The later history of Saivism as an independent religion cannot be distinguished, as it becomes so much blended with Saktism that the latter's exaltation completely makes the former indistinguishable from the other, for which it is difficult to ascertain the independent identity of Saivism divorced from Saktism. Writing on the religions of India, Barth has observed that the personification of Sakti is not peculiar to Saivism. It is in Saivism that the ideas centering round Sakti "have found a soil most favourable for their expansion, and that they have been distorted into the most monstrous developments." It is interesting to note that as many as the entire half of Saivism is, in fact, characterised by a female divinity. As a matter of fact, the exaltation of the female divinity influences Saivism so much so that at present we can find no independent Saiva sect in Assam. Although at the beginning the spread of Saktism had put a check on the growth of Saivism, it seems, at last, a synthesis between the two had been accomplished. It becomes a peculiar speciality in Kamarupa

1. B.I., p 100.
2. Ibid., pp 100-200.
3. Ibid., p 200.
4. प्रविल असम , p 0'30.
5. प्रविल असम , p 0'30.
that Mahādeva has always been worshipped along with his consort Gaurī. Another cause of extinction of an independent Śāivism from the soil of Assam is the overpowering influence of neo-Vaiṣnāvism. But it is not difficult to find that the existence of Śiva was still felt, strongly enough even at the time of the evolution of the Vaiṣṇava movement. During this period Śiva had been conceived of not as an independent deity but as a subordinate god to Hari or Viṣṇu, whom the Vaiṣṇavites regarded as the Supreme God. In their eyes Hari or Śiva could not get rid of Hari’s illusion. Hari creates thousands of Brahmāṇas by one glance of his look and Rudra is one of the creations coming out of the single egg. Not to speak of other gods even Hari cannot understand the illusion created by Hari. In neo-Vaiṣṇavism Śiva is, it is believed, only a part and a great devotee of Hari, the Supreme Being.

A trace of the same notion has been carried out in other medieval Assamese literature, including some texts of the Ahom court. This will be discussed in a separate chapter.

At present, the scope of our survey as regards the later history of Śaivism is limited to the chronicles, biographies and the religious literature associated with the neo-Vaiṣṇavism of medieval Assam.

The Chronicles : The chronicles are comprised of two categories. One is the annals of the Koch kings of Kamarūpa and Koch-Bahār, generally known as the Rājvaśāvālyics or the accounts of royal dynasty.

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6. सब्रीदेनी दुह दुर्बलान : कामबे विशेषत: / गैरी समानितो सुदूः: स्थानस्थ अविनाशिं // तेहदु सहान असन बुर्सी, प 162
7. प्रविञ्य असि , प 0930.
8. हरमेंहुँ
9. कर्तक्कव शाल्त प्रेमग्रंथ कौटि कौटि / प्रानी विमार मधु मिठू एक ग्रंथ // हरमेंहुँ v 70.
10. बुझ्याराँत : माधव No. 7
11. हरमेंहुँ v 96. बुझ्याराँत : शंकर, No. 7.
and the other is the Burañjis, literally meaning "a store that teaches the ignorant". As regards the Rājvaṁśāvalīs Gaist points out that there are numerous old manuscripts containing some accounts of the Koch kings, "but by far the most detailed narrative yet brought to light is that contained in the Vamsāvalī of the Darrang Rājās", in which, "there is clear internal evidence of a certain disregard of facts and of wild exaggeration, so that it is impossible to rely on the narratives as fully as on the Burañjis of the Āhoms".

Most of the chronicles were written under orders of some of the Koch princes of Darrang, Bijni and Koch-Bahār. In the "Typical Selections of Assamese Literature", two chronicles written respectively by Baladeva Suryakharī Daivajña, at the instance of Rāja Sasudranarāyaṇa of Darrang, and Rati Kānta Dwija, at the instance of Khadganarāyaṇa, brother of Rāja Vismunarāyaṇa of Darrang, have been included in the group of Darrang Rājvaṁśāvalīs. The chronicles were written in verse form.

Dr. Neog has fixed the date of composition of these chronicles in about the year 1800 A.D. Rati Kānta Dwija clearly mentions the date of composition of his work in the month of Māgha of the Saka 1722, or 1800 A.D.

Dr. Neog has cited the date of the latter work in 1806 with a note of interrogation, while Dr. S.H.Sarma has fixed the date to be as 1798 A.D.

There are several other chronicles of the Koch kings. They belong to some latter dates. The Rājvaṁśāvalī No 2 of Suryadeva Dwija a descendant of MM. Pītambar Sidhānta Bāgīs, who was a contemporary of

13. Ibid., pp 48-49.
15. S.H.T., p 33.
16. Rec. Cat. As. Ms., p 132. cf. तुत कासे द्वार श्राम्य माग मारा /
17. S.H.T., p 34.
18. अस्त्राणां गोविंद सत्ताश्च विद्वत्तृत / p 191.
Sankardeva, was written by order of Qandharvannrayana Khowar of Umanag in 1840 A.D. 20 The Bijni Vamāvali, also known as Śiva Vamāvali, was written by Virūpākṣa Nyāya Bāgā as desired by Raja Balitanarayana of Bijni, who flourished in 1744-1820 A.D. 21

Most of the Vamāvali dealt with the origin of the Koch kings.

It is said that the progenitor of these kings was a Koch or Koch named Hādiyā Mandal 22, an inhabitant of Oikangrām in the Khumtāghat paraganā in the district of Gaṅgārā. 23 In course of time, he was recognised as head of twelve families of the Koch tribe living in that paraganā. It is stated that the twelve of Meshes were originally twelve Kṣatriyas and they were among the thousand sons of Sahasrārjunna. Parasurāma massacred Sahasrārjunna and his thousand sons except the above twelve, who saved themselves by accepting refuge in the jungles of Assam at the time of Parasurāma's crusade against all Kṣatriyas. They came to be known as Meshes. 24 Although, they were Kṣatriyas yet they concealed their identities by adopting Koch manners and customs, and had to take wine and flesh. 25 All of them were worshippers of Śiva. Among them, the eldest was one Damāmbu, who accompanying his wife, engaged himself in worshipping Śiva incessantly. Being pleased with his devotion, Mahēsvara took his birth in his house, in the name of Hādiyā Mandal. The new-born child was sturdy and black in complexion. He could roam about in the hills without any let or hesitation. He married Hirā, daughter of a Koch named Rāmā. Hirā was none but Pārvatī herself, who according to a curse of the sage Vasiṣṭha had to take human form. As Rāmā was a devotee

21. E.H.T., p 34.
23. H.A., p 40; Hādiyā Mandal, p 98.
of Pārvatī, the latter, therefore, took her birth in the house of the former.26 There are difference of opinion as to the name of the father of Hīrā. Gaṅgāt as well as A.W. Botham has pointed out that Hīrā’s father was Rāju,27 while N.C. Bhuyan takes him as the viceroy of Rāju.28

Whatever the case may be, the episode relating to Hādiya’s birth, as narrated in the Rajvamsavali of Rāti Kānta Wija, implies that the progenitor of the line of the Koches was a devotee of Siva. It states Ramānub’s ceaseless devotion to the deity. But this fact finds no mention in any other work of authenticity. However, it bears strong resemblance with the account of the Kālika Purāṇa, where it is stated that some Kṣatriyas, being afraid of Parasurāma, at the time of his crusade against all Kṣatriyas, surrendered to the Jalpīsa Siva and degraded to accept the nlecha tongue.29 The twelve sons of Sahasrājyam who had escaped the hands of Parasurāma, evidently came to be known as Koches, adopting the manners and customs of the Mēcha tribe.30 The term Mēcha is only a corruption of Sanskrit Mecha with primitive behavours. The identical view of both the K.P. and the Koch chronicle testifies the fact that Siva had exerted a strong influence on the line of Hādiya, right from his father’s time.

In course of time Hādiya became powerful and became the lord of twelve grāmas (villages).32 It is said that he married two girls - Hīrā and Jīrā.33 Once he was engaged in some works34 at some distance from


27. H.A., p 45; Catalogue of Provincial Coin Cabinet, Assam, p 324.
28. A.R.A.N. (p 5), an old chronicle published by the R.H.A.S Assam, in corroborating the view of the birth of Mahādeva mk and Pārvati as Hādiya Mecha mk and Hīrā respectively, refers to a curse inflicted upon Mahādeva by the sage Vasishtha. The details of the curse cannot be known at all. But it goes that Mahādeva had to accept human form.
29. K.P. 77/20ff.
his home. Hirā used to supply him food and drink always at day time. One day, after her senses, she became ancienve through Mahādeva, who in the guise of Kāliya was sitting under a sīlikha tree. It is said that Mahādeva had been invoked under the tree since long past. From the vital fluid of Mahādeva, a son was born to Hirā on the day of Visu(Bihā) of Vaiśākha in Saka 1430. As the son was born on the day of Visu, he was named as Visu or Visvāsīma. We find a similar account of the bithday of Visvāsīma in the Y.T. Here Visvāsīma has been called as Beṣhari and is said to have been born from the vital fluid of Mahādeva in the womb of a nleccha woman called Beṣ hari.

Not only the Ahom and the Koch chronicles have recorded the relationship of the Koches with Mahādeva, but the caritas or the biographies of the Vaiśāvalī saints of medieval Assam have also incorporated this. It appears from all the accounts that Mahādeva had played a significant role in moulding the religious seal of the kings of this particular dynasty.

The composers of the Vaiśāvalīs have not only made the Koches descendants of Śiva, they have depicted some such accounts and events in

33. Līla instead of Hirā in देववादि अस्तम बुरस्ति, p 173 and Irā in + . 3 p 59.
34. The Ahom chronicles have specified the work as rearing of cotton, while अक्षागुरू simply mentions that he was in the hills.
35. देववादि अस्तम बुरस्ति, p 174; In the Typical Selections., Vol. III, Part I., p 50, it was a Bel tree on the bank of the Arak-Jori, a rivulet; कालकार बुरस्ति, p 11; अस्तम बुरस्ति (कैसरामण), p 27.
36. देववादि अस्तम बुरस्ति, p 174.
37. Typical Selections., Vol. III, Part I, p 51; अस्तम बुरस्ति, p 60, त्रिवित (सामयिक) vv 2437-38, अस्तम बुरस्ति, p 57; अस्तम बुरस्ति, p 31.
38. देववादि अस्तम बुरस्ति, p 174; Typical Selections., Vol. III, Part I, p 31; अस्तम बुरस्ति (Ed. S. N. Bhuyan), p 10 differs as to the day, which, according to the chronicle, is the Visu of Āśtapā, the Typical Selections., Vol. III, Part I, p 51.
40. The account varies in a few texts.
which, it is seen, Mahādeva is closely associated with in consolidation of the power and progress of the dynasty.

Visvasiśa rose to power in 1527, according to Deodāi Asam Buraṇji. But according to Gaith, it was in 1515, in which year Visvasiśa rose to power by subduing the Saru Bhuyans or the Bhuyan chiefs of Auguri and Luki. In his invasion of the Ahom territory, Visvasiśa had to retreat to a city called Kanta. This city was like that of a Kailāsa. In the temple of the Kamatesvarī νενi, which was lying in the south-eastern corner of the city, there were several pictures of gods and goddesses, nāgas and gandharvas, and besides all these there were pictures of Harā-Gaurī, Nandī and Bhṛngī also. On the northern side of the temple, there was a temple of Śiva known as Bānestvara, whose worship could give one dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. History tells us that Visvasiśa had reached the Singari hill, in Darrang District, in course of his invasion. Bānestvara Śiva is situated in the same hill. The Vamsāvalī states that Visvasiśa propitiated there Bānestvara Śiva.

