CHAPTER IV

SECTION I: ŚAIVA LITERATURE.

The Śaiva systems flourished in other parts of India are rich in literature and philosophical writings, and as such, they can claim their independent identities. On the extreme north of India, the Kāśmiris have distinct practices and principles and the Śaiva system as a whole is known by the name Trika.¹ The system appears or re-appears according to the belief of its followers in the 9th century A.D.² and Vasugupta, who flourished in the end of the 9th or the beginning of the 10th century A.D., is said to have reduced the prevailing oral traditions into its philosophical lines.³ "Since then, philosophical writing has been an active and continued process in Kāśmir which went on for nearly four centuries."⁴ The literature of the Trika system may broadly be divided into three: the Āgama śāstra, the Spanda śāstra and the Pratyabhijñā śāstra.⁵

The Āgama śāstra, which is believed to be a revelation, is regarded as

¹ The word Trika refers, among other things, to the triple principle with which the system deals, viz. त्रिका-त्र्युक्त अनेक or तत्त्व-तत्त्वाता अनेक. "K.S., p 1 in 2.
² K.S., p 7.
³ P.S.R., p 2.
⁴ Ibid., p 2.
⁵ Ibid., p 2; K.S., p 7.
of superhuman authorship and has been handed down from teacher to pupil. It contains some number of Tantras and Siva himself revealed the Siva-Sutras to Vasugupta, it upheld the idealistic monism or pure Advaita Tattva in a further developed stage having Vyrtti of uncertain authorship, Vartti of Bhaskara (11th century A.D.) and the Vimanamrita Commentary of Kaemaraja. The Spanda sakstra contains Spanda Sutras, generally known as Spanda Kairikas, attributed to Kaemaraja but were composed most likely by his pupil Kallapa.

The Pratyabhijna sakstra as the manana or visar-stra or philosophy proper of the Trika is ascribed to Siddha Somannada, most probably a pupil of Vasugupta, as its founder and the sakstras contain arguments and counter-arguments, discussions and reasonings. Later on the versatile genius, Abhinavagupta, wrote commentaries - Laahvi Vyrtti - the shorter and the Bhadhi Vyrtti - the longer - on the Pratyabhijna Sutras. Moreover, in the twelve volumes of Tantraloka and Tantralokasara, Abhinavagupta deals comprehensively with Saivism in all its aspects. Abhinavagupta was born in between 950 and 960 A.D. and his literary activity extended over a quarter of a century from 4066 to 4090 of the Septarai era i.e. 990-1 - 1014-15 A.D. It can, therefore, be taken for certain that the Saiva system of Kasmir possessed of a distinct group of literature and philosophical writings as early as in the 9th century A.D. and the process of writing philosophical works went on for nearly four centuries.

On the southern part of India, the Saiva Siddhanta literature flourished in the same way from as early as the 7th century B.C., if not earlier. The literature of the Saiva Siddhantins consists of the

8. Ibid., p 15.
10. Ibid., p 21; P.H., p 3.
following collective works - i) the Nānmarais, ii) the Śivāgamas, iii) the Vedas, iv) the Maykanda Sastra, or Parul Nūl, v) the twelve Tirumarai or Puhal Nūl. Of these, the first three categories constitute the scriptures, the fourth and the last constitute the philosophical writings and the devotional works of the school respectively. The Nānmarais and some earlier texts of the Āgamas belong to the 7th century B.C. The writers of the Maykanda Sastra flourished in the 13th and the first half of the 14th century A.D. The works of the twelve Tirumarai known as Puhal Nūl or writings of praise flourished from the 5th to the 12th century A.D.

From our discussion in the preceding chapters, it can be easily ascertained that the cult of Śiva was a most flourishing religion in ancient Assam. It was a popular form of religion both among the Aryans and the non-Aryans. The kings of the age of the epigraphs were Śaivites and Śaivism flourished strongly in rules and principles. The tradition could be traced up to the end of the Ahom rules. But is curious enough to note that not a single line has been drawn so as to reveal the philosophical basis of the system. As such it proved too poor to sustain Śaiva Saiva literature to support its growth and development. Therefore, the scope of the present chapter is limited to a few summary informations and references found here and there in Assamese literature as a whole.

15. Ibid., p 20.
17. M.G.K., p 10.
We have mainly two works in this group of literature. They are the Kālikā Purāṇa and the Yogini Tantra which are, of course, not purely Saiva literature. They have been included in the group because they dealt with certain sources of information about the history of Saivism in Assam.

The K.P. was composed in Assam in between the 10th to 12th century A.D. It emphasizes on the cult of Šiva and the enjoiner modes of practices. However, it throws adequate lights on the cult of Šiva. The evidence which the work furnishes reveals the pre-eminence of Saivism as one of the main religious tenets in ancient Assam. The adherents of the cult, according to the K.P., were both the aboriginals and the Aryans as well as the Aryanised people. We have discussed all about these people in detail in several pages of this work.

The K.P. is noteworthy in respect of the cult of our survey for the following reasons:

(1) It furnishes a historical outline of the cult of Šiva. It mentions Šiva as the guardian deity of the aboriginal inhabitants of Assam. As such we can take Šiva at the head of the pantheon.

(2) The K.P. narrates the coming of Naraka to Kamarūpa and his struggle with Ghaṭaka, the Saivite king of the state and the leader

18. 38/103ff.
of the Kirātas. After assuming sovereign power he installed the Devī-
cult in his kingdom and tried to make the land free from the adherents
of Seivism. Then ḍāna, the Asura king of Sonītpura, being afraid of
the exaltation of the new cult, extended his hands of friendship to
Nāraka in order to keep his own religious tenet - Seivism - to survive.
His intelligence and wisdom made the survival possible, and thus the
cult regained its lost prominences. However, in the new phase of its
development the influx of Saktism into it is noticed. Thenceforth, Seiv-
ism mixed with Saktism tended to become the religious tenet. The worshippers, therefore, had to worship Siva and Sakti jointly. It is allude in
reference to the episode of Betala and Bhairava, where it is stated that
Siva alone cannot grant any boon 'desire' by a devotee unless the appro-
val of Pārvatī is being received. Moreover, the conception of Anah-
īśvara itself testifies to the synthesis of both Siva and Sakti.

(3) The work furnishes that Seivism of the period under review
was Tantrik in character. Left-hand practices had distinguished the
cult. As such Siva appears here more as a Bhairava than as a nor-
mal god.

(4) The K.P. gives a detailed account of the rites and duties
to be observe by the devotees of Siva. We have discussed these else-
where in this work.

(5) The K.P. mentions two classes of Siva-worshippers, who fol-
lowed the cult in ancient Kāmarūpa. They were the Kapālikas and the Pāśu-
putas. The work deals mainly with the former group of worshippers. It
is evident from the text itself that almost all the worshippers of Siva

19. 51/2241.
20. 54/19921.
were Kāpālikās and Chādhas. Further it refers to four bhūtagrāmas and mārgams as Śiva's associates.  

(8) The K.P. records several stotras in praise of Śiva. Moreover, it records some other eulogical verses. From all these we can comprehend the theological and the philosophical basis of the cult. The K.P. describes a creation myth of the world and the cosmic cycle. It incorporates a philosophy akin to the theistic Sākhyā and speaks of the Vedantic realisation of Brahma. On the other hand, it further draws the conception of cosmic creation, the K.P. follows the V.P. including reproduction of some of the verses of the V.P. The K.P. gives stress on Yoga as the sole method of knowing the Ultimate Truth. It mentions the eight-fold Yoga and elaborately describes the Kundalini Yoga.

(9) Lastly, the K.P. weaves a few short episodes relating to Śiva. Of these episodes, the legend of Kālī, the sacrifice of Uru and Śaṅkara's self-immolation, the birth of Śatī as Pārvatī and her marriage with Śiva, the stories of Kānadeva and Bṛhadā and Bhairava are worth-mentioning. Moreover, it records the myth of Indraśeṣavara and of Sārabha and other connected tales. In the narration of the legend relating to Pārvatī and her marriage with Śiva, the K.P. shows the influence of Kālīśeṣa's Kumarasambhava.

In the Y.T. Śiva's position is less significant than that of Sakti. It primarily deals with the cult of Sakti and its ritualistic ceremonies. Sakti is the cause of creation. She is Prakṛti having the power of procreation.

22. 11/21, 26/28, 30/92, 30/150, 183.
23. 10/55-57, 19/70, 19/14-12, 43/94-95, 44/14-13, 45/95-99, 46/29, 51/179.
25. Chap. 9.
26. 7/33-34, 28/6.
27. 18/73 ff.
28. Chaps. 3-11.
29. Chap. 16.
30. Chaps. 41-45.
31. Chap. 42.
32. Chaps. 46-53.
33. Chaps. 30-35; Chap. 45.
34. Chap. 46-53.
It is stated that Sakti creates Brahma and other gods. The whole universe is said to be the creation of her maya. She is said to have possessed of two powers - Viṣṇu and Maheśvara with which she does everything in the universe. She is eternal Brahma. Thus the Y.T. enumerates the supremacy of Sakti as all-pervading. As such, it is a Śakti Tantra dealing with the Kaula system associated with the worship of Sakti. In this particular system the performances of pāṇḍavakāra of Tantrikism are commended. The Y.T. gives a detailed description of these practices. Furthermore, it makes allusion to other Tantrik rites and duties, such as the practice of saṭkarma or six black rites, sateakra, yantra, bali, and kavaca. It describes certain other śādhanas like Sāvyūhāśāhana, Trivatā and Caturvātā śādana, Vilvamūlaśāhana and Amācasāhana. It describes four vidyās, viz., Svapnāvatī, Mrtasanjīvīni, Mahumati and Paṃvati or Subhasikā. The Y.T. states that the Kaula system is also associated with the worship of Śiva. Moreover, it indirectly approves the performances of some of the śādhanas in the worship of Śiva.

The Y.T. describes some other details of the Śiva kastras of Assam. Of these, Konāra, Vrṣṭi (Umānaka), Jalpīsa, Nātekaśvara, Kamesvara (at Nīlāsala) and Śukresvara are worth-mentioning. It incor-
operates the mode of practices conducted in some of these temples. As such, although the Y.T. is a Śākta Tantra, it does not remain silent about the ritualistic practices associated with Śiva. It states clearly that one should worship the Devi with īkṣu a linga enjoined in every pūthaka.56

The Y.T. mentions three Śāiva sects, who were the Āvaśyūtas, the Kaulas and the Nāthas. All the sects approved Tantrik practices with all its paraphernalia.

The most important aspect which the Y.T. has recorded is the syncretisation of different cults such as Śāiva, Śākta, Vaishnava, Gānapatya, Mahāśāiva and others. It is said that Ādīnātha Mahākal was the preceptor of the matrikas of all the cults.57 As such we can assume that there was reconciliation among the cults to the domain of religious practices. Of course, it is also evident from the text that the deities at the head of the cults were all subordinate to Śakti. However, Śiva was regarded as supreme over all other gods. He acquired that position because Śakti has entered herself into Śiva's body, for which he became Paramesvara58 who is superior to all other gods or Isvaras59—like Brahmā and Viṣṇu. In this way the Y.T. qualifies Śiva with the Supreme God ever and above the merits of personal gods. Thus we can have some points of theosophical speculations from the Y.T.

The philosophy which the Y.T. has expounded is of the line of Advaita. Directly and in unambiguous terms it suggests not to think of any distinction between the Supreme God (Śiva) and the universe.60 It conceives Śiva as of the form of void—Śūnyarūpa.61 Perhaps the Buddhist philosophy of śūnya had influenced in moulding the conception at the time when the Y.T. was being composed.

