guiko Guī Cāi Bahilanta |
Caitanyak mātiā śāṅkare Ḍulilanta ||
Dīā nām mālak Samasta tamū thāi |
Āmāro tomāt bing ān Keḥo nāi ||

V. 281

Suniā Caitanyadevā takhane uṭhila |
Śāṅkarak ālingiā abhyantare gallā ||

V. 282

Abhyantare ^{du}yojane sabē Kathā bhalla |

It thus appears both Śāṅkaradeva and Caitanyadeva met each other and talked privately for a considerable time. They understood and appreciated each other's point of view.¹²⁹

It may be mentioned in this connection that Dinesh Chandra Sen¹³⁰ drew our attention to an old hand-written Assamese painted manuscript in which both Śāṅkaradeva and Caitanyadeva have been shown as seated and Caitanyadeva in the role of expounding something to Śāṅkaradeva who is also listening with great reverence.

Some scholars¹³¹ however, believe that Śāṅkaradeva

met Caitanyadeva during his second pilgrimage which commenced from Pāṭhānsī during the reign of Naranārāyaṇa, the king of Kāṁstāpura, who ascended the throne in 1555 A.D. But it is generally accepted that Caitanyadeva died in 1533 A.D. Hence, a meeting between the two was not possible during the second pilgrimage of Śaṅkaradeva.

Śaṅkaradeva and Caitanyadeva were thus contemporaries.

The socio-cultural conditions of this period seem to have paved the path of the rise of the Neo-Vaiṣṇavism of these two religious leaders. Both of them reacted sharply to the prevailing forms of religions in their respective areas. Caitanyadeva is said to have instructed his beloved disciple Nityānanda to initiate all sections of people rich or poor, depressed or downtrodden irrespective of their caste, creed and religion to the new Vaiṣṇava religion.¹³² Śaṅkaradeva also made similar attempt bringing all sections of people within the fold of his Neo-Vaiṣṇavism.¹³³

It may be said that both Śaṅkaradeva and Caitanyadeva derived their sustenance from Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-gītā and Bhāgavata. Both the sants were saturated with love for the Divine and sought to transfer the life of the people through the propagation of Divine love. Both proclaimed the supremacy and universality of the path of devotion over the way of arid knowledge.

Saṅkaradeva says -

Harika bhakti ohi parama sampad¹³⁴

(i.e. Hari bhakti is the main thing)

Yāhe bhakti tāhe mukuti

bhakti e tattva jāna¹³⁵

(i.e. where there is bhakti, there is salvation; know this theory of bhakti).

Caitanyadeva sings -

Trṇadapi sunicena taroriva sahjanunā |

Amānina mānadena kirttaniya

sadā Hariḥ ||

(i.e. Respect to all creators who are the manifestations of Kṛṣṇa. He who takes the name of Kṛṣṇa, will proceed towards Kṛṣṇa).¹³⁶

Again,

Na dhanaṁ Janaṁ na sunderīm

Kabitāva Jagadīsa Kānaye |

Mama janmani janmani svare bhavata-ḍbhakti =

rahituki tvayi ||

(i.e. I do not want wealth, men, learning nor poetic power; please give me pure and steadfast devotion only to thy feet throughout my births).¹³⁷

The both regarded Śrī-Kṛṣṇa as the ultimate reality,

the world as well as the individual selves as manifestations of His inscrutable power and conditions of His sportive activity and devotion to the Lord as the highest goal of life. ✓

It is again natural when the two great minds met each other they interchange their ideas and in the process they influence each other's thoughts.

It is believed that Caitanya created a new way of worshipping Kṛṣṇa and it is known as Saṅkīrtana

(Cf. Bhaktācāryya Kabe-tomār śiṣṭya vacana |

Caitanya's Sṛṣṭi of prema-Saṅkīrtana /).¹³⁸ He also composed

the Kṛṣṇa-mantra (Cf. Hari Haraye namaḥ Kṛṣṇa Yādavaya namaḥ¹³⁹

Govāla Govinda Rama Sri-madhusudana) which is befit of the

name of Rādhā and is comparable to the nāṁ-kīrtana introduced

by Śaṅkaradeva (Cf. Karīo Harir Cagane rati Kalit Harir nāṁte gati).¹⁴⁰

In this respect Caitanyadeva appears to be the path-finder.

Caitanyadeva advocated pure bhakti attainable through five different bhāvas e.g., Sānta, dāsyā, sakhya Vātsalya and mādhurya. Śaṅkaradeva, however, accepted only dāsyā, sakhya and also perhaps Vātsalya bhāvas ;¹⁴¹

Cf. Sṛavana-Kīrtana-Smarana

Viṣṇur = arccana-pada-sebana |

Dāsyā Sakhitya Vandana Viṣṇut

Kariva dāha arpana ||

But inspite of Caitanya's emphasis of Rādhāhood

i. e. Prasabdhakti, he stressed the need of absolute continence in one's personal life and behaviour. He never faltered to chastise even his nearest, disciple for the slightest fault. He left Haridāsa for good¹⁴² on such an account :

Haridasa Kaila Prakṛti Sambhāṣana ।

Herite na pari mui tāhār Vadana ॥

Sankaradeva was also a strict disciplinarian. He perhaps thought that it will not be possible on the part of common folk to raise the standard of love to a celestial height ascribing their lovers as Veda Mala Gayatri? So he promulgated that the devotees should worship Kṛṣṇa as his Dāsa (i. e. servant).

Lastly, Kṛṣṇa-yātrā in Bengal reached its fullest development under the influence and patronage of Caitanyadeva and in Kāśatā under the influence of Sankaradeva and Nādhavadeva. Caitanyadeva himself actually used to participate in such dramatic performances. It has rightly been said that Yātrā was the main sources of public entertainment and national amusement in Bengal and drama was driven to the neighbouring provinces,¹⁴³ including perhaps the kingdom of Kāśatā-Koch Bihar.

