CHAPTER-IV

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1. Infiltration of the Brahmanical Hinduism in the Royal Court:

The process of detribalisation and Hinduisation begins long before the rise of Koch Power on the ruins of old Kamatā Kingdom. Several tribal state formations alongside of a fragmented political system as the Bhuyan-Raj flourished during the thirteenth to sixteenth century in the valley. The term Bhuyan or Bhowmik is etymologically derived from bhumi meaning land and signified a land owner or land controller. A cast differentiated Assamese speaking people under the Bhuyans formed the core of the society and coexisted with numerous tribal settlements representing diverse languages and uneven levels of cultural developments.

It is discussed elsewhere that the Koches are one of the offshoots of an aboriginal tribe of Bodokachāri belonging to the Indo-mongoloid stock. After assuming political power a section of the tribe came under the religious influence of the Brahmanas and Vaisnava preachers and became to be known as Rājvansi or Koch. They were not given the equal status with the Kalitās, yet they were assigned a higher status in the caste system. The sixteen century Sanskrit work the Yogini Tantra creates a mythological origin of the Kuvāchas meaning the Koches. The Koches ruled over western Assam and north Bengal from early 16th to middle of the 17th century A.D. after which the Koch Kingdoms lost its independ status. Immediately after the foundation of the Koch kingdom by Bisu in 1515 A.D. the Brahmanas lost no time to elevate Bisu to the position of a Kshatriya of the Varnāśrama order and called him as Biswa Singha, meaning the lord of the

1. The earliest of these, the Chutiya kingdom in the northeast of Assam, was absorbed by the Āhom state by 1523 A.D. The Koch state was founded in 1509. By 1581 A.D. it was virtually bifurcated into two states — Koch Behār in north Bengal and Koch-Hajo in Assam. The later was mostly absorbed by Āhoms in the 17th century. Only the Kachāri state, reduced to vesSalāge from time to time, continued to exist separately. All these states had expanded in their formative stage through the supressions of the Bhuyans.


world. The Brahmanas revealed it to the world that Bisu's tribesmen were Kshatriyas, who had discarded their sacred threads when fleeing before the wrath of Parasurām, the son of the Brahmana ascetic Jamadagni and that Bisu was the son of god Śiva of the Hindus. Accordingly Bisu then assumed the name Biswa Singha and his brother Sisu took the name Śiva Singha. Both of them were most honourably accepted to the Hindu fold. Not the royal family alone, many members of the tribe also gave up their tribal designation and were elevated to Hindu caste. This was the first step of the infiltration of Brahmanical Hinduism in the royal court of the Koch Kingdom and the process of the detribalisation of the tribes in the Koch Kingdom.

The work of Hinduisation in the midst of the non-Aryan inhabitants was continuing since the early period and the Brahmin priest played a great role in this respect. During the period under discussion certain highly significant and noteworthy developments took place in the sphere of religion. These were—(i) Consolidation and expansion of Purānic Hinduism (ii) Conversion of the number of ruling families into Hinduism by the way of divinization of the founders of the respective dynasties (iii) Building of new temples and shrines and rebuilding of old ones (iv) Introduction of neo-Vaisnavism, which happened to have a higher degree of appeal to the masses and led to a sort of renaissance in all areas of art and culture. (v) Spirit of religious toleration and peaceful co-existence barring minor exceptions.

In this period there were three main working agents in the process of Hinduisation. They are (i) Brahmana Priests (ii) The Royal Patronage and (iii) The Vaisnavite movements. The existence of Brahmanas in Assam can be traced back to the fourth century A.D. if not earlier. Since the days of Pusyavarmana to the later part of the 18th century A.D. a number of Brahmanas were invited

4. *HAG*, P. 48 ff; *KBI*, pp. 87 ff; *DRY* (Preface) P. 10, f. (This was a common practise that the Brahmanas invented a Kshatriya origin of the ruling families. They gave a divine pedigree to each of the non-aryan ruling dynastries. They forget the way for a closer relationship between the aryan and non-aryans by incorporating the non-aryan kings into the Hindu fold and by giving them a higher status in the Hindu society. In the Purānas and epics there are numerous mentions and descriptions of the divine origin of the non-aryan kings and their descent is traced back to the eminent Kshatriya heads or gods. According to these - the Koch kings are the descendents of God Śiva, the Chutia kings were the descendance of God Kuvera and Ahom kings were the descendent of God Indra etc. Similar episodes, teaching the Divine origine of the other tribal kings are found in respect of the Jayantiyās, Giros and Kachari etc.)

5. *Ibid*; *CHAB*, P. 204

and respectfully settled in Assam by her rulers. They brought from Mithilā many Brahmana families and established them in Kāmarūpa. In our period of discussion it is found that the kings of the Kāmarūpa Kamatā invited Brahmanas from other parts of India and gave them all sorts of facilities for permanent settlement. The King of Gauda Dharmanarayan at the request of the Kamatā King Durlavanarayan sent seven families of Brahmanas and seven families of Kāyaśtas to the kingdom of Kāmarūpa Kamatā for settlement. From the records it is known that many Brahmanas from Kanyakubja, Benāras, Navadeep, and other parts of India came to Assam during the reign of Biswa Singh, the founder of the Koch kingdom and his son and successor Naranarayan. King Naranarayan and his brother general Chilarai were educated at Benāras, the most famous seat of Brahmanical teachings. They invited many scholars and writers to their court and established them in the capital. Amongst these scholars and writers there were many Brahmanas. DRV says that the two great scholars — Purusottam Bhattāchāryya and Pitambar Siddhāntavāgisa composed many works for the spread of Sanskrit learning and Hinduism, as well in the Koch dominion.

The Brahmanas occupy the first place in the Hindu society amongst the four castes. The term Brahmanism and the Brahmanical religion had been used in the sense of a religion consisting of Vedic sacrifices and other Purānic rituals which require the direct participation or supervision of a Brahmana priest. The process of mutual influence i.e, Hindu influence on primitive religion and the tribal influence on Hindu religious ceremonies obviously preceded by the introduction of the Hindu religion in Kāmarūpa. The religious leaders responsible for the impart of the Hindu rites and rituals were Brahmanas. And the type of religion propagated by them in those days may be designated the Brahmanical religion. Fragment references to the performance of Asvamedha Yajna and other vedic sacrifices by the kings of Kāmarūpa and also to vedic studies and performances of vedic sacrifices by the Brahmanas are available in the epigraphical records. But we have not found any performance of Asvamedha Yajna or other major vedic sacrifice during the period of

8. ABGB, P. 233; KGCP, PP. 9-10 DRV, VV. 604-609.
9. DRV, VV. 173, 176.
11. Ibid.
12. CHAHRB, Vol. III. P. 211
our study (1515 -1728 A.D.). For the early rulers of Kāmarūpa the issuance of land grants in the name of individual Brahmana priest and in the name of deities of various temples was a regular habit.