56. 2/VI/143.
57. 1/1/41-42.
58. 1/X/20-21.
59. 2/IV/37.
60. 1/1/21; 1/II/15; 1/IX/27; 2/II/74-75.
61. 1/IX/46ff.
We have another Tantra-text known as the Kamaratna Tantra apart from the K.P. and the Y.T. The Kamaratna Tantra is an adaptation of the original Sanskrit work of the same name, which was ascribed to Gorakṣanath. But who made the Assamese prose-rendering is not known. Late Nimbevar Neog includes the work in the group of post-renaissance Assamese literature. According to Dr. S.N. Sarmah, the Kamaratna Tantra belongs to the Ahom period, although the actual date of translation is not known. However, "the book describes how by incantations and other methods a man can be subdued, attracted, made hostile, paralyzed, killed, freed from evil, excited and so on. It gives the methods to be adopted for the performance of the above acts in the form of medicines, mantras and yantras." The work begins with a benediction offered to Krishna, the method common to almost all Assamese books composed in and after the Vaishnava revival. Then it relates to an interlocution between Siva and Pārvatī. The entire mantras and their methods have been related by Siva to his Divine consort Pārvatī. The book begins thus: "Salutation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Then the discourse between Śiva and Pārvatī. One day Pārvatī enquired of Śaṅkara (Śiva), 'LORD, relate to me the Kamaratna Tantra'. Śaṅkara said, 'Now, Pārvatī, subjugation, attraction, repulsion, precipitation, invasion, pacification, nutrition and such actions are to be performed according to the time and manner as I am going to say." Then it goes to ascertain the different seasons in a day, the tithis, the nakṣatras, the use of particular mantras and finger in a particular action and the ways of collecting herbs. In describing these ways of collecting herbs, it states that a man should fast

62. Kamaratna Tantra, p 104; closing line.
63. N.L.A.L., p 301.
64. Aksaridwara sāhitya śrītikṣetra , p 190.
66. Kamaratna Tantra, Forwarding note, p iii.
68. Kamaratna Tantra, pp 2-6.
ever night in order to collect medicinal plants, and in the following morn-
ing, after offering salutation to Mahādeva, should approach the plant with
due respect and utter the following mantra - "Ye Betāla, Piśāca, Rākṣasa,
and the reptile that live in the plant, go away at the command of Siva."69

The contents of the book evidently refer to the magical character
of the work. It is to mention here that the Kāmaratna Tantra describes the
the magical and incantational values of different mantras used for the pur-
pose of satkarma sādhanā and also for the purpose of curing of numerous
diseases. Besides all these, the book prescribes medicines for the diseases
and yantras for all purposes.

We have an indigenous mantra literature in which Siva is made asso-
ciated with all the mantras. It is believed that the diseases can be cured
even at the mere utterance of the name of Siva in the mantras used for
that particular purpose.70 The same notion has been kept here in the pre-
sent work in order to avert all kinds of adverse elements.

Like the Y.T., Siva relates here in the Kāmaratna Tantra all
about the six black rites to Pārvatī. However, the latter work prescribes
some medicines relating to the rites and gives different mantras as well as
yantras for the purpose, while the Y.T. prescribes some sacrifices in ad-
dition to all mentioned above.

70. Des.Cst.As.Ws., p 76.
SECTION III : DEPICTION OF SIVA IN MEDIEVAL ASSAMESE LITERATURE.

In this section we will survey only the medieval Assamese literature except religious literature that grew up in the hands of the Vaisnavite poets and reformers of medieval Assam. For our convenience we will divide the works of the period into five groups:—

A. The literature of the Śhajīśa cult and the Sānya Purāṇa. 
B. The literature of Nāthaism. 
C. The songs of Mahāsā and other songs or Kāvyas used for the institution of Ojāpali. 
D. The literature that grew up in the Ahom courts under the direct patronage of the Ahom kings and other officials. This group also includes all other works appeared in the Ahom period.
E. The mantra literature.

We have already observed that Assam is poor in Saiva Literature in its strictest sense although Saivism was the popular religion of the province and although its influence could strongly be felt throughout the long history of Assam. Therefore, the above works cannot be included in the group of Saiva literature proper. They have been taken into consideration only because of the fact that they have devoted to delineate Siva in his various aspects. We have no written works on the philosophical foundation of the cult.
A. The literature of the Sahajīa cult and the Śūnya Purāṇa:

Krṣṇa Kīrtana composed by Baḍu Gaṅgādāsa is included in this group and it is regarded as the Sahajīa epic. The critics of Bengali language and literature claim it to be early specimen of the saś language. Late Umasūvar Nūc discussed in details the standpoints in its inclusion into the group of Assamese literature and opined that Krṣṇa Kīrtana belonged to a stage in which "Bengali and Assamese were not distinct identities, but were one, for which the generic name Kāmarūpī might be used". The learned editor of the J.A.R.S., S.C. Gosvāmī, enumerates a suggestion forwarded by a Bengali scholar, who believes that the songs of Krṣṇa Kīrtana were composed by a group of writers— one of them at least, was an Assamese and that his name was Ananta. However, Assamese claim on the book cannot be utterly disrespected.

Krṣṇa Kīrtana narrates the love-episoe of Krṣṇa and Ṣaṃś. In several pages of the book Hara or Śiva is mentioned either in denoting particular significance or in using his name as a simile. In the Cchātra-Khaṇḍa included in the Bhārakhanda, Krṣṇa speaks of himself as Hara, Hara and the Great Yogi. It is said, Krṣṇa obtained his flute as a boon granted to him by Hara-Gaurī. Further the book states how Krṣṇa could control his mind by observing Yoga practices. Krṣṇa, by observing Yoga, attained the knowledge of Brahma and drank honey from lotus. He performed Yoga practices both day and night. In another context Gaṅgādāsa has used the simile of Mahādeva with Gaurī as his one half. He also makes

74. Ṣaṃśaṇa (Uṣṇiśa Ādi), p 236.
75. ibid., p 204.
76. ibid., p 204.
77. ibid., p 306.
78. ibid., p 330.
allusion to Ganga as residing on Siva’s head in the same context. Dr. C. R. Bhattacharyya observes that the simile bears the significance of iconification between Siva and other Sakti-Godesses, who come to assimilate with Siva at a time when the assimilation of different religions took place. 80

The most note-worthy feature to be found in the Krishna Kirtana is that it describes the Yoga of Saiva Tantrikism. 79 The Yoga is called Hatha Yoga and in this particular Yoga the primary duty of a devotee is to arrest the wind-like mind. 82 Krishna says that he has arrested his mind and has also closed the tenth-door (सन्धि-निवेद ). 83 It means that Krishna by practising Yoga makes the life-stream, which flows downwards, to take an upward course. When the tenth-door is closed, the stream of nectar gets rid of being burnt in the naval region. The downward course of the stream of life generally leads man to get arrested in bondages of the universe. 85 When it is made upward by practising Hatha Yoga, man gets released from bondages and other earthly illusions. Krishna says that as he attains the Highest Bliss through Yoga-practises, he has now no desire for Kama and he is able to pierce the arrows of love by the arrows of knowledge. 86 All such evidences support the influences of the Yoga of Saiva-Tantrikism in Krishna Kirtana.

Sunya Purana: — Sunya Purana, also known as Vgana Purana, 87 is included in the group of Thams literature. One Rama Pratikrit, who flourished in the 10th century A.D., according to B.K. Chatterjee, 88 has composed the Purana. The work is claimed by both Bengalis and Assamese as

70. ध्रार्यकथायोग्यमिति , pp 86-87.
71. Ibid., p 88.
72. भारतीय भाषान्वय , p 26.
73. कृष्णकथायोगमिति (भाषाकृति) , p 306.
74. भारतीय भाषान्वय , p 22.
75. Ibid., p 22.
76. कृष्णकथायोगमिति (भाषाकृति) , p 306.
77. कृष्णपुराण: भूमिका , p 34.
78. Ibid., p 60.
their own. Assamese scholars, however, suggest that the Purana stands as an early specimen of Assamese literature.

Scholars are of the opinion that Tharma cult appeared as an amalgamation of Hinduism and Buddhism and also of Nathism. Traces of the cult can be made in Assam from an early date. In the cult, Siva is made associated with Tharma. Sūnya Purāṇa mentions this in narrating the cosmogony of the universe. According to the description, there was only void before the creation of the universe. From the perspiration of Ādi Nirmāṇa or Tharma, who was then wandering in the space, Sāyā Sakti was born. At the first appearance of her youth, she, out of passion, drank the poisonous honey (किस्मदुः). Therefrom she impregnated three gods - Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śaivaśiva, who began to contemplate in their mother’s womb how they could come out of her womb. Brahmā came out by piercing the brahmatālu (the upper palate). Seeing this Viṣṇu came out piercing off the umbilical cord (नासिक). Then contemplated Śaivaśiva, "what shall I do? I shall come out piercing off the yoni." He accordingly with his sharp finger nail. Thus he came out through the yoni-hole.

After this the three gods went on meditation, while Tharma assuming the form of a cadaver floating on water approached them in order to test the strength of their austerities. Brahmā and Viṣṇu nauseated at the sight of the dead body, while Siva, wise as he was, took him ashore knowing all everything in meditation. Then he began to dance lifting the corpse with his hands. For his wisdom he was given Śaivaśakti as the duties of destruction by Tharma. It is also said that Tharma would marry Śaivaśakti in each birth. Thenceforth, they could be known

89. N.L.A.L., pp 97-99; महाभार.
90. मून्मयुतराणः भुविकाः, pp 7 & 61.
91. पुराणां अत्यन्ती प्रमाणं, pp 64-68.
92. भूमि पुराणः एकधिक परंतं, vv 121-187.
93. शृड्ध परंतं, vv 188-26.
94. Ibid., vv 188-199.
95. Ibid., v 221b. Compare K.P. 19/10-
as Puruṣa and Prakṛti. 96 Mr. K. Mallik has pointed out that Ājña Sakti thus assuming her birth for seven times became Gauri, wife of Śiva. 97 It is also stated in the Purāṇa that Gauri had taken her birth from one half of Śiva’s body, which, as aptly pointed out by Dr. Bhaṭṭāchāryya, is the manifestation of the aspect of ardhamañḍāiva - the aspect significantly noted for the union of both Śiva and Sakti. 98

The creation-myth, which the Purāṇa records, evidently reveals the śunya-tattva having its two aspects - Thāmasa and Vīrañjana, the former merged later on with Śiva and Vīṣṇu. 99 Scholars are of the opinion that there were the influences of Buddhism in the composition of Vīrañjana as also in the creation-myth. 100

In the Purāṇa, Śiva is supposed to have meditated on Thāmasa keeping his head downward and lifting his legs upward. 101 This is evidently a yogic procedure of meditation. 102 In another verse of the Purāṇa we find Śiva as Ādam, Vīṣṇu as P.vaṭasana and Brahma as Māḥavat. 103 Thus the work shows an admixture of Islamic culture in the cult of Thāmasa.

The most note-worthy feature of Śunya Purāṇa is that it describes Śiva as an agricultural deity. In this aspect he appears in an interesting colour. The poet explains carefully why Śiva has to take to agriculture. 104 He is rather an impotheous god, for when mendicancy is the only means of subsistence, but mendicancy is not all favourale, because it makes sometimes disappointment. 105 For this, domestic quarrels often naturally break out. He is peer old go 7, who has passed three-fourth of his age. Naturally his young wife defeats him in the quarrels. However, she has

96. सूर्दि पतन , v 222.
97. नाथ-सम्प्रदाय एव प्रतिलाभ , p 349.
98. शैवाचार्य शिव , p 136.
99. नाथ-सम्प्रदाय एव प्रतिलाभ , p 349.
100. Ibid., p 349.
101. Geōnaa Māmāe, Historical Studies, p 197.
102. आदम , p 11, 30, 61-62.
103. शैव पुराण , v 3-5.
104. Ibid., v 4.
requested her husband repeatedly to take up agriculture. Accordingly Siva manages a plough laden with gold and the plough-share of silver.  