It appears Sankaradeva also met Guru Nānak another great religious preacher in Medieval India.¹⁴⁴

Sankaradeva and Guru Nānak

Guru Nānak, the founder of Sikhism is said to have visited Kāmarūpa, possibly meaning the western most part of

present day Assam. ¹⁴⁵

Guru Nānak, then visited Kāmākhyā and other Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist Shrines on the occasion of religious festivals. ^{145a} He also stayed at Dhubri where there was a Gurudwara named Dandamā and the Sikhs of the Guru were known as Dandamians. ¹⁴⁶

Regarding the visit of Guru Teg Būhādur who came in the company of Rājā Rām Singh ^{Sinha} of Amber, leading the Moghal army of Aurangzeb against the Ahom king of Assam, the records are kept in Macauliffe's book. ¹⁴⁷ And it is said that after Śankaradeva's death, there flourished the chanting of the Nāma Dharma, Kirtana Bhajana in the Assam villages which attracted Teg Būhādur who came here when the Mughals invaded Assam. ¹⁴⁸ An interesting point is aroused in connection with Guru Nānak's meeting with Śankaradeva, the Vaiṣṇava reformer of Assam. There is a well-grounded tradition that he met Guru Nānak and Kabīr. ¹⁴⁹ Śankaradeva was in Assam when Guru Nānak visited the province and a meeting between the two possibly happened as an ultimate outcome. Guru Nānak spent a whole year in this region when Śankaradeva was living and preaching his mission here. ¹⁵⁰ This idea has also been corroborated by the writings of S.S. Kohli, ¹⁵¹ while he says, "Guru Nānak met Śankaradeva at Dhubri, who had come from Barpeta. Both of them discussed the mainpoints of their faith. Śankaradeva's faith is known as Ekasarana Dharma and his sect is called Mahapurusia sect. Ekasarana Dharma lay emphasis on the dasya aspect of the devotion to God,

while Chaitanyadeva's Bhakti is based on Madhurbhava (or the love of a married woman)? ✓

Two factors strongly indicate that there was some personal influence of the Founder of Sikhism on Śaṅkaradeva. This is the only Vaiṣṇava sect in India the mode of worship of which strongly resembles with the faith preached by the Sikh Gurus. Like the Sikhs they revere the word of God, the Holy Book.

In this case we may refer to an incident just on the eve of Mādhavadeva's death when his disciples came to him with the request to nominate his successor. He is said to have replied that it would be the best thing if they take Nāma Ghoṣā as their guide because he had employed all his energies and intellect in composing it. They would find him (i.e. Mādhavadeva) if they know how to seek him.¹⁵² In another book Kathā-Guru Carita, it is said that Mādhavadeva advised his disciples to regard Kīrtana and Dasana as representatives of Śaṅkara and the Ratnāvalī and Nāma Ghoṣā as his own.¹⁵³ And these holy books, perhaps raised to a prominent status and took the place of Idol or the diety. The seat on which the holy books are kept known as the Guru-āsana and all religious functions are held before this holy seat.¹⁵⁴ The permanent religious organisation was consisted of the Sātras. The Nāma Ghoṣā became the object of their worship and propaganda.^{154a} The Sikhs also have their holy scriptures Guru Granth Sahib.^{154b} And it is for that reason that in the Arati of this sect Guru Nānak's name is mentioned.

of caste distinction, absence of idols and images and pictures, burning of incense before the pedestral tray on which are placed the holy scriptures, congregation singing of Kirtana (or Bhaiana) and chanting of Names Divine are other features that took their origin from the same psychology and ground by mutual adoption and assimilation among the devotee in the Punjab and Assam".¹⁵⁸ It is found that in Sukhmani the book written by the fifth Sikh Guru among ^{contains} coin-twins like the Nam-Ghosha - unique verses on the glory and efficacy of chanting and remembering the names Divine.^{158a}

M. Neog¹⁵⁹ also equates the thing while he says, Nānak appointed his follower Lehna or Angad as his successors in preference to his sons, Śrī Chānd and Lakṣmī Dās, and Śaṅkaradeva nominated his disciple Mādhavadeva as his apostle without a thought in the matter for his two sons, Rāmahanda and Hari Chārana. He further postulates that the protests levelled against the Assam Vaiṣṇavism for inter-dining which reminds some one of the Sikhs' Catholic guru's Langar.^{159a}

S. K. Chatterjee, while commenting on the faith of Śaṅkaradeva says, "Śaṅkaradeva's Eka-Saraṇa Dharma, or Mahāpuruṣa sect as it is also called (because its leaders beginning with Śaṅkara Deva were great men - Mahāpuruṣa - by virtue not of birth but of faith in God) agreed more with the robust and manly path favoured by Kabīr and Nānak and later by Tulsīdāsa : it was the path of a man's straightforward faith in his

master, without his assuming the nature of a woman". 160

Saṅkaradeva and Islamism

Again, it has also been suggested by some that the Vaiṣṇavism as propagated by Saṅkaradeva has some resemblance with the concepts of Islam. 161 With the abrogation of idolatry of any kind and the dualistic conception of God as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa or Gopī Kṛṣṇa and also with the glorification of human life and the world, the Bhakti Cult of Saṅkaradeva seems to have conformed greatly to Islam. It has rightly been suggested that it was for these qualities Saṅkaradeva's Vaiṣṇavism could not only attract Muslims to be its votaries, but also 'rouse the profound feelings of admiration as well as respect among the Hindus and Musalmans of Assam for each other's religion, and thus succeeded in forging a sustaining fraternity between the communities even during the long period of evergrowing hostilities and war of Assam with the Muhammadans of India'. 162

The pāmādharmā of Saṅkaradeva has taken by name to be a substitute for 'Kalima' (qulma) in the Assamese sikirs. 163

According to the Kathā Gura Carita, Saṅkaradeva met grand daughter of Kabīr during his second pilgrimage. 164 At that time he might have acquired some knowledge on Kabīr's life and works.