The Vamsāvalī narrates how Visvasiśa had selected his next successor to the throne from his eighteen sons with the help of Saṅkara or Saṅkara. It is said in the Vamsāvalī written by Ratī Kānta Ṭīja that Visvasiśa had seen Śiva's corporal presence after due propitiation of the deity. Śiva appeared before him as ash-besmeared, his body was as white as the colour of sphatīka. He were tiger-skin, garland of bones

42. p 175.
44. H.A., p 49.
47. Ibid., p 15.
and matted hair having a trident in his hand. The god spoke to Visvasiha that although he could not be visible to human eyes in the Kali age, yet he showed his appearance only to him for his earnest desire to see his presence. An old chronicle of Assam asserts likewise and states that Rudra showed his own appearance to Visvasiha at the age of twelve of the latter. Having seen the god, Visvasiha began to propitiate him in his different forms.

In this way we find Mahadeva's association with the royal dynasty of the Koches. The kings invariably applied the epithet "सिंहचरण कसम मधुकरस्व" to themselves in their own coins. This evidently refers to the good faith of the kings on Saivism. But we have already mentioned that the exaltation of Sakti or Devi so much engulfed Siva and Saivism that it would not be possible to ascertain the independent identity of Saivism divorced from Saktism. The two cults blended with each other in such a way that where Siva was worshipped, his female counterpart, Sakti or Devi, naturally took her seat by his side and vice versa. It appears from the Vaishnavites that although the Koch kings were said to be the descendants of Siva, they were, on the other hand, worshippers of both Siva and Durga. Visvasiha not only propitiated his father-god Mahadeva, it has been stated in the Vaishnavi that while he was a cowherd boy he used to worship the Devi or Durga by sacrificing grasshoppers. It is curious to find even that once he sacrificed a boy instead of a grasshopper. Because the boy was given the charge of collecting the insect, but as he could not find out a single one, at last, himself became the victim.

51. पुराण पुराण असम अरुण published by Lili Gogoi in the असम अग्रिया सभा पत्रिका, Vol. XII, Part III, p 16.
53. असमीय इतिहास, pp 202-203, पुस्तिका असमीय इतिहास, p 13, S.H.T., p 80.
The goddess consisted of sacrificed animals, vermillion, scent and flowers, red clothes and ornaments. It can be said of Visvamitha that he had a tolerant view towards other faiths and although he was the first Kach king to worship both the deities, Śiva and Durgā, yet he extended gifts to the disciples of Viśnu and also to the priests and astrologers.

Visvamitha is said to have reclaimed the Kāmākhya pītha and revived the worship of Kāmākhya. He had rebuilt the temple of the deity on the Hālācala hill, placing one rati of gold in each piece of brick. Thenceforth, the temple was to be known as the golden temple. The king imported Brāhmanas to the temple from Kanauj, Vrānāsi and other centres of learning to conduct religious ceremonies. There is a local tradition that before the coming of the Brāhmanas, priests from outside, "the former worshippers of the goddess were Gāres and pigs were offered as sacrifices."

At last the original golden temple was sacked by the Brāhma renegade and iconoclast, Kalā Pahār, general of Suleimān Kararani, the Sultan of Bengal, in about 1564 A.D. In the next year, i.e., in 1565 A.D., king Naravarāyaṇa reconstructed the temple and issued an inscription. The inscription goes thus to say that Naravarāyaṇa was the chief worshipper of Kāmākhya and his brother Śuklaśvajna was the chief of all devotees of the goddess. The Vamsāvalli of Rājā Lokānārāyaṇa Kōvar of

55. Kānārāyaṇa, p 51.
57. K.L. Baruā is of the opinion that the temple, which Visva-
mitha had rebuilt, was the temple of Kamatesvarī demolished by the Musalmans. Vide E.R.K., p 102. R.M. Nath observes that "perhaps the story of the damage done to the Kamatesvarī temple has by stages been linked with the Kāmākhya temple", as this latter-mentioned temple, it is said, was destroyed by Kalā Pahār. Vide J.A.R.S., Vol. IV, p 46.
60. E.G.K., p 37.
refers to the consecration of the temple after its reconstruction and states that Naranarayana, with his brother, Cilārāi, went to inaugurate the temple and sacrificed buffaloes, goats, deer, hogs, pigeons, fishes and tortoises on the occasion. Moreover, "by recording a copper-plate charter the king granted one hundred and forty persons (or families) as pāiks for service in the temple".

The reconstruction of the Devī-temple by the Koch kings evidently prove to the fact that they had great reverence to Devī and as such, they were staunch follower of Śakti, whose different manifestations are Devī, Durgā, Pārvatī, Śaḥākāli and others. But it does not mean that they followed an independent Śaktism. They followed an assimilated cult grown out of the blending of Saivism and Śaktism, and hence in that cult both Śiva and Śakti were the presiding deities.

We find in the Vamsāvalli that Naranarayana propitiated Śiva at the time of his invasion of the Ahom territory. The account relates to the worship of Śiva, both according to the Hindu scriptures as well as tribal rites. It narrates that Naranarayana, at first, performed some propitiatory rites, as are prescribed by the Hindu śāstras. But Śiva appeared before him on the first night in a dream and rebuked him for giving up of his own tribal mode of worship. Śiva, then, insisted upon him to perform worship in accordance with the accepted Kachārī rites. Thereupon the king made necessary arrangements and carried out the worship on the bank of the river Sonkola. The performance contains the

63. नारायण चरणाचारीचे दिवसाने श्रीमंत श्रीमले पुत्रांना //
ksamālakā मन्यते सधारण श्रीमकुपेश्वरः //
Inscription printed in आमवध्या उपत्रे, p 94.
64. स्वरूप चंद्र भागी मताच वरिक तथा
हरिण कैक्ष्य वेद्य तपिक्षार यथा // quoted from J.A.B.S., Vol. VI, p 5.
66. Dr. Kākati and Gait opine that the insistence was made by the king's Kachārī soldiers. M.G.K., p 21; H.A., p 287.
sacrifices of ducks and pigeons, buffaloes and boars, cocks and he-goats, offering of wine and cooked rice accompanied by the dancing of woman (deo-mālī) with beating of drums (mādāla). The worship which Naranārya-ṇa had conducted was, according to B.Nārjji, none but Kherāi. Because the Boṛa-Kāchāriya do not perform any worship except Kherāi. Nārjji says that Kherāi was the traditional form of worship in the family of Naranāryaṇa.

However, the most noteworthy point is that Naranāryaṇa later on issued an edict to legalise this tribal mode of worship. It appears from the edict that the king had recognised and legalised two distinct modes of practices to be followed in the Śiva-temples - one was the Purānic or Śaṅkri and the other was tribal. The edict goes that Koch, Meeh, Kachāri and Bhoṣa people would carry on the aboriginal form of worship with wine and cooked rice in the temples lying on the northern side of the Gehāl Kamalā road (running along the north bank of the Brahmaputra from the Koch capital to Narayamguda in the east), while the Brāhmaṇas were given the temples lying south of the road to carry on worship according to their accepted rites, i.e., Śaṅkri rites. Thus the people

67. प्रथम विभाग दीनक दिने तित्तिम जाहिर / अने आयोजन चैत्र पाचासी राज / कक्षारीर सते पुभी कोरोलै साधन / तौर जन कैसे कैसे स्वरूप लान // पथ हुंदर महात्मवे अन्तर्वाण बैला / वेला तोमा साधन सम्भार अवात्ता // सावान कोष त्रिदित तीत्तिम अन्त गिरा / जानेका साधन पन अनाम कक्षारी // हुंस, गार, मट-भात, मोहंब शूकर / ककुरा, भागाम, धाइ अन्तर // पात्रिया नायाम तथ्यामान सालव / सबारो मात भावण के पाई // तारामंगल वास्यकलेन न भाव // अधूरी-कक्षारीर साधन , p 264.

68. M.G.K., p 21.

69. जोलूर नमुखा अनंत बहुर सोमा नार / उंचर फारे आके अकह ककराल // सेहिफारु दुर्लक आखे यम गन / सोले मेघे पुरानी हें गनरों कालसन // प्रवात करे घुटा जुमनगर नरां / प्रांग लालचन्दन मेघे अभी पुरानिंह // शेष ककराल ये तनु मट-भात साहित / माइर कारलो मोक सोरा ठाँड़ा दीयार // तारामंगल वास्यकलेन न भाव //
were ordered to practise religion in accordance with the rules mentioned in the edict. It appears that the king favoured both the practices — the śātrika and the tribal. The latter practice thus legalized is akin to that of the Tāntrik form of worship, which upholds the use of wine etc.

The Vāmaśāvālī directly and distinctly mentions some of the practices observed by the kings. The caritas or the biographies of the Vaiṣṇava saints testify that the kings made sacrifices of animals to the gods and the goddesses. It is stated that Śaṅkaradeva refused to initiate Haranārāyaṇa in neo-Vaiṣṇavism on the plea that as a king, he, whose path was of the pravṛtti marga, had to extend reverence to various gods and goddesses, on the one hand, while, on the other, he could not avoid sacrificing of ducks and he-goats. The offerings of wine and meat in front of gods and goddesses are characteristically Tāntrik. Gait has rightly commented that the observances of the Koch kings in adhering Saktism were based on the Tantras. The orthodox opinion is not only correct to this particular cult but would be just as regards the cult of Śiva too. In this period of medieval Assam, Tāntrik-Buddhism had probably influenced the religions of the state. The Vāmaśāvāla practices of Tāntrik-Buddhism could find a fertile ground in the observances of the tribal people. Because the tribal people were habituated, as they are at present, to wine and flesh. The goddess Tārā, who is supposed to have come from the Bhoto country or Tibet, with all obscene practices associated with her worship, had travelled in Assam probably after the 12th century A.D. It is, therefore, the edict of Haranārāyaṇa categorically allowed

71. अभयुर्दि, p 251; अभयुर्दि राजा (४१४ ए०) व १५७०।
the Bhutas to take wine and cooked rice along with worship the Kasharils and other people. 74

Now we can summarise that by legalising the tribal practices, Haranarayana gave his assent to recognition to Tantrikism. The cult of Siva flourished in the period was evidently Kairatica, as pointed out by Mr. Kakati.75 The two distinct modes of worship associated with the cult indicate two distinct forms of Saivism. The system in which the Kairatica practices were included was Tantrik Saivism. But the high-caste Brahmans could not accept this particular system, and, therefore, they were allowed to observe Sastri or Orthodox Saivism.

Siva was propitiated in his linga form. Bhumasana Wija refers to 'King's stone', which, according to Mr. Neog, is indicative of some Siva lingas worshipped by Haranarayana.76 In this respect, an interesting account is found in an old chronicle of Assam, a part of which was published 77 by Lilâ Gogoi under the caption - एथमा पूर्णिमा अप्सर्सू (an old chronicle of Assam). The chronicle narrates that Rudra showed his own appearance to Visvasishha, at the twelfth year of the latter's birth and said to him, - "Oh son! Don't be afraid of me. You will find a monkey, with a sword made of wood and a shield made of cain, in a banyan tree in the forest lying on the north. The monkey, when you call for, will come to your hand. You will kill the monkey, and taking out a bone from his head propitiate it regarding it as mine own image. Respect the bone as 'Hanumantī Rāga', as it is the symbol of your kingship.