In the month of Māgha he has completed tilling the soil, but the problem of seed remains yet to be solved. Once Siva and Pārvatī are engaged in sexual alliances at Kālāśā. As a result of Siva's lustful activities the first seeds are born and these in hundred and thousand names come into existence. The problem of seed, thus, is solved. After a few months come the harvest season when Bhīma is called for to collect the harvest from the field. But the harvest yields only a small quantity of paddy equal in measurement to the ingatherings of two and a half bighās of land. Having heard this Siva becomes enraged in fury and has ordered Bhīma to set fire to the harvest. Bhīma with the help of Rāma lā Ṛīṇī sets the harvest on fire. At last, at the request of Pārvatī, Mahādeva summons Indra to put out the fire so that the harvest be saved. 

The misery of Siva as it appears from the Purāṇa, knows no bounds. It arouses deep pity in the heart of Pārvatī who requests him to sow paddy so that they may have food, cotton so that they may not have to go naked or wear skins for want of cloth, and rice so that they may not smear ashes on their body.

Two characteristics of Siva appear from the above narration. First, in the first aspect he is an agricultural deity and in the second aspect he appears to be a medicant. We will find later on that Assamese folk-literature knows Siva only in these two aspects more popularly.

Bhīma with Siva and relates to an integrated episode centering round both

105. अथ-वासि, v 15.
106. Ibid., vv 19-20.
108. Ibid., vv 39-59.
109. Ibid., vv 7-41.
of them. The same episode is re-integrated by Rama Samavatā in his famous work "Bhima Carita" with a touch of humour.

B. Literature of Nāthism:— Nāthism seems to have been flourished in Assam from before Saṅkara. According to late R. M. Nāth, some Bud-

his Hindu Tantriks, Nāthas and Sahajjāns flocked to Kāśī and in the early part of the 12th century A.D. from Bengal. In support of his view he puts forward an account of Tāúa Nātha, in which it is stated that in the 12th century A.D. many Tantriks went to the land of the Kukis in Assam.

The Nāthas belong to the Anādi (Siva) Gotra, as it is evident from the episode relating to the Nātha-Aidhānas, who were said to have been born of Rudra. As it is believed, that they were born of Siva or Nātha, the followers of Nāthism, therefore, used the surname 'Nātha'. Now-a-days the surname implies to a distinct caste— 'Nātha'. The Nāthas are also known as Yogī, probably they were accustomed to yoga practice particularly the Nātha Yoga. Nātha-yoga is associated with Mīna Nātha, the founder of Nāthism. Another account goes that the Nāthas were born of one Yoganātha, who took his birth to Śūryavatī, daughter of king Śuṅga, as a boon granted to her by Mahādeva. As they were born of Yoganātha, they came to be known as Yogī. The general tautology of all the Yogīs is "Nātha". The Nāthas are followers of Śiva and the Nātha cult is a Śāivite faith. The use of kūṭākṣa or rosary beads and the triple mark on the forehead of the Yogīs "may be cited in support of the view. In the Nātha cult there is no doubt a Śāivite strain, including association with the

110. S.H.T., p 88; गुरुवर्ण अस्समाओऽ सन्ताना, p 80.
112. Ibid., p 21; H.C.P.A., p 426.
113. नाथ-समाका विवाहसंबंध, PP 1-2; गौरवर्ण धर्मसन्धान, Introduction, p vi.
114. Ibid., p 2.
117. नाथ-समाका विवाहसंबंध, p 2.
118. Ibid., p 5.
119. Ibid., pp 105-110; C.H.I., Vol. IV, p 252.
snake cult, and even looking upon Gorkesya Nâtha as a form of Śiva (Bhairava), in whose temples Nâthas sometimes officiate as a priest. The use of the trident (tirisula) and the celebration of the yearly festival in Caitra (March-April) in honour of Śiva, when lay followers turn ascetics, as also of Śivarâtri, complete the later picture of Śiva affiliation. Śivarâtri is, in fact, the major festival of the cult.¹²⁰

According to late M.I. Nâth, the view held by some scholars that the Nâthas do not believe in God¹²¹ is unwarranted with facts.¹²² No less, influences on it of the Mitharic civilisation.¹²³ However, literary evidences and some ancient remains point to the widespread prevalence of the cult in ancient Assam. It is generally believed that Mina Nâtha was the Adi Guru and Gorkesya Nâtha was his disciple-preceptor of the cult.¹²⁴ But it is held that the two names do not denote two different persons; they were originally only two titles. It is, however, said that Mina Nâtha or Matayanâra Nâtha¹²⁵ took his birth in Kâmarûpama.¹²⁶ Matayanâra is said to have been infatuated by the women of the kingdom of Kândali, which is, according to the competent authorities, identified with the present Kândali Mausâ in the district of Hwângma.¹²⁷ The country was ruled by women, for which its reputation as a kingdom of women spread far and wide. The songs of Gopisamâra and Mainâmati, originally composed about the 11th and 12th century A.H.,¹²⁸ furnish a detailed description of the kingdom. Nâ Neog observes: "All that may be safely said of Gorkesya Nâtha is that he (or they, for there might indeed be more than Gorkesya Nâtha), must be responsible for the foundation of Nâthism.

¹²² Ibid., Introduction, p xx.
¹²⁴ Ibid., Introduction, p vi.
¹²⁸ Ibid., p 21; According to Nâ Neog, these songs belong to later than the 13th century A.D. अनाचाय साहित्य अध्ययन p 87.
and it is this Nātha (Yuga or Yogi) community thriving in the western part of the old kingdom of Kāmarūpa who used to sing these songs and transmit them from generation to generation till they have been recorded. Apart from these songs, there are a few ruins in Assam which proclaim the flourishing position of the cult in the early part of her history.

According to Dr. Sahibullah the Nātha pantheon comes to light either from or as an influence of Mantrayāna of Buddhism. S.C. Basu in his book shows that it is a branch of the mixture of both Buddhism and Saivism. Matsyendra Nātha first revealed the cult. Originally it was, as observed by Dr. Karandikar, a Yogue form of Saivism. The learned scholar further observes that Matsyendra Nātha later on got enmeshed of a new secret cult – the Sākta cult of Yogini Kaula, which he had expounded in Kāmarūpa. He had practised the new cult in the company of women in Kāmarūpa, where every woman was a Yogini. As such the new cult was named after them, for in their company he could discover the new cult. From the narration of Gorakṣa Saṅhitā and the songs of Maināmati and Gopīśandra it can be construed that Gorakṣa Nātha, the disciple-preceptor of Matsyendra Nātha, restored Yogue Saivism again by recovering his preceptor from the clutches of the women of Kāmarūpa. It seems that Maināmati was a female Yogini of Saiva-Tantrikism. She had possessed some occult powers.

"Nāthism to-day is scarcely traceable in Assam, but some influ-

130. गोपीशंद्र, Introduction, pp liii-lviii, नाथसम्प्रदायिक वृत्तांश, p33
131. युक्त पुराण : भृगुमिका : p 3.
132. Ib.4·, प्रवेष्टक : p 113.
134. Ib.4·, p 365.
135. Ib.4·, p 365.
136. नाथसम्प्रदायिक वृत्तांश , p 14.
Ones of Nātha legends are still to be felt in Assamese folk-songs.\textsuperscript{139} Such songs with Nātha legends include the songs of Śaināmatī and Gopīcandra. However, we have one Assamese metrical composition on Nāthīm known as the "Jātimuktā". It narrates how Nāthīm, which is a turned to a caste at present, came into being and also how the Yogīs were degraded as a curse of Vaiśīṣṭṭa. According to the narration Śiva once became emaciated of carnal appetite, for which he discharged semen. Hundreds of Yogiṇīs came there and took the semen in the fist so that it might not be useless. But when they desired to drink it, they could see that the semen had already taken three shapes and when these three pieces were placed together to be united, these were again converted into four fetus-shaped forms. In an instant four & persons were born from the fetuses and began to pray Śiva. As the persons were born from the womb of Yogiṇī, they came to be known as Yogī and so also the caste by Yogī.\textsuperscript{139}

It is stated in Jātimuktā that Yogīs were degraded as an impression of the sage Vaiśīṣṭṭa.\textsuperscript{140} Historically, the Yogīs had to be degraded, because they had to rear silk-worm and spinning as the only means of subsistence after they had been driven out from Bengal by Ballāl Sen, who flourished in the later part of the 11th century A.D. Thereafter, they came to be known as Kāṭanī as they had taken to rearing of silk-worm and spinning. \textsuperscript{140} M.R. Nāth forwards another reason for the title of

\textsuperscript{139} S.H.T., p 69.

\textsuperscript{140} Quote from Yogī Bākṣṭaṇī Jāntīr Ṛnīhās, pp 6-9.

\textsuperscript{140} Yogī Bākṣṭaṇī Jāntīr Ṛnīhās, pp 18-21.
the caste. According to his interpretation one of the Vaish̄eva Gosāi of Assam (people say that the Gosāi was Late Rūpaṇārāyaṇa of the Śrīnāṭe Sattrā) made the Yogis śārenāśa instead of ancēranāśa (outcaste), He initiated them and gave the them the title - Kāṭal.

6. The songs of Manasā and other songs used for the institution of Ojāpāli:—The songs of Manasā have secured an extraordinary place in the literature of medieval Assam and they formed the main articles for consumption of the institution of Ojāpāli. "The institution of Ojāpāli was the direct precursor of the Vaish̄eṇa drama in the same way as the holy chorus in the festivals of Dionysus preceded the Greek tragedy. When there was no regular drama in the country, the performances of Ojāpāli provided the common people of villages and court circles with edification and amusement in the nāṭghar (house of lyrical dance-drama). But even when ankā or nāṭṭ, the regular drama invented by Śaṅkaradeva, came into existence, this musical institution might not cease to have its utility. It came to be known as the special property pertaining to the festival of the snake-goddess Manasā." For this particular festival a group of Manasā kāvyas came into existence in medieval Assam. These kāvyas are lyrical in character and more secular in tone. The composers of the Manasā kāvyas include Manakara and Vurgāvara. Śaṅkaradeva came later on to make the grand trinity.

Mr. Neog has observed that these "Kāvyas in choral songs represent the most popular form of literature before neo-Vaishnavite influences pervaded the literature of the country. In point of time these belong to the time of Śaṅkaradeva but in essence and method of treatment they swing back to the preceding period."

141. Yonegū Ṛa Ḍāṭānī, p 14.
143. Ibid., p 46.
The Manasā Kavyas written by Manakara and Bṛgāvra dealt with the worship of the goddess Manasā and the exaltation of the cult of Manasā. The subject-matter of the kavyas point to the association of the cult with snakes. Writing on the place of Śiva in Bengali kavyas, Dr. G. N. Bhaṭṭāchārya points to the abundance of snakes in Bengal and Manasā appeared in the form of a snake-goddess in a society dependent on agriculture with some influence from the Deccan.¹⁴⁴ Snakes are abundantly found in Assam also, and some of her tribes have the tradition of snake-worship. The Boṣes worship the serpent and they call it Māeri, which is also an epithet of the goddess Manasā. This and other traditions of snake-worship current amongst some tribes of Assam have helped the growth of the cult of Manasā. The epithet Māeri for the goddess, as it is rightly observed by the editors of the Manasā Kavyas, comes from the Boṣe tribe.¹⁴⁵ Manasā is more a local village-goddess¹⁴⁶ than a goddess with antique divinity. Her association with snakes makes her entrance easy to the family of Śiva, who is also a god of snakes. It is a noticeable tendency that the village gods and goddesses having some form of terrible aspects always had been seeking refuge in Śiva from time to time to enliven their position in the society and they were solely responsible in transforming Śiva to a folk-deity. Although in course of time, the goddess Manasā could get easy approach to establish her relationship with Śiva, the followers of Śiva, at the outset, could not accept her cordially they treated her with contempt. The episode of Cānd Saṅgār and his son Lakhinār and Saṅgār's-daughter-in-law Behulā provides the significance of comprehension of the followers of Śiva towards the new cult. The struggle between Cānd Saṅgār and Manasā signifies a struggle between two faiths - Saivism and the cult of Manasā. At last a compromise between the cults had taken place and Manasā securing herself the position of a daughter.