Kabīr's teachings ^{are based mainly} bear on some influence of Islam and Hinduism. Hence it was not unlikely that Saṅkaradeva also

had in his Vaisnavism some elements borrowed from the songs of Kabir and other things.¹⁶⁵ Chāndkhan, the Muslim disciple of Śaṅkaradeva, is sometimes identified with or known as Kabir.¹⁶⁶

It is, however, difficult to form a concrete idea of the Islamic influence upon the thoughts and concepts of Śaṅkaradeva. But it may be pointed out that during that period, the monotheistic ideal of Islamism had obvious reflections upon the contemporary thoughts and religious beliefs. As we have seen before that both the Mahāpurāṇā of Śaṅkaradeva and Sikhism of Nānak believe in monotheistic approach towards God and consequently negation of idolatry. And it was perhaps because of the relation developed between Islam and Bhakti, and the Eksarana Dharma of Śaṅkaradeva which conforms to the monotheistic ideal of Islam, there was a very insignificant converts to Islam in this region. From the census report of 1872 A.D. the total number of Muslim population was altogether 1,78,109. It is said that the total strength of Muslim in Assam was less than 1/17th of the entire Muslim population in the country. Thus it is found that the Muslim who entered this region as early as 1305-06 A.D. could not procure any large number of local converts in Assam. On the contrary, from an account of Shihābuddin Talish who visited Assam in the middle of the seventeenth century it is learnt that the early Muslim settlers of Assam became the victims of local influences so much so that they lost everything of Islam save the name.¹⁶⁷

Folk Deities ✓

Certain other deities were offered worship by the inhabitants of the area under study. The people use to worship them still today.

Every village has its seat of its God, where the Dogs or evil spirits are supposed to reside; and whenever anything goes wrong in a family, they take offerings to that place of worship in order to appease the wrath of the Dog.

Every year, on the fourteenth day of the moon, in the month of Chaitra (February), the Rājasthānī worship Madan Kāndan, the god of love. Large, straight bamboos, covered with red cloth, and surmounted by chamsars (yaks'tails)', are erected in the court-yard, and great rejoicing prevails. Songs of a loose description used to be sung on this occasion. The worship is continued for three days, and on the fourth day the cloth is taken off the bamboos and thrown away.

A singular relic of old superstition is the worship of the God called Madan-Dog. The women of a village assemble together in some distant and solitary place, no male being allowed to be present at the rite, which is always performed at night; a plantain or a young bamboo is stuck in the ground, and the women, throwing off their garments, dance round the mystic tree, singing old songs and charms. This rite is

more especially performed when there is no rain, and the crops are suffering from drought.

The people also worshipped Balarāma which is not very common in other parts of Bengal. It was worshipped on every festive occasion, such as, the tonsure ceremony, marriage or adoption in the family. It may be pointed out here that Balarāma who is known as Haladhara (i.e. holder of plough) for his association with agriculture, possibly stands for fertility cult. The gods peculiar to this class of Hindus are Saṅyasi, Daṅg-dhara and Buri-Thakurani. Some wild animals, such as, tigers, crocodiles and some objects of nature, such as, trees and rivers, are still being worshipped.

If a man is without children, he supplicates the God Kārtika. This deity is worshipped on the last day of the month of Kārtika (October). After the offerings have been duly made, all the male-kind retire from the place, and the young women of the neighbourhood assemble together, putting off their clothes, dance round the idol throughout the whole night with rataplan or drums being held during the whole time by the musicians, who are shut up in a closed shed.

The snake goddess, Biṣṭ Harā (poison destroyer), is also very largely worshipped by the people. This is the more strange, as there are few poisonous snakes in Koch Bihar.

When Cholera or small-pox prevail, the women go

about from place to place, and beg for alms. The dole thus obtained is expended in making offerings to the Dees, or evil spirits, through whose malign influence mankind is supposed to be afflicted by diseases of all sorts. These worship may be classed under folk religions of this region, although some of these worships are closely associated with Purānic religious rites.

Thus it is observed that Koch Bihar is a place where various religions took their position side by side without causing any harm to each other. Religious harmony was the most peculiar character in the dynastic history of Koch Bihar. The harmony in terms of Hindu-Muslim relationship is worthy of mention.

The well-known Āstānās of Muhammedan Pirs in the capitals of Hindu kings viz. Kamatāpura, Dhaliyābāri and Koch Bihar, suggest that the pirs resided in those places receiving honour, and practised their devotional exercises and preached their religion without fear of oppression. The different pirs who started preaching Islam religion in Kamata-Koch Bihar from the first phase of the 13th century A.D. Of them the names of Gāsi pīr, Shāh Garīb Kamāl, Shāh Fakir, Torsāpīr, Satya, Pīr, Pāglā pīr and Pīr Ekānasul Hoque are worthy of mention.^{167a} Pīrpal (lands granted to meet the expenses of the Dargās) was given to these Muslim Preachers.^{167b} 'The Muslims', as we get from the Coch Behar State and its land revenue settlement, are

mostly of the Shia sect; they offer presents to Pirs and have Dargas. They observe the Maharam festival and go out in procession with the tazia. There are Ferajis or wahabis also who refrain from the observance of rites and festivals and have no music on social ceremonies. They content themselves with simply doing the Namaj or prayer in the jomba ghar or Masjid. 169

Notes and References

1 S.K.Chatterjee, Kirāta-Jana-Kṛti, p. 148; Also Supra Chapter I, Calcutta, 1974.

2 S.K.Chatterjee, Origin and Development of Bengali Language, p. 29, Vol. I, First Pub., Calcutta University Press, 1926, First Pub. by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1970.

S.K.Chatterjee, ^{again} however, in his ^{another} book entitled

'The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India'; Gauhati University, 1970, pp. 18-19, stated that 'by the early centuries of the Christian era, Assam as Prāgyjyotisa and Kāmarūpa had become definitely a part of Hindu India, although the masses of its people were probably still Bodo-speaking, as in 16th century North Bengal among the Koches'.

3 The Mahābhārata refers to a tradition in which Lord Śiva in the garb of a Kirāta hunter defeated Arjuna, the epic hero and follower of Kṛṣṇa (Vasudeva) cult.

Ṛgveda-Dwāipāyana Vyaśa, The Mahābhārata,

(Saḥsra-Parva & Vana-Parva, Vol. II, Pt. I, 2nd ed.), Eng. tr. from original Sanskrit by P.C. Roy, Calcutta, pp. 87-89.

4 Watters, On Yuān Chūāng's Travels in India, Vol. II, pp. 184 ff.

5 S.C. Ghosal, A History of Cooh Behar (Eng. tr.), p. 121.

6 Ibid., p. 45.

H.N. Dutta Baruah (ed.) 'Guru Garita', by Rāmacarāna

Thākura, p. 11.