74 औरत काँचारी ये तत्त भूत-भात स्वाभि / मातिर कारणे मीक्ष सोला होंदा हिदिबि /
Tarrang Rajvatisvali quoted in पुराण कामकथा ऐसे ०, p 87.
75 पुराण कामकथा ऐसे ०, p 86.
76 S.H.T., p 80 in 81.
77 अत्सम साहित्य समा पाँचेका ,Vol. XIII, Part III.
Whichever direction you desire to invade, worship me in the 'Hanumanti Nagha', after making one samkalpa to that direction.\(^78\)

A danda is generally a round piece of stick having its length and looking like the male organ of generation. The Hanumanti Nagha was possibly like that. Therefore, we can take it for an emblem of Śiva, a linga.

The Āhoms chronicles known by its Āhoma name Buraṣīs are included in the second category of chronicles. These chronicles supply us with more informations about the later history of Śaivism. The great god of the non-Hindu Āhoms was Īndra\(^79\), known by his Āhoma name Langdān. He is said to be their progenitor. There are several accounts as regards the birth of the Āhoms kings from him.\(^80\) Even then they showed great reverence to Śiva also. The Āhoms, in general, pay respect to him as Budhagosañ or Budhāṅgariyā.\(^81\) Lila Gogoi opines that originally the Āhoms were followers of Taoism, promulgated by Lao-tse, the Chinese philosopher, and they believed in sacrifices of animals.\(^82\)

The Āhoms in their first entrance in Assam under Sukāphā had met people of Chutia, Bārāhī, Kachārī and Merān tribes in different places of the state. These tribes had followed a primitive form of Śaivism. The Kachārīs, in particular, practised this form of Śaivism with sacrifices of animals and birds and by offerings of wine and cooked rice.\(^83\) We have already discussed at this some of the practices of the Āhoms as narrated in the Darrang Bājvaśāvalī.

The Boço-Kachārīs worship a god known by their tribal name as Bāthau Barī or Bīrāi. He is equated with the Hindu god, Śiva. Late R.N.
Brahma says that the Boço-Kachāris have been practicing the worship of Śiva since long past. B. Bārjālī observes that the worship of Śiva was the system of religion of the old Boço-Kachāris. The deity is known to them by several names, such as Gīlā Maṃrā, Khaīrāi Bairāi - Śri Nārāī Bairāi (Cībrāi), Bāthau Bāilī etc. Among the Chutīā-Barāhī and Veerī-Chutīā the local names for Śiva and Śakti are Budhā-Budhī and Gīrā, Gīrāi or Pīvādemā respectively. The Boço-Kachāris worship Śiva with a cock burnt in one side along with a pitcher of wine. Sukāphā met some of these people of non-Aryan tribes and there was a strong tradition of primitive Āaisvaism among them. Sukāphā or the Āhomes could easily cope with these tribes, not only for some other reasons but also for the reason that they all believed in sacrifices. Thus easy fusion of races could easily be taken place between the Āhomes and the non-Aryan tribes. The historian Prime Minister, Āṅā Budhagohāi writes: "Sukāphā had greater regard for the abilities and personal qualities of the Chutīās, Barāhīs and Morāps when he met at different places, than towards his own followers. Since that time there was an admixture of blood amongst and their children were of mixed origin as the first Āhomes had not brought their wives when they came from Nārā, and as they accepted wives only when they came here." The process leads to the incorporation of the families of Barāhī, Morāp and Chutīā into the Āhom tribal system. Naturally, some of the beliefs and practices and other cultural traits of the former tribes might have influenced the latter.

We can find a loose conception of the Vedic Budra with the Āhomes.

84. अस्म-साहित्य-संबा पत्रिका , Vol. XIII, Part II, p 117.
85. बुढ़ी आचारीय समाल , p 215.
86. Ibid., p 215.
87. उपलब्धियाँ: Preliminary Introduction, p viii.
88. बुढ़ी-आचारीय समाल , p 232.
89. दौरानां अस्म सूर-स्री , Introduction, pp xiii-xiv, text in para 151 of the chronicle; see also सत्सारी अस्म मुर-स्री (1st chronicle), p 4; H.A., p 2.
An account goes to narrate that God had created four persons as his sons. They were Phāshāngdinkhunnyeu, Shengchāphāphākam, Shengkāmphā and Ngingao-khām or Phurā. He said to his third son Shengkāmphā, "I put you in charge of eight millions of thunder". We can equate Shengkāmphā with the Vedic Rudra, as he is also represented as the possessor of brilliant shafts.

The Hindu gods were later on specialised in their functions. So also, when Shengkāmphā met his death and became an evil spirit for his own fault of doing against the will of God, Lengdon or the Hindu Indra became the lord of eight hundred thousand thunders.

Apart from this, we can find a good deal of evidences from the Ahom Buranjīs as regards the popularity of the cult in the Ahom rule. A chronicle commences with the invocation of Siva in its prologue. Sukāphā established his capital at Carāideo Hill in the Saka year 1185 or A.D. 1263. The Barāhis and the Morāns invited him to settle there. Dr. Neog points out that the place Carāideo was regarded as sacred and it was a place of pilgrimage on the pre-Ahom period. There were two temples at CarāIDEO. One of the two was known as Deosāl and the other was called Lāngkuri Do'1 or temple. Lāngkuri is an Ahom name ascribed to Siva. As such it was a Siva temple and it was there perhaps even before Sukāphā had entered Assam.

A chronicle narrates that Sukāphā had sent four men from Carāideo to proceed towards a place called Phatāsīl. There they could see a

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91. Ahom Burañjī, p 2.
92. Ibid., p 2.
93. RV.VII, 46/3.
94. Ahom Burañjī, p 2.
95. Ibid., p 6.
97. Ibid., (2nd chronicle) Para 117; According to the 2nd chronicle CarāIDEO is also known as Bhagācala and Nilamāhava, p 6.
98. (2nd chronicle) Para 155.
99. Ibid., p 41.
100. Ibid., p 41.
101. (2nd chronicle) Para 118.
gigantic figure, having jata (matted lock) and grey beard and moustache, sitting on a high bhested. The man told them, "Tell your king that I have made him king at Saumārapītha. I am Mahađeva." Having heard this one of them kicked his heel on the earth and began to reply in taunting words. In consequence of that he had to die of blood vomiting. Then the other three persons being afraid of prostrated before him. The persons then ordered them to inform their king to worship him daily with offerings of thirteen boars. Moreover, after this event Mahađeva appeared before Sukāphā at night in a dream, for which the latter began to enquire the former and could hardly find him out in the hill. Thenceforth, Sukāphā began to worship the deity daily with animal sacrifice.

In the days of Suhungmung Dihinglā Rajā, also known as Oparjanā Dihinglā Rajā (1495-1539), the Kachāri king demanded from the Āhoms the lands lying south on the bank of the river Nikhau to be included in his own territory. On the other hand, the Āhoms also demanded the same area as their own. A battle took place between the Āhoms and the Kachāris. At last, to settle the dispute both the parties agreed to perform two experiments. According to a second experiment, it is said, the Āhoms and the Kachāris agreed to perform a sacrifice in the temple at Devagrāma before the god Mahađeva. The agreement was made that whichever party would be able to cut the neck of the animal in one stroke that would get the land. According it was done, and the man belonging to the Āhom king decapitated the head of the animal in one stroke. The Kachāris, as they could not even strike off the head attempting four times had to leap back, according to the agreement, to the other side of the river Dhanāri.

The Āhom king, Chāophā Susengphā alias Budhisvarganārāyaṇa alias

102. Ibid., Para 140.
103. Ibid., Para 140.
Pratap Simha (1605-1641), is said to have propitiated Siva before he was installed as a king. According to a chronicle, when he was made king by his nobles, he said to them, "There is a devil in me and how will it be possible for me to conduct the affairs of the state when I am possessed by that devil." The king then appointed Brahma priests to offer prayers for the removal of the devil from his person. A temple was constructed on the bank of the river and Brahma priests, dancers and musicians, readers of the Puranas, and musical instruments were dedicated to this temple. It was from that time of Pratap Simha that Brahma priests were for the first time employed in the temples. Before him in the days of Khoraj Raja worship was conducted according to the Ahom rites.

The above chronicle furnishes a most important point. The chronicle states that the Mahesvara Ghar or Siva temples came into use from the days of Pratap Simha. Thus it evidently refers to the adoption of Saivism by the Ahom kings and marks to the tradition of erection of Siva temples by them. Further it signifies the formal Hinduisation of the Ahoms, as the chronicle mentions that the previous Ahom rites were supplanted by the Brahmanic rites.

The patronages of the Ahom kings in respect of the erection of temples are well-known. The Ahom chronicles have supplied several other instances in this regard. It is a fact that most of the temples erected during the Ahom rules were of Siva alone. Pratap Simha has been credited as being the first Ahom king to erect Siva temple. He rebuilt the broken temple at Sital-negheri and reinstalled the Bhalalinga there. Sital is

104. अञ्चली आलि, p 40.
105. अक्षम बुरेस्ती (कुकुमार), p 37.
106. Ibid., Introduction, p xiii, text pp 36-37.
107. अक्षम बुरेस्ती (कुकुमार), p 37.
108. Ibid., p 37.
109. Ibid., p 37.
a corrupted form of the word Sivatal. The king also rechristened the place as Devargao, at present known in its corrupted form of Beraga, meaning the village of God (Siva). In the Vividha Khandha Buranji No. 4, Siva is said to have taken his corporal presence within Pratap Sisaa's territory at Devargao. Mahadeva told the king in a dream that nobody should ascend high to his temple except the son of Sakeekaa Ganaka. The king then employed five hundred men in the service of the temple, and gave not only elephants and horses to the temple, but also constructed it in Saka 1549 or A.D. 1627. He employed Bhushar Agamacarya, a learned Brahmana descended from a Brahmana family of Kanyakubja, as the priest of the temple and gave him the title of Barthakur. The Vamssavali of the Agamacarya or Barthakur family states that the family was appointed to conduct the worship of Siva in his linga form in the temple. The linga is about 3 feet in height and about the same in circumference. It is known as Banalinga, about the origin of which we have discussed elsewhere. The linga is embedded in the centre of a large flat stone, on which are carved a number of Siva lingas. The Ahom kings paid great reverence to the temple and its presiding deity. They called the deity by the name of Bar Bopai, meaning Great Father. It was a tradition among the reigning kings to take daily meal only after getting the Mirmalya of daily puja conducted in the temple. The people engage in the service of the temple numbered seven hundred, which include Brahma-

112. Ibid., p 10.
113. Included in ñrûdhāya (Assam, 1851), pp 162-173.
114. ñrûdhāya (Assam, 1851), para 287; Assam Buruji, p 28; Assam Buruji (Assam) , p 41.
117. Ibid., p 10; pataki Assam, p 87.
118. Pataki Assam , p 67.
120. Ibid., p 13; Ibid., p 12.
121. Ibid., p 12; Pataki Assam, p 81.
nas, Śūrās, musicians and female dancers, potters, fisherman and others.

Not only the Ahoms but the Kachari kings also worshipped the deity of the temple. It is stated in the chronicle written by Maniram Dewan how Siva-worship was conducted with wine and flesh in this temple under the auspices of the Kachari kings. In the temple under the auspices of the Kachari kings.