¹⁴⁴ भाट्य ए (4) विशेष, p 56.
¹⁴⁵ भाष्य की (4), आदर्श, p 0'11.
in the family of Śiva ensured veneration from the followers of Śiva. The Hanasākāvyas narrate this scene of hostility and reconciliation of two faiths. It is thought that the legend of Cānd Sadāgar is a later incorporation. Dr. S. D. Malley observes that the "opposition of Cānd as an ardent devotee of Śiva seems to be a later addition to the legend, dating from a time when the cult of Hanasā was beginning to find a foothold in the society and when the Brāhmaṇas thought of the absorption of these laterika deities into their own fold by giving them Purānic garb and relating them to the gods of Brāhmaṇical Hinduism. This is the only feasible explanation of why Hanasā came to be considered a daughter of Śiva." 147

Whatever be the basis of reality in the legend of Hanasā in relation to Cānd Sadāgar - the reality being denied and also being maintained by two groups of scholars respectively - the histrionicity of legendary Cānd and his position as an exponent of Saivism is being maintained by the scholars, who point to the 10th-11th century as the probable date of origin of the legend. 148 H. K. Kathiyawali identifies Cānd with Śri Candra Deva, the Candra king of East Bengal (circa 975-1000 A.D.), but the hypothesis is opposed by scholars on several grounds. 149 On the other hand, it is also forwarded that the peculiar status which Cānd enjoys suggests that he was at the same time a rich merchant and a ruling chief or king. 150 He was a local chief perhaps like the Ruhās of medieval Assam. Saivism was a most popular form of religion in his locality. It attained undivided veneration from the subjects.

Of the early group of composers of these popular songs of Hanasā, Hanasakara seems to be the first. 151 As to the date of the poet nothing can be known from his songs. Basing on the political as well as social conditions

148. Ibid., pp 164-168.
149. Ibid., pp 166-167.
150. Ibid., p 168.
and also on the internal evidences of the language of his songs, critics have assigned him the date towards the close of the 15th century A.D. or the beginning of the 16th century A.D. However, "Manakara was a village poet and minstrel, singing his songs from songs in his hands." He deals with the following topics in his songs: (A) Cosmology of the universe, (B) the marriage of Hara and Pārvatī and (C) the birth of Padmā.

A. Cosmology of the universe:—When the world was in void and there was none to inhabit, the Anādi Gosal, out of his desire, created Gangā, eight crores of stars along with the heaven, the Moon and the Sun and others, assumed himself different incarnations and became himself the cause and effect of creation. He also created a pair of birds—the female eating unknowingly the semen of the male became impregnated and laid three eggs out of which all living beings were created. From the thigh of Gosal was born the Bhāngara Jagannātha or Gangā-smoker Śiva. Brahamā and Viṣṇu were also born of Anādi Gosal. While the three gods were in constant meditation on the river side, Anādi Gosal in the guise of a dead man let his body float on the current. Brahmac and Viṣṇu, being annoyed at the sight of the cadaver, pushed it away, while Śiva recognising it as the body of his own father, took it ashore and started sprinkling water into the mouth of it from a conch shell. At last Anādi Gosal came to life and praised Śiva for his spiritual qualities. He then desired to enter into the body of Śiva and also gave him Gangā and Uṛgā. Śiva married Gangā, kept her in his matted lock and sent Uṛgā adrift on the river in an iron intro-
pitcher, which not sinking miraculously went to the possession of the sage Hemanta.\textsuperscript{161} \& Būrgā grew up in his house.

The creation-myth is apparently similar to that of the Śāmya Purāṇa of Rāmāi R. Pandit. The editors of the Manasā Kavyas maintain that the speculations as regards the creation-myth narrated by Manakara is significantly similar to that of Thāma literature.\textsuperscript{162} Some internal evidences also testify to this influence of the Thāma cult. It is said in a song that Śiva is a combination of both Mahādeva and Thāmasa: "One half of mine is Mahādeva and the other half is Thāmasa.\textsuperscript{163}\textsuperscript{\textdagger} In the description of the Śāmya-tattva, the influence of Nāthism and Buddhist can rightly be seen.\textsuperscript{\textdagger}\textsuperscript{\textdagger}

The supremacy of Śiva is prominent in all the songs. The poet describes how Śiva attains spiritual qualities of high merit all over other gods and it is apropos to the advice of Śiva only that Brahmā engages himself in the work of creation.\textsuperscript{164}

The significance of the creation-myth lies in incorporating certain popular beliefs associated with Śiva. Here Śiva appears rather a householder and agricultural deity, who is himself a worth example to all human beings.\textsuperscript{165} Śiva in these aspects further elaborate\textsuperscript{\textdagger}\textsuperscript{\textdagger} in the chapter on the marriage of Hara and Pārvatī.

B. Marriage of Hara and Pārvatī:—The chapter begins with the legend of Śiva starting from the creation of his bull with the help of Viśvakarmā.\textsuperscript{166} We have already noticed that Śiva had already started his family life with Gangā as his wife. In the present chapter Śiva is seen busy in making a flower garden meant for Būrgā. Gangā has given forty-two varieties of flower seeds and a sickle made of gold.\textsuperscript{167} Śiva ploughed the

161. Songs 8-12.
162. Introduction, p. 103.
163. Song 8.
164. Ibid.
165. Song 10.
166. Songs 2-3.
167. Song 4.
field twelve times and measured it. The garden was made with varieties of flowering plants. One day Durga came to the garden herself dressed as impressively as possible. Having been reported of the entrance of Durga by the attendants, Siva came to the garden to meet her and to satisfy his amour with her. Siva and Durga made sexual alliances in the garden under a Bakula tree. By this time Narada informed Gangā all about Siva's secret affairs. The situation became very awkward when Siva appealed to Gangā to allow him to marry Durga. Gangā abused him and worsened him of his old age and presumptuous conditions. She declared that a man very poor and old in age like Siva should not think of discontentment with a single wife. At last, of course, she yielded reluctantly to the proposal and thus Siva began a family life with two wives - Gangā and Durga.

In this chapter on Hara-Pārvatī's marriage various kinds of popular folk beliefs have been made associated with the character of Siva. Firstly, he is made a passionate cultivator. Secondly, the vehicle of bull comes to his association. Moreover, Narada as well as Kuvera has become his companion. Thirdly, Siva appears to be a god of love and his secret means to satisfy his lust for Durga reveals him to be a licentious. Fourthly, several other elements, viz., addiction to gāñjā smoking, beggar's mentality and naked appearance have made him a most human deity, who is akin to all human beings bounded by both good and evil, merits and shortcomings, feelings and passions. Lastly, the conception of Purāṇa Siva is also in vogue side by side with his Laukika characteristics. A Purānic conception about the origin of Siva's garland made of skulls is described.

168. Song 4.
170. Song 15.
171. Song 22.
172. Song 29.
173. Song 40.
174. Song 29.
175. Song 37.
in a song of Manakara. It states that the garland of Śiva is made of the skulls of Durga, who is believed to have died of hundred times. 177

C. Birth of Padmā:— The chapter b begins with the journey of Śiva to the flower garden. He left his wives Durga and Gangā at home. While he reached the bank of a pond in the garden, he could see that the flowers were blossoming impressively and the frones and the kanas were roaming in pairs. He passionately felt for Gangā and Durga and stood love-stricken. Out of excitement he discharged semen over a lotus-leaf. His semen reached Parāla, where Padmā born of it. 178 Once he was enamoured of Padmā, when he could not recognise as his own daughter. 179 But he was ashamed of his behaviour when he could know that Padmā was his daughter. Hereafter Padmā was taken to the house of Śiva at the ardent desire of the former. 180

The learned editors of the Manasā Kavyas have rightly maintained that the songs of Manasā are full of secular descriptions, and the gods, although they were gods by their position, could not escape from the secular touch of a kavya. On the other hand, they appear as common human beings. They have lost the dignity and gracefulness of a god. Mahādeva of Manakara is not the Purānic god, who had burnt Kamaśevas to ashes. He appears rather as a laukika god of peasantry. Moreover, he appears to be a mendicant in several songs. He is, however, crazy. Having been well acquainted with his poverty and also having been known to mendicancy as the only means of subsistence, he craves for another wife not being contented with a single wife. 182 It seems that mendicancy helps him with opportunities in restoring secret relationship with females. We have seen this

178. Song 5.
179. Song 4.
180. Song 14.
181. Introduction, p 1004.
182. Song 29 (कुर्पाभिनंतीर बिधान)
while he had been to the residence of Manasa for begging alms from Durga. Siva did this only because he could not restrain himself from seeing Durga immediately after his sexual dalliance with her in the flower garden, sweet memory of which pinched him greatly. We can trace here the indecent nature of his character underlying his efforts. His indecent nature and profligacy also can be traced from his association with Koch woman and Gowalini. His relation with Koch woman reminds us of his relation with Hirā, whom he had copulated in the curse of Hadiyā Mandal.

The story related by Nāgarīvara supplements Manakara. It appears from his benediction to king Viswasīha of Koch-Sabhā that he was a poet of the early 16th century and unlike Manakara, as his treatment of various ragas of classical music and the skill he showed in the art of poetry reveal, he was a cultured and dignified poet. His legend of Manasa is limited to the episode of Behula and Lakhdār, and as such deals only with the phase of expansion of the cult of Manasa and corresponding oppositions from the side of the Śivites represented by Cande Sadāgar as their leader. Cande was a great devotee of Śiva and he never showed any respect to gods other than Śiva. He is said to have warned and rebuked Senkā, his wife, for her immoral endeavour of worshipping Manasa secretly.

It is stated in the songs that the first appearance of the cult of Manasa was made by an Oja named Charvāntari and the goddess is said to have possessed of various qualities including the power of granting offspring to the childless. Secondly, the fisher-woman Sāradā is said to have preached the cult and it is also stated in this connection that Manasa was the daughter of Śiva, the God of gods.

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183. Song 28 (हरिपर विभाजन ।).
184. Songs 7-8 (प्रभुर अन्न रविद ।).
185. मनसा कथा, Introduction, p 103; लोक विकास 72-73, p 60.
186. Song 2.
187. Song 14.
188. Songs 5, 12. 189. Song 12.
The songs of Purāṇavastra do not describe directly as to the person of Śiva. Here Śiva appears only as a god of a pantheon and nothing else. He could not come to rescue his great devotee, Cānda, from befalling dangers caused by Pāmā or Manasā. It seems that the influence of Śiva began to cease in the society. On the other hand, the new cult of Manasā, as observed by Dr. Maity, "came to gain popularity, first among the woman-folk of upper classes and then among the upper classes of men." 100

Sukavi Nārāyāndevā came to form the famous trio of the Manasā poets at a later period. Scholars are diverse in opinion as regards the actual date of this poet. It is thought that he flourished probably in the 18th century A.D.

Sukavi Nārāyāndevā is famous for his composition of the Pāmā Purāṇa, which deals with the glorification as well as the exploits of Manasā. The Purāṇa is also known as Sukanaśā, which is probably an abbreviation of Sukavi Nārāyāndevā. 101 The songs primarily deal with the legend of Manasā and also with the gradual development of the cult among all sections of people. The songs are numerous and the legend is too long to be dealt with addition of sub-plots or ākhyānas to survey fully in these pages. Here we will refer only to certain aspects of Śiva, who is said to have in paternal relation with Pāmā.

As a Purānic god, Śiva appears to be the head of a pantheon. Cānda represents as the leader-devotee of that pantheon. The god appears to be creator of all beings. For the god of the universe he drank the Kālakūta poison. 102 He resides secretly in the universe practising yoga. 103 He destroyed the sacrifice of Pākṣa and roamed like an insane lifting Satī's corpse over his shoulder. 104 Later on he undertook severe austerities and

100. Goddess Manasā, Historical Studies, p 134. Dr. Maity discusses elaborately the gradual evolution of the cult. See op.cit book, Chap.V.
101. Preface to , Preface to , , Preface to , Preface to ,
104. pp 39-42.
having burnt Kāmaṇḍeva he went to marry Pārvatī, who was none but Gāndā. 195
Two sons - Ganesa and Kārttiṅka were born to them. Kārttiṅka killed the demon Tādesa and liberated the gods of heaven. It appears from the songs that Siva is benevolent and on no occasion he allows his devotee to be annihilated by Manasa.

