CHAPTER IV

A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE VAISNAVITE LYRICS OF BENGAL FROM THE PRE-GAITANYA PERIOD TO THE POST-GAITANYA PERIOD, SHOWING TREND OF DEVELOPMENT IN THOUGHTS AND IDEAS AS WELL AS RASA.

As we turn the pages of history, it is found that, since ancient times, music was accepted as the medium for expressing and preaching the spiritual thoughts and ideas of almost all the religions. Such deep feelings were presented through lyrics to those people, who were capable of realizing the inner significance of religious experiences. Examples of various lyrics or songs, pertaining to different religious practices and worshipping and which are also included in devotional lyrics and hymns, have been found in all Indian literatures. The Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal, known as padas are also hymns or devotional lyrics, relating to the religious practices of Bengal Vaisnavism. These are a special kind of lyrical works, that have found expression in the combination of the songs of devotional practices and romantic poems. These devotional lyrics were composed by numerous padakartās (literally, masters of songs) in that sweet mixed dialect called Brajabuli, containing lofty spiritual tune with bhakti sentiment, philosophical ideas of the doctrine of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism as well as classical rāgas. These lyrics, form by far the most important and colourful page in the history of Bengali Vaiṣṇava literature.

The devotional lyrics of the Bengali Vaiṣṇava poets are the good development of some pieces of self-completed poems relating to the events and incidents in the life of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. In these lyrics, the deep philosophy of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, that lies behind the Radha-Kṛṣṇa legend, has been expressed minutely and at the same time an outburst of romantic lyrical enthusiasm also felt. The Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal are the scriptures of Gaudīya
Vaisnavism founded by Caitanyadeva and these are as if the commentaries of the doctrine of Caitanya's *prema-bhakti* (devotion touched with erotic sentiment). Through these lyrics, the Vaisnava poets of Bengal, wonderfully describing the frolicsome activities of Krṣṇa, particularly His amours with Rādhā and the philosophy of the same as well as the activities and different states of ecstasy of Caitanyadeva, have expressed and preached the devotional practices of Gaudiya Vaisnavism.

Moreover, there are also lyrics, relating to Cow-herd-Kṛṣṇa, the pastoral scenes and His cowboy-companions as well as the playful ways of Child-Kṛṣṇa and also the motherly feelings of Yasodā.

**Classification of Bengali Vaisnave lyrics and a brief notes on each of them:**

The Vaisnave lyrics of Bengal have not been compiled according to different subject matters. However, these may be broadly divided into three classes, namely:

1. **Kṛṣṇa-līlā** (Lyrics relating to Kṛṣṇa's divine sportiveness).
2. **Gaurā-candrikā** (Preliminary songs in praise of Gaurāṅga describing His ecstatic activities), **Gaurā-līlā** (Lyrics relating to the activities of Gaurāṅga in childhood and asceticism).
3. **Bhajam** (Devotional lyric songs or prayer songs)

1. **Kṛṣṇa-līlā**: The subject matter of the Vaisnave lyrics of Bengal is mainly based on the sportive activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. In such lyrics, which are coloured with devotional attachment, the amorous sports of Kṛṣṇa with Rādhā are the main features. The episode of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa was prevalent since long; but earlier it was full of love sentiment; with Caitanyadeva it became the marvelous theme of devotional sentiment pertaining to erotic love sentiment.
The main theme of the lyrics relating to the love of Radhā-Kṛṣṇa is the pangs of separation of Radhā. However, some other events and incidents in the life of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, than the love episode of Radhā-Kṛṣṇa, such as the relation of Kṛṣṇa with other gopis, Yaśodā and the cow-herds also find place in this class of lyric. But, these incidents comparatively speaking are secondary in the literature of the padas. Moreover, these are a few in number and amongst these, number of good lyrics are very few. In the thoughts and perceptions of the Bengali Vaisnava lyric poets Lord Kṛṣṇa is ṣadaiśvāryamaya (being the treasure of six powers)¹ and mādhuryamaya (full of romance). The Gaujīva Vaisnāvite poets are the worshipper of His romantic dalliance. But the lyrics, relating to parental sentiment (vātsalya rasa) in relation to Kṛṣṇa and Yaśodā as well as friendliness (sakhyā rasa) in relation to Kṛṣṇa and the cow-herds cannot be ignored. Such types of lyrics have added a new light in Indian literature. The lyrics, relating to the dalliance of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Vraja may be divided into two categories: Firstly, the lyrics dealing with the different activities of Kṛṣṇa with parent and friends. Secondly, the lyrics dealing with His secret amorous sports with Radhā.

The first one contains the lyrics on the birth festive of Kṛṣṇa (nandotsava) as well as of Radhā, the childhood, boyhood and pastoral activities of Kṛṣṇa, His act of holding up the hillock Govardhana, His sports with Radhā in the autumn and spring, holi sports, Kṛṣṇa's activities as a mad tax-collector (dāna-lilā), Kṛṣṇa's activities as a boat-man (naukā-vilāsa), act of swinging (jhulān), subdual of serpent Kaliya, coming of Akrūra, departure to Mathurā and the pangs of separation of the people of Vraja.