References are found in the DRV that the royal priest of the Koch king Biswa Singha, named Sarvabhūma Bhattachaiyya was a scholar having knowledge of four Vedas, fourteen Śāstras, Sruti, Smriti and Vedangas.13 The curriculam of study meant for Sankaradeva in the tol (Pathasālā) of Mohendra Kondoli also included the four Vedas, fourteen Śāstras and six Vedangas besides many other lores.14 Some of the pupils had their centres of learning laying outside the territories of Assam. Malladeva and Sukladhavaja the two sons of Biswa Singha, for instance had their education in Varanasi the erstwhile famous seat of Hindu learnings, the curriculam of their study included the Vedas (Sruti) besides Vyākaraṇa, Purāṇa, Smriti and Mīmāṃsā.15 The prevalence of Vedic sacrifice is so far concerned it may be presumed that sacrifices continued to be performed comparatively in a smaller scale in the royal families and well-to-do and Brahmana families either under the style of a Viṣṇuyajna, in the form of a homa connected with the worshipping of a Purānic deity. Preverence of Vedic sacrifices in the form of homas may be wananated by the fact that Pitāmbara Siddhāntavāgīsa, the Rājguru of king Naranarayana of Koch Behār is known to have written a book entitled ‘Homa paddhati’, obviously connected with the procedure of performing homas.16

It is recorded in the Rājā Harendraarayana’s Brihat Rājā-Vamsāvalī that Chilarai the brother and general of the King Naranarayana cured the mother of the Padshāh of Gauda from the snake bite when he was a captive at the hands of Padshāh. Having highly pleased with the act of Chilarai the Padshāh provided him with two learned Brahmanas. In complaince with the earnest request of Chilarai the two Brahmanas one called Purusattam Bhattāchāryya Vidyavāgīsa, and the other Pitāmbara Siddhāntavāgīsa went to Kamatā with him, they were received cordially by king

13. DRV. VV. 267 f
14. KGC. PP. 35 ff, SHTN. P. 102; S.N. Sarnā, P. 163
15. DRV. VV. 267 f, SHTN. P. 92
16. SHTN. P. 212
Naranarayana and made to each of them a grant of nine villages and thereafter both of them were settled in the country.17

Both these Scholars became the advisers of the royal brothers and set about the work of social reform and composed many works for spread of Sanskrit learning and Hinduism in the country. By the examples and influence of these two scholars the social and religious life of the then Koch society was thoroughly changed. Just in Bengal Raghunandana compiled 28 copies on smriti for the guidance of the Hindus of the province, so to in Assam Siddhāntavāgīsa acquired fame for himself as the writer of 18 books on the same subject all known by the name of Kaumudi.18 As we have been noticed earlier that Naranarayan and Chilarai were brought up at Benāras after the ideal of high caste Hindus, a deep sympathy for Hindu manners, customs and ideals was rooted in their hearts. This was why they made an attempt to introduce those ideas and customs among their subjects through the learned Brahmanas, after their accession to power.

Before the rise of Biswa Singha, most of the people of Kāmarūpa followed the religion of the Mlechcha. Sadācāra and Brahmachāryya was unknown to them. Though the rule of the Kāyasthas had lasted in the country for a long time and followed to a considerable extent the manners and customs prevailing in Gauda, yet they never dared to interfere with the manners and customs and religious beliefs of the people.19 We have already discussed that the Mech Chief Bisu followed the traditions of his family before his occupation of the throne of Kāmarūpa. When he became the king he came to be known to the Brahmanas as the son of the god Śiva. Thenceforth, he came under a great influence of Brahmanas and their religion. And hence he sent his two sons Malladeva and Sukladhvaja to Benaras the erstwhile Hindu seat for learning. Biswa Singha also brought from Mithilā one Brahmana named Sarvabhūma belonging to the Vasistha Gotra for the worship of his tutelary deities.20

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   (The Kaumudies, composed by Siddhāntavāgīsa are — (i) Danda (ii) Preta (iii) Vrishatsarga (iv) Pرانāma (v) Śrāddhā (vi) Durgostava (vii) Ekaḍāsi (viii) Suddhi (ix) Pratisṭhā (x) Sankalpa (xi) Prāyaśchitta (xii) Tṛthā (xiii) Kāla (xiv) Dikṣā (xv) Sambandha (xvi) Tithi (xvii) Dayā (xviii) Āchāra Kaumudi.
19. N. N. Vasu pp.57 ff
20. Ibid., P.58

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Through the efforts of the king Naranarayana and Chilarai the \textit{Varnas and Āsramas} in keeping with the \textit{Kaumudis} of Siddhāntavāgisa were established in Kāmrūpa. At this stage the people of various persuasions in the country came to be known as Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras.\textsuperscript{21} Thus there came into existence of different gradations in the society. As the adviser of the royal house Siddhāntavāgisa got full freedom from the royal house for the work of social reform hence he gradually became the position of a social dictator. He prescribed the rites and ceremonies to be observed by the various classes of the people and his voice was supreme in matters relating to the social positions of each class. If anybody violate the rule of Siddhāntavāgisa he was punished by the king.\textsuperscript{22} In this way the Brahmana authority was established in the whole of Kāmrūpa. And accordingly the ancient traditions of the tribal chiefs and the kings were disappeared gradually and the Brahmanic customs came into prominence. \textit{Smṛiti Kaumudi} of Siddhāntavāgisa prescribed that the Brahmanas alone could worship Sakti. To prevent the Mecha kings from breaking their new injunction it was laid down that neither the king nor a vile Sudra should have a look at the goddess of Kāmākhya for their good.\textsuperscript{23} Even to day a superstition is in current among the descendent of the Koch royal families, based on the Brahmana priest Kendukalai.\textsuperscript{23a} No member of the Rājā families of Koch Behār, Bijni and Darrang, and Beltola undertake any pilgrimage to shrine Kāmākhya or Goshāni of Kamatā even to-day.\textsuperscript{24} However though in the time of Naranarayana the ancient customs were fast changing in Kāmrūpa yet outside its border the ancient customs still held sway. \textit{DRV} narrates the following