The songs of Narayanādeva describe vividly the popular characteristics of Śiva. His description is more elaborate and impressively expressive than Manakara. The nucleus of the popular aspects of the deity current among the village-folk, which Manakara seems to have implanted in his songs, has got wide expression in Narayanādeva’s hands. In his songs Śiva appears to be as like a man of hump and mūtūra. 106 He is an insane from his very birth, 107 a poor 108 and a mendicant. 109 He is the possessor of theurgy, as it is evident from his possession of Mahājñēma which he is said to have given to Cānda. 200 It appears from other reference that Śiva was old in age when he married Pārvatī. 201 So far women are concerned, he is very much partial and shows his lewdness always whenever he meets any woman without searching her caste or creed. A thief is only aware of other thieves. Śiva tries to detect fluctuant motives similar to his own in every woman. Therefore, he says to Pārvatī, “If you receive me fraudulently, you will not be married by any person in this life.” 202 Out of his lust for woman he maintains unceremonious relation with a non girl, who is, it is said, none but Pārvatī. 203 The lust for woman encourages him to behave even his own daughters - Nāṭa 204 and an̄ Rañā 205 in an indecent manner.

Siva's weakness to all kinds of intoxicating drugs, particularly

197. pp 75–76.
198. pp 73–74, 632.
199. pp 73–74, 116, 304, 682.
200. p 130.
202. p 55.
203. pp 115–117.
204. p 121.
to hemp, is well-known and Narayandeva acknowledges this in his Prâma Purâna. Wherever he goes, he keeps the wallet full of hemp inside his armpit. It so happens even at the moment when he goes to marry Pârvati. 206 He wears a garland of Shûtûrâ around his neck. 207 Insanity on the part of an old god like Siva may possibly be the outcome of excessive smoking of ganjâ. It seems that ganjâ makes him intoxicated and out of intoxication he begins dancing and singing in a wild manner. 208 Sometimes he makes mock-meditation out of intoxication. 209 In such a state he knows not what had been happening in the world. Moreover, in this state he generally comes under the subordination of woman although he is a god of gods. 210 Like in Gandakara in the songs of Narayandeva also Siva is epistate as a poor god. Of course, Narayandeva gives much emphasis on the impecuniosity of the deity. According to the poet, Siva is so poor that he has neither paddy preserve for the year nor the trace of a single straw on the roof of his dwelling-house; he has no bed to sleep and cloth to put on, he smears the ashes of men in his body and roams in the graveyar, generally he go for begging alms door to door and it so happens sometimes that quarrels break out between him and his wife at the time of cooking food. 211 Pârvati in the guise of a don girl also renews him for his hemp-spirit, idleness and poverty. 212

A popular belief as regards Siva being the possessor of the power of magic and incantations can be found in the songs of Narayandeva. It is said that he gave Gânâ the Mahâjâna or the Great Knowledge. 213 The exact nature of Mahâjâna, as can be contemplated from the services done by it, is that it was a magical incantation by which life could be restored to

206. p 71.
207. p 71.
208. pp 120-121.
209. p 131.
210. p 421.
211. pp 73-74.
212. pp 116, 682.
213. p 180.
the dead, and snake-bite could also be cured. Bamsidasa, a Bengali poet of Nanasa, states that the Mahājāna is consiste of only two syllables and a half. Its narrated in the Nārāyanāvata's song how Gāna restores life to his dead sons and revives the garden and its attendants with the help of the Mahājāna. Although it is not known whether it is an incantation used for the purpose of curing snake-bites. But it is quite evident from an instance which states the application of it in this particular purpose, that it was also used to cure snake-bites. It is said that waters being purified by the particular incantation should have to be sprinkle on the dead. The name of Siva is invariably associate with the central literature of Assam. As such the popular belief as regards the relation of the deity with incantations reveals him to be the possessor of medicines like Rudra of the Veda.

Certain incoherent manners of Siva made him peculiar to all his devotees, for which he is spoken of by his devotees as the 'ma god'. Wearing of the garland of skulls and tiger-skin, smoking of gānja and the performance of terrific tāntava-dance are all peculiar to him. He drank the Kālakūta poison at the time of when other gods were drinking amṛta or nectar. A.C.Barua observes that from the time of drinking poison, the intoxicating objects like hemp and others came to be worshipped use in his worship and thenceforth he came to be known as a gānja-smoker and a voluptuous god. Moreover, he assigns three reasons for which people call him a ma god. Firstly, he is much more addicted to intoxicating objects. Secondly, being a god he behaves like a man and enters into matrimonial relationship. He is enfe voces with children. Yet he never becomes a householder. He never abandons to roam in the graveyards even after his marriage.

216. p 224.
217. p 234.
218. pp 61-63.
Thirdly, some non-Aryan traits have strongly influenced him to be a god of lowest dignity.

The songs of Nārāyanadeva have thrown some lights on the story of worship of the deity and the practices concerned to him. It is found that Śiva was generally worshipped in the abode of a linga. In several places the worship of a linga by Cāṇḍo have been mentioned. The objects offered to him contained jābā (gōda) or the China rose, mūtūr (the thornapple stramonium) hemp and vilva-leaves.221 Offering of one's own flesh or blood was not uncommon in the days of Nārāyanadeva. It is said that Cāṇḍo worshipped Śiva offering his own head.222 Cāṇḍo was also worshipped by offerings of one's own flesh.223 In several other contexts Saṃśa is said to have been worshipped by offerings of sacrifices of animals and birds.224

In the songs of Nārāyanadeva we find mention of the members of Śiva's family. They are Genisesa and Karttikeya and other attendants, who came to the company of Śiva. We find the bellicose Nārāṣa as Śiva's nephew, Bhīma as his cowherd boy, Nanda and other Rūtes and retinas as his attendants. Nārāṣa appears a joke-lover, quarrelsome and a glutton. So in the picture of Bhīma who is more voracious with a tremendous capacity of out-eat.

Apart from the above three poets, Hitārbar Vija, a contemporary of Śri Saṁśa, was one who is credited with his contributions in giving an impetus to the growth of secular literature. He composed the kāvyas Uṣā-Parinaya using the famous story relating to the love-episode of Uṣā and Aniruddha and the struggle between Hārī and Hara or its subject-matter. Dr. Noug includes the kāvyas in the group of lyrical kāvyas, all

221. pp 175, 317, 362, 472.
222. p 175.
223. p 497.
depicting the love and marriage of young men and women. The kāvyas of the secular branch of literature were used in the institution of Ojāpāli. It is also composed for the same purpose. The songs composed of the subject-matter from the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas written by Vyasa are used for the institution of Ojāpāli are generally known as the Viyāhar Gīta or the Sabhāgāvā Ojāpāli. The methods as well as the manners in which the Ojā of the Viyāhar Gīta accepts differ from those of Sukanānī. In the former institution, obeisance to Śiva has been shown in a song called Māladi (coined from the gīga name Mālavārī) at the end of the sāhibāsa (a ceremony performed in the ninth evening of the day previous to that on which a solemn rite is to be performed), which the institution of Ojāpāli does not include.

The episode relating to the marriage of Usha is narrated in chapters 116-123 of Vayu Parvan of Harivamśa. Pitāmbara has faithfully translated the important verses of Harivamśa keeping intact the sequences of events narrated therein. The poet has composed his kāvyā in songs and pādas (a kind of Assamese metre of two lines rhyming at the end) making it appropriate to the institution of Ojāpāli. The poet was perhaps a worshipper of Viṣṇu having catholic outlook in matters of religion. As a matter of fact, partiality to Viṣṇu is evident in Usha-Pariṇaya as it was in the original Purāṇa text. Śiva is also said to have been fascinated with the adventures of Arāma as he has to propi-
tiate Krsna in order to protect his devotee, Bāna. Of course, Krsna did not forget that Siva was the Great God known to the world.

However, from the narration Siva appears as an ancillary to Hari. He is propitious to his devotees. Whenever he has been called for by his devotees, he appears before them and grants boon to them according to their desire. According to the legend, Bāna, the king of Saptavana, was a great devotee of Siva. It is said Siva appeared before him in the Mithuna form having Mahāmāyā or his consort on his lap. It is stated also how Bāna was given the milk of Mahāmāyā’s breast, as the former wished for, which reminds us of a like boon granted to Votālo and Pānirāva in Kālikā Purāṇa.

The poet of Uṣṇa-Patināya conceives of the Ṣaiva Trinity with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara as the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe respectively. In another context the dual entity of Hari–Hara has also been conceived of. The poet envisages the oneness of Hari and Hara with great novelty. It is said: “Half the body of Hari is blue and the other poison half is white. One half drinks ambrosia and the other poison. There is tiger-skin in one half and the cloth yellow in colour on the other. One half is besmeared of sandal-powder and the other is of ashes. One half takes the trident and the other the discus. One half wears the Kaustabha necklace and the other the cakra. There is Kamalā in one half and Bhavānī on the other. One half wears the ear-ring made of precious stones and the other the snake.”

Pitāmbara Viṣṇu describes the erotic pleasures of Hari and Pārvati in the arbour which reminds us of Manakara’s like description.

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236. vv 1070–74.
237. v 1075.
238. v 15.
239. vv 18 & 22.
240. vv 36–37, 755, 757.
241. vv 941–947, 996.
242. vv 945–947.
The description provides indirectly some non-Aryan traits as well as popular nature of the deity. It is said, when Śiva went to the flower garden he set all his crude attirements free from his entire body. Of these the matted lock, ashes, garland of skulls and of dhūturā or the thornapple stramonium were included. The association of these objects with Śiva points to the popularity of the deity among all sects of village folk.

Furthermore, some allusions are also made as regards the popular aspects of Śiva. He is said to have been contempted by Kṛṣṇa as Kāpālī, for which he was not invited by Dakṣa to the sacrifice. It is said wherever he goes he takes Devī with him in order to appease his lust. He spares no pains to make sexual dalliance even with girls of the Kirūtas and the Kočhes. He drinks poison, wears tiger-skin and necklace of bones. The bull, which is an object of veneration, is the means of his appeasement. Even when hairs are becoming grey proclaiming his old age, he roams on the earth becoming nude. These words of disdain used by Kṛṣṇa are all significant of the insanity of the deity.

Some glimpses of practices relating to the worship of Śiva can also be had from the kavya. Bāṣa is said to have performed meditation for a long period to have a corporal presence of the deity. He is also said to have worshipped the deity fumigating incense and candle and offering oblations as well as flowers of various kinds. It can be presumed from a verse that songs and dances are inevitable in the worship. It is stated that Bāṣa was emancipated and became the leader of the Pramathas of Śiva by virtue of his propitiation of the deity with songs and dances. We have like references in the Manasā

\[\text{References:} 244, \text{vv} 64-68. \]
\[245, \text{v} 911. \]
\[246, \text{vv} 912-917. \]
\[247, \text{v} 9215. \]
\[248, \text{v} 934. \]
\[249, \text{v} 1079. \]
\[250, \text{vv} 1076-1077. \]
\[251, \text{vv} 1077-1079. \]
Kāvya also, 252

The V iy ā h a r Gī tā includes the Rāmāyāna composed in songs meant for the performance of Ojāpālī chorus by Durgāvāra who was also the poet of Dānāsa Kāvya. The Rāmāyāna written by him is popularly known as Gī tā-Rāmāyāna. In course of his narration, the poet describes performance of the Cāitra-Caturdaśī festival by Rāma, Lakṣaṇa and Sītā in the company of the citizens of Ayodhya. Śrī Lekhāru points out that the introduction of the festival into the text is one of the poet's own creations. 253 The festival is performed in honour of the god of love, Madana or Kāmadeva at the fourteenth night of the bright half of the moon of Cāitra. "The worship", according to Dr. Neog, "is a branch of the Śiva-Sakti cult and seems to have been widely carried on in the days of Durgāvāra." 254 It is also mentioned in the text that Sītā worshipped Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahēśa mentally at the time of fire ordeal.