Numerous lyrics, relating to the dawn of love (mūrvārāg), intensity of love, seeing the beauty of each other (ṛūpānurāg), Radhā's love tryst or

1. Six powers (ṣadaiśvārya) are: jñāna (knowledge), sakti (strength), vīra (power), virya (stamina), aśīvārya (grandeur) and teṣā (lusture).
secret going-forth (abhisāra), Rādhā’s going to meet Kṛṣṇa in the place of assignment in different seasons, Rādhā’s decorating her bed-chamber and dressing herself to receive Kṛṣṇa (vāsakassajā), Rādhā’s sorrow for nonarrival of Kṛṣṇa and her anger and jealousy at the sight of marks of cohabitation with another lady on Kṛṣṇa when He arrives in the next morning (khanditā), her huff (mān), refusal to Kṛṣṇa (kalahāntarītā), sending of messenger by each other (dautya), meeting of the lovers (sambhogamilana), deep attachment to each other (premavaicittva), tiredness for recollection of past happy days at the time of excitement due to deep love (rasodgāra), Rādhā’s fear for separation with Kṛṣṇa (bhāvī viraha), her pangs of final separation caused by the departure of Kṛṣṇa to Mathura (bhavana viraha) and union in spirit (bhavasammelana) are of the second category.

2. Gaura-candrikā, Gaura-padāvalī: Although the Gaṇḍīva Vaisnavite lyrics are mainly based on Kṛṣṇa’s amorous sports with Rādhā in Vṛndāvana, but in some lyrics, there are no references of Kṛṣṇa. There are plenty of lyrics, in the treasure of Bengali Vaisnava literature, believing Caitanya as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa Himself (also of Rādhā) and describing his charming beauty as well as his superhuman activities. Seeing and recollecting Caitanya’s absorbness in Kirtana (the songs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) and his devotional ecstasies, some of the Caitanyaite poet-devotees composed this type of lyrics. Many other lyric poets of later period followed them.

Caitanyadeva worshipped Lord Kṛṣṇa, thinking Him to be his Beloved. His transcendental state of mind is nothing but the representation of that of Rādhā. Realising the intense religious emotion as well as the ecstatic state of the mind of Caitanya at the pangs of separation with Kṛṣṇa, and then taking the ideal of Caitanya, the Caitanyaite poets depicted the character of bereaved Rādhā
in these lyrics. Again in some lyrics, Gaurânga acted as Kraṣṇa and as such these lyrics are the representations of that of Kraṣṇa. The lyrics, containing such thoughts and ideas are called Gaua-candrika. These lyrics are included into the post-Caitanya lyrical literature. A sense of perplexity touched with humility, which was absent in the writings of the former poets, are seen in this type of Vaiṣṇava lyrics. In pālavandi kirtana (narrative opera of Rādhā-Kraṣṇa episode) such as: Kraṣṇa’s sportive childhood, pastoral activities, intensity of love (anurāga), love tryst, aquatic sports (jala-keli) dancing of Kraṣṇa with Rādhā in the autumn (rāsa-krīḍā), meeting at the groves (kuṇḍamilaṇ), Rādhā’s huff and pangs of separation etc., were sung as a narrative opera. At the beginning of each narrative opera, according to its subject matter, songs from among these are to be sung as a prayer to Caitanyadeva. Thereby the listeners are able to know the chapter of Kraṣṇa’s dalliance, that would be presented in the opera.

Navadvipa-līlā (Caitanya’s activities in his home-land—Navaḍvīpa), is nothing but the repetition of Vṛndāvana-līlā. The main thoughts and feelings of Kraṣṇa get a new form in Caitanya—such a feeling of oneness between Kraṣṇa and Caitanya are represented in Gaua-candrika. Therefore, at the time of describing the activities of Kraṣṇa, such activities of Caitanya were always prominent in the minds of the lyricists. Being influenced by Caitanya’s bewilderment, the manner of thinking, exultation at the chanting of the name of God as well as by the bright memory of the practice of prema-bhakti, the poets of such lyrics entered into the mystery of Rādhā-Kraṣṇa’s love episode.

There are also some lyrics regarding the activities of Gaurânga (Caitanya). These lyrics are known as Gaua-līlā padāvalī. Here, Gaurânga’s birth, childhood, youth, act of uttering and preaching the name of the deities, taking to asceticism etc. have been narrated continuously in a simple manner.
Of course, these lyrics are not heart appealing and thought provoking as they are deficient in sincerity and intense feelings of the Gaura-candrika.

Along with Caitanya, prayers are also said to Nityānanda and sometimes to some other devotees like Advaitacārya and Gaddhara.

3. Bhajan-padanālī : This type of lyrics are generally prayer songs, replete with deep devotional sentiment. The devout poets, expressing their heart-felt humiliation and intensity, offered themselves at the feet of the deity Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as well as Caitanya—the united idol of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The dedicated poets devoting themselves, sometimes as servants, sometimes as friends or mañjarī of Kṛṣṇa experienced their earnest supplication. Some songs of this type are also composed, addressing the gurus and mahājana. In these prayer songs, the intense devotion touched with humiliation as well as the sense of sublimation of the devout hearts are obvious.