7 Ibid., pp. 45ff.

8 W.W. Hunter, Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. X,
Kuch Behar, p. 344.

We come to know from 'Guru Garita' of Rāma-
Charaṇa Thākura that during the period of the Khen rulers,
there was the importation of Kayastha-Brahmanas from

Kananj. See op. cit., 16ff.

8a J.A.B.S., Vol. III, 1941, pp. 113ff.

9 Yogini Tantra, XIII Slokas, 2-19.

10 Gandharvanārāvaner Vaiśāvalī, p. 52.

N.N. Pal (ed.), Mahārāja Vaiśāvalī, (Bengali), p. 3.

11 S.C. Ghosal, op. cit., p. 105.

12 W.W. Hunter, op. cit., p. 404.

13 G.R. Barua, ^{Isām Burañji} op. cit., p. 32.

14 Allen, Gait & Howard, Gazetteer of Bengal and North
Eastern India, Delhi, Reprinted, 1979, p. 224.

15 Cf. Kālikāpurāṇa, Ch. 77, V. 9.

16 The Rāmaganj Copper plate of Īśvaraghoṣa contains a
reference to a river named Jatodā near Dekkari, which
has been identified with same region either in Burdwan-Katwa,
in Jalpaiguri-Cooch Behar, or in Kāmarūp-Goālpārā (Assam).
D.C. Sircar, Pala-Sena Yuger Vaiśāvanarita (in Bengali),
Calcutta, 1982, p. 146.

17 Cf. Kālikāpurāṇa, Chhp. XXXVIII, V. 96.

18 Cf. 'A Brahmana should never worship the Siva-Linga.
Water, rice, flower, leaf & C. offered to this deity should
should never be accepted by him. Should any Brahmana violate

these injunctions and worship Linga, he shall at once fall from the rank of the Brahmana'.

N.H. Vasu, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 60.

19 N. Paul (ed.), op.cit., p. 6.

'According to another view the Asura Bāna, well-known in the Purānas, established the Śiva in his own name and king Nīlāvara constructed the temple'.

In the Yoginī Tantra there is mention of a Siva established near Manikṭā (Hājo). Yoginī Tantra, Uttarakhaṇḍa, Navamapatala, p. 101.

Also see S. Ghosal, op.cit., p. 161.

20 N.N. Paul (ed.), op.cit., p. 12.

'Lolarka is a celebrated Sun God of India. This old Kunda (well) is dedicated in his name. There is a tradition that bathing in the water of the well, cures leprosy. Later on Maharaja Sibendranārāyaṇa again repaired this well and erected a memorial tablet with an inscription (1250 B. S.)'.

S.C. Ghosal, op.cit., fn p. 139.

21 N.N. Paul (ed.), op.cit., p. 13.

'According to another view Sukladhvaja, brother of the Mahārāja Naranārāyaṇa, being so ordered in a dream went with Kumāra Lakṣminārāyaṇa and discovered the Linga

of Śiva in Jalpeśvara and constructed a temple there'.

Durgādās-Majumdāra, Rāja Vaiśāvalī, p.63 (

22 Ibid., p.206.

23 Jalpeśvara Mandir Committee, Jalpeśvara Mandir Itihāsa (Bengali)
pp.23-25.

24 B.K.Barna, A Cultural History of Assam (Early Period),
Gauhati, 1969, p.165

25 Loc.cit.

26 B.Kakati, The Mother Goddess Kamakhya, p.162.

On the authority of the Yoginī Tantra, B.Kakati says that Śiva was considered as a Bhairava who could be adored with extreme left-handed (Vānā cāra) practices. See B.Kakati; op.cit., p.162. We learn from (Assam Burāñji S.M., art 33) See B.Kakati, op.cit., p.22) an old chronicle that people used to worship a stone image of Bhairava on the day previous to their marriage with the offering of eight pairs of ducks, eight pairs of pigeons, twenty rupees, and other things. In case of a poor people, an offering of five rupees was fixed.

27 R.C.Majumder (ed.), The Mughal Empire, Vol.VIII, Gauhati.
Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan Series, p.641.

28 A.Bhattacharyya, Bāngla Bāngal Kāvya Itihāsa (Bengali)
6th ed., Calcutta, 1975, pp.185-87.

According to some, different Saivite emblems viz. ox, snake, liṅga etc. convey the sense of cultivation and farming G.S.Roy, Uttara Bāngla Rājyañī Samāer Dev Devī O

Pujāpārvana, (Unpublished thesis (Bengali) in the University of North Bengal, p. 11)

- 29 B.K. Barua, op. cit., p. 165.
- 30 Sibapada Bhowmik, UttarVangar loka sakti carca, (Bengali) Jalpaiguri, 1980, p. 25.
- 31 M. Neog (ed.), 'Pavitra Assam', p. 29. Jorhat, 1969.
- 32 A.K. Chakravarty, 'Literature in Kāmarūpa-Koch Bihār Rāidarbār', Dhubri, 1964, p. 110.
- 33 Ibid., p. 134.
- 34 Ibid., p. 110.
- 35 Cf. A Sūrya image inscription from Rajganj by P.K. Bhattacharyya, in the Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 1977, pp. 790ff.
- 36 Quoted in B. Gohain's Human Sacrifice and Head Hunting in North Eastern India, Gauhati, 1977, p. 91.
N.N. Basu (Social History of Kāmarūpa, Vol. 3, p. 61) however, thinks that Kāmarūpa is the first seat of Sakti worship and this has been introduced by the Panis from an early time.
- 37 D.C. Sircar, The Śākta Pīthas, p. 15.

He holds that the original name was Kāma which, might have been a shortened form of 'Kāmarūpa'. Kakati, however, opines that the word is non-Sanskritic in origin. 'The name of Goddess is traced to the Austric words Kāmoi (demon), Kāmoit (devil), Kōmin (Grave), Kāmet (Corpse in Khasi), Kāmū (a god of the Santals), etc. B.K. Kakati, 'Assam Tribune' Oct., 22, 1947, quoted in the Śākta Pīthas.