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\textsuperscript{22}. \textit{Ibid}, Vv.1792-94; \textit{Ibid}. 
\textsuperscript{23}. N.N.Basu. \textit{Ibid}. 
\textsuperscript{23a} There is a strong legend about the Brahmana priest Kendukalai. According to this legend one Brahman named Kendukalai was entrusted upon the duties and responsibilities of the worship of Goddess Kāmākhya by the king of the land. But the legend speaks nothing about the identities of the king and the Brahmana and their period of time. It is simply said that at the time of worship at night the Goddess herself used to appear before Kendukalai in nude and took part in dance and music. The king having being informed expressed his desire to see the Goddess. Kendukalai asked him to put his eyes on a hole on the wall of the temple from outside. The king did accordingly and enjoyed the nude appearance of the Goddess. As soon as the Goddess got the information, she became angry and cursed the king that if and when the king and any one of his descendents visit Her would die in no time. No one of the descendents of the Koch royal families knows about the king nor about the Brahmana priest Kendukalai by name. The legend is simply imparted orally from generation to generation and hence they do not pay even today a visit to Kāmākhya. Vide. G. Adhikary, \textit{Religious Establishments of Assam}, 2006.P. 48. 
\textsuperscript{24}. N.N.Vasu., Pp. 59-60
\end{flushright}
account in this regard—"The king proclaimed to all with a vow that it was his royal command that in all temples lying to the north of Gosain Kamal Ali which was the line of demarcation, between western and eastern Assam the Koches and the Mechas would continue the worship in traditional way with easy association of flesh, blood and wine, while in the south the Brahmanas would officiate. This law was to hold good in all places. The Bhotas and the Kachāris would eat formented liquor and rice."25 This indicates the facts that the forgoing Brahmanical Hinduism had not became the universal religion in the Brahmaputra valley. The great mass of the Kachāri, Rābhā, Lālung and other aboriginal tribes still held to their old tribal beliefs, just as do some of them even to the present day. No presure was put upon them to change their creed. Naranarayan even issued an order recognising the aboriginal forms of tribal worship. At the time of expedition against the Āhoms Naranarayan made a special arrangement for the performance by his Kachāri soldiers of their tribal rites on the banks of the river Sonkosh.25a The supremacy of the Brahmanas was established in modern Koch Behār and in the modern districts of Goalpārā, Kāmrūpa, Nowgaon and Darang, while in the north of the Goshain Kamal’s Āli (in eastern Assam) in the districts of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Naga hills and adjoining places the ancient customs continued to be in vogue.

To introduce and popularise the manners and customs of the Brahmanas among all classes of men the spread of Sanskrit learning was very much necessary and to write books on Hindu religion in the language of the people. Hence for this purpose king Naranarayan brought learned Brahmanas from Gauda and Kāmrūpa and made arrangements for the publication of religious books in popular dialect. DRV says at the command of Naranarayan, Purusattam Vidyāvāgisa wrote Ratnamālā a famous works on Grammer at the request of Queen Bhānumati26 of Naranarayan, Rāma Saraswati composed padas simplifying the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyāna and eighteen Purānas. In obecince to his royal behest Sankaradeva wrote the Padas of Bhāgavata

25. DRV: vv. 336-338
25a. HAG. Pp. 59-60; DRV. Vc. 326-27
26. Bhānumati the queen of Naranarayan made the following request to Vidyāvāgisa: ‘O preceptor, would you please write a book on Sanskrit Grammer following up Panini and Mahesvara’s Kalapa and call it Ratmala after me.’ Vidyāvāgisa could not disregard such a request and wrote Ratnamālā. A famous work on Grammer called Prayoga-Ratmala is still taught in many tolls in Koch Bihar and Assam. Vide, N.N. Vasu, Social history of Kāmrūpa, Voll. 11. Pp 63-64.
consisting of twelve *skandhas* in the language of the people in order to spread the cult of Hari. So also Sridhara wrote his book on Astronomy and Bakula Kāyastha translates *Lilāvati* a book on mathematics in the popular language.26a

In this way the Brahmanas and the Kāyasthas first took the opportunity to infiltrate in the Koch royal court by giving the divine pedigree to Bisu the founder of the Koch kingdom and later on the kings of the dynasty gradually patronised the Brahmanical Hinduism by establishing the Brahmana priest and scholars in the capital.

**II. Infiltration of the neo-vaishnavism:**

In Vaisnavism, Visnu is the supreme deity in any one of his several forms. In course of time Visnu came to be identical with Krsna-Vāsudeva. The Purānic doctrine of the *avaTārās* made Visnu identical with deities like Rāma and Krsna. The Mahābhārata and the Bhāgavata *Purāṇa* and the followers of the cult are called Bhāgavatas. In earlier times the deity used to be worshipped according to a procedure prescribed in a set of text known as *Pancaratra Samhitās*. The *Pancaratra* form of worship is marked by the predominance of the rituals common to the Tantric Sākta cult besides *mantra* and *tantra*. It is observed that the *pancaratra Samhitās* may be the first emergence of Sākta principles in the Vaisnava sect.27

*Kālikā Purāṇa*, though a Sākta *upapurāṇa*, exhibits a catholic outlook by eulogising Visnu-Vāsudeva in many places and the opening *mangalācarana sloka* indicates that the writer was probably a Vaisnava, for he concludes the work with a salutation to Visnu. Further, Sakti has been mentioned in several places as Visnu-māyā. Vaisnavism prevalent in Assam before the advent of Sankaradeva was mainly Vāsudevaism affiliated to the *pancaratra* cult. Again it mentions that Hayagriva-Madhava, Matsya-Madhava, Pāndunātha-Madhava and Vāsudeva and Varāha-Madhava were worshipped at different places of Kāmarūpa.28 In the later phase of Vaisnavism, known as neo-Vaisnavism, which had been propagated in the 15th-16th century onwards, stress was laid on *bhakti* and on the singing of prayer songs than on other priestly rituals.

26a 604-609.  
27. *CHAHBP.* 327.  
28. *K.P. CH.* 81-82  

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The Vāsudeva cult once prevailed in Assam is furnished by the practices of worship of Vāsudeva with caturbhuja and Vibhāvāsī in the Smarta rites till prevalent in a section of Brahmanas who follow the earlier and the Kāmarūpa school of Smriti codes in contrast to those introduced by Raghunandan of Bengal. The forefathers of Gopāla Āta living in Kalitā Rājya as mentioned by the Kathā-Guru-Charit, signify the popularity of the Vāsudeva cult in the north-eastern region of Assam. The names like Bhāgavata, Vāsudeva, Sankarsana, Harideva and Aniruddha, Kṛṣṇa, Devaki etc. found in the copper-plate grant of the Kāmarūpa kings reigning from 5th century to 12th century A.D. conspicuously point to the prevalence of the Vāsudeva cult before the advent of neo-Vaisnavism. Sankaradeva did not preach the Pancarātra cult, but has respectfully mentioned it in his Kirtana and translation of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The monotheistic bhakti cult which the neo-Vaisnavite reformers brought to the forefront was also familiar to a section of people. The writing of the pre-Sankara poet like Hemaswarasvati, Harihar-Vipra, Mādhava-Kondoli, and Kaviratna Sarasvati who flourished in the 14th to early 15th century have witnessed the evidence. Besides several Sanskrit scholars having special knowledge in the Kāvyā and Smriti work flourished in Kāmarūpa between the 11th to 16th centuries who clearly established a separate school of Smrītinibandhas. The Nibandhakaras Vedacharyya (13th century), Kavibhārati (13th century), Dāmodara Mishra (15th century), Nilambaracharya (14th century) and Piṭāmbara Siddhāntavāgisa (16th century) were well-known digest writers, whose works are still considered authoritative in respect of observing Brahmanical rites and rituals in western Assam. However, most of the smriti scholar were Vaisnavite by religious faith. The highly ritualistic and priest ridden religious rites of Brahmanical religion were considered unsuitable for the majority of