The erection of Siva-temple at Butgali and the gifts to the service of the temple exhibit Pratap Simha's great devotion to Siva. Another instance of this his faith to the deity can be found, as narrated in a chronicle, at the time of Muslim invasion of Assam in Saka 1597 or A.D. 1615. The Mogol army came under Sayad Hakim and Sayad Mir Abu Bakar accompanied by Sarja, the son of a Zamindar living near Dessa, later on became the thānādar at Panjān and Gambatī, to invade Assam.

The Ahoms met them at the mouth of Bhorali. The first battle of the Mogals caused a heavy loss to the Ahoms, for which the Ahoms had to leap back to Gambatā. Having heard of this defeat, king Pratap Simha went to propitiate Siva in the temple. At night Siva appeared before him in a dream and told him that he would go himself to the battlefield with sword and soldiers and kill the Bangals (Mogals).

The Ahoms had a clear conception of Siva's being as benevolent. It is said in the Sāhāría Buraṇjī written by the Prime Minister, Atan Buraṇghāi, that in the pradhvani primal Sayd Mabānēva swallowed poison to save the gods and the demons from fear. This is evidently the Purāṇio conception of the deity.
Next to Pratāp Simha we find mention of king Gacchāhar Simha (1618 - 1646 A.D.), who had an aversion to Hindu religion. However, he was well-known as benevolent builder of temples of Lāngkuri or Bumāgosai at Māibelā, Carēdeo, Bahāi, Umānanda and Vasiṣṭhārasāma. These temples according to Hindu faith, belong to Śiva. During his reign the temple of Śiva at Umānanda was constructed by Chenkāk Gośaṇa Samākai Barphukan, the king's Viceroy at Guwahati, in the Saka year 1616 or A.D. 1704. Śiva is said to have dwelt in this temple in the form of Bhaiyānāga. Inside the temple, there is an Anādi Śiva linga and an image of Umānanda with ten hands riding in a Bṛhaspāta. The image is made of silver. Gacchāhar Simha donated an inscription to the temple in the Saka year 1616. Till to the present time sacrifice by wrenching the neck is current in the same temple.

Gacchāhar Simha also constructed the Śiva temple at Vīravatātha, Tempur in 1685 A.D., four years after his accession to the Ahom throne. He issued a copper-plate inscription to the temple. Here it is said that the king donated four Brahmans, forty paikṣāṇi of the Śūra caste, eight nāṭīs (female dancers), twenty purāṇa of land and some ornaments to the temple. Gacchāhar Simha had great respect for the Śaiva and one chronicle records that at the second ēśaṇa on the night of Friday, the twelfth of Pūha, 1612 Saka or 1690 A.D., after recovery from illness in 1689 A.D., the king performed a sacrifice at Vīravatātha with the help...

132. Śiva is popularly known as Lāngkuri or Bumāgosai.
133. A.B.H.T., p 228; असाम कुर्सुकी (संदर्भात्), p 60.
134. T.L.A., p 50; पवित्र असम, pp 227-228; असाम कुर्सुकी (संदर्भात्), p 60.
136. Ibid., p 16.
137. Ibid., p 228.
138. Ibid., p 228.
139. Ibid., p 16.
140. Ibid., p 184.
141. Ibid., p 184.
of one hundred and eight Brahmanas.\footnote{142} It is said that two persons - "Katyayana Bhaṭṭacaryā and Mākalimara made offering of til and kusa and blessed the king with the longevity of a hundred Brahmanas."\footnote{143}

Next to Cāḍācārī Śiśha, his son Rudra Śiśha, the most illustrious Abha monarch, ascended the throne in 1696 A.D. He was also credited with the responsibility of erecting Śiva temples of Huḷḷeśvara (1705 A.D.), Kuṇḍākesvara (1697 A.D.) and Banḍesvara (1705 A.D.) in Darrang District.\footnote{144} He completed the construction of three dome-shaped temples on the bank of Jeyṣāgar in 1622 Saka and installed images of Vigna, Śiva and Rāiva and others in those temples.\footnote{145} It is said in a chronicle\footnote{146} that Rudra Śiśha showed great reverence for Mahādeva although he took his initiation on Harideva Gosāī of the Ānāṭi Sutra, a Vaisnavas convert. Tradition goes that the king worshipped a Śiva-linga made of one 'saer' of soil with flower mixed with sandana, incense and ablation. Sometimes fire coming out of Śiva's image is said to have burnt the Vilva-leaves used for the worship. The king adored Mahādeva as 'Bopā'. Further, the chronicle narrates that Mahādeva gave the king an indication of his death when the latter reached Gaubati on his march against the Nagals.\footnote{147}

Śiva Śiśha, who ascended the throne in 1714 A.D., like his father Rudra Śiśha, also built Śiva temples of Umāśana (1741 A.D.), and Rudrapada (1730 A.D.) in Darrang District, Puṇḍīgaśīr Thēm at Golāghāṭ, where Śiva has been propitiated along with Umā, Cepesvara (approximately in 1725 A.D.), Varṇesvara and Varṇagoevara (approximately in 1750 A.D.) in the District of Kāmarūpa.\footnote{148}

\footnote{142} Tungkhungīā Buraṣājī, Para 41.
\footnote{143} Ib., Para 41.
\footnote{144} दिबैल असम , pp 196, 180, 179.
\footnote{145} Tungkhungīā Buraṣājī, Para 55.
\footnote{146} असम भुरागु (संहरामसेन ), p 67.
\footnote{147} Ib., p 68.
\footnote{148} दिबैल असम , pp 185, 178, 93, 237, 239.
Like their predecessor, kings Susenphā Pramattā Simha (1744 -
1751 A.D.), Suremphā Rājesvāra Simha (1751 - 1769 A.D.) and Suhitpunda-
phā Gaurināth Simha (1769 - 1785 A.D.) also patronised the constructions
of Śiva temples at different places of the Āhom territory. King Pramattā Simha is said to have raised a temple at North Gauhati on the spot where Ruḍrā Simha breathed his last. In the last year of his reign the temple was raised and "an image of Śiva named Ruḍrāvāra was placed in the
temple, and lands and pāiks were endowed for the maintenance of the tem-
ple on the system of Devottara tenure".  

The image was a B Śiva-linga. The king constructs also a temple at Sūkresvara in 1744 A.D. During
the days of Rājesvāra Simha, the temple at Bārūṭa was damaged in the
flood of the Brahmaputra river. Therefore, he undertook to build the
temple on the top of a hill, but he could not install the lingas in the
temple. Later on his successor king Laksāmī Simha installed the lingas
in the temple during his reign. This king took initiation in Śiva-
mantra from Rāmānanda Bhattācārya, who was a teacher of the king in his
childhood.  

The Āhom kings were not only responsible for the construction of
numerous Śiva temples in the State, but were also liberal in making
endowment and land grants for the maintenance of the temples. Some
of the land grants were specially meant for the establishment of Śiva
temples. Apart from the documents relating to the construction of
Śiva temples by the Āhom kings all over the State, we have records of
their coins, which testify to their devotion to the lotus feet of Śiva.

149. Tungkhunglā Burañjī, para 51; असम पौरण पूर्णिमा, v 405; अमरकोटा सार, p 44
150. पाञ्चल असम, p 233.
153. पाञ्चल असम, p 38.
154. पाञ्चल असम, p 268.
156. Ibid., p 93.
It is mentioned in the coins that Jayadhvaja Siônha (1654-1665 A.D.) and Gâkradhvaja Siônha (1665-1670 A.D.) were devoted worshippers of Hari-Hara and Siva-Râma respectively, while the kings right from Ruâra Siônha to Jogesâvara Siônha were worshippers of Hara-Gauri. From the coins of Ruâra Siônha it appears that he was a devoted worshipper of Siva. His father, king Gâkâhara Siônha was undoubtedly a follower of Siva as he was adoring to the feet of Lord Siva attributing himself as "श्रेष्ठीशिवप्रपंचय परस्य" in his coins. In some of the coins of Râjesâvara Siônha, conventional use of Hara-Gauri was supplanted by Mahâsvâra. However, a reading of the coins will indicate that almost all the Ahom kings were worshippers of Siva.

It appears from the accounts that the Ahom kings were great patrons of Saivism. They exhibit the zeal raising extensively many Siva temples within the Ahom territory and minting coins showing their devotion to the feet of Siva. Galt has justly remarked that "Saivism was also a popular religion during the rule of the Ahoms. In spite of the success of Saikârdeva's movement, Saivism could count among its adherents king like Pratâp Siônha only shows its popularity".

The characteristic trait in the manifestations of Siva in the period under review is an important aspect to be surveyed. One chronicle incorporates a stotra of Mahâdeva, in which the characteristics of Saivism peculiar to Kâmarûpa (Assam) have been revealed. The peculiarity is that Saivism although familiar in other countries too, Assam receives special

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157. असमीया संस्कृति, p 193.
159. असमीया संस्कृति, 195.
160. Ibid., p 194.
mention for the fact that here Śiva is worshipped along with his consort Gauri. Even now, Śiva is worshipped in almost all the temples along with his wife. On the other hand, at the time of Devī-worship a place is given to Śiva besides her, so that Śiva would not be deprived of getting offerings from the devotees of Devī. This is due to the assimilation of both the cults. History tells us that king Śiva Sinha (1714-1744AD) was officially converted to the Śakti faith. He accepted a Śakti Guru, Kṛṣṇa Rāma Bhattachārya, also known as the Parvati Gosāi, whom his father Rudra Sinha summoned from Nādi of Bengal sometimes he passed away. The chronicle records that once Chitra-Bhangas Yuga (loss of the throne) befell on Śiva Sinha, for which he made his Chief Queen - Phuleśvari Kāsārī the Bar Rājā of the state. Phuleśvari Kāsārī had a consuming zeal for the Śakti cult. She perpetrated various misdeeds. She caused the images of all the Vaiṣṇava temples to be thrown into the river Brahmaputra and substituted images made of stone and brass in these temples. A struggle in consequence broke out between the followers of Śakti and Vaiśṇa for survival. The Śakti faith, as it was patronised by the reigning king, triumphed over the Vaiṣṇavas. In the later part of the Āhoma rule, i.e., from the time of Śiva Sinha onwards, numerous Śakti temples were constructed and patronised to flourish. Thus Śakti gained a distinct foothold of the Saiva cult, and as a result, worship of both Śiva and Śakti became leading religious tendency of the period.

It has elsewhere been pointed out that the worship of Śiva had been conducted both by the Āhoma rites and Śaivaite rule. According to the Āhoma rites the vestatics contained in the worship were one each, four

162. এখানকার মিত্র বক্তৃতা (ভিট, এখন)।, এক্স পা. ২৮৫।

Vide: কাব্যোথৈ কামান্তং কামীপ্রসন্নং ভ্রমণ-কামাস্তা।
সূত্রি সন্তুত্তম সন্তুত্তম সমুচ্ছলি মাত্রার।
মহাত্মা ন প্রস্তাগ কামে তত্ত্বনামে মাত্রাসন্নিহিত।
কোনে সম্বন্ধিত কি? স্থানের অর্থনিবাস।
Human sacrifice was unknown in the temples. Of course, Devil was worshipped also with human bloods. During the reign of Pratap Siha, when the Mogals came to invade Assam in 1615 A.D., the Ahoms captured one Karmasand, son of Satarajit, Karmasand, and some other prisoners were used as objects of sacrifice before the Goddess Kamakhya. There were other references also of victims to the Goddess Tamresvari at Sadiya.