From all the accounts found in the Dānāsa Kāvyas as well as other lyrical kāvyas meant for the use of the institution of Ojāpālī, it is evidently clear that Śiva tends to become a Lawkika god and it seems that his nature and character are not all ascent.

B. Literature of the Āhoma Period: — A secular essence pervades over the literature flourished during the Āhoma period. We have a few works of the period in which Śaiva legends and Tāntrik rituals have been discussed either because some of the writers were Śaivites or because some of them were sympathetic to the deity. In the following pages we will discuss how Śiva was portrayed in the literature of the Āhoma period.

The Hayagrīvanāṭhava, also known as the Yaḍini Tantra 255 written by Rāma Candradevapātra Gohāl, describes how Mahēśa relates to his divine

253. A. E. AlL., pp 221-222.
254. Ibid., p 59.
255. Tt. B. F., pp 221-222.
consort, Pārvatī, the rites and disciplines to be observed in the worship of Mādhava. The work upholds the view that Tāntrik ideals are most efficacious and secret and Mahesa has revealed those secrets to Pārvatī. Of course, the book does not dwell on the most terrible and outrageous practices of the Tantras; simply it deals with the path of renunciation. In Assam a few Vaiṣṇava Sattras – particularly the Sattra of the Kāleśvara pantha observe initiations conducted both according to the Ṛgvedas and the Tantras. In the Viśnupāṭ Sattra, a special mode of Tāntrik initiation has been conducted, which is in accordance with the ideals of renunciation spoken of in the Tantras by Siva. The Hayagrīvanāhava deals with this aspect of Tāntrik initiation and discipline.

Various legends relating to Siva are found in several works of the Āhoī period. One Vāsudeva Uśi, a poet of the post-Saṅkarite era, narrates the legend of Siva how he becomes Nilakantha or Bhamanīma blue-necked in the book called 'Hara-Gaurī Sambāva'. The poet takes materials from the Skanda Purāṇa, and, according to Dr. Neog, 'Hara-Gaurī Sambāva' is a pure Śaiva text and the poet himself was a Śaiva.

The story of the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī is variously dealt with by several writers from the time of Ārubāravera. A book style as 'Hara-Gaurī Vivāha' (The marriage of Hara and Gaurī) or the Kālikā Purāṇa is such one. The writer of the book is not known. The Mañjā Kavyas in general and the 'Rukmini Haraṇa Kavya' of Saṅkarṣeṣa in particular have exerted influences on some of the descriptions incorporated in the book. The verses describing the restlessness of the women after to see Mañjā in the form of a bride are obviously reproductions of the like verses of...
the 'Rukmini Harana Kavya'. However, the book like the Haraschana kavyas portrays Siva in all his popular aspects - his wild attirements, his desire to be a house-holder and also his insanity as well as meekness. It is said here that Siva assumes human form and observing all the customs and conventions he married Parvati. There is another reason why Siva undertakes to marry her. It is said that he is without a single human being in his home, for which he desires to marry her. The proposal has been forwarded. But there is a problem: Siva is too poor to collect money and other objects required for the marriage. He, therefore, censures himself for his poverty and idleness for making. It is said that he himself remains very poor, while others are rich and wealthy getting boons from him. This aspect of the city is not, of course, rare to find in the Puranas. In the Assamese kavya he appears to be more a materialist. He realises that wealth is strength and life is barren has it not possesses wealth. In this connection the poet gives a clarion-call to the house-holders to acquire wealth and money.

In the Kalika Purana (Assamese), Siva is best illustrated as a lankika devta and house-holder. For his poverty smaka refuses him to accept him as her son-in-law. She fears his insanity, which is an outcome of excessive smoking of hemp. She is afraid of Siva and thinks that he would surely whip her daughter if he does not get hemp when he desires to smoke it. At last, of course, the marriage is solemnised observing all local marriage marriage customs and formalities. The marriage episode

261, vv 215-223. So also the verses describing Siva's poverty are reproduction from Saikarmi's like verses of the Rukmini Harana Kavya.
262, vv 238-2.9.
263, v 117.
264, vv 153-167.
265, v 166.
266, बंका काही सिखिया, p 118.
267, v 162.
268, vv 168-170. § 269, v 45.
of Śiva is also described in the Assamese version of the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa. 270

Other legends relating to Śiva, such as the destruction of the sacrifice of Ṛṣa, burning of Kāmaḍeṇa, killing of Śeṣākaciṭa can be had in the literature of the Ahom period. The "Mahāmāya Kāvyā" of Kāmaṇḍa Priya is an adaptation of the philosophical Sanskrit drama "Prabodhacandraśodāyā" written by Kṛṣṇa Miśra of Mithilā in the 11th century A.D. 271 It describes the episode of the destruction of the sacrifice of Ṛṣa and the burning of Kāmaḍeṇa by Śiva. 272 The "Kānakumāra Harasa" of Banitante is a pseudo-classical play, 273 written by Kavi Cantra Priya in 1724-31. under the direct patronage of the Ahom king Śiva Simha and his consort Phulesvarī Kamari 274 depicts the affair d'amour of Uṣā and Aniruddha, the plot being interwoven with the struggle between Bāna and Kṛṣṇa, and ends with the struggle between Mahādeva, the tutelary god of Bāna, and Kṛṣṇa. This particular episode has been variously dealt with by several poets both known and unknown before and after the playwright. In the present narration the unmistakable influence of Ananta Kamāli's "Kumāra Harasa" can be traced although the present writer does not acknowledge his debt to the poet of the 16th century. 275 Of the pseudo-

272. Ibid., pp 79-82.
273. Prapaccn ams, Preface, p 1. "Mr. Nog calls the three Rūpākas as pseudo-classical plays, as "they do not represent an urge to revive the drama in the line of the great masters like Kālīkāsa and Shva-bhūti, or of any of the latter-day Sanskrit playwrights. On the other hand, they find hardly the new code as established in the 16th century Assamese Brajabuli drama of Śeṣākaciṭa." Ibid., Preface, p 1.
275. Ibid., Introduction, p 7.
classical plays, the "Vighneshajamodaya" (written in 1721 A.D.) of Gauri Kanta Nija, who wrote the play in order to appease Siva, depicts the birth of Karttiika and also of Ganesa as a result of Siva's sexual relation with ParvatI. It further goes to narrate how Siva gave Parasurama the Pasupata weapon in order to exterminating the Ksatriyas in general and Karttavirja in particular. The "Samkhasudvaraha", another pseudo-classical play, written by Nuna Nija in 1724 Saka under the patronage of the then Barphukan of the Sandikai family at Gauhati, narrates how Samkhasudha was annihilated by Siva being assisted by Mahakali and Karttiika and other bhutas and the pretas. We have other two kavyas relating to the seal of Samkhasudha - one written by Kaviraja Cakravarti during the reign of the Ahom king Siva Sihha and the other by Nija Bhagiratha. The latter narrating the annihilation of Samkhasudha by Visnu describes the birth of Tulasi on the head of Siva. In this connection the poet relates to a quarrel between Ganga, who was also in the matter lock of Siva, and Tulasi so as to ascertain the superiority between them.

We have found in the medieval religious literature of Assam that Mahadeva was propagating the ideals of Bhakti of Mahava. The literature flourished during the Ahom period also reveals this aspect of the society. In some places he is said to have related the rituals appertaining to Mahava as in the "Hayagrivamahava" of Lama Ganendra Barptatra Gohain. In other places he is found relating his consort ParvatI about the future of Bhakti in the Kali Age. In other context he is said to have revealed the benefits of wearing strings of rosary beads and offering Tulasi leaves to God, of meditation and of the mystic effect of uttering the name of

275. v 16, Act I.
276. Ibid., vv 33-39.
277. Ibid., v 31.
278. Ibid., vv 88-90.
279. Translated by Kadambari Chakravarti, Vol.II, Part III.
280. Ibid., Vol.II, Part IV.
According to the Vaimāsra theology Śiva is a subordinate goṣ to Hari. He is regarded as the manifestation of Hari himself. He always meditates Hari and becomes a great devotee - a great Vaimāsra. The same outlook is maintained in some of the text of the Āhom period. Some of the texts maintained the identity of Hari and Hari. The conception of Śiva as one of the Trinity and as destroyer of the universe can also be met with in the kāvyas.

Śiva is conceived of in both saguna and nirguna aspects. In his saguna aspect, he appears a human being having a wife and children. In this aspect he cannot escape from lust for sex and beauty. On the other hand, in his nirguna aspect, he is the liberator of all beings, propitious, dispeller of fear, giver of wealth, bestower of mercy to the poor and so forth, and even the mere utterance of his name can dispell mayā.

Sometimes Śiva is conceived of as the Absolute Reality as in the "Vighnēśajanmodaya" of Dīnā Dwija. On the other hand, it is also said that Śiva without Śakti is like a corpse. It is evidently an indication of the Tantrik conception of the Ultimate Truth as non-dual through the manifestations of dual entities. This view is clearly postulated in Ananta Āchārya's Ānanda Lahari, which is translation of 'Saundaryā Lahari written by Śaṅkarāchārya. Ananta Āchārya cites the reason of his adoration of Uma-Mahēśvara or Gaurī-Saṅāśiva jointly as "because devotion to Śiva-Durgā is the cause of salvation, and also because without offering..."
devotion to both one cannot attain accomplishment". It is said Saṣā-siva resides in the mount Kailāśa. He is Iśvara and the soul of the universe. In him the Goddess of the universe playfully resides in accordance with her own will. The poet gives a sem-yogic interpretation of it. It is said Saṣā-siva resides in the thousand-petalled lotus. Not to speak of others, even the Yogis cannot know this secret of all secrets. But Durgā or Sakti, residing outside mūlāhāra, intends to have union with Śiva. Therefore, she begins to proceed by piercing the six cakras to reach Saṣā-siva at the highest plexus.

The poet gives a Yantra principle as the residence of the Goddess. Saṅkara is said to have constructed the residence having forty three angles on it. The poet illustrates profusely the popularity and efficacy of Tantrik worship, its knowledge, principles and initiations. He says that salvation can be attained in the Kali Age only through the performance of Tantrik principles along with the mantras. He prefers Tantrik initiation to the Vedic, and it is stated that everything can be attained easily only by the grace of Śiva's feet.

The traditional view on Śiva as being the giver of offspring to the childless can be witnessed in the literature of the Ahom period. Śiva, as we have observed already, has been shown in this aspect of the deity from the times of Saṅkaradeva. This aspect of the deity has been depicted in the text of Mahāmolati written by an unknown poet of the latter part of the 18th century. The book is an Assamese adaptation of the Hindi Sufi poem of the same name written by Melik Mainjhan.

286. Ibid., Preface xxiv.
287. Ibid., p 90.
288. Ibid., pp 902-903.
289. Melik Mainjhan composed the poem in Hijri 952, Sambat 1602 or A.D. 1545. Ibid.
According to the narration Lomaśa, the sage, narrated the story of Śūryabhānu, a king of the solar dynasty and the son of Ikṣvāku, in the convent (Satra) at Nimīśāranya. Śūryabhānu ruled at Kanauglī and had no child. He was instructed by some Vipras to propitiate Śiva in the forest, for which Śiva would surely grant him a son of great merit. Accordingly, the king complied with the suggestion and began to propitiate Śiva in his idol made of earth. Being pleased, Śiva granted him with the boon of a son and accordingly a son, Nāmaśhara by name was born to him.

Apart from all these aspects, Śiva is known in Assam as a discoursing of different forms of dances. The Assamese prose-rendering of the Sanskrit "Śrī Hastamuktāvali" presents the poses of dance in a discourse between Śiva and Pārvatī. In Indian mythology, Śiva is supposed to have danced in no less than a hundred and eight different styles. The Purāṇas have variously described the asanas of Śiva's dance. Whatever may be the symbolic interpretation of his dances, his association with dance and music itself is very interesting to note.