29. CHAHB, vol. III, P.229
30. KGC, pp. 317 ff.
30a. Inscriptions of Ancient Assam ; Sankar-Narayana Stone image inscription, Pp.310 ; Kāmarūpa Sasanavali, Plate no,1&2. (The Visnu Image inscription of Deopani, of 9th century A.D. reproduced in Inscriptions of Ancient Assam, plate no 2&3, Pp. 306-309.)
30b. Even Sankardeva himself very humbly acknowledged Mādhava Kandali’s superior quality as a Vaisnavite poet when he wrote “Purba kavi apRāmadi Mādhava Kandali adi pade vicrocita Rāma Kathā/Hāstra dekhya lada sara yena phade maga, Morā vaiita tehnya abastha.” meaning my predecessor, the great poet Mādhava Kandali composed the verses enalising the name of Rāma in front of whom I am like a fool. Vide. S.N. Sarma, Asomiya Sahityar Samikshatmak Itivrta, Gauhati, reprint, 2011, P. 124.

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the non-Aryan ethnic groups with little or no knowledge of Sanskrit language in which Brahmanical rites and rituals were conducted. At this juncture Sankaradeva was born in mid-fifteenth century at Ālipukhuri in the Siromoni Bhuyan family who inflicted the neo-Vaisnavite movement in Assam and Koch Behār.32

Sankaradeva came out from the Sanskrit tol of Mahendra Kandali as the most learned scholar in all branches of Sanskrit learning. After the death of his wife Sūryavati, Sankaradeva set out for pilgrimage throughout the length and breadth of India for long twelve years, in course of which he met many saintly and scholarly persons.33 In his pilgrimage Sankaradeva witnessed neo-Vaisnavite movements in different regions of India under the stewardship of Mādhavāchārya, Nilāmbarāchārya, Visnusvāmi-Vallabhāchārya, Rāmānanda and Kabir. Sankaradeva spent more than a year at Puri.

The spread of neo-Vaisnavism in Assam had already been discussed elsewhere. The new Vaisnavite movement propagated by Sankaradeva received jolts from various quarters. He based his teachings principally on the Bhāgavata Purāna and it came to be known later on as Mahāpurushiyā Dharma. Sankaradeva’s religion comprised mainly of four principles the condensed form of which are Guru, Deva, Bhakata and Nāma33a. His religion marked by a sense of broad humanism and wide democratic sentiment, had a universal appeal. It did not accept any distinctions of caste or creed. Thus among his fraternity of disciple there were Gāro, Mirī (Mishing), Āhom, Bhutiyā, Muslim, Kachārī and also Brahmins. The new religion became an open revolt against the old intellectualism of the Brahmanic philosophy on the one hand and the misguided tantricist on the other. It was therefore vehemently opposed by a section of Brahmanas particularly by the priestly class who feared that their occupation as priests in the Vedic rites and commands would be affected by the simple Nāma-Prasanga introduced by Sankaradeva. Further, they also disliked Sankaradeva’s translating the scriptures into vernacular, thereby rendering them comprehensible to all people which privilege had hitherto been virtual monopoly of the Brahmin.34

32. For details, SHTN. PP. 98-122
33. KGC. PP. 29-33
33a Bapchandra Mahanta, Sankardevar Darsan, Guwahati, 1994, Pp, 213 ff.
34. D. Nath, PP. 210 ff

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Hence the priestly section of Brahmins frequently opposed and lodged complaint against Sankaradeva’s evangelical activities to the King. Occasionally he had to face the frown of contemporary kings and received patronage also. Due to uncongenial atmosphere for the propagation of his religious faith he shifted the place of his residence along with his Kith and kin and followers, first from his ancentral place in central Assam to eastern Assam where he spent nearly twenty years and then finding the Ahom Kings hostile to his creed he shifted to western Assam and settled at Pàthbàusi at Barpeta. Finally he spent the last few years of his life in Koch Behär. Here in Koch Behär he had to contend with the hostile scholars in the court of Koch King Naranarayana at the initial stage but succeeded in winning the favour of the king by his scholarship, Poetic genius, towering personality and stredfactness to his religious ideals.35

The fast growing popularity of Sankaradeva’s new faith invited the fresh hostilities with those of the old priestly class, who could not tolerate his teachings.36 They made Sankaradeva’s teachings doggerel stressing the anti-traditional traits of his schools, and abused King Naranarayana’s ears with greatly exaggareted accounts of his activities. They also lodge complaint in the court of the King that Sankaradeva was persuading men not to worshipping the goddess Kàmàkhyà. The king being highly incensed by such disturbing reports took no time to send garàmàli (policemen) to arrest the vaisnava teacher Sankaradeva. However the king’s brother Chilarai was already inclined favourably towards vaisnavism. He therefore made an arrangement to Sankardeva’s escape before the kings Garàmàli arrived at Pàthbàusi, the Head-quarter of Sankaradeva. This may be an indication of a rift between the two royal brothers, which was gradually developed leading to the Koch kingdom after the death of Chilarai later on. Chilarai was indeed a well wisher of Sankaradeva and it was through his interest that Sankaradeva’s son Ramànanda was appointed to a government post.37 The king’s men for the initiatives taken by Chilarai did not find Sankardeva. They however apprehended two of his followers Narayan Thàkura and Gokulchanda and took them to the

35. S. N. Sarmà, pp. 210 ff
37. N. N. Vasu, P. 103; (According to Sri Sri Sankaradeva by M.Neog, Ramànanda was appointed as Head of the Kàyasthas as Kakati at Chilarai’s office. But KGC mentions he was appointed as weaver (Tanti) in the royal weaving factory. Vide. P. 233.)
capital and put to the severest forms of punishment. But they were adamant, refusing to budge an inch from their faith or to disclose the whereabout of Sankaradeva. Both of them were then sold to some Bhutiyas, who, however were impressed by their Godliness and soon released them. They were taken back to the king by two constables, who became converts to Sankara's faith. At their persuasion, the king was convinced to the innocence of the two prisoners and eventually made them free.38 The hostile camp out of frustration attempted to pour more venom into the king's ears. The enraged king once more, sent out men to arrest Sankaradeva saying—"I will cut him to pieces, throw his flesh to the dogs, make a drum with his skin and beat it with his bones." But Chilarai being senset his brother's fury sent his own men to take away Sankaradeva in a boat to his abode Phulbari.39