B.Kakati again in Assamese, its formation and development, Gauhati, 1941, pp.53ff suggests that Kāmākhya was formerly, a goddess of Ghosts and spirits, who was worshipped in a Smasāna or cremation ground⁶.

38 Cf. the genital organ of Sakti fell here when her body was carried, hither and thither in frantic sorrow by her husband Siva. The mountain represented the body of Siva himself and when Sati's genital organ fell on it, the mountain turned blue. The Goddess herself is called Kāmākhya, because she came there secretly to satisfy her aruous (Kāma) with Siva.⁷ B.K.Barua, op.cit., p.187.

39 R.P.Chanda, Indo-Aryan Races, Delhi, Reprint, 1976, pp.122-61.

40 R.G.Bhandarkar, however, informs us of the extent and growth of the Śakta cult in other parts of India. He ascribed the Goddess Sakti in fierce form, in which she was associated with ^{the} sacrifice of animals and human beings.

See R.G.Bhandarkar Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and other Minor Religious Systems, Vārānasi, 1965, pp.142ff.

"In fact, the worship of the Great mother in some of her various shrines of Assam and East Bengal, particularly in Kāmākhya near Gauhati, is looked upon as being originally Kirāta of Tibeto-Burman".

The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol.I, Calcutta, p.90.

41 B.Gohain, op.cit., Preface.

Gait, op.cit. p.59, observed that one hundred and

42 E.A.Gait, A History of Assam, 3rd ed., p.59.

43 J.A.S.B., 1873, p.240.

H.Blochman writes, 'The prevalence of human sacrifices in Koch Bihar is known from the Ain'.

The Darrang Rāja Vaisāvalī narrates :

"Tin laksa hom dilā ek laksa bali |
Sāt kuri pāik dilā kari tārafali" ||

See N.C.Sharma (ed.), op.cit., p.111, Gauhati, 1973.

Gait (op.cit., p.59), observed on the basis of above verse that one hundred and forty men were sacrificed before the Goddess Kāmākṣhyā. But the real meaning of the verse is that 140 pāiks (Sebāits) were given to help in the worship of the Goddess and this fact was recorded on Tārafali (Copper plates). It may be noted that in Assam, the servants employed in temples, of Gods and Goddesses and whose caste befit, them, for drawing water for worship, are called 'pāiks'.

44 B.Gohain, Human Sacrifice and Head Hunting in North Eastern Assam, Gauhati, 1977, p.10.

45 B.Gohain, op.cit., pp.11ff.

Intro - pp.(x-xi)

'There is archaeological evidence to suggest that a ritual significance was attached to head hunting about 40,000 B.C. Human sacrifices is related to the Agricultural Revolution and developed after 10,000 B.C.'

46 M.Neog, Sankaradevs and His Times, Gauhati, 1965.

47 B.K.Barna, op.cit., p. 166.

The author has referred to the Devī Purāṇa, a work composed about the end of the seventh or the beginning of the 8th century A.D.

48 S.K.Chatterjee, op.cit., pp. 12-13.

Cf. Tespur plates, Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī, (Eng. ed.), p. 176.

The inscriptions of Vansūāla and Indrapāla (Cf. Guaknei Grant, op.cit., p. 204) refer to the Temples of Kāmesvara and Mahāgaurī.

49 ~~महाप्रभु~~ M. Neog has suggested that Saivism was so forceful in earlier periods that the Saktism could not attract many people as well as the rulers in its folds (M. Neog, op.cit., p. 31).

50 Ibid., p. 85.

51 N.N. Paul, (ed.) op.cit., p. 14.

52 N.C. Sharma (ed.), op.cit., p. 15.

53 Ibid., p. 20.

53a N.N. Vasu, op.cit. Vol. II, p. 58; S.C. Goswami, op.cit., p. 46.

Cf. Brāhmaṇa Śāstī Mahā Puruṣa śūrio |

Kaṇai purat pūrbe āchilo Śārio ||

54 N.N. Vasu, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 47.

55 N.N. Vasu, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 47, 165; N.C. Sharma (ed.), op.cit. 86

Cf. 'Sarvabhāma nānabhāla Rāj Purohit, V. 173.

But the name of ministers as mentioned in ^{the} Darrang Rāja Vānsūāli are Barihaṇā and Baihāgu. It does not mention about Narahari Dāsa to be the Prime Minister.

N.C. Sharma (ed.), op.cit., p. 34.

- 56 N.N.Paul (ed.), op.cit., p. 3.
 57 N.C.Sharma, op.cit., pp. 42-43.
 58 S.C.Ghosal, op.cit., (Eng. tr.), p. 160.

'The rent free land of 23,685 Bighas as Devottara property of the Goddess Kamakhya is still in existence. The Kamakhya temple had a great damage in 1897 due to an earthquake. It is said that an amount of Rs. 3,200 was sanctioned by the Durbar of Cooh Behar for its repair'.

- 59 Ibid., p. 135.
 60 Though it appears from the Nilācala Temple (Cf. Prāya Śāsanāvalī, by M. Neog, 2nd ed., p. 2) Inscription that the Kāmākhya temple was constructed (Racitavan) by Naranārāyaṇa and Śuklādhwaja, some scholars believe that the temple was actually rebuilt by the royal brothers over the basement which dates much earlier, in 1565 A.D. See M. Neog, op.cit. p. 142. H.C. Goswami, Dasrang Rāja Vaiṣṇavī, Intro. p. 7; S.C. Ghosal, op.cit., p. 158.
 61 Rām Charana, Thākura, Śāikara Carit, (p. 280), A. Ahmed, Kuch Bihār Tihāsa
A History of Koch Behar, (in Bengali), pp. 125-26.
 'Śuklādhwaja is credited with one hundred wives.'
 62 E.A. Gait, The Koch Kings of Kamrup, 1903, p. 28.
 63 M. Neog, Cf. Rock Inscription of the Kāmatēsvarī temple, Prāya Śāsanāvalī, pp. 145, 5.
 64 Amanatullah Ahmed refers to the tradition as mentioned in the Śāikara Carit, op.cit., pp. 127-28.
 65 R.C. Majumdar (ed.), op.cit., Vol. VII, p. 367.

