

# Chilārāi and the Contemporary Literary World of Assam - A Study

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/gijash.20220713>

## ABSTRACT

The Koch Dynasty occupies an important place in the history of Assam. There were many great warriors of history who were associated with this dynasty. Viśva Simha was the first king of the Koch Dynasty. Viśva Simha had eighteen sons and Chilārāi was the third son. After Viśva Simha, the Koch Dynasty was ruled by King Naranārāyaṇa. Chilārāi was appointed as the commander-in-chief during the reign of Naranārāyaṇa. Being a commander-in-chief, Chilārāi brought various states under the control of the Kamata-Koch power. Chilārāi was very popular for his military exploits during the reign of Naranārāyaṇa. The name of Chilārāi during his birth was Śukladhvaja. But later on, the name chilārāi was given to him due to his traits. It was said that Śukladhvaja got the name chilārāi because of the swift mobility of his army and sudden and surprising attack. There was another tradition regarding the name chilārāi. History said that when Śukladhvaja crosses the Bhoroli River in one jump, it appears like a hawk is pouncing on its prey. Thus he got the name chilārāi. In the history, Chilārāi was always remembered for his prowess. But people hardly know about the connection and contribution of Chilārāi in the field of literature. Thus the present seminar paper tries to bring out the connection of Chilārāi with the contemporary literary world of Assam.

**Keywords:** Koch Dynasty, Chilārāi, military exploits, contribution in literary field

## INTRODUCTION

Chilārāi was the son of the King Viśva Simha of the Koch Dynasty. The Koch Dynasty occupies an important place in the history of Assam. There were many great

warriors of history who were associated with this dynasty. Viśva Simha was the first king of the Koch Dynasty. From the information gathered from historical testimonials, it is said that Viśva Simha had eighteen sons by different wives. Though Viśva Simha had eighteen sons, but only four of them had left a footprint in the history. They were- Narasimha, Naranārāyaṇa, Chilārāi and Gohain Kamal. Chilārāi was the third son of Viśva Simha and the name of Chilārāi's mother was Padmāvati.<sup>1</sup> The name of Chilārāi during his birth was Śukladhvaja. But later on, the name Chilārāi was given to him due to his traits. After Viśva Simha, the Koch Dynasty was ruled by King Naranārāyaṇa. Chilārāi was appointed as the commander-in-chief during the reign of Naranārāyaṇa. History narrates that Chilārāi was always remembered as a great combatant and a fighter of the Koch Dynasty. Though Chilārāi is known for his prowess but his poetic talents are not less in comparison. He had shown his poetic talents in his commentary named *Sāravatī* on the *Gītāgovinda* of Jayadeva. But the society hardly knows his intellectual side. So, the present paper aims to discuss the connection of Chilārāi with the literary world.

## Chilārāi's Personality

Chilārāi always shines as a brightest star in the history of the Koch Dynasty. Though Chilārāi was popular as a great warrior, but he had a very soft side also. He was a very generous and idealistic person. He set great examples of military deftness, leadership

persona, courage, equity, justice etc. He had the highest standard of patriotism. He put extreme efforts in fulfilling the dream of Naranārāyaṇa of becoming an Emperor into reality.<sup>ii</sup> He was like the Right-hand of King Naranārāyaṇa. Like any other warriors, Chilārāi also aimed to invade and occupy other countries. But, he never supports any brutal tasks like murder or robbery. He was against all such bad deeds.<sup>iii</sup> He did not subjugate or oppress the people of the vanquished kingdoms. After conquering a kingdom, he fixed the tributes by viewing the financial strength of the concerned kingdoms. These types of activities show his kindness towards other people.

Chilārāi had a great physique and he was very appealing to the people. And thus, some people compared his beauty with God Kārtika. He was six feet tall with broad shoulder and with a strong body. He was also fair in color.<sup>iv</sup> During his coronation ceremony as the Commander in chief, the people were delighted on seeing the great physique of Chilārāi.<sup>v</sup> After the coronation ceremony, Chilārāi offered numerous gifts and presents to the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Daivagyas*, saints, *Mahantas* and the like with a free hand.<sup>vi</sup> This proves that he was a donor also. Chilārāi spent almost all the tributes received from the neighboring countries for the construction of the Kāmākhyā temple.

Chilārāi was not only blessed with great physical quality, but also bestowed with intellectual potency, self-confidence and with other qualities like patience, punctuality etc.<sup>vii</sup> He is also a man with great dignity. There was an instance when he fought the battle with the Gauḍadeśa for the first time. The battle continued for many days and at last the Koch lost it. Chilārāi got many opportunities to elope from the battle field but he preferred to fight with the enemy and show his strength. At last he was left alone in the field and the army of Gauḍa took him into custody.<sup>viii</sup>

Chilārāi was also a very secular person. He respected all the religions, faiths and beliefs. Initially he was a follower of Śaivism and Śaktism. But later he became a Vaiṣṇavite

and accepted Śaṅkaradeva as his *guru*.<sup>ix</sup> He never discriminated against people of any religion and caste. It is also worth mentioning that the construction of the Kāmākhyā Temple was executed by Chilārāi when he was already a follower of Vaiṣṇavism.<sup>x</sup> There were also few people of Muslim religion in the Koch kingdom. They were designate as *Turk* or *yavana* in some works of that period.<sup>xi</sup> In the *Darrang Rājyaṁsāvalī*, it is said that in the Koch kingdom, the *yavana* could read the *Qurān* liberally.<sup>xii</sup> These activities show his secular behaviour.