Very soon it reached the ears of the king that Sankaradeva had been secretly putting up with Chilarai, he then asked his brother to send Sankara to his court. Chilarai agreed to do so on condition that no harm be done to Sankaradeva and in lieu of sending Sankara, the king had to keep two of his own men in the custody of Chilarai. Naranarayan, the king accordingly did so, but was highly disturbed for an assurance why his brother General Chilarai was favouring Sankaradeva. With all of his curiosity he fixed a date and time to meet Sankaradeva in his royal court. Sankaradeva accordingly presented himself at the court with none for his help except his personal attendant. At the very first sight the king was so much impressed by his calm and peaceful appearance that he got down from his throne and entered a special chamber desiring Sankara to be conducted there so that they might have a talk between them. This chamber had a very high plinth and there was a great state leading to it. Sankaradeva recited a sloka (verse) describing the glory of the king as he ascended each step of the stair and when he stood in the presence of the king, he recited a most charming way a hymn in praise of Almighty.40 In spite of the ire that was roused in him by the fill meaning reports of Sankara's antagonists, Naranarayan was

38. Daityari, 712 ff
39. Ibid. 749 ff
40. KGC. PP. 235 f. (The verse was, "Madhu danava darana deva barang, bara barija lochana chakra dhuran .......") meaning- Glory to the Supreme God- the destroyer of demon Madhu, who is offered prayers by all other gods, the holder of the great lotus eyes, the holders of the Chakra and also the holder of Govardhana mountain, God of all the gods and the destroyer of evil designe of the crooked.)
instantaneously overpowered by the saints radiating personality, his steady physical build, and
effectful culture manifested in the sweet measures of a Sanskrit hymn and some laudatory verses
(Rājā-bhatima). He hastened to make amends for his former harsh attitude by ordering a blanket
to be brought for Sankara's seat in his presence. He now wanted to know what he could do for
the holy guest. Sankaradeva replied that all he wanted from the king was that the latter should try
to verify the allegations against him. This was, however, differed till the next day, when Sankara was
given opportunity of giving grounds for his faith in a full dress debate with the scholars belonging to
his enemy's group, equipped with heaps of manuscripts and eventually Sankara rose triumphant.41
King Naranarayana was firmly convinced of the profundity of the saint's learning and the sublimity
of the new faith, honoured him with rich presents and requested him to come to his court every
morning. The king and Sankaradeva became friends at the very first meeting and they continued to
be friend till the last. Thus having support at this back from both the king and his brother Chilarai,
Sankaradeva and his followers felt completely secure in their movement, and the Vaisnava order
thrived vigorously.42

The enemies got alarmed at the influence of Sankaradeva in the court of the king Naranarayan
and tried their best to do him harm. But all their efforts proved abortive. One day king called an
assembly of the Pandits (scholars) and asked them whether they could prepare a summary of the
Bhāgavata in the course of a day and explain it to him. They however gave him to understand that
they might do it if they were allowed eight to ten days time. Then the king put the same to Sankaradeva,
who replied that he would try his best to carry out the royal behest. Then the reformer came home
and after taking rest for sometime began to write a synopsis of the Bhāgavata. The work was
finished a few hours before day break. This book was 'Gunamālā'.43 The following day after
performing his devotional duties Sankaradeva presented himself in the royal court at the proper
time and having permission of the king he read the book 'Gunamālā'. Every one present at the
court was charmed at the simplicity and style and the sonorous music of his composition.44 As well

41. Daityari, 774 FF; SHTN. P. 119, KGC.P. 236.
42. SHTN. P. 119
43. KGC. P. 255 f
44. Ibid. p. 256.

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as they all astonished when they learnt that such an excellent book was composed in a single night. The king too pleased and gave him valuable presents and offered him the post of Gomāstā or Viceroy of Pāṭbāūshi and neighbouring areas. There after Sankara returned to Pāṭbāūshi from where his fame spread far and wide. Thousands of men came to him daily and took the “Sarana-mantra” (initiation) from him. The famous Brahmana scholars like Harideva, Dāmodaradeva, Ananta Kandoli and such other scholars also came forward to join his new movement. The cooperation of these scholars, enabled the saint to extend the sphere of his activities to the Brahmanical section which had been averse so long to the movement. Even the king Naranarayan also wanted to accept initiation from him, but Sankaradeva declined stating that being the king a person should not follow a particular path of worshipping.

At the request of the king, Sankaradeva left Pāṭbāūsi several times in order to visit the Koch capital. During these days he used to stay at Chilari’s house and present the King’s court every afternoon. With Chilarai’s request and as well as the king’s good will to the new faith the king donated lands to establish a Satra at Bheḷādivgā (later known as Madhupur) to Sankaradeva near Koch capital. Besides the king also issued a declaration permitting the free propagation of his teachings amongst subjects of the Koch kingdom. Chilarai on one occasion gave the saint a copy of a work called “Janma-Purāṇa”, which Sankaradeva had rendered into Assamese verse by Mādhavadeva. It was also the request of Chilarai that Sankaradeva had a forty-yard long piece of cloth worn by the weavers of Tatikuchi (Barpeta), depicting the early activities of Kṛṣṇa upto the killing of Kansa. Although Sankaradeva declined to give initiation to the king but Chilarai however got his initiation from the saint and became an active patron of the new creed. With such royal patronage people from all walks of life became converts to the new creed and within a short

44a. However some claims that Harideva was not a disciple, but in normal circumstantial evidences show that he took his sarana under Sankara deva. Vide, Bapchandra Mahanta, Eitiḥāṣik Pataḥbhumiṭ Mahapurush Sankaradeva. Dibrugarh, 1999, Pp, 103-04.
45. KGC, PP.280 ff
46. Ibid, P.252
48. Daintyari, 866 ff; KGC, PP. 256 ff.
49. This piece of cloth is referred as Vridavani Vasta, as it depicted Kṛṣṇa’s life in Vridavana : Vide, KGC, PP. 267 ff.
time neo-Vaisnavism became the religion of the people in the Koch Kingdom. Neo-Vaisnavism after Sankardeva influenced the later Koch kings also, particularly Dāmodara Deva initiated king Lashminarayana the son and successor of Naranarayan into Vaisnavism. Sankardeva’s great disciple Mādhavdeva and Dāmodara Deva both got the full freedom to preach the Neo-Vaisnavite faith freely in Koch Behār. Dāmodara Deva even able to keep away the king Lashminarayan from animal sacrifice during Durgāpujā.49a

III. The Koch rulers as patrons of Brahmanical Hinduism and new-Vaisnavism:

It is seen from the above discussion that both the Brahmanical Hinduism and the new-Vaisnavism had gradually infiltrated into the royal court of the Koch Kingdom. The very beginning of the Kingdom the Brahmanical Hinduism took the opportunity to get a foothold in the royal court by elevating Bisu the founder Koch king to the position of the Kshatriya of the Varnāśrama order and called him Biswa Singha, meaning the lord of the world. Immediately after his accession to the throne and having elevated by the Brahmanas to the position of Kshatriya Bisu converted himself to the Hindufold and his brother Sisu also took the name of Śiva Singha. Both of them were honourably accepted to the Hindufold. Not the royal family alone many members of the tribe also gave up their tribal designation and were elevated to the Hindu caste.