66 M. Neog, Sankaradeva, (The Background, p.2).

New Delhi, 1969.

67 S.K. Chatterjee, op. cit., p. 70.

Also see Tarachand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Allahabad, 1946, p. 147.

68 Eliot, Hinduism and Buddhism, Vol. II, London, 1921, p. 74.

69 H. V. S. Murthy, Sankaradeva and Bengal: a Comparative Study, p. 38.

70 M. Neog, Sankaradeva and His Times, p. 108.

71 H. V. S. Murthy, op. cit., p. 39.

S.K. Chatterjee on the basis of the Hevaira Tantra (8th Century A.D.), the Kālikāpurāna (earlier than 1000 A.D.) and Yoginī Tantra (more or less of the same period) asserts that Śākta Tantricism fully established itself in Assam by the time the above mentioned works were composed.
op. cit., p. 12.

72 N. N. Vasu, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 11-12 &

H. N. Dutta Barua (ed.), Guru Carita, pp. 48 ff. Ht 4266

73 M. Neog, Sankaradeva, p. 20, New Delhi, 1967.

74 H. N. Dutta Barua (ed.), Guru Carita, pp. 745 ff.

75 P. Jash, History and Evolution of Vaishnavism in Eastern India,

Calcutta, 1982, p. 63.

And this matter has also been discussed by H. V. S.

Murthy, op. cit., p. 23.

76 Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī, Eng. ed. Gauhati, 1981, 1 ff.

77 H. V. S. Murthy, op. cit., p. 23.

78 Rāmacarṇa Thākura, Śāṅkara Carit, p. 185.

H.N. Datta Barua (ed.), Mahāpurāṣa śrī

Śāṅkaradeva āra śrī Mādhyava Deva Carita, pp. 157-68.

79 Ibid., pp. 168ff.

79(i) "King Naranārāyaṇa was so much impressed by his personality and learning that he once directed that due honour be shown to him From that date the king held him in high esteem and treated him with consideration. Śāṅkaradeva established a Satra (Central monastery) at Koch Behar, made many converts including the Cola Dewan (Śukladhaja) and stayed there for six months on that occasion. Later, as desired by the king he paid a visit to Koch Behar once every year".

Intro. to Aṅg Kāvālī, by Kaliram Medhi, quoted in an article 'The destruction of the Kāmākhya Temple as referred to in the Yoginī Tantra, by Śrī Biswanarayana Shastri, The Journal of the Assam Research Society, 1978-80, Gauhati, p. 3.

79(ii) Cf. Hari bhaktik tumi kariyo dracār |

Hari bhaji nare hanak saṁsāra pār || V.608.

N.C. Sharma (ed.), op.cit., p. 124.

79a S.N. Sharma, 'A Contemporary of Guru Nanak - Shankaradeva'

Journal of Sikh Studies, Vol.V, No.1 Feb. 1978, Amritsar, p. 129.

79b N.N. Vasu, The Social History of Kamarupa, Vol.II, p. 111.

79c H.N. Datta Barua (ed.), Guru carita, p. 310.

80 Śāṅkaradeva, Kīrtana Ghosa, Verse Nos.5, p. 341.

81 H. V. S. Murthy, op. cit., p. 149.

82 And also in S. N. Sharma's 'The Neo-Vaishnavite Movement

and the Sātra Institution of Assam, Gauhati, 1966, p. 223.

83 S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p. 244.

84 Loc. cit.

85 Ibid., pp. 244-45.

86 A. K. Chakravarty, op. cit., p. 37.

S. N. Sharma's article - A Contemporary of Guru Nanak -
Shankaradeva Journal of Sikh Studies, Vol. V, Amritsar, 1972,
pp. 135-36.

87 A. K. Chakravarty, op. cit., p. 37.

88 S. N. Sharma, The Neo-Vaishnavite Movement and the Sātra
Institution of Assam, p. 370.

88a N. N. Vasu, op. cit. vr. II, pp. 111-112
89 Rāma Chandra Thākura's Śāṅkara Gaṇī, (pp. 274, 301) x

refers to a Ghāt of Kāgajkūtā on the bank of Torsa river where it is said that during the period of performing funeral rites of Śāṅkaradeva the Goddess offered a shower of rains of flowers and thus the river was named Puspakāntī^s. That particular place has now become either a dead river or a hill.

It is also said that Śāṅkaradeva took his last breath in Kāgajkūtā :

'Pāche Śāṅkare mahala nār hai Kākat

kuṭār chāte gailā |

Kākat kuṭār chāte Śāṅkar

paralok hailā'. ||

- Kaliratna Bhattacharyya,
Sat Śāṅkaradevar Katha, pp. 45 & 46.

90 Bhūṣaṇadvīja, Srī Srī Śaṅkaradeva, p. 222.

91 S.C. Goswami (ed.), op.cit., p. 115.

'Bhelāt caṣṭarṇātī
raillā mahāraṣiḥ'.

92 H.M. Das, (ed.) Māghosā, pp. 14-15, Gauhati, 1957, pp 14-15

93 Ibid., p. 15.

94 Ibid., Cf. (Intro: p. 10)

95 Ibid., Verse 473, 501.

96 H.N. Dutta Barua (ed.), Mahāpurāṇa Srī Śaṅkaradeva

Śrī Mādhavaḍevar Gaṛita, pp. 339-40.

Cf. 'Kahiba katek saraṇ lailek

Āno nagarastha jan.

Dak Dākua Bar Barua

Bilāntarā lekjana.

Nāhi ādi anta āsi aparjanta

Kṛṇat laila saraṇ! v. 1503

Koch Mech lok saba erilek

Pūrvar ita sār!

Mādhavaḍevar Upadeśā pāvā

Bhalla saba sadāsar" v 1504

97 'A Sātra is a religious College which is in some respects
not unlike a medieval monastery'.

See Allen's Assam Dist. Gazetteers Vol. VII, Sibsagar, p. 97.

98 H.N. Das (ed.), Intro, op.cit., p. 11.

99 J.N. Samaddar, European Portals, 4th Part, p. 61.

Sana Samayk Bhārat (in Bengali).

99a S.C.Ghosal, op.cit., p.81.

Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa declared the new faith propounded by Mādhava deva as the State religion. M.Neog, Sankaradeva, New Delhi, 1967, p. 30.

100 It is curious to note that the prince Viṣṇunārāyaṇa and the queen along with princess and members of royal family took initiation to Madhavadeva while he was in Koch Bihar,

See H.M.Das, op.cit. Intro: p.12.

101 H.N.Datta Barua (ed.), op.cit., p.339;

H.M.Das (ed.) Intro : op.cit., p.12.

And it has also been stated in Śrī Śrī Deva Dāmodaradeva Garita, S.C.Goswami (ed.), p.123) that Mādhavadeva came to Koch Bihar from Porābhita Thān. He opened a sutra at Madhupura where he took his last breath.

102 Nīlkantha Dāsa, Ed. S.C.Goswami, op.cit., p.133.

Cf. Parṣṇā āśode Rāja Nānā āśode kari,

'Baikāthapurat thān dilanta sādari || - p.133.

'Baikāthapurat Dāmodara āśā nabi, p.161.

Also see Amanatulla Ahmed's op.cit., pp.64ff.

103 K.C.Pathak (ed.), Gurullās, p.109.

104 Ibid., p.111.

104a Ghosal, op.cit., p.82.

105 Cf. 'Talla bati āti thik laci Nṛpatar

Āru bisā tankā O' deya Rāj bhāndārar ||

Kumbhakar nāpit rajak sonārik |

Bhūmi melidilā Rāja sebite dharmak⁹¹

V.705

K.C.Pathak (ed.), op.cit., p.113.

106 S.C.Goswami, op.cit., p.134.

(Quote Verse)

Cf. Lakṣmī nārāyaṇ putra jata jata |

Laliek śaraṇ Dāmodar caranata || V 515

107 K.C.Pathak (ed.), op.cit., p.114.

Cf. 'Nagara lok jata aḥe nagarā |

Śaraṇ lailanta Dāmodar caranat || V 707

Brāhmaṇ kāyastha Rāj prajāṅ āndolan |

Prabhu Dāmodarar saḥeo sukul anukū ||

Pratikūl acarantā nahi sirājyat |

Prabhu Dāmodarar prati saḥe anugat ¶ (708)

108 A.K.Chakravartty, op.cit., p.51.

109 H.N.Datta Barua (ed.) op.cit., pp.173 ff.

110 H.N.Datta Barua (ed.), Guru Garita, p.836.

M.Neog (ed.) Bardovā Guru Garita, p.167.

But according to Śaṅkara Garit, Śaṅkaraḍeva is said to have told Naraṇārāyaṇa that he would never initiate a king, woman and orthodox Brāhmaṇa.

Cf. Rāja strī karmakāṇḍi Bhaṣṇaṇa Śaḥara |

Kadāḥito ũi Guri nahi isabara. ||

- Rāmacarana Thākura, Śaṅkara Garit, p.295.

- 111 N.N.Vasu, op.cit., Vol.II, p. 111.
 112 S.C.Ghosal, op.cit., p. 162.
 113 Biswanath Das (ed.), Rājopākhyān (in Bengali), p.41, Calcutta, 1985.

However, in The Cooch Behar State and its 1861 Revenue Settlements by H.N.Chowdhury, it has been said in one place (p.242) that this image was established by king Rūpanarāyaṇa, but in another (p.698) by King Prānarāyaṇa (1632-1665 A.D.).

- 114 R.C.Majumdar (Ed.), The History of Bengal, (Medieval period), p.478.
 114a P.K.Bhattacharyya and Shyamal Ch.Guha Roy, Sankaradeva's Meeting with Caitanyadeva - a study in Contemporary sources, (paper presented at the seminar on Early Historical Perspectives of North Bengal held at Balurghat College under the auspices of the Akshaya Kumar Maitreya Museum, North Bengal University,
 115 Kail Ram Medhi, Studies in the Vaishnava Literature and Culture of Assam, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat, 1978, pp.20-21. Sankaradeva's date of birth in 1449 A.D. has earlier been accepted by K.L.Barua, Early History of Kamarupa, p.308 and L.B.esbarua, Sankaradeva, p.184.
 116 Maheshwar Neog, Sankaradeva, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1980 (Reprinted), pp.6, 22.
 117 Cf. 'Did Caitanya influence Sankaradeva' ? by H.V.S.Murthy in Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol.35, pp.171 ff.

- The Early History of the
- 118 S.K. Dey, Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal, Calcutta, 1961
pp. 32, 101.
- 119 The name is said to have been given by Śaṅkaradeva himself.
Dāmodaradeva was Brāhmaṇa by birth and founder of the
Bāṇunīyā branch of Vaiṣṇavism. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla
Ahmed, ^{Kuch Bihon Itihāsa} A History of East Bihar (Bengali), 1936, p. 64.
- 120 Supra ref. no. 102.
- 121 It has been suggested that Dāmodaradeva died in 1598 A.D.
(Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, op. cit., pp. 65-6).
But Dāmodaradeva was driven out by Parikṣit who became
king of Kāmarūpa in 1603 A.D. when he issued coins.
Parikṣit was alive when Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa met the Emperor
Jahāngīr in 1618 A.D. and the Emperor is said to have
made an attempt to establish peace and amity between
Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa and Parikṣit.
- Cf. Rāiā bole nityaḥ hobe āmunār |
Birodh bhābat na karāho namaskār ||
- Śaundranārāyaṇar Vaiṣṇavī, Patra 100.
Also see Bahārīstān-i-Ghaybī, Vol. II, p. 234;
Tazuk-i-Jahāngīrī, pp. 160, 162, 166. Cf. Kāmarūpar
Bhāṣā, p. 10.
- 122 Cf. Journal of the Numismatic Society of India,
Vol. XXXIII, pt. I, p. 131.
- 123 See 'Introduction' of S. Goswami (ed.) Śrī Śrī Deva-Dāmodara
Gitā.