However, most of the songs of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism have been composed on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's episode. Generally, Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal refer to that type of lyric which particularly deals with the amorous dalliance of Kṛṣṇa, containing madhura sentiment. The Bengali Vaiṣṇava poets of the padas feel Kṛṣṇa's sportive activities, being enlightened by the transcendental and spiritual thoughts of Caitanya. The Vaiṣṇava mahājana very sincerely followed the directions as laid down in the Vaiṣṇava-rasa-sāstra. The explanations and analysis prescribed in Rūpa Gosvāmi's rhetorical and philosophical treatises namely, the Ujjvala-nilamanī and the Bhakti-rasāmrtā-sindhu have regulated the subject matter, thoughts and ideas of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavite lyrics. As regards to the richness of thoughts, fine artistic skill, beautiful expressions and multifariousness, the padas or songs of Bengali Vaiṣṇava poets have possessed comparatively a remarkable significance amongst the lyrical literary world of
the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As the lyrics in general of most of the world literatures are mere a part of literature and as these are generally free from religious influences, as such these may be acceptable only to the men of literary pursuits. But Bengali Vaisnavite lyrics are singled with the religious as well literary conceptions of the mass. A deep spiritual theology is hidden in the background of the padas which finds its expression in the shape of colourful novel literature. As a high standard literature, these inspire the artistic minds of the lovers of literature in one hand and on the other hand awake the dormant spiritual state of mind of the people through a touch of pleasure. The mind of every Bengali is glorified and sanctified, having a bath in the sacred water of these padas.

Quite a large number of the devotional lyrics or songs of Bengal Vaisnavism, rather the bulk of them deal mostly, if not exclusively, with the love episode of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

The Bengali Vaisnava lyricists of the later period, called with due reverence their former padakartās— mahājanas. That is why, this particular type of devotional lyrics of Bengal were also known as mahājan-padāvalī from the later part of the seventeenth century. All the padas collectively are called the Vaisnava padāvalī.

The Historical Background of the Vaisnavite Lyrics of Bengal:

Tracing back to the historical background of the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal, the introduction of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa episode in Vaisnava literature is discussed here briefly.

ŚrīKṛṣṇa, the mythological God, has been worshiped as four handed Viṣṇu, by the upper class Hindu society, since ancient times. In this connection a few lines may be quoted from The History Of Civilization Of The People Of Assam, by Dr. P.C. Choudhury, an eminent historian of Assam where he dis-
cusses about the origin and development of Vaisnavism in Assam, the antiquity of the origin of Visnu-Vasudeva-Krsna in India is disputed. Some ascribe the origin of Visnu-Krsna to the Mediterranean—Dravidian element and even to the stone age, while others point to their non-Brahmanic or non-Vedic origin. Those who cling to the Dravidian origin of Vaisnavism find support in the contention that the cult of bhakti belongs to that element. Hopkins deals with the evolution of Vaisnavism through successive stages, by which Visnu came to be identified with Vasudeva-Krsna. In any case, the worship of Visnu is as old as the Rig Veda, where he is called one of the adityas."

There is reference of Visnu in the Rig Veda. It is found that Visnu came in the prominence from the later period of the Rig Veda and He became a chief God before the end of the Vedic age. The faith of Vaisnavism was also prevalent at the time of the Mahabharata. In the Mahabharata, Krsna, the son of Vasudeva-Dalvaki of Vrsni dynasty was the main character—He was the incarnation of Visnu. Bhismma accepted Him as the incarnation of Narayana. In the Bhagavad-gita, Krsna and Narayana are the same. Thus in the old scriptures, Lord Krsna (or Vasudeva), somewhere is called Narayana, somewhere Visnu or an incarnation of Visnu Himself. While discussing about the antiquity of the origin and development of Visnu or Krsna or Visnu-Krsna or Vasudeva-Krsna as well as Vaisnavism, a few lines from Dr. Choudhury's book may be quoted again: "There is in fact little connection between the cult of Visnu of the Vedas and the Bhakti cult or what may be called the sectarian Vaisnavism of later times. The name Vasudeva finds mention in later Vedic literature and in Pāṇini as a name of Visnu; the earliest reference to the Bhagavata is found in the Brahma Sutras. The name Krsna is mentioned in the Chhandogya Upanisad (III,17,6). The Vrsni family, to which he belonged, is mentioned in the Brahmanas. All

2. H.O.C.JM, p. 408.
3. idam visnurvivakrame tredhā nidadhe padam, RV. VI.49.13.
these prove the historical character of Vasudeva-Kṛṣṇa, who flourished during the time of the Kuru-Pândavas, mentioned also in the Brāhmaṇical literature. Even Buddhist works like the Avadānasāta (I/37) mention Nara-Nārāyaṇa-Viśnu. The antiquity of the cult of Saṅkarsana-Vasudeva is also proved by epigraphs from Besnāgar and Nānāghāt of 2nd and 1st century B.C. respectively. In any case, the divine character given to Kṛṣṇa was a later development.

In some Sanskrit purāṇas of the later age, such as the Śrimad-bhāgavata, the Viṣṇu-purāṇa, the Harivamsa, the Padma-purāṇa, the Brahma-Vaivarta-purāṇa, the sportive activities as well as the dalliance of Lord Kṛṣṇa have been nicely described. But in the Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa legend and Vaishnavism mentioned above, there is no indication of bhakti touched with erotic sentiment, centered round Kṛṣṇa. It is worth mentioning that though in the Mahābhārata, Draupadi called Kṛṣṇa as gopi-jana-priya (dear to the gopīs), there is however no reference of Vṛndāvana-līlā (Kṛṣṇa's eternal erotic sports) in it.