Chilārāi was always desirous of knowing the unknown. He never thought of his status while learning something. For instance, on one occasion, a famous physician Narasuddha sought shelter from the Koch King Naranārāyaṇa. Chilārāi acquired the knowledge of treatment of many diseases, injuries etc. from that simple physician in spite of differences in status between the two.<sup>xiii</sup> This proves that he was totally devoid of egotism and had a thirst for knowledge in every aspect.

Chilārāi was a great patron of learning and arts, and his name has been borne out by many appreciative references of contemporary scholars and poets. Rāmasarasvatī, the translator-in-chief of the *Mahābhārata* from the eastern part of India, Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva-the two great Vaiṣṇava poets, the poet Pītāmbara and few other poets have gratefully acknowledged the patronage of Chilārāi.<sup>xiv</sup> Śaṅkaradeva hailed him as a *paramarasikaguru* for his *Sāravatī*.<sup>xv</sup> Besides the *Sāravatī*, another book was written by Chilārāi that is based on the philosophical aspects of life. But unfortunately, that work has not been recovered yet.<sup>xvi</sup>

Chilārāi was not only a scholar in the Sanskrit language, but he also advocated the use of Sanskrit by the officers in the Koch Kingdom. Chilārāi and Naranārāyaṇa were brought up under the ideal of high-caste Hindus, as they had their education at Banaras. Therefore, a deep sympathy for

Hindu manners, customs and ideals were rooted in their hearts. Thus, they made an attempt to introduce those ideas and customs among the people of their kingdom after their accession to power.<sup>xvii</sup> Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi took efforts to introduce the brāhmaṇic faiths and they also made provisions for settlement of *Brāhmaṇas* in the city.<sup>xviii</sup> Thus, the ancient customs were fast changing in the days of Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi. It is important to note that, outside the border of Kāmarūpa, the ancient custom had its affects on the people.<sup>xix</sup> In the *Darrang Rājvamsāvalī*, it is found that the King made a royal command in respect of the Koch to perform their worship in all temples that lie to the North of the Gosāin Kamala's Āli. Gosāin Kamala's Āli was the line of demarcation between western and Eastern Assam. On the other hand, the *Brāhmaṇas* would officiate in the Southern part of Gosāin Kamala's Āli. This law was to hold good in all places.<sup>xx</sup> From this account, it appears that the supremacy of the *Brāhmaṇas* was established in the Koch Behar and in the districts of the Southern part. The spread of Sanskrit was necessary in order to introduce the manners and customs of the *Brāhmaṇas* among all classes of people.<sup>xxi</sup> Thus, Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi proclaimed that none must speak but Sanskrit within the court.<sup>xxii</sup> An interesting incident is also noted in this connection. On one occasion, Kavindra, along with his pupil was moving around the city of Naranārāyaṇa enquiring about the residence of Śaṅkaradeva. They were surprised to find that all their enquiries to the passer-by were ably replied in Sanskrit. Kavindra then made a significant remark to his followers that this seems to be a country of scholars.<sup>xxiii</sup> Chilārāi and Naranārāyaṇa used to invite all the poets and scholars of neighboring countries and pay homage to them.<sup>xxiv</sup> In the Koch kingdom, various scholarly debates were organized, and who could give evidence of their scholarship, was conferred with titles like Vidyavāgīśa, siddhāntavāgīśa, kandalī etc.<sup>xxv</sup> The term

*vidyavāgīśa* means the one who is an eloquent man of knowledge.<sup>xxvi</sup> The word *siddhāntavāgīśa* means an eloquent man of established facts.<sup>xxvii</sup> The term *kandalī* was derived from the word *kandalah* which means gold.<sup>xxviii</sup> Thus the word *kandalī* refers to the man who is like gold in the literary field. Some names of the scholars who are worth mentioning are- Rāmasarasvatī, Pandit Ananta Kaṇḍali, Puruṣottama Vidyāvāgīśa, Pītāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa, Deva Nath Thakur, etc.<sup>xxix</sup> Śaṅkaradeva was the foremost among them.<sup>xxx</sup> Naranārāyaṇa himself also composed a prominent work called *Malladevī Abhidhāna*.<sup>xxxi</sup> During the time of Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi, many scholars were engaged for composing works connected to Sanskrit. Bakula Kāyastha was engaged to write a simplified version of *Līlāvātī* which is a treatise on mathematics. Śrīdhara composed the *Sādhyakhaṇḍa* which is a work on astrology.<sup>xxxii</sup> Śrīdhara also composed the works called *Jyotiramālā* and *Varṣakṛtya*.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Kavi Karṇapura wrote his *Chandaśāstra*, *Vṛttamālā* and Bhaṭṭadeva wrote his *Kathabhāgavata* and *Kathāgītā*.<sup>xxxiv</sup> The females were also interested in Sanskrit in that period. It was said that the ladies of the Royal harem were versed in Sanskrit. They were very interested in the publication of religious books.<sup>xxxv</sup> In some works, it was found that Puruṣottama Vidyavāgīśa composed the *Prayogaratnamālāvyaṅgyakaraṇa* at the request of Bhānumatī, wife of Naranārāyaṇa.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Bhānumatī got the name Ratnamālā when she became the chief queen. And Puruṣottama Vidyavāgīśa wrote his grammatical work and named it after her.<sup>xxxvii</sup> So, from these facts, it is clear that the females were also related with the literary field during the period of Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi. Thus, though Chilārāi's works other than the *Sāravatī* is not available, yet his patronage to the advancement of Sanskrit study during the reign of Naranārāyaṇa can establish him as a connoisseur of Sanskrit literature altogether.