The employment of Nati in the Siva temples was another feature in respect of the cult of Siva. The institution of Nava-Dahi or Nava-natī was not unknown to Assam in the past. From the days of Varasāla of the Salastambha dynasty or still at least from the 9th century A.D., the institution was in vogue in ancient Assam. The Ahoms gave it a formal recognition, and thus the Ahom Burañijis have recorded numerous dedication of natis to the temples. Perhaps the institution was also a most living one during the days of the Ahoms. History records the dedication of dancers to the Mahesvara Char by king Pratap Siha. Further it records the stealing of three natinis by Satarajit from the temple at Visvanātha, the presiding deity of which was Siva. In this context, it is also said that Satarajit stole away all the sets of gold as well as silver ornaments of the deity. The stealing of natinis as well as ornaments was one of the causes of war between the Ahoms and the Mogals. The Assam Burañji recovered from the house of Sukumar Mahanta records the incident assigning its time to the first defeat of the Ahoms in the hands of the Mogals. The date of the occurrence is taken as being 1712 A.D.

163. अमोल जाति ., p 44.
164. H.A., pp 110-111; असम बुरुधी (सुकुमार ), Para 100.
165. असम बुरुधी (सुकुमार ), Para 51.
166. देउधारु असम बुरुधी , Para 55; असम बुरुधी (सुकुमार ), Para 104.
167. शतसरी असम बुरुधी (3rd chronicle), Para 168. It may be that the natinis dedicated to the temple were three in numbers, which the chronicle records as all the natinis.
168. शतसरी असम बुरुधी (3rd chronicle), Para 163, असम बुरुधी (सुकुमार ), Para 104.
169. शतसरी असम बुरुधी (3rd chronicle), Para 163, देउधारु असम बुरुधी , Para 55.
by a few scholars. But it should actually be 1615 A.D.  

There are other references of the dedication of nātīs to the temples in the Ahom chronicles. H Gādākhāry Simha (1681–1696) raised the Śiva temple at Visvanātha in 1685 and issued a copper-plate inscription, wherein the king records the grants of Brahmānas, pāiks from the Saṅra caste, lands and eight nātis in the service of the temple.  

The institution of Devadāsī seems to have attained great prominence during the days of Siva Simha and that this king had married a Sansārali Ṣwarī Dvārī, daughter of a Naṭ family from Kalugā – Cinātali near Sibsāgar. She obtained the position of the Chief Queen or Bar Rajā. She was primarily responsible for ushering havoc in the religious world of medieval Assam. This particular instance indicates that the Devadāsīs or the nātīs were not merely temple-dancers, they were , on the other hand, very much powerful in the domain of religion as well as politics.  

Pointing out the origin of the institution of Devadāsī, Mr. P.C. Chaudhury holds that the institution developed in Assam under Tāntrik influences. He observes that many literary works, "particularly the Tāntrik works make references to the institution of Devadāsī or temple-dancers"in the service of the main object of worship, particularly in Śiva temples". As such Śaivism flourished during the Ahom kings was more or less Tāntrik in character. It is evident from the performances they had observed in worshipping Śiva, about which we have already discussed. One chronicle refers to Āśik mean the worship of a stone-
image of Bhairava, an aspect of Śiva, with twenty silver coins, a pair of black goats, eight pairs of duck, eight pairs of pigeon and others. The Bhairava was residing on the west of the gate of the Kanatā king's palace. The reference indicates that the cult of Śiva was then something like that of the religion of the Kirātas state in the I.T.
CHAPTER III : EVIDENCE FURNISHED BY THE BIOGRAPHIES OF THE VAISHNAVA SAINTS OF MEDIEVAL ASSAM.

The caritas or the biographies of the Vaishnava saints of medieval Assam form a branch of literature having great merits in respect of its subject-matter, which includes not only the life and teachings of the Vaishnava saints but also a depiction of vivid picture with social, religious, political and economic colours of medieval Assam. Caritas in general are the narrations of the story of the Masters of the Vaishnava revival, cultivated in the Vaishnava cireles. The Kathāguru Carita\textsuperscript{175} informs us mark bow this was cultivated in medieval Assam. Thus a comprehensive biography of Śāṅkara-deva as well as his six apostles came into existence.

From the biographies of the saints we can get some informations regarding the cult of Siva in Assam. It is found that the birth of Śāṅkara-deva, the Master of the Vaishnava movement in Assam, is itself related to Śāṅkara or Siva. It is narrated in the caritas that Śāṅkara-deva was born as a boon of Siva.\textsuperscript{176} According to the narration, Śāṅkara's father, Kusumbara, had no children, for which he was advised to adore Siva, which he

\textsuperscript{175} pp 1-2.
\textsuperscript{176} युवायरित ( रामचरण ), 
Chap. II, आचार्यकृष्ण, p 20, पुराणम् श्रीसाक्षीभवे 
( धैर्यारित ), v 27, श्रीशाक्षीभवे ( भूमिका ), v 16.
Kusumbara invoked the deity by observing sastric performances. According to the narration of Bāmacaraṇa, Kusumbara invoked the deity in his different aspects – such as Trinayana, Pasupati, Lord of Pārvati, Śūlaśāri, Mahēsvara, Saḍāśiva and Bhūtanātha. He prayed the God: "Homage to thee, the Lord, the Destroyer of the world. Thou art the Great God, bennignant always, the Lord of the world. There is nothing except thee, who art the Liberator of the fallen." Later on Śiva appeared before Satyasandhyā, the wife of Kusumbara, in a dream at night and begged her a room for him. The dream was fulfilled and a son was born to Satyasandhyā. The son was given the name of Śaṅkara, an epithet of Śiva, as he was born as a boon of Śaṅkara himself.

Śaṅkaradeva was regarded as an incarnation of Śiva. The Gaurilā or the biography of Nāmodardeva narrates a story in this regard. The narration goes that once upon a time Brahma, Hari and Hara assembled on the mount Mahipūta with a view to discuss about the welfare of mankind in the Kali Age. Hari asked Śiva to incarnate as Śaṅkara to propagate the religion of devotion, which could be practised even by the Śāra and the females. He would be accompanied by Brahma as Mahādeva Mādhava to assist him in his work. Hari told them that he would himself follow them and take his birth as Nāmodara. In the biography Śaṅkara is thus said to be an incarnation of Śiva himself.

Although there was a strong ṛṣī tradition of begetting children...
through the propitiation of Siva as well as Candi in the family of Kaus-
abara, we find certain instances in contrary to this tradition in the life
of Sa\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}kar\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}deva. In the introductory note at the top of this chapter we
have already mentioned the prevailing outlook about Mah\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}deva. We have
said that Mah\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}deva was a great devotee of Siva, who is Hari or N\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}arayana.
Mah\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}deva was one of the first twelve Va\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}ippavas and the greatest of all.
In the evolution of the cosmic world Brahma, Vis\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}nu and Rudra appear to be
the three manifestations of Hari. In the ultimate reality the three become
one. People only identify them differently out of utter ignorance.

We find in different works of Sa\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}kar\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}deva that eulogistic appela-
tions have been applied to Mah\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}deva only in applause. But nowhere in his
works Sa\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}kar gives instructions to his disciples to worship Siva. One
carita-work informs us how he abhorred a place called Carpat\textsupers\textperiodcentered}vara
finding it unfit to reside, because it was already an abode of Siva and
contained a Siva linga.\textsuperscript{185} This should, of course, not to be taken as
total antagonism. Because we find in the biography not only such references
of Hari and Siva as both identical\textsuperscript{186} but also the Sa\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}kar\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}deva actual
reasons for disrespect to the place. The reason is that Sivainger general
outlook or in folk conception was regarded as such a deity, who wanted
pu\textperiodcentered}ja (offerings).\textsuperscript{187} By pu\textperiodcentered}ja Sa\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}kar\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}deva perhaps wanted to mean the worship
of Siva in his Bhairava aspect with offerings of blood and flesh, which
was then prevailing in the society before the propagation of Va\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}navism.

Sir Ram\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}nanda Dvija, a composer of the early group of biographies, descrives
the religious atmosphere of Assan before the advent of neo-va\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}navism. According to him, people did not worship K\textsuperscript{\textperiodcentered}rana or perform

\textsuperscript{185} लौकैं कोहै चपेटकी उपत्यका बालक्ष/ अर्थि ताल मुखि एक शिवकृत आकाश// तारापीढी देखिए यसे के सामि/ रुप चारित (रामचरण ) vv 2492-93.

\textsuperscript{186} आल नवरीवा तेजः किन्तु नाहिं सेव/ तीमारे आमारे एके कामा/- हर मेहन v. 93.

गुण नाम श्रा विश्व शिवर/ ताक भिन्न चुदि के धि नर
the deeds sacred to Hari. They, on the other hand, propitiated Bhairava, which they considered the greatest of religion and made offerings of blood of tortoises and of six goats to the deity, drank of it as a sacred drink. Both Saitya and Ramarai have recorded similar religious conditions prevailing in medieval Assam. That this was the prevailing form of religion corroborated also by an Ahom chronicle which narrates some events of the later half of the 15th century A.D., when Shungamung Thongia Rajah was on the Ahom throne. In course of the narration, the chronicle describes the worship of a Pāśāṇ Bhairava residing on the west of the gate of the Kamatā king’s palace.

It was one of the cardinal motives of the neo-Vaishnava movement to fight against all kinds of sacrifices notorious for their obscenities and extremities. On the other hand, Vaishnavism does not recognise any idolatry. Thus it would be frank and realistic on the part of Saikardeva to disregard the place. According to him, the composer, the image was none but a linga of Śiva, who would seek offerings. Lastly, it would belittle the prestige of Śiva had he not offered daily pūja and would involve him in frequent conflict with the followers of Śiva. Saikardeva did not want to enter into such a conflict. Thus it appears that the mix worship of Śiva was not all disregarded even at the time of Saikardeva.

We find other references too to the prevalence of Śiva-worship
in Assam during Śaṅkara’s life-time. D learnt an episode of one Vyākalyā, a Brāhmaṇa follower of Śaṅkara-deva. According to the narration, Vyākalyā had lost three sons and the fourth was ailing. To save the life of the fourth he violated the interdict of Śaṅkara against the worship of gods other than Viṣṇu. He allowed his kinmen to adore the image of Mahesa at a place called Caparā. As a result of this, Śaṅkara-deva disallowed Vyākalyā to stay in his bhakta circle. According to Ramānanda, once Mādhava-deva, the chief disciple of Śaṅkara-deva, went to his original home at Bāṇḍakā where he was asked by his elder brother to accompany him in the worship of Śiva on the day of Śiva Caturḍāśi. Rāmārāi states that the people in general worshipped village gods, such as Śiva and Brahma.