In the description of Rāsa-līlā in the Viṣṇu-purāṇa, there is a reference of one gopi called Kṛtapunya-madālasa but there is no Rādhā. Though there is no distinct reference of Rādhā, in the Śrimad-bhāgavata—the Bible of Gaudīya Vaishnavism, however Gaudīya Gosvāmis, have found the indication of Rādhā through the Bhāgavata itself. In the Bhāgavata, there is description, that ŚrīKṛṣṇa, while playing rāsa with the gopīs, disappeared taking away one main gopi. Seeing the footprints of Kṛṣṇa, in the jungle, the gopīs uttered with lamentation thus:

anayārādhito nūnena bhagavān haririsvāraḥ
yanno vihāya govindaḥ prīto yāmanavadrahaḥ

5. Śrimad-bhāgavata, 10/30/24
(The Lord Hari must be worshipped by her (by this gopi) in such a way that Govinda, being attracted, took her away to this secret place, leaving us behind).

The Vaisnavas think that, the word anavārādhita of the above mentioned verse, implies Rādhā. According to the Gaudīya Vaisnavas, there are mentions of Rādhā in the Padma-purāṇa and the Matsya-purāṇa. There is also elaborate description of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa episode in the Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa. But scholars differ about the time of these purāṇas.

There is no mentioning of the name as well as the cult of Rādhā in early Vaisnava literature. In the early purāṇas also there is no reference to Rādhā. It has been assumed that, the idea of Rādhā originated first in the ancient society of India and the particular Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa myth found its place, in ancient Indian literature later on. In the later age, on the basis of this ancient literature, Rādhā appeared in the theology and philosophy of Caitanyaism and the fervent quasi-amorous episode of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa lifted the Vaisnava lyric of Bengal into a high level. In this connection, Dr. Devidas Bhattacharyya has referred to a view of the historians. The historians say that, amongst the cow-herds of the Adbhuras, from ancient times, there prevailed a love episode, full of erotic-sentiment, centering round Youm-Kṛṣṇa and the adolescent girls (gopīs). This particular folk-episode became very popular. This anecdote spread out in different parts of India in the form of songs and folk-rhymes. In the songs and folk-rhymes, sung and recited in the social and domestic ceremonial occasions in those days, the hero and heroine were Kṛṣṇa and an unknown adolescent girl and later on Rādhā respectively. Such songs may be the sources of the Vaisnava lyric poetry of Bengal.

The distinct reference to the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme that is to Rādhā has been found in Hāla's Cāhā-sattasal— a Prakrit anthology of lyrics. This appears to be the first reference to Rādhā in the lyric poetry. The

6. V.P.S.U.P., p. 83
7. Ibid.
scholars are of opinion that, the verses of this anthology were compiled in the fourth-fifth century. It is assumed that, the love episode of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa became very popular, as early as the fifth-sixth century A.D. In the Pāshamur ruins (8th century), many scriptures, depicting Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love have been found. Before, it was properly used in Bengali literature, the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa episode was found described in different poetical works, dramas and stories in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramśa and Avahattha literature, during the period between the fifth and twelfth centuries. These enriched the ancient Indian literature immensely. In the history of Gauḍiya Vaismavite lyrics, the contribution of these lyrics cannot be ignored. Most probably, during the time of the Senas, the love-episode of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa appeared for the first time amongst the Bengali folks. This sacred anecdote became very popular in Bengal, with the result, many poems and various sarcastic verses were composed during the period.

During the time of the Senas particularly in the courtyard of Laksmana-sena, Sanskrit literature was mostly cultivated. The Sena kings, being foreigners, were not however interested in Bengali language. As such, the Brahman scholars, well-versed in Sanskrit, were honoured in their courtyard. Jayadeva, the court-poet of Laksmana-sena, composed the Gita-govinda, following the traditional love episode of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and thereby bringing the lyrics of folk-literature to Sanskrit. The Caitanyaism of Bengal was influenced by the subject matter and theme of Jayadeva's work, whereas, the Vaismavite lyrical literature of Bengal was influenced by the poetical merit as well as the spirit of the same.

Jayadeva's contemporary poets namely, Sarana, Umāpati, Bhori and Govardhana Ācārya also adorned Laksmana-sena's courtyard. Jayadeva has mentioned in his work the names of these four poets. Amongst them, Govardhana
Acārya composed Ṛṣya-saptasati in the line of Gahā-sattasai of Hāla. In this work, he composed some poems on the love-story of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Although there are descriptions of parakiñj-prama (the love for a lady, belonging to another) as of the Gaudīya Vaisnavite lyrics, in these poems, the theology and philosophy of love of the doctrine of Gaudīya Vaisnavism is rather wanting. Here, only the poetic sentiment has been reflected through the description of Kṛṣṇa’s dalliance with Rādhā or the gopīs.