- 124 Cf. (Sankaradeva) 'is said to have been born in 1449 and to have died in 1559. The later date is probably correct, in which case the former is possibly thirty or forty years too early'. Edward Gait, A History of Assam, Third edition, 1963, p. 59.
- 125 Maheshwar Neog, op.cit., p. 9.
- 126 S. Goswami (ed.), op.cit., pp. 27-28.
- 127 Dilip Kumar Mukhopadhyaya, Gaitanya, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1974, p. 19.
- 128 Ibid., p. 36; R.C. Majumdar (ed.), The Delhi Sultanate, p. 567.
- 129 S. Goswami (ed.), op.cit., pp. 72 ff.
R.M. Nath (Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. IV, p. 222) thinks that Sankaradeva met Caitanyadeva who was in a state of divine ecstasy. Both gazed at each other, but there was no discourse between them. B.D. Majumdar (Gaitanya Chaitan Upadhan (Bengali), p. 409) also holds that the two met each other, but did not talk.
- 130 Dinesh Chandra Sen, Brahat-Vanga (Bengali) Vol. II, p. 1067 and also see the illustration.
- 131 L. Basbarua, op.cit., pp. 230-31. Also Maheshwar Neog, op.cit., p. 21.
- 132 R.C. Majumdar (ed.), History of Bengal (Medieval period) (Bengali), 1973 Sen, p. 277.
- 133 Cf. Sankara Chrit, p. 185. See also Sri Sudhansu Mohan Banerjee, Assiya Sahitya, p. 35.

- 134 Cf. Kalidasa-Nat of Saṅkaradeva; See A.K.Chakravarti,
Literature in Kāśā Kōsh Bihār Rāj. Darbhā,
Dhubri, 1964, p.36.
- 135 Cf. Kalidasa-Nat of Saṅkaradeva; loc.cit.
- 136 Dilip Kumar Mukhopadhyaya, op.cit., p.86.
- 137 Ibid., p.57.
- 138 Ibid., p.122.
- 139 Ibid., p.123.
- 140 Cf. Kirtana of Saṅkaradeva; Ibid., p.33.
- 141 loc.cit.
- 142 Dilip Kumar Mukhopadhyaya, op.cit., pp.49ff.
- 143 A.K.Chakravarti, op.cit., p.56.
- 144 H.M.Ghosh(ed.) Nān Ghosā, by Sri Mādhavadeva,
Intro : S.C.Roy, pp.25-26.
- 145 K.R.S.Iyenger (ed.), Guru Nanak - A Homage!, pp.91-92.
Guru Nanak, Sikhism and Assam, an article by M.Neog.
- 145a T.Singh, A Biography : Guru Nanak : Founder of
of Sikhism, Delhi, 1959, p 213
- 146 Dr.Arjan Singh Mann, Guru Teg Bahadur and Assam Pradesh,
Delhi, p.170.
- 147 Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Vol.IX, pp.353ff.
- 148 S.C.Roy, op.cit., Ed. H.M.Das, pp.26-27.
- 149 Trilochan Singh, op.cit., p.212.
- 150 Ibid loc.cit.
- 151 S.S.Kohli, Travels of Gurnanak, Punjab University, p.46.

152 H.N.Datta Barua (ed.), op.cit., pp. 253-54.

"Dekhā Ghosā puthikhan suay āchay Sate kahi āchē
libā kahibe lagay. || Tāhar arthake libāian bulibek ||
sehiane iana hāg sāk pāibek || 1555 Ghosāte smaste
mor bal buddhi iata | iār bhāgya āche sēe raibe smaste"

153 U.C.Lekharu (ed.), Kathāguru Carita, Nalbari, 1932, p. 514.

154 'The Assamese Vaisnava Temple, called Kirttana-Gṛha or nanghar, is an ordinary house providing a rectangular space like the inside of a Sikh Gurudvara; and in it the object of Veneration is no idol, but a large pedestal to contain one or more of the two original Guru's works. This is called Guru-asana which has its striking parallel in the adoration of the Guru Granth Sahib by the Sikhs" -

M.Neog, op.cit., p. 98.

154a H.M.Das, (ed.), op.cit., p. xviii.

154b Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, Jullunder, 1944, 2nd ed. 1966, p. 140. Cf. (The way in which the Granth is wrapped in clothes and when opened, but not read is covered by a sheet of cloth was also fashion for its sister quran).

Incidentally it has been mentioned that 'Nanak met Baba Farid II who was the 13th spiritual successor of the First Sheikh Farid Shakerjang'. Both of them 'prescribed some steps in the spiritual progress of the mass. Both the Creeds agreed to uphold the sense of general tolerance and mutual respect for all religions'.

Ibid., p. 144.

- 155 T. Singh, op. cit., p. 212.
- 156 Khuswant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, Delhi, 1977, p. 41.
- 157 M. Neog, op. cit., p. 97.
- 157a S. C. Roy in Naga Ghoshā ed. by H. M. Das, p. 25.
- 158 Ibid., p. 27.
- 158a Ibid., p. XXVI.
- 159 M. Neog, op. cit., pp. 98-99.
- 159^a Ibid., p. 98
- 160 S. K. Chatterjee, The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India, Gauhati University, 1970, p. 70.
- 161 M. Saikia, Assam-Muslim Relation and its Cultural Significance, Golaghat, Assam, p. 222.
- 162 Loc. cit.
- 163 Loc. cit.
- 164 Ibid., p. 223.
- 165 Loc. cit.
- 166 Loc. cit.
- 167 Blochman, J. A. S. B., 1872, p. 80.
- 167a A. Banerjee & S. Das (ed.), Koch Bihar Zelar Purāṭi (Bengali) Archaeological Dept., Govt. of West Bengal, 1974, p. 25(Intro)
- 168 Ghosal, op. cit., p. 85
- The tomb of Shāh Fakir is situated in the ancient capital of Amatā-Koch Bihar named Dhaluābāri, four miles to the south east, of the town of Koch Bihar. The Koch Bihar Durbar has granted 77 land as 'Pirpal' to meet the expenses of this Durgā. The Muhammeden religion flourished

in this area by the preachings of different pīrs viz.
Torṣāpīr Shāh Gwīb Kamāl, Ismāīl Gāsi, Pāglāpīr,
Satyapīr etc.

169 H.N.Chowdhury, The Cooh Behar State and its Land
Revenue Settlement, 1903, p. 141.

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