### Connection of Chilārāi with Mahāpuruṣa Śaṅkaradeva

Mahāpuruṣa Śaṅkaradeva was born in the year 1449 at the place named Bordua in Nagaon district of Assam and he belongs to the caste of Kāyastha.<sup>xxxviii</sup> He was a relative of Śiromaṇi Bhuyān Chaṇḍībar who was superior to Śaṅkaradeva.<sup>xxxix</sup> He lost his mother during his birth and his father also died during his childhood.<sup>xl</sup> Śaṅkaradeva promotes a purified Vaiṣṇavism and inculcate the doctrine of salvation by faith and prayer rather than by sacrifices.<sup>xli</sup> Śaṅkaradeva had a wonderful personality. He was a multi-talented genius with a rare combination of intelligence, practical foresight, courage and organizing ability.<sup>xlii</sup> His faith was officially called *ekaśaraṇanāmadharma* as it taught devotion to one God. Śaṅkaradeva had shown as many as nine different ways for showing devotion to God. They were *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, *smarana*, *archanā*, *padasevana*, *dāśya*, *sakhitvae*, *vandanā ātmanivedana*.<sup>xliii</sup> The relation of Śaṅkaradeva with the Koch dynasty is an important issue in the records of Assam. The former harsh relation of Śaṅkaradeva with Āhom and Koch dynasty turning into a courteous and reverent relation is one of the significant matters. Actually it could create a new dimension in the history of Assam.

According to the information gathered from *Kathāgurucarita*, Śaṅkaradeva, after returning from his first pilgrimage, established his *satra* in a place named Bordua<sup>xliiv</sup>. And while residing there, he composed a work named *Cihnajātrā*.<sup>xliv</sup> But he had to leave Bordua because of the Kachari people and went to Gāṅgmou.<sup>xlvi</sup> Afterwards, Śaṅkaradeva resides in different places like Bhālukaguri, Komorākoṭa, Belguri etc. After residing in a same place and preaching for eighteen years, Āhom king engaged him and his disciples in the duty to protect from elephants. After protecting for few days, one night an elephant smashed the build i.e., gaḍha which was being guarded by Śaṅkaradeva. So, Śaṅkaradeva with his disciples tried to

elope from there. But the Cāodāṅg catches Mādhavadeva and Hari, i.e., son-in-law of Śaṅkaradeva. The king killed Hari by slaying his head. And in this grief Śaṅkaradeva went to pilgrimage for the second time for a period of twelve years together with Mādhavadeva and some other devotees.<sup>xlvii</sup> And after wandering various places, he ultimately resided in a place named Pāṭbāusī and established his *satra* there.<sup>xlviii</sup> After returning from pilgrimage, Śaṅkaradeva went to Koch Behar and stayed at a place name Bhelāduā at the appeal of King Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi.<sup>xlix</sup>

During Śaṅkaradeva's dwelling at Koch Behar, Chilārāi wedded to Bhuvaneswari who was a relative of Śaṅkaradeva.<sup>l</sup> On one occasion, Chilārāi heard a beautiful song sung by Bhuvaneśvarī. When he came to know that the song was composed by Śaṅkaradeva, Chilārāi became fascinated by him.<sup>li</sup> He then called Śaṅkaradeva to his own home with full respect and became his pupil by following the *Vaiṣṇavadharma*.<sup>lii</sup> Śaṅkaradeva became famous and got importance as Chilārāi became the pupil of Śaṅkaradeva. But, some of the *śākta brāhmiṇs* became jealous of Śaṅkaradeva. As Śaṅkaradeva was more intelligent and more learned they could do nothing to check its forward stride.<sup>liii</sup> Since King Naranārāyaṇa followed the *śakti* cult, the Brahmins provoked Naranārāyaṇa against Śaṅkaradeva.<sup>liv</sup> They said to Naranārāyaṇa that Śaṅkaradeva was persuading men not to worship the goddess Kāmākhyā.<sup>lv</sup> They also took a damaged idol of the goddess and told Naranārāyaṇa that Śaṅkaradeva had committed this type of highly unethical acts. They also said that if he was allowed to stay in the kingdom, he would bring doom to it.<sup>lvi</sup> So, Naranārāyaṇa became very angry and commanded his armor to kill Śaṅkaradeva. When Chilārāi came to know about it, he became extremely sad and worried, and mentally decided his course of action. He dispatched eight of his own soldiers by boat and gave them clear direction that Śaṅkaradeva would have to be escorted and produced before him



absolutely safe and sound.<sup>lvii</sup> He also declared an award of hundred rupees to the soldiers to rescue Śaṅkaradeva. He ordered them to row their boat day and night to reach Śaṅkaradeva well before the King's soldiers could reach him.<sup>lviii</sup> The soldiers of Chilārāi literally followed his order and rescued Śaṅkaradeva from the kinsmen in two days.<sup>lix</sup> On arrival of Śaṅkaradeva at Koch Behar, Chilārāi received him with high reverence and also arranged his accommodation.<sup>lx</sup> He also secretly kept Śaṅkaradeva in his own home and fought for him.<sup>lxi</sup>

