The Bisnupriya Manipuris are a small people struggling to restore their identity lost in the vagaries of history and afflictions. This group of homo-sapiens has been referred to by different writers in their works. The socio-religious history of the Bisnupriya Manipuri community is yet to be written.

While I was studying the Hari-bhakti-vilása of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa I found the importance it carries as guidebook for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. I also found the influence it exerts upon the culture and religious consciousness of the Bishnupriya Manipuris.

In the present dissertation, a modest attempt has been made to throw some light of the impact of Hari-bhakti-vilása on Bishnupriya Manipuri community presenting their ethnographic account, social structure, economic activities etc. An attempt has also been made to find out the historical truth about this ethnic group.

It has been endeavoured to show that many regulations of Hari-bhakti-vilása are still alive, that they govern the everyday life of the Vaiṣṇava Hindus and permeate the Bisnupriya Manipuris as a Vaiṣṇava Hindu Community. Excellent works dealing with Hari-bhakti-vilása might
have been given to the world by eminent scholars. But so far as I know no writer has yet attempted to survey the impact of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa on the religious field of Bisnupriya Manipuris.

This dissertation will focus on the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism of 16th century and I feel it can not be studied isolated from the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa as the latter is closely linked with the former. The proselytism of the Bisnupriya Manipuris into Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism on a certain point of history has become a turning point to them to come under the pale of the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. I as a member of the Bisnupriya Manipuri community have the scope to fathom the moulding impact of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism and Hari-bhakti-vilāsa upon this race. Hence, I have tried to make a modest study of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism and Hari-bhakti-vilāsa to explore materials relevant to the Bisnupriya Manipuris.

In the present work, an attempt has been made to give an explicit exposition of the ethical norm, rules relevant to Bisnupriya Manipuris and the content of the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. The present study has been divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with the authorship of the book Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, its date and subject matter. In the second chapter an attempt has been made to ascertain whether Hari-bhakti-vilāsa a smṛti in the
proper sense or not. The third chapter discusses on the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* in the light of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. The fourth chapter contains a brief historical and socio-cultural sketch of the Bisnupriya Manipuri community. The next chapter explains the impact of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism on the religio-cultural consciousness of Bisnupriya Manipuri community. Sixth chapter aims at expounding the influence of the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* on religious practices and observances of the Bisnupriya Manipuri community. Seventh chapter contains concluding remarks. Some of the fine arts and cultural events of this community have been illustrated by means of pictures at places which I have found suitable.

The primary source of our study is the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, edited by Haridas Sastri published in 1986 from Vṛndavana and other editions of the book. For the historical account of the Bisnupriya Manipuri Community, I have depended mostly on *Khumal Purāṇa*, The Background of Assamese Culture, History of Manipur, Introduction to Manipur, A Clarification on the Bishnupriyas in Relation to the Manipuris, The Meitheis, Let History and Facts Speak about Manipuris, Manipurer Prachin Itihas, Bishnupriya Manipuri Bhasatattver Ruparekha.
I now humbly submit my work for adjudication by the learned scholars

Place: Guwahati

Date: 1st September, 2009

Krishnadas Sinha

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