After his conversion Biswa Singha actively patronised Hinduism and encouraged the worship of both Śiva and Durgā. Śiva was sometimes involved as Bāneswara and Durgā as Kamateswari. DRV mentions that he was a great devotee of goddess Kāmākhyā and rebuilt the Kāmākhyā temple on Nilāchāl Hill near Gauhati.50 But the Rock inscription found in the garbha griha of the temple credited it to his sons king Naranarayan and Chilarai. Biswa singha however rebuilt the temple of Bhavāni (Kamateswari) at Gosāmārī within the present district of Koch Behār. As mentioned earlier, Biswa Singha then brought to his kingdom a number of Brahmanas from Mithilā and Gauda to conduct the religious rites of these temples.51 He appointed one

50. DRV, V.114
51. ABGB, opcit, P.41

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Vallavāchārya from Srikshatra as the chief priest of the Kāmākhya temple. He showed his great regard to the Brahmanic faith and so much influenced that he even sent two of his sons Naranarayana and Chilarai to Benāras for studying the Hindu scripture written by the Brahmana teachers, under one Brahmananda Sanyāsi. As well as Biswa Singha is said to have patronised the worship of Visnu also and gave gifts to the Vaisnava priests and astrologers. Besides there is ground to believe that the dynastic title ‘Nārāyan’ of the Koch kings was adopted in the intimation of the supreme deity among the Hindu trinity Nārāyan. Raghudevā the son of Chilarai who became the king of Koch Hājo was also a worshipper of Mādhava (Visnu). He rebuilt the Hayagrīva Mādhava Temple at Hājo and the Pandunātha temple near Kāmākhya and granted lands and men for its maintenance. It also appears that there were scholars studying the Bhāgavata Gītā regularly in his court. For Sankaradeva it is said to have found a manuscript copy of Bhāgavata Gītā floating on the Brahmaputra while he was leaving his native place Bordowa. However the Visnu worship was a minor cult in the period and it was also quite different from that of propagated by Sankaradeva.

Like his father Biswa Singha, Naranarayana was also a great patron of Brahmanic Hinduism. The Abhiseka of Naranarayana was celebrated according to the rites and rituals of the Hindu scripture. During his reign the Koch power reached the highest watermark. His Kingdom included the territories upto the Saumārpitha, which formed the Āhom Kingdom and in the west it crossed the river Karotog, on the south-west it included Rongpur district and part of Mymensing and on the south east it included the whole of the Dakhinkol or south bank of the Brahmaputra as far as Māyang and Dimarūa including modern Gauhati and its neighbourhood. As well as his reign also witnessed the beginning of the renaissance in Assamese culture and Koch Behār became the cultural, seat of Assam. Under the lavish patronage of this noble king the greater portion of the vast non

51a  KBI, P. 95.
52.  DRV, vv.266-267
53.  HAG, P.50, ABGB, P41; DRV, V.131
54.  SHTN, P.88
54a.  Inscription no. 5. as reproduced in the Prashya Sasanavali (ed), M. Neog Gauhati, 1074.
55.  DRV, vv. 677-687
57.  K.L. Barua, P302;
Aryan population were brought into the Hindu fold and the great literary talents and scholar including Sankardeva, assembled in the court of Koch Behar and rendered monumental service for the growth and development of the Assamese culture.  

It has been already discussed earlier that the heterogeneous sects and beliefs prevailed in the Koch Kingdom during the period of our study. The non-Hindu tribes worshipped their deities and performed their religious rites according to their own ways without any interference from the government till the Hinduisation was mainly confined to the ruling families or to a certain areas, usually in the neighbourhood of the capital. For the political purposes, mainly for the extension of the Kingdom the Koch Kings first patronised both Brahmanic and tribal worship, although they themselves accepted Hinduism and were elevated to the status of Kshatriyas by the Brahmin priests. But a major change in the existing system was brought by the neo-Vaisnavite movement led by Sankaradeva.

They spread Vaisnavism in the land and made a profound impression on the King. It is under the patronage of the Koch government that Sankaradeva founded his institution of Satra in order to propagate his teachings. With the liberal grants from the Koch court, a number of Satras were established in the Koch Kingdom. However, at the same time the King Naranarayan also imported Brahmanas from Koch Behar for the worship the Goddess in Kāmākhya temple, the most distinguished of them was Kendukalai Bapu. Naranarayan and Chilarai rebuilt the temple of Kāmākhya with bricks in 1565 A.D. An inscription in the temple bears evidence to this fact

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59. ABGB, PP. 43-45' CHAHB, vol II, PP.88-89. (Regarding Kendukalai a great debate has been advanced recently. G.Adhikary in his paper entitled Kendukalai legend, a rejoinder speaks that the Kendukalai legend was created at this time (i.e,under the reign of king Siva Singha A.D. 1714-1744.), and taking advantage of the royal power and prestige by KrishnaRām Bhattacharya himself with a view to keep away the members of the Koch royal families from visiting the temple even as pilgrim. Vide G.Adhikary, Religious Establishment of Assam, P, 51.
which eulogises the manifold qualities of Naranarayan and Chilarai. Although the reign of Naranarayan reached its climax of glory but it also witnessed a set apart of the kingdom. After the death of Chilaraya his son Raghudev the future heir aspirent of the Koch Kingdom having instigated by some officers and counsellors proceeded to Bamagar on the Bank of the river Manah declared himself King. As because King Naranarayan was blessed by a son named Lakshminarayan in his advanced age. The peace loging king Naranarayana preffered division of the kingdom. And accordingly he made over to Raghudev the territories east of the river Sonkosh and retained the western part of the kingdom for himself and his descendents. This had happened in 1581 A.D. The Persian writters called the eastern part of the kingdom Koch Hajo and the western part Koch Behār. Assamese chronicles reffered to them as Kamrup and Behār respectively.

After the division of the empire Naranarayan did not live long and died in 1587 A.D. At his death Raghudev started minting coin on his own name and declared as independent king. Thus the Koch empire, once the undisputed power house of the north eastern India, got divided into two parts. Raghudev gradually extended his kingdom in the east as far as the river Bharali in the modern Darrang district and included the old course of the Brahmaputra and Gāro hills, which now forms the northern part of the Mymensingh district of Banglādesh. The kingdom of Koch Behār with its capital at Kamatāpur included present Koch Behār and part of modern district of Dinājur Jalpaiguri and Rangpur. Raghudev was a Vaiśnava by faiths. He rebuilt the Hayagriva

60. Quoted from Gait. *(History of Assam)* P.57. He refers—Naranarayan greatly encouraged religionn. He rebuilt one temple of Kāmākhya which the Muhammadans had destroyed and imported Brahmanas from Bengal to conduct the religious ceremonies. The temple contains two stone figures which are said to be representations of Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai or Sukladhvaj. It also contains the following inscription—

"Glory to the King Malla Deb, who by virtue of his mercy is kind to the people, who is archery is like Arjuna and in charity like Dadhici and Karna; he is like an ocean of all goodness and he is versed in many Satras; his character is excellent, in beauty he is as bright as Kandarpa, he is a worshipper of Kāmākhya. His younger brother Sukladhvaj built this temple of bright stones on the Nila Hillock, for the worship of the goddess Durga, in 1487 Sak (1565 A.D.). His beloved brother Sukladhvaj again, with universal fame the crown of the greatest heroes, whoo like the fabulous Kalpataru, gave all that was devoutly asked of him, the chief of all devotees of the goddess, constructed this beautiful temple with hups of stones on the Nilla hill in 1487 Sak."