When King Naranārāyaṇa came to know about the actions of Chilārāi in rescuing Śaṅkaradeva, he was taken aback by Chilārāi's behavior. But, he also knew that Chilārāi would not go against the order of the King if there is nothing significant about the person. He thought that Śaṅkaradeva must be someone with special traits due to which Chilārāi was in favor of him. And thus he sent message to Chilārāi to bring Śaṅkaradeva to his court with full respect.<sup>lxii</sup>

When Naranārāyaṇa saw the great physic and poetic qualities of Śaṅkaradeva, he became mesmerized.<sup>lxiii</sup> He was highly pleased, talked to him for some time and freed him with kind words. He admired the learning of Śaṅkaradeva and asked him to compose as many verses as he could, by using certain words selected by him.<sup>lxiv</sup> Highly impressed by Śaṅkaradeva's depth of knowledge, Naranārāyaṇa established him by appointing as the *Gomastā* which was the post of an administrator in the Barpeta region. The King also donated him lands to establish a *satra* at Bhelāduā, later came to be known as *Madhupura satra* or *Bhelā- Madhupura* at Koch Behar.<sup>lxv</sup> He also wanted to become a disciple of Śaṅkaradeva.<sup>lxvi</sup> But Śaṅkaradeva did not accept his request because Naranārāyaṇa was a king who performed religious rites and worshipped god and goddess and it was not possible for him to surrender the duties of the king.<sup>lxvii</sup> But, Naranārāyaṇa again insisted him to make him his disciple and

thus Śaṅkaradeva thought of leaving the mundane world as there is no other way.<sup>lxviii</sup>

While residing in Koch Kingdom, Śaṅkaradeva composed his immortal works. Śaṅkaradeva composed all the major works during his stay in the Koch kingdom from 1543 to 1568 till his death.<sup>lxix</sup> Those works are- *Kīrtanaghoṣā*, *Rukmiṇīr premakalaha and Bhṛguparikṣā*, *Bhāgavat*(book I, II, IX, XII), *Anādipātana*, *Balichalana*, *Ādidaśama*, *Kuruṣetra*, *Śrīkrṣṇabaikuṅṭha-prayāṇa*, *Niminavasiddhvasaṁvāda*, *Uttarakāṇḍa* of *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bhaktiratnākara*, *Kālidamananāṭa*, *Keli gopāla nāṭa*, *Rukmiṇiharāṇa nāṭa*, *Pārijātaḥaraṇa nāṭa*, *Guṇamālā* etc. At the request of Chilārāi, Śaṅkaradeva's last work, *Rāmavijayanāṭa* was written and it was staged in 1568.<sup>lxx</sup> In this devotional play, Śaṅkaradeva appreciated the help rendered by Chilārāi in arranging the performance of the play in Koch Behar just before his departure from the mundane world.<sup>lxxi</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva also made the *Vṛndāvanīvastra* at the appeal of King Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi.<sup>lxxii</sup> When Śaṅkaradeva completed the work and bought the *Vṛndāvanīvastra* in front of the king, Naranārāyaṇa was mesmerized by seeing the work. He also rewarded him with a dress, gold coins and hundred rupees.<sup>lxxiii</sup> Naranārāyaṇa also excused Śaṅkaradeva from his duty in Barpeta.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva established various *satras* in different places while he dwelt from one place to another. Those *satras* were formed to propagate their faith on Vaiṣṇavism.<sup>lxxv</sup> The common people got educated in both Sanskrit and Assamese medium language in those *satras* or monasteries.

The enormous composition of Śaṅkaradeva would not be available to us if Chilārāi did not stay as a support when King Naranārāyaṇa ordered to eradicate him. People would not be able to get the *ekaśarananāmadharma* of Śaṅkaradeva if Chilārāi did not convert himself as one of his desciple.<sup>lxxvi</sup> When Chilārāi became a

pupil of Śaṅkaradeva, many people of the royal family started following the *dharma* of Śaṅkaradeva. Without the help rendered by Chilārāi, it can be said that Śaṅkaradeva would have remained a poet in some other parts of India and he might never reside in North-east India.<sup>lxxvii</sup> Thus, Chilārāi plays a very significant role in making Śaṅkaradeva well-known in the social and religious history of Assam.