In this connection two great anthologies of Sanskrit scattered verses, namely, Kavindra-vacana-samuccaya and Sadukti-karpamrta (Sukti-karpamrta) are worth mentioning. In these two anthologies of verses, there are numerous poems of various types, some of which were composed by some Bengali poets. These two anthologies are supposed to be written before the thirteenth century A.D. At that time, nobody in other parts of India, had taken up the work of compilation of such scattered verses. Although, Kavindra-vacana-samuccaya contains some verses by Bengali poets, but, it was not compiled in Bengal. Only a part of this old manuscript was found in Nepal, but this does not contain the name of the manuscript and the compiler. Late F.W. Thomas, compiled this book and named it as Kavindra-vacana-samuccaya. Afterwards the complete work of this book has been named as Subhāgita-ratnakosa. The compiler of this new anthology was Vidyākar, who was a Saugata—a Buddhist monk. From the epigraphic point of view, the scholars have assigned the time of these poems to the twelfth century A.D. or previous to that.

These scattered verses enthused the Bengali lyricists of the later period to compose lyrics. The ideas and sentiments contained in and the mode of expressions of some verses, relating to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are almost same as in the Vaisnavite lyrics of the later period. For example:
"Who is at the door?"

'Hari'

'Go to the garden. Why should a monkey come here?'

'O beloved I am Kṛṣṇa'.

'I am very much afraid of you. Is monkey black?'

'O fool girl! I am Madhusūdana'.

'Then go to that creeper, where flowers are blooming'.

Let Hari Who is befooled by the word of His beloved, help you."

Verses of such ideas are also found in the Vaisnavaite lyrics of the sixteenth and seventeenth century A.D. To quote an example:

"Who is shouting here repeatedly?"

'I am Hari, Don't let know others'.

'Why the lion has come to human habitation leaving the hill cave?'

'No, no, I am Madhusūdana'.

'Then you go to the honey comb of lotuses'.

Again, "being at His wit's end at the huff of Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa, did not come near her. Then Rādhā sent her companion in search of Kṛṣṇa. But, He was found no where." Such a description is also not wanting in the Vaisnavaite lyrics of Bengal. Exactly, such an idea has been found in another verse of Subhāsita-ratnakosa. Failing to find out Kṛṣṇa, the companion of Rādhā reported her:

"O friend, thinking that He may be here and there, may be in love tryst with another lady, I made a search for that clever One every nook and

8. Quoted in V.P.S.P.U., p. 87.
9. V.P., p. 795.
corner, throughout one whole night. But I could not see Murāri in any place—not under the bhāndī, at the foot of Govardhana hill, on the bank of Kālindī and even in the groves of canes.”\(^\text{10}\)

Such type of verses are many in the Bengali Vaisnavite lyrics of the sixteenth and seventeenth century A.D.

Śrīdhara-dāsa, the compiler of *Sadukti-karṇāṁṛta* was a Bengali, who was a chief employee of king Lākṣaṁa-sena of Gauḍa (Bengal). The compilation work was completed in Feb/March of 1207 A.D. In this anthology, there are so many excellent compositions of Bengali poets. Some of the verses of this anthology have special value in the history of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend, as well as of Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism. The Vaiṣṇavite poems that have been incorporated in this anthology, contain almost all the sentiments of Vaiṣṇava lyrics, such as dāśya, vātsalya and mādhuṛya. The composers of these verses belonged to the school of Jayadeva. The Sena kings of Bengal were Vaiṣṇavas. In *Sadukti-karṇāṁṛta*, the writings of Lākṣaṁa-sena and his son Kṛśṇa-sena have been incorporated.\(^\text{11}\) The poems of Umapati-dhāraṇa, incorporated in *Sadukti-karṇāṁṛta* are preface of the thoughts and ideas of Vaiṣṇava lyrics as well as of the importance of Rādhā in the later period.

But in the above mentioned books, in many cases, the verses revealed the materiality of ordinary human life—the sense of devotion and spiritual practice are wanting in them.

Thus the folk tales on pure love, being supplied with the golden string of Kṛṣṇa legend as told in the Hindu *purāṇas* have effloresced a new type of significant lyrical literature, which has adorned the Bengali literature. Thereafter in post-Caitanya age, this very lyrical literature rose to

\(^{10}\text{mayānvistō dhūrtāb sa sakhi nikhilāmeva rājānīm} \\
\text{iha svādātra svādāti nipumānyāṁmathīṁśrtāḥ} \\
\text{na drsto bhāndīre. tataḥbhūvī na govardhanagirera} \\
\text{na kalindvah (kule) na cha nichulakudīs murarinuh}.
\text{Quoted in B.S. Itiḥās, p. 37.}

\(^{11}\text{Vide V.P.S.P.U., pp. 91-92.}\)
the height of a spiritual nature and resounded as—the nada. This particular lyrical literature is based mainly on the devotional love sentiment of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. A heavenly stream, full of unparalleled devotional love sentiment, immersed in the Sanskrit treasure house of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, as if, being inspired by a supernatural touch, have flowed like an earthly stream through Bengal, giving to its soil the fertility of holiness. In that fertile land innumerable Vaisnava devout poets of Bengal, have sowed the seeds of a new type of devotional lyric, strewn with significant thoughts and passions centering round the episode of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. And, innumerable devotional lyrics written in lucid rhythm, complete in themselves, have enriched that field of Bengali literature. The entire atmosphere of Bengal have come to be echoed with the purest and sweetest of tunes.