The Vaiṣṇava view about the person of Śiva have been systematically revealed by Daityāṇi in the carita written by him about the lives of Śaṅkara-deva and Mādhava-deva. In course of his narration, the composer refers to an incident of schism between Mādhava-deva and Virūpākṣa Kārjī, who was the Chief Minister of Rājā Lākaṇhārāyana, son of Nārāyaṇa of Coch-Behar. It is said, Mādhava-deva translated the Nāmanālīka on the request of the Chief Minister. Once Virū Kārjī asked Mādhava three questions about the person of Mahesa. Those were – (i) whether Mahesa is sentient or insentient, (ii) whether he is God or not, and (iii) whether he possesses the power of granting liberation to the souls. In answer to the first question, Mādhava-deva told that Mahādeva is not sentient, because he is within

192. Madāpūruṇa śrimākāra-deva (Deśavāri) vv 675-679; The Com. , however, states that only a pair of pigeon was let off into the sky. The offering was done as a mark of respect to the deity enshrined at Caparā. p 191.
193. Madāpūruṇa śrimākāra-deva (Deśavāri), v 681.
194. S.H.T., p 83; M.G.K., p 11.
196. Madāpūruṇa śrimākāra-deva (Deśavāri) vv 1908-1510; Kāthāraṇa, p 628; Res.Cat.As.
197. Madāpūruṇa śrimākāra-deva (Deśavāri) v 1609; Kāthāraṇa, pp 727-728.
198. Ibid., v 1613.
199. Ibid., v1614.
limitation of the guṇas or the qualities. Had he been the sentient one, Hari might not infatuate him in the guise of a female. The sentients have no fear or fascination. But Mahādeva once became afraid of Vyūkṣura, to whom he himself granted a boon. It is the trait of the insentient to be bound up by fears and illusions. As regards the second question, Mādhavadeva replied that Mahādeva is a god no doubt, but he is not an independent being. As to the last question, he said that Mahādeva is not the liberator of the souls. The discourse evidently embraces the fundamental Vaishnava views about all other gods including Mahādeva. But Virū Kārjī and others did not want to disparage the position of Śiva to that of Viṣṇu. The schism refers to a fact that Saivism was not a dead religion amongst the mass people even at a time when Vaishnavism was gradually sweeping widely.

Some internal evidences furnished in the biographies also support the above view. All the biographies have recorded the inimical attitude of the Brahmans, who stood against Śaṅkara, for the latter’s vigorous stand against the worship of Śiva and Śakti, and, even against all sacrifices. Not to speak of Śaṅkara, his chief disciples Mādhavadeva and Nāmodeva had also to face adversities here and there while they were on the march of propagating neo-Vaishnavism. All these indirectly affirm that Saivism as well as Śaktism were two other major winds in the religious air of the time.

Evidences are large in number. In several places of the biographies Śiva and Pārvatī were used as upamānas. The composers of the biographies have regarded Hari and Hara as both identical. According to

200. महादेव और भक्तेवर (१६०६), v 1609.
201. Ibid., vv 1610–1611.
202. Ibid., v 1613.
203. Ibid., vv 1614–1615.
204. गुरुवारित (सम-वर्ण), v 1627; गुरुवारित v 47.
then, who is Śiva is Mahādeva. Guru is also called as Deva, Ātma and Mahādeva and Śiva is none but Śadāśiva. Śaṅkara-deva is an incarnation of Hari and he is same as Śiva of Vīṇāśvara. He is, therefore, Mahādeva. Hara assumes the form of Śaṅkara-deva and propagates the ideals of Bhakti in the world.

The identity of Hari and Hara can be found in other independent biographies. Vaiśālī Gopalādeva, one of the twelve Maheśārayas of Mūkha-deva, saw Mahādeva, the presiding deity of the temple at Vērgā, in a dream. Mahādeva invited him to visit the temple. On the day after the next day, Gopāla went to the temple and repeatedly embraced the image (Śiva-linga) regarding it as identical with Hari. It is said that Vaiśākha-deva, the founder of the Vaiṣṇava Sāttva at Puraṅgātā, also went to see Halesvara Śiva according to the invitation of the latter.

One more biography written on the life of Hari-deva, who was also one among the twelve Maheśārayas of Mūkha-deva, comes to our hand. The book has been ascribed to Vaiṣṇāgī, younger brother of Śaṅkara-deva. The authenticity of the work is undoubtedly doubtful. Hari-deva was no doubt a contemporary of Śaṅkara-deva, but the dates of his birth as well as death as put forth in the biography do not stand correct. The composer was devoid of Vaiṣṇava ideals of self-surrender and himself demands praise.

205. गुरु-चारित (सम-भरण), vv 477, 605.
206. IBID., v 695.
207. IBID., v 717.
208. IBID., v 347.
209. कल्पनहु रो, p 29.
210. गुरु-चारित (सम-भरण), v 850.
211. महाभारतसौररेतं, v 27.
212. दृष्टिमोहयेतं, v 774.
213. IBID., vv 784-785.
214. महाभारतसौररेतं, v 304. The temple of Halesvāra Śiva is situated on the bank of the river Hairavi about six miles north of Temar town. Radha Pārśaṅga had built the temple in 1705. The linga enshrined in the temple was found out at the time of ploughing the field. It is, therefore,
Moreover, he portrays Harideva more as a Saiva than as a Vaisnava. It may be that the work was written by somebody probably in or after the 18th century A.D., in which period Saivism, mixed with Saktism, along with other beliefs and practices of some village gods and goddesses, was moving extensively in the province.

Only to assert a good prestige on the work, the composer intentionally dropped his name and circulated it in the name of Vangañagiri. Actually, it was not written by Vangañagiri himself.

Of course, we should not overlook to some of its contents. It describes some important Siva temples of Assam in its several pages. Harideva is said to have visited the Keśava temple at Hajo and propitiated Siva there chanting the 22 mantras ascribed to Vatuka Bhairava. It is said, he was either a devotee or a servant or the son of Siva or himself Siva. Harideva speaks of himself as the ṛṣi or servant of Siva. Moreover, he used to meditate on Siva on every Caturśaḍam day. A sanyāśī in the name of Thurjati, an appellation of Siva, gave him the Kavatūr of Krṣna.

It appears from above that the composer was perhaps a follower of Siva, for which he looks all from Saivite viewpoint devoid of Vaiṣṇava known as Halesvara or God found in ploughing. 

215. *ART* *304.
216. The book has compiled by S.K. Gosvāmi of Haripur Sattra (Pāṭhasāla).
218. *305*.
219. Ibid., p 87.
220. Ibid., p 89.
221. Ibid., p 80.
222. Ibid., pp 120-138.
223. Ibid., pp 140-141.
ideals. It may also be that in his days the worship of Siva and other minor deities of urban societies were flourishing throughout the province. In this context it is worth-mentioning that the worship of Siva-Nurga and other grāma-devatās (village gods) was prevailing in Assam from before the advent of neo-Vaisnavism. 224

From the description of the biographies it can be inferred that two distinct lines of practices were prevailing at the time before and after the neo-Vaisnavas movement. The lines were śātric or orthodox and Tantrik or hetero-orthodox. The former way of worship includes viṣṇuuals such as rice pudding, pulses, plantains and vegetables. The performance xwhich Kuśumbarā had maintained in worshipping Siva at Singari was conducted according to the śātric procedures. The Vaiṣṇava saints disapproved sacrifices and approved a different method of worship where obscenities were not included. Yānḍarādeva is said to have approved incense, fragrant gum, areca nut and sandal to be used in the worship instead of sacrifices. However, the second line of worship, i.e. worship according to hetero-orthodox procedures was much in vogue and attained great prominence. This form of worship included blood sacrifices. Not to speak of Siva, but other gods and goddesses were also propitiated with sacrifices of animals 226 and sometimes with one’s own blood. 227 There are certain instances in the biographies of making of or arrangement for goat-sacrifices.

As it is evident from above, there were some form of Kirāta religion which prevailed prior to the advent of neo-Vaisnavism in the Ahom territory. The caritās have coined another designation of the religion

224. ꦱꦼꦱꦺꦼꦂꦗꦂ , v 30.
225. Ibid., v 720.
226. ꦱꦼꦱꦺꦼꦂꦗꦂ , pp 82, 261; ꦱꦼꦱꦺꦼꦂꦗꦂ , vv 320, 717–718; ꦱꦼꦱꦺꦼꦂꦗꦂ (218 194) vv 1347, 1370, 1615.
227. ꦱꦼꦱꦺꦼꦂꦗꦂ , p 118.
It is Buddhism or the religion of the Buddhists. Speaking about the Buddhists, Mr. Neog has pointed out that they belonged to the Tāntrika-Buddhist group, who followed Vāmśācara practices. 228 When Vasāl Gopāla Dāsa was deputed to preach Saṁkara's religion in upper Assam, he humbly refused to go there. 229 Probably because he had to face many adversities there owing to the humiliation of some of the bhakatas, who were pursuing vyahhi-cāra or immoral rites and who never discriminated food and drink (ānna and yoni). 230 The sanity of the Buddhists or the Tāntrika-Buddhists was another reason of his refusal. At last, of course, he had to go to preach Bhakti there. He could overcome the difficulties testfully and attracted the Tāntrika-Buddhists to the fold of Vaiṣṇavism. 231 The influence of Tāntrika-Buddhism in this period over the Śaivite cult cannot be, therefore, ignored.

There were a few Śaiva scholars in Assam during the medieval period. We trace a name of one such Śaiva scholar in the kingdom of Raghu-deva Charitāryana, son of Cīḷārā Dvāra. Nātīyārī records that this king sent one Śaiva scholar - Asutarka Bhāṭṭācārya - from Viṣṇupur to perform the worship of Puṣṭā, the Old God (cf. Āhon's Puṣṭa Bopāl) Śiva on the Hilācāla mountain. 232 At that time Madhava Dāsa was also eager to meet the scholar, for which he arranged a journey to Viṣṇupur. The Śaiva scholar was highly convinced at the profundity of Madhava's scholarship and sublimity of his faith. 233 Later on the scholar came to Ś Madhava's monastery at Sundarīḍā on his way to Hilācāla. 234 Moreover, he suggested the latter to go too Hilācāla and Hāje so that the antagonists of Vaiṣṇavism might
never utter anything against the new faith. Mādhavācārya is said to have accepted the suggestion of the scholar but refused to go to the shrine of Kānakāyā and see the genital organ of the goddess Kāthā Goddess.

The biographies of the Vaisnava saints of medieval Assam have thus recorded some living traditions about the worship of Śiva and the practices assigned to the deity. Now we will pass on to the Vaisnava literature or the medieval Assamese religious literature, where we will find the causes of diminishing influence of the faith in the soil of Assam.

235. Padmapurana, Shēmākānta ( pesticide ), vv 1201-1203.
236. Ibid., v 1212.
SECTION IV : SAIVISM IN MEDIEVAL ASSAMESE RELIGIOUS LITERATURE.

The literature of medieval Assam has been divided into two groups — the pre-Vaishnavite or the pre-Saṅkarite and the Vaishnavite.
The eminent literary persons of the pre-Saṅkarite era were Hema Sarasvatī, Bṛdṛa Kāndali, Harihara (vara) Vipra, Kaviratna Sarasvatī and Māhāv Kāndali.

Māhāv Kāndali alias Kavirāja Kāndali was the most outstanding personality of the age. He flourished not later than the 14th century A.D. He rendered the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki into Assamese verse under the patronage of Mahāśikya, a Varāha king. A tradition goes that the first and the last Kāṭṭaas or chapters of the original Rāmāyaṇa rendered by him had been lost in the war with the Kachāris. Māhāvdeva and Saṅkardeva later on composed the two chapters respectively. The Kathāguru Carita relates a story about the rejoinder. It is said, Ananta Kāndali, a contemporary Vaishnav poet of Saṅkardeva, once tried to spoil the verse Rāmāyaṇa of Māhāv Kāndali. For this the latter appeared before Saṅkardeva in a dream at night and requested him to preserve the

238. Ramayana (वायर) ), v 6709.
239. भासारामान्यसि , Introduction, pp ix & xii.
240. p 151.
the book from any loss or damage. Accordingly Sāmkaraśva with the help of 
Mādhavdeva translated briefly the two lost chapters and gave a touch of 
bhakti or devotion to the whole work.241 As these two chapters - Ādi anā 
Uttara - were composed skāmask at a later date on the Vaiśeṣika outline, 
our task will, therefore, be limited to the rest portions of the work.