### Connection of Chilārāi with Puruṣottama Vidyavāgīśa

Puruṣottama Bhaṭṭāchārya was a contemporary poet of Śaṅkaradeva, Harideva etc. It was said that he was seven years elder than the poet Harideva. Harideva was born in the year 1426 A.D and thus it can be assumed that Puruṣottama Bhaṭṭāchārya was born in the year 1419 A.D.<sup>lxxviii</sup> Puruṣottama Bhaṭṭāchārya lost his parents during his childhood and he was taken care off by his relatives. He studied the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, *vedas*, *vedāṅgas* and various philosophical works. The title *Vidyavāgīśa* was given to him by his *Guru* Paṇḍit Viśveśvara. After that he established *tol* in the place named Śilāgram where he gave education on grammar and various *Śāstras*.<sup>lxxix</sup> He married from the place Pāṭbāusī.<sup>lxxx</sup> When King Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi heard about his scholarship, they welcomed him to his court. King Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi understood the importance of Sanskrit language and also knew that no language can be properly learned without the knowledge of grammar. The Pāṇinian grammar is difficult to understand by the common people. Thus, Naranārāyaṇa commanded Puruṣottama Vidyavāgīśa to compose the *Prayogaratnamālāvyākaraṇa* in simple language so that all people get familiar to it.<sup>lxxxi</sup> In the benedictory verse of his work, Puruṣottama Vidyavāgīśa gave the background of writing the work.<sup>lxxxii</sup> The *Prayogaratnamālāvyākaraṇa* is the only established work of the Non-Pāṇinian Eastern School of grammar which may be designated as the Kāmarūpa School.<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

This grammar is also recognized as an ideal grammatical work after the Pāṇinian grammar.<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

### Connection of Chilārāi with Rāmasarasvatī

Rāmasarasvatī was another poet who got invited to the court of King Naranārāyaṇa. His father's name was Bhīmsena Kavi Chuḍāmaṇi and lives at Pāṭchaurā in Barpeta.<sup>lxxxv</sup> Rāmasarasvatī was the well-known verse-translator of the *Mahābhārata*. He translated the verses of *Mahābhārata* on the inspiration given by Chilārāi and Naranārāyaṇa.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> He had composed many important works. He wrote the *Ādiparva*, *Sabhāparva* of the *Mahābhārata* and the first part of the *Bhīṣmaparva* during A.D 1560- 1565, i.e., before coming to the court of Naranārāyaṇa.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> While residing in the Koch kingdom, he composed the following works— *Ādi vanaparva*, *Puṣpaharaṇaupaparva* or *Śankhadhavalavadha*, *Maṇichandraghoṣaparva*, *Bakāsurasavadha*, *Vijayaparva*, *Kulāchalavadh*, *Droṇaparva*, *Bhīmācharitra*, *Jayadevakāva* etc.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Rāmasarasvatī clearly mentions about Chilārāi's commentary in his *Jayadevakāvya*.<sup>lxxxix</sup> He says that finally he composed the *Jayadevakāvya* on which Śukladhvaja wrote a Sanskrit commentary.<sup>xc</sup>

Rāmasarasvatī also wrote about himself and his patrons, King Naranārāyaṇa and his general Śukladhvaja in his work *Puṣpaharaṇaupaparva* of the *Vanaparva* of the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>xc</sup> He wrote that he was asked to translate the *Mahābhārata* into Assamese verse. Naranārāyaṇa also told him to take all the commentaries which were in his library and thus send all the books to the residence of Rāmasarasvatī on the back of Bulls. He encouraged Rāmasarasvatī by providing with the service of slaves and servants and by paying a large amount of money.<sup>xcii</sup> Rāmasarasvatī was given the name *kavindra* by Chilārāi. His original name was Aniruddha and the name *Rāmasarasvatī* was given by the King Naranārāyaṇa.<sup>xciii</sup>

It is interesting to note that, contrary to the than existing Aryan tradition, even the lower caste people such as *Śūdras* also could study the *Śāstras*. Rāmasarasvatī also belonged to the *Śūdras* and he had no bars in studying the *Śāstras* during the rule of King Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi.<sup>xciv</sup> During their reign, acquisition of knowledge was open to all, unlike in many parts of Bhāratavarṣa.<sup>xcv</sup>

### Connection of Chilārāi with Pitāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa

The poet Pitāmbara who was also known as Pitāmbara *kavi* or Pitāmbarasiddhāntavāgīśa was a 16<sup>th</sup> century litterateur from Kāmarūpa and was a contemporary poet of Dāmodara Miśra.<sup>xcvi</sup> He was the great digest-writer on the *Smṛtis*.<sup>xcvii</sup> It is said that Pitāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa came to Kāmarūpa for pilgrimage. For his settlement in the country, King Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi grant villages to him and thus he settled in the country. He became the advisor of Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi and set about the work of social reform.<sup>xcviii</sup> He composed many works at the request of Śukladhvaja. He composed eighteen books known by the name *kaumudī*. The names of these works are - *Daṇḍakaumudī*, *Pretakaumudī*, *Vṛṣotsargakaumudī*, *Pramāṇakaumudī*, *Srāddhakaumudī*, *Durgots avakaumudī*, *Ekādaśīkaumudī*, *Śuddhikaumudī*, *Pratiṣṭhākaumudī*, *Saṅkalpakaumudī*, *Prāyaścittakaumudī*, *Kālakaumudī*, *Tīrthakaumudī*, *Dikṣākaumudī*, *Sambandhakaumudī*, *Tithikaumudī*, *Dāyakaumudī*, *Ācāryakaumudī*.<sup>xcix</sup> Among these works, some of them might have been written under the patronage of Raghudeva.<sup>c</sup> Thus, it is known that Pitāmbara resided in the Koch kingdom also after the reign of Naranārāyaṇa. Pitāmbara referred to the support of Śukladhvaja in the *Caṇḍī Ākhyāna* of his work. In the verse, Pitāmbara referred to Śukladhvaja as *yuvarāja* and said that he had made up his mind to compose his work by the order of *yuvarāja* whose orders were pursued by many other kings.<sup>ci</sup> A new order of the