Dance and songs were the important accompaniments in the worship of Śiva in the temples of Assam from a remote past. The epigraphs of the early rulers of ancient Assam mention the dedication of Rājaśāhī to the temple of Śiva at Hāruppesāvara. The Bargāo Grant of Ṛatnapāla gives a description of Śiva's tāṇḍava dances performed in accordance with the rules of the sastras. In describing the benefits of dances, Subhāskara Kavi points that Śiva is easily pleased with the dancers, who attain perfection in hand-poses and with the audiences as also with the masters who are possessed of pure mind in the subject.
these point to Siva’s association with dance and music, and as such, Assamese literature witnessed this aspect of Siva as a master of dance and music.

E. Depiction of Siva in the Mantra Literature:— Assam is famous, from early times, as a land of magic and sorcery. From a long past the people outside Assam have taken a specific view about the land and her people taking into account of all the magic, witchcraft and black art of the state, and within the limits of the state a considerable number of mantra texts comprising all these came into existence long before Sankaradva propagated Vaisnavism to clean the society and also to set the memory of these people free from the influence of theurgy.

In the eyes of the foreign traveller-writers, Assam was a land of magic and witchcraft. Mirza Nathan records the skill of Assamese people in black art. He informs us that Munshiagh Paragana in the present district of Coālpara, where Haditya Mandal first established his capital-city was notorious for magic and sorcery. According to his narration “if a man takes by force a fowl from a ryot and the ryot comes to the judge for rescree, and if that person is refuse justice then the complainant by means of his magic and sorcery could make the accused produce the voice of a fowl inside his stomach and thus proves the falsity of the protestation of the accused.” So also, “It is the custom of the Assamese that whenever they engage in a war, they perform some sorceries a day before previous to the battle.” They send magical objects floating down the river towards the side of the enemies. The Ahom chronicles have recorded some of such practices performed by the kings on the day previous to the battle against the enemies.

In tracing the historical background of Assam as a veritable asylum for all kinds of uneasy beliefs and superstitions, F.R.K.Barua

300. Ibid., Vol. II, p 497.
rightly observes that Assam was a meeting as well as throwing off groups of several cultures belong to different races and tribes from earliest times and "the various aboriginal beliefs, cults and myths of these diverse races and tribes mingle together as if in a witch cauldron and form the foundation of the unorthodox religion of the Tantras." The black rites associated with Tantrikian apparently rest on the system of efficacious magic in which the words are believed to be very significant although some of them do not provide anything meaningful except creating a state of horrible atmosphere.

Assam has a long history of practising magic and witchcraft variously discussed by several writers. Both K.L.Barua and B.I. Baru point out that considerable number of mantra-texts covers a sufficient ex place amongst the collection of ol manuscripts of Assam. Mr. Kâkati connects both Kâmarûpa and Kâmâkhya with some Austric formations, which "suggest some sort of connection with a lon of necromancy" and "place having been connected with some one's "oa" respectively. Lote Visnu Prasâd Kâbâ gives a different etymology of the words Kâmarûpa and Kâmâkhya. According to him, Kâmarûpa comes from the Bo word Khâmarub which is derived from 'Khâmasu', meaning turn to ashes from burning, adding 'Ub', meaning to revive. Thus Khâmarub means the "destroyed" which turns to ashes from burning Revives again. So also the word Kâmâkhya comes from the Bo word Khâm-sthâ-khâ which means the restoration of the universe again after it is burnt by the other.

observes that the temple Kamakhya was associated with Tantrik Hinduism or magic and sorcery. On the other hand, Dr. P. C. Chakravarty opines that the "traditional origin of the name of Kamarupa, as given in the Gopatha Brähmana, which relates the story of Kāmaśeva's revival after being burnt up by Siva, may be explained in the light of the prevalence of the cult of magic and amrit sorcery, associated with the Austrio-Alpine culture of Assam." All these testify that Assam was reputed for mantras or magical charms and black arts from a remote past.

Dr. B. K. Barua finds parallel of some of the mantra-texts of Assam with those of the Mahārāṇi mantras of the Buddhists. Like the Tantras, the Assamese Karati Mantra traces its origin from the Atharva Veda, which, according to the Puṣṭa Karati, is the Aśva or the original Karati. From it spread the Karati Mantras throughout the world.

It is said that the four Vēdas came out of the respiration of Cōśi, who was sleeping in the bed of thousand-headea snake, Ananta. The Aranya Karati of the Atharva Veda bears witness to this and since then spread the Karati Mantras throughout the world. Karatis are said to be fourteen in numbers and they all sprang from the mouth of Brahma. In explanation to the term Karati, it is said the "Cōśi has begun to utter the mantras (Karati Mantras) with a big sound. Karati was so named for it was born out of this big sound." According to the Brahma Karati, the big sound was Ōkāra, from which Karati was born. The mantras are also called Obhotā Vēda (counter Veda) for they are "sometimes recited backward to undo the work of Hāra or Bān".

310. T.S.C.L., pp 10-14; R.−,−,−; pp 2-4; See for the origin of the Tantras.
311. It is so called, perhaps, "for they are chanted over a jar of water with a knife (Ketāri−Karapatra) J.U.G., Vol.1, No.1, p 49.
312. भइनर रटू काराति; p 42.
313. श्रेणी काराति; p 36.
314. अत्याग काराति; p 2.
315. रटू काराति; p 42; English rendering taken from A.L., A.L., p 06.
316. श्रेणी काराति; p 36.
From the times of the Vedas Siva is found associated with medicines and curative drugs. In the Vedas, Rudra, the veedic counterpart of the puranic Siva was believed to cause diseases, and when men recovered from them or were altogether free from them, that also was attributed to the agency of Rudra. In the Assamese mantras all diseases are believed to have been born from Mahadeva or Siva. It is also believed that even the mere utterance of Siva's name can cure any disease. One mantra attributes Siva as repeating himself the charms over the disease person and transforming the Kalakuta poison to water. The belief on the merits of Mahadeva is so deep that when charms have been applied, poisons of sixty-four snakes have to transform to water alone for his merit. Because Mahadeva is said to have seized and swallowed poison after its birth. Therefore, Siva's name has been made associate with the curses and oaths in the mantras only for the belief that his namesake can ward off the evil spirits believed to be the agents of diseases. Some of the specimens of curses are as follows:

(i) If this speech be altered, go and die falling upon the trident
of Mahadeva.

(ii) If my injunctions are altered go and die falling upon the trident of Mahesa, and catch the breasts of Mahadeva.

(iii) If this speech be altered lie of placing your foot in the matterless lock of Mahesa.

313. V.S., p 103, "This trait of the Veedic city was specially manifested in the Puranic Siva who was regarded as the best physician of the physicians." P.T.R., p 66.

319. Kamaratna Tantra, p 100.

321. Ibid., p 162 of Mahesa's shilas, placed in a large basin of water. / Kamaratna Tantra, p 100.

322. Kamaratna Tantra, p 100.

324. "This trait of the Veedic city was specially manifested in the Puranic Siva who was regarded as the best physician of the physicians." P.T.R., p 66.

Quote in Kamadeva, p 174.
All other curses with the name of Mahādeva are like those cited above.

Some of the mantra texts depict legends relating to Śiva. The legends are either found in the Purāṇas or the projections of one's own belief. The Śaṅkeśvara Mantra deals with the legend of churning of the ocean and of Mahādeva's swallowing of the poison produced from the churning.325 The Gu Karati describes a creation-myth almost akin to that found in the Bhārata literature and it also describes the functions and duties set of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra. It is said that Brahmā creates the universe, which Viṣṇu protects and Rudra destroys. Rudra or Mahādeva appears in the same text in the part of an ascetic, who Manvantari, the chief of the magic men, is said to have inquired about the Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, which could not be found in the Vedas.326 The mantra is called Gu Karati, because it makes the knots of the body purposeless like human endure.327 Anādi Karati describes how the devas or gods once went to take shelter in Mahādeva for protection.328 It is stated in Jañjana Mantra that fevers were created by Brahmā out of his breath and they came to reside in the weapon of Mahādeva.329 The origin of the Vaiyu Mantra is also attributed to Mahādeva.330 In another mantra text Śiva is said to be a cultivator. His plough was made of gold and the plæl or the share was of silver. The soil thus came up from the beams of the earth is said to have been used for the purpose of mesmerism. When someone is fascinated after the application of charms on him, he is then compelled to wander hither-thither. The state is compared with the insanity of Śiva, who also wanders hither and thither out of intoxication of smoking.

326. गु करति , pp 1-2.
331. राजमेहूति मन्त्र , p 1.
aphu, bhäng and dhūtūrā.\textsuperscript{332} It is observed by \textsuperscript{333} B.K. Barua that Siva is thus transformed to a village-deity with the incorporation of all these legends and myths into his body.\textsuperscript{333}

A text dealing with the mantras of \textit{Khubha} and \textit{Khobhoni}, a couple of evil spirits born out of the \textit{Huskara} of Pārvatī, depicts Siva as a consummate cultivator. Like this mantra text, the \textit{Makh Bhangā} Mantra, generally used in lower Assam to avert accidents caused by the evil eyes, also depicts such an account.\textsuperscript{334} Of course, the text of \textit{Khubha Khobhoni}, recited in upper Assam in connection with marriage ceremony, is similar to that of the \textit{Makh Bhangā} Mantra of lower Assam.\textsuperscript{335} In order to avert evil eyes the \textit{Boths} chant a mantra called \textit{Khugā Phāmāi}.\textsuperscript{336} In this mantra also the cultivation done by Siva is depicted. It is said that once Siva desired to create human beings. But Siva Pārvatī was not at all informed about his work. He made a skeleton with human soil and to feed him the deity created paddy. Once Mahādeva went to Kailāsa to bring the ātma for the man and before going there he requested Pārvatī not to go to the place where the skeleton of the man and the cultivated fields were. But in his absence Pārvatī went there and seeing the man and the corn-field she exclaimed - 'mūshōbāi', for which the corn-field and the man got plighted. Of course, they could hardly be restored to life. For this act of Pārvatī, Mahādeva cursed her saying, - "No woman in future would look corns. Devastation would follow if it is not obeyed." From that time, the \textit{Boths} have been chanting the mantra in order to avert evil eyes from the corn-field either at the beginning of the year or at any time seem convenient to a family. In the \textit{Khubha Khobhoni} Mantra the story varies slightly. It describes Siva's mendicancy. For the abatement of this state of affairs, Pārvatī

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{332} \textit{Sālātālātari Mātrā}; p 22.
\item \textsuperscript{333} \textit{Asthāvini Sāsāra Aśā Māttāңātā}; p 164.
\item \textsuperscript{334} \textit{Loṅk-Devata Pratikā}; pp 81-83.
\item \textsuperscript{335} \textit{Ibid.}, p 8.
\item \textsuperscript{336} \textit{Asthāvini Kāṭhāra Sāsāra}; p 81.
\item \textsuperscript{337} \textit{Ibid.}, pp 60-61.
\end{itemize}
once requested him to take to cultivation taking lands from Ina, the seeds from Kaurva, the buffalo of Yama to make a pair with his own bull, and using his own trident as a plough-share. Siva accordingly took keen interest in cultivation of varieties of crops abandoning yoga-practices. He even forgot to come home. Parvati then created goflies to force him to go back home from the field. Moreover, she created a magic tiger to kill the bull so that he could plough no more with a single buffalo. Even then she could not bring him back home, for which she herself had to go to the field. Seeing various kinds of growing and ripe crops, she exclaimed and from her exclamation the demons and the gnomes - Khobby and Khobhoni - were born.

The descriptions in the above mantras definitely point to a fact that Siva was originally perhaps an agricultural deity of the village-folk. The impediments which Siva is said to have faced, as recorded in the mantras, are none but the impediments with which the Assamese peasantry has been facing since years past.