From the narration of the Rāmāyana it appears that the cults of 
Śiva and Śakti were more familiar among the people at the time when it 
was composed.242 Both the cults were perhaps associated with flesh or 
blood sacrifices. Because the poet has constantly used similes of goat 
sacrifices in his book243 The sacrifice of black goat is mentioned in con-
nection with the jāju performed by Indrajita, son of Rāvana.244 There are 
plenty of references to Śiva and Pārvatī, Gaurī and Kailāsa either using 
them as similes or providing them with simple meanings.245 They are worth 
noticeable as the similes are not to be found in the original Rāmāyana.

At the time of Rāma's coronation to the throne of Ayodhyā, the palace 
meant for the purpose was decorated with pictures of Sāmkara riding on 
Bṛhaspata, Pārvatī on her lion, and Gāndēla and Kārttikeya, the two other members 
of Śiva's family, in their respective chariots of Āśvatthama peacock.247 Allus-
sions have also been made to some other instance of pertaining to Śiva -
like the burning of Kāmadeva,248 killing of Tripūra249, lifting of Kailāsa 
with Pārvatī and Śiva by Rāvana250 and the battle of Hari-Maha.251 Sītā
became mortified with the news of Kāma's retirement to the forest leaving her alone in the palace, and she thought the calamity befell on her was only due to her incapability to worship Śaṅkara and Pārvatī in her previous birth. A Yogi was said to have been chanting the name of Śiva repeatedly at the time of Rāma's departure to the forest. Mr. Neog holds that the Yogi perhaps belonged to the Nātha-pantha. Once the Nātha-pantha was a most flourishing religion all over India. According to R. M. Nath, it has a great antiquity carrying sufficient influences from Nāthism. Whatever it may be, the followers of Nāthism are generally known as Yogis. They are said to have been born in the race of Kuṭera and thereby they belong to the Anādi (Śiva) Gotra. The followers of Nāthism are considered as Śrīśiva-Gāṇṭikas. Mādhav Kānāli does not go into the details of the Yogi, but he portrays him with the 'prāṇāsā kāthi' (platter sometimes in the form of a trident) in his hand and shouting 'Śiva Śiva' all the time. It can be said that the Nātha-Yogis were practicing Saivism in ancient Assam in the 'ays of the poet of the Rāmāyana.

Nandī, the attendant of Śiva, is also mentioned in several pages of the book. He is said to have cursed Rāvana to be pursued by death by a monkey similar to his (Nandī's) own face. Rūtra and Agni were identified. In some pages Śiva appears to be the devotee of Hāri. So also Rāma, who has been regarded as the incarnation of Hāri, is identified with Śiva. The unity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Tripurāri (Śiva) has also

252. Rāmāyana (Adīa), vv 1838.
258. Ibid., p 2.
259. Ibid., p 151.
261. Rāmāyana (Adīa) vv 1655, 2522, (वंका) vv 5415-16.
262. Ibid., (वंका), vv 5415.
263. Ibid., (Ibid.), vv 6046.
264. Ibid., (वंका), vv 1493, (वंका), vv 2002.
265. Ibid., (सुन्दर), vv 4840, (अस्वाध्या), vv 2622.
been described. From all these we cannot deny the presence of a living Śaivism during Mādhav Kandali's time. Śri Lekhāru observes, "At the time of Kandali, Śiva worship predominated in Assam and that is why Śiva's thought is uppermost in his mind." 267

Tantrik rituals were probably not unknown in the days of Mādhav Kandali. Because it is evident from the narration that sacrifices of goats are repeatedly mentioned and reference to the joint worship of Śiva and Śakti can also be found in the Rāmāyana. 268

Mādhav Kandali is said to have composed another kāvya known as Devajīta. But there is controversy as to the authenticity of the work. Lekhāru suggests that during the rule of Śvarga-dēo Pratāp Siṣha, (1533 - 1571 Saka) there flourished another person of the same name, who may probably be the author of Devajīta. 269 But he cannot ascend beyond a guess for which he goes to say that whoever may be the author, it can be said that he cannot escape deep influences of Mādhav Kandali of the Rāmāyana. 270 In this connection it can be suggested that the book was perhaps written by Mādhav Kandali of the Rāmāyana and later on was revised by somebody else. In this respect the incident related in the Kathāgūrucharita as to the preservation of the Rāmāyana from loss or damage and the addition of Bhakti ideals by Śankara dēva and Mādhava dēva can be cited. It is no wonder, therefore that the present work was also revised by somebody at a later period and the reviser had a Vaiṣṇava leaning in his mind. Hence the reviser might deliberately joined the words about the superiority of Vaiṣṇavism and Nāma-harman like Ananta Kandali, who composed the Rāmāyana with a ran's mixture of

266. रामायण (अनंत), v 2054.
268. रामायण (अनंत), v 1838.
269. अनंताक (अनंत) रामायण, p 29.
270. Ibid., p 31.
The present manuscript copy of Devajita was prepared in Saka 1807 or 1885 A.D. The copyist may also join the words of Vaisnava supremacy with touch in the language of the original work.

The book narrates the conquest of the Devas by Arjuna. Arjuna is said to have defeated Mahadeva, who was fighting for Indra. Moreover, it narrates how Arjuna entered him in the body of Kryna after the retirement of the latter to Vaikuntha and the other four brothers of the former got merged in Mahadeva while Draupadi in Parvati. Apart from the mere episode the book also provides similes relating to Siva, for which Sri Lekhara rightly observes that the influence of Saivism might not have disappeared at that period.

Rama Sarasvatī was one of the most illustrious poet of the pre-Sanskarnite era. He composed two books - "Praladā Carita" and "Hara Gaurī Saibāda". In both the books he mentions the name of Durvīlābhamāraya, a king of Kamata. On the basis of this, critics have assigned the date of the poet in the later part of the fourteenth century A.D. In his "Hara Gaurī Saibāda", the poet depicts a legend of Siva. He narrates the exploits of Tadakā, meditation of Siva after the death of Sati, burning of Kamadeva with fire coming out of Siva's eyes, marriage of Siva and P Parvati, the birth of Kārtika and the means and ends of Yoga practices. The influence of Kalidasa's Kumārasambhava and the Kālikā Purāṇa can be noticed in the book. From the depiction of a Siva legend in the book, it cannot

271. शब्दिकेष समस्तर = शास्त्रां युम पदस्यानां न भागवत कथाय विलेचित्य / Quoted in असमोव शास्त्रां नियुम , p 41.
272. Des,Cat,As,Ms., p 45.
273. Ibid., p 46.
274. Ibid., p 46.
275. असमौव शास्त्रां नियुम , p 46.
276. A.S.A., p 42.
277. Ibid., p 42; असमौव शास्त्रां नियुम , p 55.
278. असमौव शास्त्रां नियुम , p 55.
be said that Saivism was greatly popular during the period. But we have some grounds to construe that the cult had a wide popularity. It is found that the original name of the poet was Hemanta and by virtue of constant worship of Hara and Gauri, he acquired the epithet of Hema Saraswati.279 Thus it is apparent that the worship of Siva was familiar in the days of Hema Saraswati and Hara and Gauri were propitiated jointly. It can be said that the family of Hema Saraswati had a long tradition of worshipping Siva, which appears from the names of the poet's father and grandfather, N banda Saraswati280 and Pasupati281 respectively, which are also the epithets of Siva. Names with the epithets of one's Ishwara-devata seem to be current in early medieval and medieval Assam. Dr. Neog has cited a few specimens of such names like Harivara, Gangivara and Purgavara.282 Shankardeva was so named because he was born as a boon (vara) of Shankara (Siva). It can be said that the poet's father and grandfather were perhaps the worshippers of Nanda-Pasupati.

279. अपर हेमस्कन्त कवि हुर्गैरी पद सैलेवे इसरसक्षती में नाम / हुर्गैरी शंकरादतimensional quoted inअसमीय नामकरण सत्तियुषा ,p 53
280. कामला मण्डल दुर्गी-भक्ति-रथ अमुमारम / ताहतान रामला-सरसक्षती देवायती कामानाम / ताहतान तनम हैमसक्षती.../ प्रत्याद वातिज़ dimensional quoted inअसमीय नामकरण सत्तियुषा ,p 55. Here कन्ना may mean wife also besides its literal meaning of a daughter. असमीय नामकरण सत्तियुषा ,p 72.
281. भूप दुर्गी-भक्ति-रथ पदुरोली शंकरादती धारण भुलम / ताहतान तनम चार धनराम आदेकोरे भुलम मैल कुलम प्राप्त / अपर हैमसलाहर हुर्गैरी पद सैलेवे हैमसक्ककसी जैल नाम / ताहतान शंकरादतिब्रम dimensional quoted inअसमीय नामकरण सत्तियुषा ,p 53.
Hina Sarasvatī refers to the scriptures of the Asuras as Vāsanāya and sings the victory of the Vaiṣṇavas against the worshippers of Vāsanāya. Sanākardeva also mentions about the sāstras of Vāsanāya being taught to Prahlāda by Sañcāmar. It can be thought that the Asura practices opposed to Vaiṣṇava ideals were prevalent in the pre-Samkarite period. The caritas of Rāmānanda and Vaiyākī provide ample proof of such practices.

The Vaiṣṇava revival gave birth to a large number of religious scriptures. In all these works, Śiva appears to be a minor god. He is considered to be a part of the Supreme Being, the other two being Brahmā and Viṣṇu. All the three lead to make the conception of Trinity. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are all Īśvaras and they are one and inseparable. It is said anybody can acquire the status of Brahmā and Rudra. Śiva is a part of Hari. As such he is not independent of Hari and he will have to merge in Hari again after the completion of the Mahākāla. Just as our limbs are dependent on and serving for the body, so also Śiva, being a part of Hari, has to serve Hari and propitiate Hari. Śiva does so and remains as a great devotee of the Supreme God throughout his life in the medieval Assamese religious literature. Showing humble submission to Hari, Śiva prays Hari to regard him as his slave.

In the "Anāti Fataana" the Supreme God is said to have assigned respective duties and responsibilities to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahēśvara. In the same work it is said that Rudra was born of the quality of Tamāḥ and he is the presiding deity of Ahaṅkāra. The Supreme Lord entrusted him
with the responsibility of destruction of the world. He would then take the form of Rudra and destroy the three worlds at the time of allusion. It is said that the Rudra form of Siva cannot be measured at all, because in this form Siva accepts a large shape. He would wear the matted locks with the trident in hand. His jaws would be equal to the peaks of mountains. His thousand mouths would eat the fleshes of creatures. His three eyes would appear as fire. He would be the killer of the killers and the great Yama of Yama. In this terrible shape he would destroy the three worlds.