*varṇas* and *āśramas* were also established in Kāmarūpa through the efforts of Naranārāyaṇa and Chilārāi in keeping with the works of Pitāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa. At this stage, the people of various persuasions in the country came to be known as Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras.<sup>cii</sup> Pitāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa prescribed the rites and ceremonies to be observed by the various classes of the people and his voice was supreme in matters relating to the social position of each class. It is important to note that, though Anantakaṇḍali did not have any direct connection with Chilārāi, but he composed various immortal works while residing in the Koch kingdom. The most famous among the works are- *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Kumaraharaṇakāvya*, *Vṛttāsuraavadha*, *Mahīrāvāṇnavadhakāvya*, 10<sup>th</sup> *skanda* of the *Bhāgavata* and the drama named *Sītāra pātāla praveśa*.<sup>ciii</sup> In the 10<sup>th</sup> *skanda* of the *Bhāgavata*, he gave his introduction. He was the son of Ratna Pathak and was a residential of Hajo. His real name was Hari Charan and he got the name Anantakaṇḍali for his erudition in logic.<sup>civ</sup> Thus, it can be said that the court of King Naranārāyaṇa was rich and prosperous in literary activities because of the poets and scholars that came from various places.

### CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is clear that many writers wrote their works in the Koch Kingdom. From the works of these writers, their connection with Chilārāi can be found. Chilārāi not only encourage them to compose works, but he himself composed the commentary on the *Gītāgovinda* of Jayadeva named *Sāravatī*. This was a literary masterpiece. This commentary shows the fabulous scholastic qualities of Chilārāi and has been marked as a milestone in the academic world.

**Acknowledgement:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** None

**Source of Funding:** None

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## FOOT NOTES

<sup>i</sup>Kavi Baladeva Suryakhari Daivagya, *Darrang Rājvaṃśāvalī*, p.48

<sup>ii</sup>Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.143

<sup>iii</sup>Dr. Ajit Kumar Barua, *Koch Rajyar Buranji*, p.120

<sup>iv</sup>Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.38

<sup>v</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>vi</sup>*brāhmaṇa daibagya santa mahanta yateka / gāve gāve sabāhāke tuṣilā pratyeka // adaridra kari dāna sabāke dilanta / yateka dakṣiṇā nāhi ādi anta //314// Darrang Rājvaṃśāvalī*, p.64

<sup>vii</sup>Dr. Ajit Kumar Barua, *Koch Rajyar Buranji*, p.120

<sup>viii</sup>*ekeśvare nirāhāre yuddha karilanta / hānaste hānaste khāgario bhailā anta // palāibāka pāri tathāpito napalāilā / napalāi āponāra vikrama dekhāilā //501// Darrang Rājvaṃśāvalī*, p.103

<sup>ix</sup>Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.145

<sup>x</sup>*Ibid.*, p.153

<sup>xi</sup>Dr. Ajit Kumar Barua, *Koch Rajyar Buranji*, p.313

<sup>xii</sup>*vaiṣṇava thākaya nāmaka dhari / naṭe bhāṭe thāke kīrtana kari / yavane farcchi kare korāṇa / svadharmata pare nicinte āna//563// Darrang Rājvaṃśāvalī*, p.115

<sup>xiii</sup>Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.144

<sup>xiv</sup>*Ibid.*, p.44

<sup>xv</sup>Sri Visvanarayan Sastri, *Śrī Śrī Śankaradevar Rāmavijaya nāta.*, p.44

<sup>xvi</sup>Satyendra Nath Sarma, *Jayadeva's Gitagovindam with Sāravatī- a scholium by Maharaja*

*Śukladhvaja.*, publisher's note

<sup>xvii</sup>Nagendra Nath Vasu, *The Social History of Kamarupa*, vol.2, p.57

<sup>xviii</sup>*Ibid.*, p.58

<sup>xix</sup>*Ibid.*, p.61

<sup>xx</sup>*śapata khuvāi rājā bulilā bacana / śuniyo samaste mora bākya nibandhana // gohāinkamala āli madhye simā kari / uttarara fāle āche yateka kachārī // 336//*