A Short Discussion on the Vaisnave Lyics of Bengal:

The above discussion shows that, prior to the promulgation of Caitanyaism in Bengal, an under current of the cult of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa was flowing there. Of course, there was no touch of the theology and ritualism of the Bhakti cult or what may be called the sectarian Vaisnavism. Then the Gīta-Govinda of Jayadeva of twelfth century A.D., the lyrics of Vidyāpati relating to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrīkṛṣṇa-kirtana of Bādu Candīdāsa, brought a new wave not only in the lyrical literature of Bengal, but also of Assam, Mitilī and even in Gujarāt, the Punjab and Rajasthan. These inspired the devout roots of those countries to compose the songs celestial in their own ways. The lyrical songs written on the love of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, by the three early poets were, as it were the opening songs of the beginning of the doctrine of devotional love (prema-bhakti) of Caitanyaism. The songs of these three poets were the main sources of Vaisnave lyric poetry in Bengal. The base of the doctrine
of devotional love, that was founded in Bengal, centering round the amorous activities of Krsna, as described in the Gita-govinda, was further made firm by the writings of Vidyāpati and Candidāsa. But, in their writings, erotic love sentiment is prominent—the descriptions therein are however full of sensual pleasure. The minute thoughts and ideas of Gauḍīya Vaisnavism are wanting in them. Later on, in Caitanyadeva, the sacredness and goodness of Rādhā’s love manifested and in fact the lyrics of the former great poets, take a new spiritual colour since then. There are references, that the writings of the three former poets, greatly influenced Caitanya. The burning heart of Caitanya, due to the pangs of separation from Krsna, got however solace by chanting and hearing the songs of these three poets. Kṛṣṇadāsa-kavirāja, the greatest biographer of Caitanyadeva writes thus:

"The drama and lyrics—  
Of Candidāsa, Vidyāpati,  
And Śrī-gita-govinda—the nectar of ear—  
Mahāprabhu along with Śvarūpa Rāmānanda—  
Chants and listens  
(Throughout) day and night."¹⁶

In other biographies of Caitanyadeva and also in the history of Gauḍīya Vaisnavism, same thing has been uttered. So, it is natural that, those lyrics of the former age, influenced the contemporary poets of Caitanya also. In the post-Caitanya period, under the influence of the ideal of Caitanya’s life as well as the teachings of Bengal Vaisnavism, founded by him, numerous Bengali Vaisnava poets, composed the pādas, based on the cult of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

¹⁶. Caritāmṛta, Madhyalilā, Sec. II, p. 156.
Subject matter of the padas:

It has already been discussed fully in the beginning of this chapter, about the subject matter of different classes of the Vaisnava lyrics of Bengal. The Vaisnava padas deal mostly with the sweet events and incidents in the life of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Quite a large part of these devotional lyrics, rather the bulk of them, relate to the forbidden love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The frolic-some activities of Child-Kṛṣṇa, described in the Bhāgavata, inspired many Vaisnava poets, to try their talent in this direction. The Vaisnava lyric poets of Bengal were also not exception in this regard. Beautiful padas based on some amusing situation from the life of Boy-Kṛṣṇa were produced. Besides, some lyric songs describe mother Yaśodā's anxious love for Child-Kṛṣṇa. Again, as has already been referred, Caitanyadeva became a divinity and his followers regarded him as an incarnation of God. And as such, a large number of padas were composed describing Caitanya's activities in childhood and ascetism as well as his beauty and attributes. Moreover, many prayer songs, woven with the spirit of humility and selflessness, added the glory and prosperity to the subject of the padas. Thus, in the emotional intensity of Vaisnavism, which carried the message of love and devotion, the God-intoxicated souls of the devout poets burst into emotions and found the voices in the sweet lyricism.

Language and structure of the padas:

The languages used in the Vaisnava lyrics of Bengal are of two kinds: one is simple Bengali and the other is that sweet mixed dialect called Brajabuli. Probably the padakartās did not consider these two languages as separate ones, while expressing their devotional feelings. Some poets like Jahānādāsa composed many beautiful lyrics in Bengali, while some others like Govindadāsa did so dexterously in Brajabuli. In this way the Vaisnava lyric poets of Bengal enriched Vaisnava lyrical literature with the efflorescence
of their writings. However, it may be mentioned that a large number of padas were written in Brajabuli.

In fact, Brajabuli language came to be used profusely towards the last part of the sixteenth century when the Vaisnavite lyrics in Bengal came to be composed in accordance with the principle as led down by Rūpa Gosvāmī. Of course there are also some other reasons for using Brajabuli in the padas. As we find, in Brajabuli, there are preponderance of Prakrit words together with sprinkling of Maithili words, which contribute much to the softness of the mixed dialect. The momic metre, variable vowel length, archaic vocabulary and minimum of grammar of Brajabuli helped much the Vaisnava lyric poets of Bengal for expressing their emotional outburst at ease. In morāt metre it is much easier to make a jingling sound of rhythm and Brajabuli having such quality could very soon attract the Vaisnava poets. Besides, this language contribute many Sanskrit words with consonant sounds. Moreover there was no restriction in using even the Bengali words in it. So it was much easier for the lyricists to compose any kind of lyrics in Brajabuli language. The use of Brajabuli also helped much in the musical side of the Vaisnava lyric songs. The rhythms of Brajabuli harmonise with the symbolic sound (bol) of khol.