61. HAG, PP. 56
63. *KB*, PP 18 ff; *PAB*, P. 58

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Madhava Temple at Hajô and that of Pândunâth at Guwahati. He highly patronise literature and education as well.

Naranarayan was succeeded by his son Lashminarayan in the western part of the kingdom in 1587 A.D. During his period his royal court poet Govinda Mishra translated eighteen parbas of Bhâgavata Gita into Kamâtâ Kâmâru pi or Râjvanshi language. This is the only complete translation of Gita during the period in eastern India. Madhavadeva who carried forward the neo-Vaisnavite preaching of Sankaradeva once expelled by Raghudeva, took shelter at Laksminarayan’s kingdom. Similarly another Vaisnavite saint Dâmodaradeva was also sheltered in this kingdom. Madhavadeva composed Bhakti Ratnâvali, Nâma Mallikâ and Sri Krsna Janma Rahasya at his court. KBI mentions that Lakhminarayan offered full patronages to Madhavadeva to preach the Vaisnavite teachings and declared the Vaisnavite form of Hindu religion as his state religion. he even stop the animal offerings at the every royal adoration paid to God. King also patronised Siddhânta Vagis who composed Śivarâtri Kaumudi, Mantradikshâ Kaumudi, Sankarânti Kaumudi, Ekâdasi Kaumudi and Grahan Kaumudi. Another Vaisnavite saint Dâmodaradeva also spread the Vaisnava teachings in his kingdom. It is said that king Laksminarayan being highly delighted with the teachings of Dâmodara had taken initiation to Damodahrdeva. Sources witnessed that Laksminaraya founded the ‘Lulark kund’ at Varanashi and established the worshipping of Jalpeswar Siva at Jalpeswar Siva temple. The king died in 1627 A.D. During the reign of his son and successor Bir Narayan (1627-1632 A.D.) the royal court was adorned with learned scholars. With his royal patronage pandit Kavisekhar composed the ‘Kirâta parva’ of Mahâbharata. He established the Charturbhuja Vigraha (four arme Visnu) at Bheladunga village in Koch Behar and also reconstructed the Baneswar temple. Bir Narayan

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64. DRV. vv. 674, 686.
67. KBI, P. 151.
68. Ibid., P. 152.
70. Ibid., Pp. 62-65; KBI, P. 152.
71. KBI, P. 154; Rai Varma, P. 64; N. R. Ray. P. 87.
was succeeded by his son Pran Narayan (1632-1665 A.D.). He was personally the supporter of Brahmanic Hinduism. He took up temple construction work vigorously. He renovated Baneswar temple and constructed a pond near it. He reconstructed Sandeswar Shiv temple and as well as reconstructed the temple of dynastic deity Kamatswari (1665 A.D.) at Gosainmari. He also took up the renovation work of Jalpeswar temple and for which he had brought the mason from Delhi. His royal court was adorned with learned personalities who produced so many important literature of the period. In his court a forum named ‘Pancharatna’ (Five Scholars) always engaged in literary activities. Rama Rāya the author of ‘Gurucharita’ and the followers of the Vaisnave saint Dāmodaranādeva was also one of scholars of his court. Varamālī Gosāin of Madhupur was the Royal Priest and adviser of Pran Narayan. He offered Tulāpurush as well as donated Brahmottar land to a Brahman named Sri Siromoni Bhattacharya. After Pran Narayan his second son Moda Narayan (1665-1680 A.D.) became the king, as his elder son Visnu Narayan being dissatisfied with his father accepted the Islam religion and became Muhammanadans. In this context J.N. Sarker mentions in his History of Aurangzib, that Mirjumla occupied the capital of Koch Behar in the month of December 1661 A.D. The Rājā had deserted the capital leaving his people in terror. Mirjumla change the name of the town to Alamgimagar; the Muslims call to prayer, so long forbidden in the city, was chanted from the lofty roof of the Palace, and a mosque was build by demolishing the principal temple, the whole kingdom was annexed to the Mughal empire, and an officer, Isfandiyar Beg, left to garrison the capital. The Rājā, an indolent voluptuary had fled to Bhutan, but his son joined the Muslims in the hope of the throne and even offered to arrest his father. But there is no mention of the name of the king and his son. During the reign of

72. N.R. Ray, PP. 87-88; Rai Varma, P.65.
73. KBL, p. 163.
74. Ibid, P.164
74a. Tulāpurusha: A gift made by kings in which the done stood on the one side of the scale and an equivalent amount of gold and silver were placed on the other side.
75. KBL. Ibid.
76a. J.N.Sarker. History of Aurangzib, Voll, iii. 1972.P.103; (The Fathiya-i-Ibriya, tells us that the son of the Raja turned a Muhammadan, while the Alamgīrnāmah and the Rājopakhyaṇ are silent on the point. Again, there is some confusion in regard to the name of the Koch prince. The Rājopakhyaṇ P.53. says the first son of Maharājā Pran Narayan was ‘Visnu Narayan’, who died not long after his father’s assumption of the royal power. The Mughal invasion of Koch Behar took place in 1661 - full 28 year after Pran Narayan’s ascension to the throne. How can Visnu Narayan be living at that time? It may be the Mughal historian has made a confusion in regard to the name of the Koch Behar prince, and has mentioned Bishan Narayan in place of ‘Vasudev Narayan’, the third son of Pran Narayan. Vide, S.N.Bhattacharya, MNEFP. Foot note, Pp. 306-07.)
Moda Narayan the Sixth Sikh Guru Teg Bāhādur visited Koch Behār. The king completed the renovation work of Jalpeswar temple started by king Pran Narayan and as well as he granted land as Devottar for its maintainence. After Moda Narayan his brother Vasudev Narayan (1680-1682 A.D.) succeeded the throne but due to the internal crisis his reign witnessed only for two years. He was succeeded by Mohendra Narayan (1682-93) a young nephew (elder brother’s son) in A.D. 1682. Mohendra Narayan was the follower of Vaisnavism. He was fully vegetarian and always recited the Hari Nāma Prasanga. One Rāti Kāntā Mishra was his royal priest. At his request his court poet Rām Saraswati translated the ‘Bhīṣma Parva’ of Mahābhārata. After him, the internal crisis and the struggle for supremacy again swayed in the kingdom upto 1704 A.D. Taking advantage of the situation one Rup Narayana ascended the throne and ruled upto 1714 A.D. He shifted the capital on the eastern bank of the river Tursha and renamed the capital as Behār; the place was originally known as Garīhāti village (Present Koch Behār Town). His royal priest was Shidhartha Srimoni Bhattāchāryya. The king donated land to this Brahman priest. It is said that Rup Narayana constructed a beautiful temple of Madon Mohan at Koch Behār and placed a beautiful idol of the deity in the temple. However from the very begining of 18th century a larger part of the Kamatā-Koch kingdom went into the hands of Muslim rulers, which now formed a part of present Bāṅglādesh and Māláda, both north and south Dinājpur district of North Bengal and their adjacent areas of Behār.