- sehi fāle devālaya āche yata yata /  
koche meche pūjibeka mohora bākyata//  
dakṣiṇara fāle pūjā brāhmaṇe kariba /  
ehi nibandhane sabe dharma pravartiba // 337//  
Darrang Rājvaṃsāvalī, p.68*
- <sup>xxi</sup> Nagendra Nath Vasu, *The Social History of Kamarupa*, vol.2, p.63
- <sup>xxii</sup> Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.158
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Upendra Chandra Lekharu, *Kathāgurucarita*, foreword, p.iii
- <sup>xxiv</sup> *gauḍa kāmārūpa yata paṇḍita āchilā/  
samastake āni satra devāla pātīlā //  
bole bipra paṇḍita samaste śuniyoka /  
kalira yugata vrdhi haiba bhaya śoka // 604//  
Darrang Rājvaṃsāvalī, p.123*
- <sup>xxv</sup> Dr. Dambarudhar Nath., *History of the Koch Kingdom 1515-1615*, p.178
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Vaman Shivram Apte, *The Student's SANSKRIT- ENGLISH DICTIONARY*, p.499
- <sup>xxvii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.603
- <sup>xxviii</sup> *kandalah- (kadi+alac) kanakam/  
Śabdakalpadrumaḥ*, Prathama kāṇḍam, p.20
- <sup>xxix</sup> Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.43
- <sup>xxx</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Dr. Dambarudhar Nath., *History of the Koch Kingdom 1515-1615*, p.178
- <sup>xxxii</sup> *śuniyo śrīdhara tumi mora bākyā dharā /  
jyotiṣaka bhāngi tumi sādhyakhaṇḍa karā //  
bakula kāyastha tumi bhānga līlāvātī /  
alpate bujaya yena kāyasthe samprati // 609//  
Darrang Rājvaṃsāvalī, p.124*
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Dr. Dambarudhar Nath., *History of the Koch Kingdom 1515-1615*, p.178
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Nagendra Nath Vasu, *The Social History of Kamarupa*, vol.2, p.64
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Sri Ambikacharan Sarkar, *Koch Rājboṣṭī jatir itihāsa āru saṃskṛti*, p.67
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Upendra Chandra Lekharu, *Kathāgurucarita*, p.6
- <sup>xl</sup> Dr. Maheśvar Neog, *Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Mādhavdeva Kīrtaṇa-ghoṣa and Nāma ghoṣa*, preface, p.17.
- <sup>xli</sup> Sir Edward Gait, *A History of Assam*, p.55
- <sup>xlii</sup> Dr. Dambarudhar Nath., *History of the Koch Kingdom 1515-1615*, p.171
- <sup>xliiii</sup> Dr. Maheśvar Neog, *Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Mādhavdeva Kīrtaṇa -ghoṣa and Nāma ghoṣa*, preface, p.20.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Upendra Chandra Lekharu, *Kathāgurucarita*, p.33
- <sup>xlv</sup> Ramacharan Thakur, *Gurucarita.*, p.578
- <sup>xlvi</sup> *kachārī māraṇā āsi ārobāra bhaila /  
baradovā eri teve gāṅmouye bhaila //  
kocharo māraṇā punu tahita milila /  
tāka bhaye louhitya sānhurante gītā pāila //  
2683//RamacharanThakur, Gurucarita., p.530*
- <sup>xlvii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.579
- <sup>xlviii</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 814
- <sup>xlix</sup> Dipendra Narayana Konwar, *Koch Kamatar Itikatha*, p. 115
- <sup>l</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>li</sup> Upendra Chandra Lekharu, *Kathāgurucarita*, p.85
- <sup>lii</sup> *Padmapurāṇa.*, svargakhaṇḍa., v.195
- <sup>liii</sup> Nagendra Nath Vasu, *The Social History of Kamarupa*, vol.2, p.103
- <sup>liiv</sup> Upendra Chandra Lekharu, *Kathāgurucarita*, pp.138-139
- <sup>lv</sup> Nagendra Nath Vasu, *The Social History of Kamarupa*, vol.2, p.103
- <sup>lvi</sup> Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Sankaradeva: His Life, Preachings and Practices*, p.116.
- <sup>lvii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>lviii</sup> *rātri-dine māri baiṭhā āna āge jāi /  
jimate rājāra loke dhariba nāpai//  
ehi buli rājabaṅśīloka āṭha jana /  
paṭhāiyā dilanta huiyā utkaṅṭhita mana  
I13457II RamacharanThakur, Gurucarita., p.683*
- <sup>lix</sup> Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Sankaradeva: His Life, Preachings and Practices*, p.116
- <sup>lx</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>lxi</sup> Dipendra Narayana Konwar, *Koch Kamatar Itikatha*, p.116
- <sup>lxii</sup> *mora icchā āche śaṅkarar kāche  
dharmar kathā śunibo/  
mora samīpaka āsoka śaṅkara  
sādare āmi ānibo//  
kailā dūte jāi kariyā binay  
rājāra sakale kathā/  
śuni cilārāi nagaila pratyay  
bhāvi guṇi pūrvvakathā//  
3543//RamacharanThakur, Gurucarita., p.698*
- <sup>lxiii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.117
- <sup>lxiv</sup> Nagendra Nath Vasu, *The Social History of Kamarupa*, vol.2, p.106
- <sup>lxv</sup> Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Sankaradeva: His Life, Preachings and Practices*, p.114.