The religious literature of Assam narrates how Siva became a devotee of the Supreme Lord. As he is a manifestation of the latter, he cannot ascend high to such aspirations of becoming greater than the Supreme Being. He executed a hypocritical worship in order to salves his position higher than the Lord Himself. Knowing even the hypocritical nature of the worship the Lord of three worlds being pleased with devotion gave Siva the means of becoming greater than Himself. He told him to uphold the Āgamas among the people at the end of Treta and in the beginning of Dwāpara, so that the process of worshipping several other gods would certainly conceal the name and fame of the Lord. But Siva became afraid of doing that, because he thought that it would be a great sin had he concealed the Lord by upholding the Āgamas, and therefore, he begged Him to be pleased to grant the means of salvation to the people. Then the Lord told him that chanting of the thousand names of the Lord would make the people liberated from mundane worldly bondage. And from that time Siva became a great devotee of the Lord. From that time he had been performing great meditation on the Lord all the time at Kailāsa. In this way Siva became a Vaisnava of great prominence and the greatest of all the twelve

293. अमादिनवन्ते. \*Śrīmad Viñātha Kirttana.
294. Ibid., vv 30-32.
Vaishnavas placed by the Lord. 295

Mâhâdeva also described the same episode in his "Nâma Mâlikâ." 296

It is said that the Great Nâmaâhârma thenceforth rests on Mahesâ. 297 People should not seek any difference between Siva and Viṣṇu, because as a Vaishnava the former has no difference with the latter. The person who seeks to find any difference between them is to be treated as a sinner. 298 To attain salvation or Supreme Bliss the devotees are instructed to recite the names of both the deities without seeking any difference between the two. 299 That Rudra was the beloved bhakta of the Supreme God can be had also from the text of the "Bhakti Ratnâvalî" of Mâhâdeva. 300

In Vaishnavism Siva is regarded as a minor god and a devotee of the Supreme Being, who is Viṣṇu. As such a minor god cannot be the object of worship for getting liberation. Therefore, it is found that the Vaishnava literature of medieval Assam does not recognise the worship of Siva. In other words Assamese Vaishnavism banned the worship of the deity. It is said that as the gods and goddesses other than Viṣṇu are only the branches and leaves of a tree and, therefore, waters shall have to be poured at the root of the tree not on its branches and leaves, so also people should worship only the Supreme Lord but not other gods and goddesses. 301 The worship of the Supreme God would yeild merits of all other gods and goddesses as the Supreme Being contains one to all in Himself. This was the outlook Vaishnava and on the basis of this the worship of other gods and goddesses was strictly prohibited. As such Siva cannot be the object of worship.

The biographies of the Vaishnava saints of medieval Assam have narrated

295. भिक्षुं देवाकृतम् । वव 39-40.
297. Ibid., p 232.
298. Ibid., p 244.
299. Ibid., p 245.
300. Ibid., p 262.
301. सुखरूपत चैन ग्रहे अवि जने । कीर्ति तुषारिनि तस्म परं युगयु मधुम ।
 Indian पार्थिवीविशेषि हृदयम् प्रेमयम् । काश्चिति उच्चे वाति तृषिति निहयं ।
the episode of Vyāskalāi, who is said to have propitiate Śiva. But he was excommunicated from the bhakta circle of Śāmkarādeva, which evidently refers to the interdiction prohibiting the worship of gods other than Viṣṇu.

But in another place we find that Śāmkarādeva gave a mila recognition to Śiva at a place called Carptasvarā. Of course, he disfavoured to reside there. From these two contradictory events, it can be said that when Śāmkarādeva reached the village Carptasvarā, a clear and sound theology of his faith might not possibly have taken its full shape.

The medieval religious scriptures of Assam have conceived Śiva in his different forms. He is said to have been pursuing meditation on the Supreme Lord by observing Yuga practices. As such he is conceived of as a Mahāyogī. But as he is not sentient he cannot escape from the fascinations of the Supreme Being in the guise of a female. As such he appears to be a god under the influence of guṇas. The "Anādi Patana", therefore, speaks of him being born of the quality of Tamāḥ. Assam As a Yogi and as a Myāna, Śiva appears to be the greatest of all. His performances of Yuga and Myāna were so serious and deep that while he was performing Yuga practices he appeared to be a vīgambara (naked) having his clothes worn out and the particles of ashes in his limbs fade away. As a god having attributes, Śiva cannot fathom and understand the illusion of the Supreme Being. He has to worship the feet of Hari.

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302. सुदर्शन (रामकृष्ण), vv 2492-94.
303. कौर्तिन (यमोद्य), v 17; सुदर्शन , vv 30-32.
304. मघुपुर्ण श्रीशंकरेश्व (केसारी), v 1609; कौर्तिन , p 728.
305. कौर्तिन (यमोद्य) , v 18.
306. v 131.
308. कौर्तिन (यमोद्य), vv 79-80, 86; प्रभात , vv 119; भगवान (माधव), Nos. 7, 158.
309. कौर्तिन (प्रभात), vv 175, 212-13; सामसंग , vv 16, 68; भगवान (माधव), Nos. 9, 39, 42, 52, 161.
The Purāṇas in general assert three gods - Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara - to be comprehended within but one Supreme Being.310 Saṅkara-dvāsa asserts this and adjures the pious not to make any difference among them.311 It may, however, be pointed out like the Purāṇas,312 Viṣṇu often carries off the palm of supremacy over Brahmā and Maheśvara313 and takes his various incarnations when the world is engulfed in evils.314 In several pages of the religious scriptures, Śiva and Maheśvara have been used to denote the Supreme Being. In each all these, Śiva is used to mean the benignant while Maheśvara to the Great God.

The religious literature of medieval Assam portrays Śiva also in his personal attirements. We can see him wearing the garland of skulls and tiger-skin. Sometimes he is found naked. He wears the nattled loek and serpents around. He smears ashes in his limbs. He is Paśupati,315 the Lord of beasts, meaning Lord of the world.316 He shuns the śāstra in order to propagate the devotion of Śiva.317 He is benignant and the giver of boons.318

Saṅkara-dvāsa's early works like the "Rukminī Harana Kāvyā" and the "Harisendra Upākhyāna" have furnished us similes exhibiting Śiva and Pārvatī. In the "Harisendra Upākhyāna" the attachment between Harisendra and Śāivyā has been compared with the inseparable existence of Cauril-Saṅkara.319 It may indicate the Anāhaśīvara aspect of Śiva.

The Vaishnava poet of Assam never forgets to portray Śiva in a distorting manner. In the "Rukminī Harana Kāvyā" it is described that Śiva

311. गुण मात्र यत्व लिङ्गः विशेषः / तान किं मित्र भूति अज्जयेतिः मिर //

313. विश्वास  (नृष्ण)  , v 176.
314. Ibid.,(वहुगीत भवाव ) v 1-33.
315. Ibid.,( हृद मोीत) v 19.
316. Ibid., (Ibid), v 86.
317. नामधिया  vv 53-54.
318. असचाव ( dreday ) v 422. () 310. v 16.
came to the wedding ceremony of Brāhma and Rukminī riding his Brahma (Bull), who seemed to be timid. On the other hand he found nothing worth to be presented to the wedded couple, because he thought that he was too poor to make a gift equal to other devas or the gods. What he had in his possession were a tiger-skin, a trident and a Sāmbaru, a bull and the ornaments of snake, the garland of human skulls and the particles of ashes. Of course, the omniscient Kṛṣṇa has pacified the situation begging for himself only the blessings of Śiva.

Sīva is known for his amorous enormities. This can be seen in the Bhāgavata. Here he appears to be a lecherous deity at the time of Lākṣmi's Sayambara. Saṃkarṣaṇa furnishes a special metrical composition in order to narrate the pangs of Śiva's lust for Lākṣmi. Sīva is so much blinded by lust that he becomes naked and has lost all dignity. He faces a similar situation at the time when Hara fascinates him in the guise of a female.

We find Sīva in the Vaiṣṇava literature also in the form of a cultivator, the aspect which Manakara deals briefly in his songs and the folk-ministrels as well as the composer of Kālikā Purāṇa or Hara Gaurīr Vivāha in details. It is Rāmasarasvatī, the Vyāsa of Assam, who describes this aspect of the deity in his famous work 'Bhīma Carita'. The primary motive of the poet is to portray what Bhīma has done, while he was in exile roaming in the forests. Incidentally, he desired to go to the abode of Mahādeva in Kailāsa with a view to learning some methods of warfare from the latter. In order to conceal his identity he assumed the garb of a cowherd and reached Kailāsa where Mahādeva was sitting playing in his 'Sāmbaru'. He begged the god to appoint him as his cowherd boy, which
the latter granted without any hesitation.

From here begins the life of Bhima in the family of Sankara. The poet gives a playful description of Siva's person and his dwelling house. It is narrated that Siva had a worn-out house for dwelling. The enclosing walls of the house were all damaged. In the house there could be found no rice or paddy. Although the three unable praise him as the giver of boons, yet he had nothing for his own. He had no clothes to wear, because he was penniless. He had to wear the garlands of human skulls and of snakes instead of garland made of precious stones. His hairs were tangled for want of oil, and people could hardly manage to breathe beside him for its bad odour. He used to live always on alms-begging, for which he had a tattered wallet.

In such a deplorable family of Mahādeva, where smoking of hemp instead of rice was regarded as pañcārtha, it became very difficult on the part of Bhima to satisfy his appetite in full, for which he reproached Pārvatī for the poverty of her husband. Hearing this Pārvatī requested her husband to take to cultivation. Accordingly Siva engaged himself in cultivation, but it yielded only three muthis or handful of harvests. For the poor harvest Bhima rebuked Mahādeva again for his insanity and idleness owing to excessive smoking of ganjā.

The poet of Bhima-carita' depicts the character of Siva as a householder and peasant. As a householder he appears to be not worthy of affording his family with the means of livelihood. On the other hand, as a cultivator he appears to be very passionate in his work. In both the aspects he is much more anthropomorphised and is transferred to a god of the campa-folk.

The poet has rendered the episode playfully with a touch of

325. Part II, vv 67-73.
326. Ibid., vv 73-83.
327. Ibid., Part III, vv 84-87.
mild humour. He has sketched the character of the deity as an embodiment of human passions and anxieties. Thus the character and personality of the deity paved the way for the transformation of the deity to a village-god commonly conceived in secular literature and folk-beliefs of the peasant class. Of course, Siva's poverty as revealed in the Vaishnava literature can be viewed from another angle. The Vaishnava outlook is that the worldly objects are all transitory and that outward exhibition is not the means of devotion to the Supreme God. Here complete self-surrender of a devotee excels all.

At present, an independent system of Saivism cannot be found in Assam. Dr. M. Neog cites two reasons for the extinction of the cult from the soil of Assam. They are the exaltation of Sakti on the one hand, and the spread of neo-Vaishnavism on the other. The exaltation of Sakti reached the zenith of importance during the rule of king Siva Sihâ. He was initiated to a great Sâkta scholar, Kâmarâma Bhâttâcârya. His Chief Queen, Phuleswari Kowâri, extended great impetus to the development of the cult of Sakti. A religion thrives when the ruler extends patronisation. Saktism as a religious tenet of the Ahom kings engrailed Saivism, for which it is seen that Saivism cannot be surveyed divorced from Saktism. On the other hand, the neo-Vaishnavite movement launched by Saivardeva swallowed religions in general and Saivism in particular. As such the predominance of the cult of Siva naturally came to be diminished.

In this regard, another reason may be forwarded here. We can easily see that in no phase of the history of the cult endeavour was made by any scholar to delve deep into its philosophical core. We find no Saiva scholar trying particularly to draw a single line on the philosophy of the cult and its natures and characteristics in ancient Assam. Therefore, the cult of Siva lost its prominence although it was at one time the most flourishing religion of ancient Assam.

328. भारत असम, Introduction, p 0'30.