On the other hand in the eastern part of the Koch kingdom—Koch Hájo, after the death of Raghudev Narayan his rebellious son Parikshit Narayan with the help of his uncle Lakshi Narayan the king of Koch Behār had ascended the throne of Koch Hájo. But unfortunately the greater Koch kingdom (undivided) has to face the great danger from both east and west. The imperial Mahammadans from the west and the rising Āhoms from the east. In this situation the relation between the two Koch houses also became worsen. Parikshit Narayan established marital...
relationship with the Āhom king Pratāp Singha (1603-1641 A.D. with a view to strengthen his power by giving his daughter Mangaldoi in marriage. On the other hand Lakši Narayan of Koch Behār, himself begged help from Mughal Nawāb of Dāccā. Seikh Alauddin Islam Khān. The Nawāb happily accepted the opportunity and sent one Mukarrm Khān to invade Koch Hājo. In a series of battle Lakhi Narayan assisted Mukram Khān, and combinely fought against Parikshit. Although Parikshit seeking help from Āhoms but being found conditional help, he left it and fight against the combined forces. However his army was defeated and the king himself had to surrender and was sent to Delhi as captive in 1616 A.D. But the Mughal Emperor Jahangir being pleased to Parikshit for his loyalty to pay an annual tribute honourably released him. While returning the king decided to pay homage to the Kashi Vishnath temple of Lord Śiva at the holy place of Prayāg, where he fell ill and breathed his last in 1617 A.D. After his death the control of the Koch Hājo virtually came under the Mughal commanders appointed by the Nawāb of Bengal. And the areas falling as far as river Barnadi were annexed by the Mughal power and Hājo became their administrative centre. The then Āhom king Pratāp Singha’s reign witnessed the series of Āhom-Mughal conflicts. The annexation of Koch Hājo kingdom by Mughal was not acceptable to the Koches. In 1615 A.D. Balinarayan, the younger brothr of Parikshit Narayan finding no alternative, fled to the Āhom kingdom and take shelter of king Pratāp Singha. But for the reasons of providing shelter to Balinarayan and killing of a one Mughal trader by the Āhoms at Kāliabar angerad the Nawab of Dāccā. He immediately ordered the Muhammadan forces stationed at Hājo to attack the Āhom kingdom. However at a naval battle in 1616 A.D. at the mouth of river Bharali the Āhom army seriously defeated the Mughals for which the Mughals faied to consolidate their power in Koch Hājo. After this decisive defeat of the Mughals the Āhom king Pratāp Singha installed Bali Narayan as a tributary rular of Darrang and renamed him as Dharma Narayan. The Āhom king also installed few brothers of Dharma Narayan as tributary rulers at different smaller areas. The Mughal army killed Dharma Narayan in 1637 A.D.in the battle of Singhari. A peace treaty was negotiated between Āhoms and the Mughals, by which the country west of the Bar Nadi was given up to the Mughals and the rest of the areas earlier ruled by the Parikshit Narayan were taken over by Āhoms. Dharma Narayan’s son Mohendra Narayan was installed by the Āhom king as a tributary king in Darrang. During his time the Āhom king took away Kamrup from
the Darrang king and placed it under Borphukon at Gauhati, with a mandate that Darrang king ought to discuss every important matters with Borphukon before taking any decision. From then onwards the eastern Koch kings cannot be regarded as independent rulers. After Mohendra Narayan his son Chandra Narayan became the king of Darrang in A.D.1643. In A.D.1660 he was succeeded by his son Sūrya Narayan but he was made captive by the Mughal invader Mansur Khān in 1682 A.D. and had taken prisoner to Dāccā where he was kept for 40 years. He was succeeded by his brother Indra Narayan. He was died in 1725 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Āditya Narayan. The territory of Āditya Narayan was then consisted only of that portion of the present Mangaldoi subdivision which lies south of the Gohain Kamal Āli. Three years later in 1728 A.D. his younger brother Mod Narayan seized upon two-thirds of the little kingdom and proclaimed himself Burhā Rājā (senior Rājā) relegating Āditya Narayan to the position of the Dekā Rājā (junior Rājā). From this time onwards Darrang was ruled by two rulers. From the time of Āditya Narayan and the Mod Narayan the ruling family of Darrang, sank into comparatively insignificance. They were now mere subordinates of the Āhoms and exercised no powers except such as were conferred them by the Āhom prince. 83

Although the sources witnessed the full swing of neo-Vaisnavism since the reign of Nananarayan yet the cult of Brahmanic Hinduism was also prevailed simulteniously. Raghudev’s son Parikshit Narayan was a devout follower of Brahmanic Hinduism. 84 He used to perform the worshipping of Durgā annually and as Dāmodaradeva a devout Vaisnava Brahmana, did not approve the animal sacrifice; 84a he was extermed from his kingdom who later have to take shelter in Lakshi Narayan’s kingdom. 85 Parikshit’s court seems to have flourished in learning and seven hundred Brahmanas are said to have resided in his capital. It may be mentioned in this connection that the art of clay–modelling, image of Durgā was taken to the Āhom kingdom during the reign of

84. DRV Vv 716
84a. S.N. Sarma, P.199; Moheswar Neog Rachanavali, Vp, 2$3-M Damodaradeva Chant Vv, 543-46.
85. KBI, P. 151.
Pratāp Singha from Koch Behār. Bali Narayan alias Dharma Narayan of Darrang was also a follower of Brahmanic Hinduism. He was the devout worshipper of Devi and Śīva.

Thus from the above discussion it appears that since from the days of king Biswa Singha, the Koches were the follower of Brahmanic Hinduism and the devout worshipper of Saiva and Sakti. Although Naranarayan patronised neo-Vaisnavism and had given a honourable seat to its preacher Sankaradeva and his disciples to spread the teachings of Vaisnavism among the subjects of his kingdom and himself also wanted to take initiation to Sankara, yet he did not left his traditional offerings to Saivaism and Saktism. Hence he performed the Durga Puja annually at Devi Bari of his capital. Likewise after him till the end of the power in both the eastern and western Koch kingdom the traditional Brahmanic cult was prevailed as well, though the period witnessed the spread of neo-Vaisnavism in its full sway.

86. ABSMJJC, P. 46.
87. DRV, Vv. 786, 793.