- <sup>lxvi</sup> Ramacharan Thakur, *Gurucarita.*, p.836
- <sup>lxvii</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>lxviii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.837
- <sup>lxix</sup> Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.71.
- <sup>lxx</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44
- <sup>lxxi</sup> *parama rasika guru: śri śukladhvaja 335 : rajā nṛpati pradhāna / 336 jayatu jayatu nitya: īśvara kṛṣṇaka: keli lilā rasa jānā //3///20// rāmaka parama bhakati rasa jāna / 346 śri śukladhvaja nṛpati pradhāna / 347 Sri Visvanarayan Sastri, Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradevar Rāmavijaya nāta.*, p.44-46.
- <sup>lxxii</sup> Dipendra Narayana Konwar, *Koch Kamatar Itikatha*, p.120
- <sup>lxxiii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.168
- <sup>lxxiv</sup> Dipendra Narayana Konwar, *Koch Kamatar Itikatha*, p.121
- <sup>lxxv</sup> Upendra Chandra Lekharu, *Kathāgurucarita*, foreword p.iv
- <sup>lxxvi</sup> Dipendra Narayana Konwar, *Koch Kamatar Itikatha*, p.120
- <sup>lxxvii</sup> Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.6
- <sup>lxxviii</sup> Dr. Thanewar Sarma, *Sanskrit Sāhityar Itivṛtta*, p.392.
- <sup>lxxix</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>lxxx</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>lxxxi</sup> *alpa āyu alpa vuddhi haiveka niḥśeṣa / lopa haiba pūrva śāstra granthādi viśeṣa // śuniyo puruṣottama bhāṭṭāchārya dvija/ kariyoka ratnamālā vyākaraṇa nija //605// Darrang Rājvamsāvalī*, p.123
- <sup>lxxxii</sup> *Śrīmalla-devasya guṇaikasindhormahī-mahendrasya yathānirdeśam/ yatnāt prayogottama-ratnamālā vitanyate śrīpuruṣottamena //3// mahatāmapī hr̥dvibhāvanīyaimmahanīyairguṇa-vṛdhimat-prayogaiḥ / racitām puruṣottamena bālāḥ pratibhāyai pāradhatta ratnamālām//4// Prayogaratnamālāvyākaraṇa*
- <sup>lxxxiii</sup> P. C.Roy, *Prayogaratnamālā of Puruṣottama Vidyāvāgīśa*, Introduction p. v.
- <sup>lxxxiv</sup> Dr. Ajit Kumar Barua, *Koch Rajyar Buranji*, p.140
- <sup>lxxxv</sup> Dimbeswar Neog, *Asamiyā Sāhityar Addhyayan*, p.146.
- <sup>lxxxvi</sup> Kavi Baladeva Suryakhari Daivagya, *Darrang Rājvamsāvalī*, p.124
- <sup>lxxxvii</sup> Dr. Ajit Kumar Barua, *Koch Rajyar Buranji*, p.346
- <sup>lxxxviii</sup> Dipendra Narayana Konwar, *Koch Kamatar Itikatha*, p.172
- <sup>lxxxix</sup> Rajkhowa, Jyoti Prasad., op.cit., p.45
- <sup>xc</sup> *jayadeva nāme kāvya virachilo sāra/ śukladhvaja rājā ṭika karilanta yāra//5// Śrī Kālīrāma Devaśarmā Baruah and Kamrupa Guwahati, Jayadevakṛta Gītagovinda Asamiyā Bhāṣaya Rāmasarasvatī-kartṛka padavandhe nivandhita*
- <sup>xc</sup> Rāmasarasvatī & others, *Aṣṭādaśa parva sampūrṇa Asamiyā Mahābhārata*, vol.2, p.1437.
- <sup>xcii</sup> *āmāka karilā ājñā parama sādare / bhāratara pada tumi kariyoka sāre // āmāra gr̥hata āche bhāṣya ṭikā yata/ niyoka āpona gr̥he diloho samasta // 21556 ehi buli rājā sabe baladhi jorāi / pathāilā pustaka sabe āmāra ṭhāi // dhana vastra alamkāra dilā bahutara / dāsa dāsī diyā mana barhālā āmāra // 21557*
- <sup>xciii</sup> *pitṛ māṭṛye aniruddha nāma dila/ kavīcandra nāma got dewane bulila/ rāmasarasvatī nāma nṛpati dilanta//*
- <sup>xciv</sup> Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.46
- <sup>xcv</sup> *sampratike strīye sūdre paḍhibā yatane/ kichu śeṣa bhaile paḍhibeka bipragane// śuniyoka ājñā mora rāmasarasvatī/ bhāratara pada tumi kariyo samprati//606// Darrang Rājvamsāvalī*, p.124
- <sup>xcvi</sup> Kāmarūpa Anusandhāna Samiti, *Journal of the Assam Research Society*, vol.28, p.97.
- <sup>xcvii</sup> Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa, *Generalissimo Chilarai and his times*, p.45
- <sup>xcviii</sup> Nagendra Nath Vasu, *The Social History of Kamarupa*, vol.2, p.58
- <sup>xcix</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59
- <sup>c</sup> Dr. Dambarudhar Nath., *History of the Koch Kingdom 1515-1615*, p.179
- <sup>ci</sup> *yena mate yuvarāja ajñā karila more/ yāra ajñā anya anya rājā dhare śire// tāhāra ādeśe āmi sthira kari mana viśeṣa bhavānipada kari viracana//*
- <sup>cii</sup> Nagendra Nath Vasu, *The Social History of Kamarupa*, vol.2, p.59
- <sup>ciii</sup> Dr. Ajit Kumar Barua, *Koch Rajyar Buranji*, p.347
- <sup>civ</sup> *Ibid.*

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How to cite this article: Karchika Mahanta. Chilārāi and the contemporary literary world of assam - a study. *Galore International Journal of Applied Sciences & Humanities*. 2022; 6(3): 92-102.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/gijash.20220713>

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