338. सीखालीनी, pp 1-2; सुप्रभोजन कला विज्ञान, pp 91-92.
339. Ibid., p 3. cf. राजवीर भारत जी मी देव के ग्राम ध्यानी
—नाडु दिनां में ग्राम अबु १८६४ ध्यान
340. Ibid., p 3.
341. Tiger is said to have born from the yams of Parvati, while she was taking rest under a fig tree on her way to the flower garden of Siva.
342. सीखालीनी, p 4.
Assam is rich in folk literature. Dr. P.N. Goswami, an eminent folklorist of Assam, has discussed the term folk-lore and its scope. He makes an analysis of the "folk-lore of the spoken word", more specially, the ballads and the fictional tales, of the Assamese. By "folk-lore of the spoken word" he suggests, after Prof. Stith Thompson, a leading U.S.A. folklorist, to include (i) tales and traditions, (ii) songs - such as the narrative ballads, lyrics - mostly love songs but not always, work songs, play songs and children's songs etc., (iii) riddles, (iv) proverbs, (v) sayings and (vi) charms.

Of the folk-lore of the spoken word, the tales and the songs - the narrative ballads and lyrics and a few proverbs glorify various aspects of Siva. In some of them the deity is portrayed humorously and in some others he is given traits of cultivator, a beggar, a bride-groom and an excessive smoker of hemp. A study of these songs and ballads are important. Firstly, they exhibit some popular beliefs centering around the deity, which are popular religious beliefs. Such beliefs include everything.

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344. Ibid., p 5.
345. Ibid., p 3.
what we can or cannot see, touch and hear. Secondly, they have thrown considerable lights on the social as well as economic life of the people.

In analysing the motif-index of Assamese tales and ballads, Dr. Gosvarî has incorporated a tale of the 'Master Thief' in a motif.\(^{346}\)

The tale describes how a thief imitating Siva harassed a king and his minister, the tale Assamese exhibits a mock-portraiture of the deity and indicates his rustic popularity.

The Assamese ballad - 'Pagalà Parvatî Git'\(^{347}\) describes a homely quarrel between Pagalà, the husband, and Parvatî, his wife. But too much fuss of the quarrelling couple does little at the end. In the concluding quatrain Parvatî expresses her affection to Pagalà saying that she cannot forsake his tender hands like the tender leaves of jara even though she desires she should.\(^{348}\)

Dr. Gosvarî has made a classification of the Assamese ballads\(^{349}\) and includes the 'Pagalà Parvatî Git' in the group of realistic ballads, "which are more or less transcripts from life". He further observes\(^{350}\) that the narrative thread is thin in this ballad and it is playful in spirit. According to him the names "Pagalà and Parvatî are suggestive of some sort of relation with the wild god Mahâdeva and his wife Parvatî, the god being frequently called Pagalà or the wild one. Under the name Pagalà, Mahâdeva has acquired a domesticated and rather humorous personality and he is often described as quarrelling with his wife. As he is indifferent, as a husband, to whether his wife and children have anything to eat, Parvatî has grounds to harbour a grouse."\(^{351}\)

Further he observes, "in spite of suggestiveness of the names Pagalà and Parvatî, the Assamese ballad makes no reference to either

\(^{346}\) B.T.A., p 216.
\(^{347}\) अनुदाप प्रवाहः, pp 26-27; अर अध्यात्मिजीन, pp 108-109; अध्यात्मिजीन, pp 190-192.
\(^{348}\) अनुदाप प्रवाहः, p 27.
\(^{349}\) B.T.A., p 11.
\(^{350}\) Ibid., p 51.
\(^{351}\) Ibid., pp 51-52.
to the wild god or to his wife.\footnote{352} We doubt we find in this ballad "only a plain house-wife and goodman competing in declaring in what manner the one would thwart the other\footnote{355} but it should not be justified to look it from this point of view alone. Here the association of the name Parvati is quite significant. It is also evident from our previous discussion in section III of this chapter that Mahadeva is commonly believed as a wild god for the reason that he roams everywhere making himself intermixed with the smoking of ganja, seeks matrimonial relationship even though he never remains as a house-holder after his marriage, never abandons his all wild dresses and ornaments and sometimes appears to be naked like a mad man. Hence we can take the name Pagala as suggestive of Mahadeva. Here Mahadeva and Parvati are humanised only to ensure common man’s approach to them.

There are other references, too, to Pagala and Parvati in the ballad of Janâ Gâbhara.\footnote{354} Coplean, the hero of the ballad, is said to have paid homage to Pagala and Parvati occasionally as instructed by his friend Kalidhan.\footnote{355} Janâ Gâbhara, the heroine, has also paid homage to Siva to get success in the test taken by Coplean.\footnote{356}

The Assamese minstrels are known as Bairâgl, "the term implying also something of the wandering characteristic of a mendicant (Sanskrit Vairâgya : renunciation)"\footnote{357} They use to play on a tâkârâ, a stringed musical instrument played with finger. Some songs have been attributed to the tâkârâ as tâkârâ Git or Bâbhicârâr Git, as the songs deal with the metaphysics of the human body. In such a song\footnote{358} the tâkârâ sangai to have originally belonged to Kâlâma, the abode of Siva. It was first made

\footnote{359} B.T.A., p 52; see B.T.A., p 190
\footnote{359a} Ibid., p 52.
\footnote{359b} Ibid., p 13.
\footnote{359c} Ibid., pp 185, 191-192, 196.
\footnote{359d} Ibid., p 192.
\footnote{359e} Ibid., p 15.
\footnote{359f} Ibid., p 20.
by Mahādeva, and his wife Pārvatī made its strings. The strings numbering three stand symbolically to Ingalā (Iśā), Pingalā and Saunmā. For the realisation of the Ultimate Reality, the Tantra lays stress on some practical methods or sāhanas, which were based on the belief that the truth is to be realised in and through the body, as the "human body is not merely a thing in the universe, but is an epitome of the universe - a microcosm in relation to the macrocosm." According to the practical methods laid down by the Tantras Siva is conceived of as residing in the highest plexus (Sahasrāra) while Sakti is said to have resided in the lowest plexus (Mālāchāra). The union of the two must be apprehended in accordance with the practical sāhanas. Again, the right side of the body is believed to be the region of Siva, and the left that of Sakti; this will explain the Tantrik and Purānic conception of Anānānāśīvavara, i.e. the Lord as half woman and half man. The important nerve on the right side, well known as Pingalā, through which flows the apana air or current, is said to represent the principle of Siva, while the left nerve, known as Iśā, through which flows the prāna air, is said to represent the principle of Sakti. The sāhanas consists mainly in uniting Siva-Sakti by perfect conmilling of the right and left in various ways and neutralising their functions in a middle course, called s Sakti, which is the way of neutrality or perfect equilibrium of opposing currents.

The Tekāri Songs of Assam has well conveyed this metaphysics and refers to the body as a Tekāri and Ingalā, Pingalā and Saunmā are its strings. The union of both would lead to the union of Mahādeva and Pārvatī or Siva and Sakti.

360. Bār Mādhav Tīrī Tīrī Gīt, p 78 mentions four.
362. Ibid., p 293.
363. C. V. Prasad, Introduction, p 0'10; Bhāsāmā 6. Chāndānā Pragya, p 34.
It is stated in a song that there are two tokāris - one nebēbā and the other is cehebā. It is also narrated that one of the tokāris had gone to the abode of Pagalā or Siva, and the other remained in the earth. Siva asks his wife Pārvatī to bring with her the tokāri which was in Kailāsa, because he had to go far for begging. The song describes that before Siva was out for begging, he would eat a handful of ney kept in the bamboo-shelf with the plantain aṭhīa.

Of all the songs of Assam, the Viyā Nām or the marriage songs abound in with the legends of Siva's marriage and in this particular branch of folk-lore also Siva is seen in varied aspects and characteristics. Assamese marriage songs are classified into two groups - the purānic or classical, "as they describe the marriage as symbolical of mythological gods and goddesses as of Vīṣṇu and Lākṣmī, Kṛṣṇa and Rukminī, Rāma and Sītā, Hara and Gaurī or Uṣā and Aniruddha", and the other is romantic. The classical songs describing the marriage of Hara and Gaurī are generally playful in tone. Such a song creates mild humour saying:

"Hara has come down from Kailāsa beating his drumbarā. He bathes not for twelve years; the obnoxious small thus coming from his body is unbearable and almost fatal. Hemavanta is waiting for the auspicious moment and his son-in-law (Siva) is on the gate. 'Hara comes to my house from Kailāsa. Oh, Rama, I know he wants my Gaurī. I shall not allow Gaurī to marry Siva, the clotted haired.' The snakes are craving their hoods. They are rearing in the paddy. Pārvatī says, - 'they will kill me'. Mahādeva replies, - 'they will not kill you, Pārvatī. I have means to rescue.'"

At the time of marriage, the women minstrels sing:

"Give up your clotted hair, Lord Bathani, because Hemavanta
will give you a golden turban. Give up the ashes, Oh Five-Faced Lord, Hemavanta will give you agaru and sandana. Set the body free from the garland of snakes, Hemavanta will give you the best clothes of the gods. Abandon to take dhūtārā, Hemavanta will bring sweet-smelling flowers for you. Your whole body is tied with snakes and tiger-skin, go back, Oh Śiva, to your city Kailāśa. Where have you come from, Oh splayed-haired gānjā-smoker? Your chest is tied with snakes and seeing you thus Manaka will be afraid of you and she will not allow Pārvatī to be married with you." 369

Apart from all these, there are several other songs portraying Śiva in his different aspects. The 'Kāti Pūjār Git' (Songs used for the worship of Karttika in the month of Kāti) performed by the womenfolk in the District of Cālprādā describes the marriage of Śiva, in which Nārada is seen busy in finding out an auspicious day in the calendar for the marriage ceremony of Śiva and Pārvatī, while Śiva, on the other hand, is seen busy in purchasing a garland, a bracelet, a looking glass, a bamboo-cane, a strainer and a winnowing fan for Pārvatī and a few other objects such as curd, plantain and betel-nut required for the purpose of marriage. 370

Another song depicts the moment in which Śiva, Nārāśa-Hrṣṇi and Pārvatī are seen pounding hemp or bhang. In this song Nārāśa and Hrṣṇi are said to have been pounding hemp in a wooden-mortar with a pestle, while Pārvatī is seen sifting the powders of hemp through a sieve.

369. नामता , pp 50-60.
370. ग्रामवास्तव श्रीकंठ संस्कृती संस्कृत अभ्यास मूलमिश्रि . pp 56-58.
371. धुमुर धुमुर और रक्तवे आवश्यक हुई / नन्दी भक्ति उजन मने, पार्वती आते चले गईं.
धुमुर धुमुर और रक्तवे आवश्यक हुई. // quoted from असामीया साहित्य कर
अध्ययन , p 73.
The scene depicts purely a domestic affair.

In another song, Siva is said to have eaten hemp-powder and six poras (porā = 15 years) of Chūturā, out of intoxication of which he seeks no house of dwelling and always remainsrenched in showers. Sometimes his madness is said to be the outcome of his devotion to the name of Rāma or Hari or of the intoxication of hemp. The songs furnish also some higher speculations around him. In such songs he is invoked as indifferent to the creatures. In such songs he is sometimes depicted as a dancer, always benignant and yielrer of whatever asked for like the Kalpitara, bestower of boons while he himself is poverty-striken and naked. As a master of dance and music, he is depicted in a legend of the kachāris of Upper Assam as himself imparting the lessons of dance and music to the gods.

372. ब्राह्मण बाले नाम घर-बारी अभुर धूम दाः से विन निति //
Quoted from असमीया साहित्य-अध्ययन, p 73.

373. ब्रह्मण बाले नाम घर-बारी अभुर धूम दाः से विन निति //
Quoted from असमीया साहित्य-अध्ययन, p 73.

374. दिशिबिशित शिब शिव भूमाभ रागिर भोवा भारत उ भोवा //
Quoted from असमीया साहित्य-अध्ययन, p 73.