It may be said that the form of the padas is based on the ideals of Jayadeva's padavali besides the caryapadas. As in Jayadeva's lyric songs, in the Vaisnava padavali also the second and third couplets (in Jayadeva's sometimes the third couplet only) often form the refrain (dhrvaka-pada or dhu). Generally, the padas contain twelve or fourteen couplets, in rare cases sixteen or ten couplets. There are few lyrics with ten couplets. The names of the poets occur in the last couplets and along with it, there may be mentions of the names of the God or guru or those persons having the status of the guru. Again, the spirit of humility, devotion to God, or the wishes
for the good of the poet himself or the listeners are expressed in the last couplets of the lyrics.

Some other kinds of language are also used in the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal. A few beautiful padaas are found written in Sanskrit. From the last part of the seventeenth century, mixed languages (macaronic) such as—Sanskrit-Bengali, Sanskrit-Brajabuli, Sanskrit-Bengali-Brajabuli and Bengali-Brajabuli came to be used in the padāvālī.

Sentiments in the padaas:

Devotional sentiment is the main sentiment of the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal and its dominant underlying feeling (sthāyi-bhāva) is the love of Krsna (Kṛṣṇa-rāti). The meaning of rāti is congenial thought. So, congenial thought of Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa-rāti. According to the rhetoric of Bengal Vaisnavism also, there are mainly five types of sentiment, based on the congeniality of the feelings of quietude (sānta), servitude (dāsya), friendliness (saṁkhya), parental (vātsalya) and erotic (mādhurya):

"Quietude, servitude, friendliness, parental and erotic by name.
Amongst devotional sentiments these are the main."\(^7\)

Though there are references of these five types of sentiments in the padaas, the sentiments of quietude (sānta-rasa) and servitude (dāsya-rasa) are totally secondary. Except in the lyrics regarding prayer-offering, these two sentiments have no existence.

In the sentiment of quietude, as the divinity of God is intense and in the expression of this sentiment, the devotee’s mind becomes restless with the depressed feeling, the sweet feeling (mādhurya) for Kṛṣṇa is extinct in it. That is why in the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal, the introduction of the sentiment of quietude is very thin.

17. Ibid., Madhyalīlā, Sec. XIX, p. 351.
The dominant feeling of the sentiment of servitude is service to God. Along with the feelings of faith and esteem as well as ordination for Krishna of the sentiment of quietude, the attitude of humility to Lord Krishna is connected here. The incomprehensibility of the ways of God as well as His glory and grace attract the devotee-minds. God is the Master and the devotee is His servant. It is difficult to find lyrics relating to the sentiment of pure servitude in the Vaishnavite lyrics of Bengal. In some lyrics of Narottama, this sentiment has been found to be infused. For example, the following verses may be cited:

"Show kindness to me O Vaishnava God,
There is none but Thou to save the sinner.
Whose nearness drives away the sins.
Where such kind Master is one can find?

* * *

I desire the dust of Thy feet in each birth,
Be kind to Narottama as Thy own."^18

Moreover, in the context of Uddhava etc., as well the introduction of this sentiment has infused the devotional sentiment. But as the attitude of humility is intense in the sentiment of servitude, so in the theology of Bengal Vaishnavism, this sentiment has not much significance and in the padavali literature as well there is no abundance of lyrics on this sentiment.

The basic feeling of the sentiment of friendliness is confidence. Here along with the reverence for Krishna of the sentiment of quietude, and that of the attitude of service to Krishna of the sentiment of servitude, is added the faith and equability of mind which are the elements of friendliness. In the minds of the devotees the feeling of the aisvarya aspect of God, does

\[^{18}\text{V.P., p. 542.}\]
not remain conscious—therein lies a relation of affectionate feelings, faith for each other. Many verses belonging to the pastoral activities and sports of Kṛṣṇa belong to this sentiment. For instance here is one such lyric from Balarāma Dāsa’s:

"The two brothers Rāma and Kānu
stood in two sides,
And they divided two teams of players.
Suvala started dancing in Kānu’s side,
Śrīdāma and Sudāma stood for Balāi.
The two brothers divided the players equally,
And promised to carry on shoulder if beaten.
(Listen) O brothers, (those) who will be defeated
to-day’s game;
Should carry the others to the Vaṁśivat."¹⁹

The root-emotion of parental sentiment is parental affection of kindness and pity. Here the Child-Kṛṣṇa is reared and Nanda-Yaśodā is his caretaker. The devotee, as if parent, rears the God as child with affectionate feelings. Scolding, beating, binding, giving advice, blessing and ordering Lord Kṛṣṇa come as indispensible parts of parental sentiment according to necessity. The āśīrvāya aspect is totally absent here. In this sentiment the parental affection is mixed along with the faith in Kṛṣṇa of quietude, feeling of servicing of servitude and confidence of friendliness. The lovely picture of Child-Kṛṣṇa drawn in the lyrics, containing parental sentiment is as if the picture of eternal human child. Again, many other lyrics are immersed in the stream of love of the mother’s heart—the spontaneous motherly love flows in these lyrics. The heart of mother Yaśodā fills with pleasure in the varied

¹⁹. Ibid., pp. 727-728; Vaṁśivat : A banyan tree at Vṛndāvana under which Kṛṣṇa played His flute.
activities of her son Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, the anxiety and fear of the mother's heart for Kṛṣṇa, her eye-ball, are picturised in a real manner. For instance:

"O Śrīdāma, Sudāma and Dāma—
Listen 0 Balarāma.
I request all of you,
The forest is afar, and filled with—
Sharp pointed young shoots of Kuśa tree
Don't take Gopāla to that distance." 20

To apprehend Lord Kṛṣṇa with erotic emotion (kānta-bhāva) is the essential theme of Bengal Vaisnavism and according to the Vaisnava-rasa-sāstra, madhura-rasa is the primary or mukhya bhakti-rasa. It is primary, because in this sentiment, the qualities of all other sentiments are present. The absolute faith and ordination of the sentiment of quietude, feelings of servicing of servitude, friendly confidence of friendliness and the attitude of rearing up of the filiality, mixed with the feelings of absolute self-offering create the erotic sentiment. The erotic-sport of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is the basis of this sentiment. Most of the padas are of this sentiment.

The permanent emotion of madhura-rasa is madhura-rāti, the sweet feeling. This rasa is also called sṛngāra-rasa or ujjala-rasa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Beloved here, the owner of peerless love Śrī Rādhikā is the foremost lady-love. Rādhā is as if the living image of Kṛṣṇa's love, everything in her life is full with the sweet feeling of such eternal love.

20. Ibid., p. 726.
Musical sonorousness of the padas:

The Vaishnavite lyrics of Bengal, Bengali or Brajabuli, are meant to be sung. The real beauty and melody of the padavali can never be fully felt unless heard as songs. The peculiar musical style in which the padas are sung is known as the kirtana. The style of the kirtana, which must have originated in early times was developed by Narottama Dāsa towards the end of the sixteenth century A.D. In the seventeenth century A.D. two lighter styles of kirtana developed which, with the touch of the local folk-songs of Bengal brought about a novelty in Indian music.

There are four kinds of kirtana:

1. Garan-hāti
2. Reneti
3. Mandarani
4. Manohar Sahi

These are so called after the names of the places in which they originated and flourished. Garan-hāti is in the district of Maldā, Reneti in Midnapur, Mandarani in Katak and Manohar Sahi is a Pargana in the district of Burdwan. The last one is the combination of the former three ones and as such it might be a later growth.

The kirtana is performed in two ways. The head-singer (mūl-gāyān) in order to elucidate the meaning contained in the pada concerned, add short sentences, sometimes along with the couplets or sometimes splitting them. This system is called ākhar, ākhar deovā. So, ākhar is an appreciation and an explanation of the pada concerned. Thus in the kirtana, the original compositions of the lyric songs appear to be recomposed. In the way of ākhar only, the mūl-gāyān may improvise the composition. In another style, some explanatory or elucidatory couplets are added to the padas without disturbing the tune and
rhythmic beat (tāla). These couplets are more or less prose-like rhythm and when separated from the nadas, these may be treated as different compositions. This is called tuk or chuta. In the padavali-kirtana the mul-gayen while going on improvising, the others in the party clung closely to the burden (dhyā) of the composition. The sweet Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa episode are sung in various well-arranged rāgas and tālas, which have the basis of classical music. But they cannot be called Indian classical music. Being influenced by the local folk-songs of Bengal, they became a different type of music.

The khol (or mrdanga) is the indispensable part of the kirtana. The peculiarity of the kirtana lies in the conception of rhythmic beat and tempo (laya) in the permutations and combinations of certain system of beats. In the kirtana there are numerous tālas of motley variety, played in keeping with the varied emotions of the songs. For example, Gaṅgana (8 mātrās), Dharmā (8 mātrās) Rūpaka (6 mātrās), Sāsīsekhara (11 mātrās), Indrabhāvita (13 mātrās), Viṣṇasamudra (10 mātrās) may be cited. The laya of the kirtana is connected with the gradual increase of sonority from soft to loud.

Much can be said about the musical sonorousness of the Vaisnava padavali. But here it is mere an attempt to give an idea about it at a glance. It is the musical style, mingled with the lyrical intensity that attributes the eternal beauty and sonority of the padavali.

Three Periods of the Vaisnавite Lyrics of Bengal: A Brief Note on the Padavali of the Vaisnava Poets of Different Periods:

In the history of the development of the Vaisnавite lyrics of Bengal, three periods in broad sense are noticed:

1. The first period or the pre-Caitanya period—from the twelfth century (Jayadeva's time) to the last part of the fifteenth century or the first decade of the sixteenth century (to the time of Caitanya's taking initiation).
(2) The second period— from the early sixteenth century to the last part of the seventeenth century. The second period again may be divided into two stages: (i) The Caitanya period (ii) The post-Caitanya period.

(3) The third period— from the last part of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century.

During the process of passing through these three periods, some changes occurred in the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal, in the matter of thoughts and ideas, as well as in sentiments. This is noticed, by a proper study of the devotional lyrics of the Vaisnava poets of different periods.

The Vaisnavite Lyrics of the Pre-Caitanya Period: The Padavali of the Two Precursors of the Vaisnava Lyric Poets of Bengal:

If we exclude Jayadeva, the first period of the Vaisnava padavali in Bengal, may be dated from the middle of the fourteenth century to the last part of the fifteenth century A.D. Of course, the scholars, unanimously admit that, Jayadeva's madhura-komala-kanta-padavali, is the main source of the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal. Jayadeva deserves the honour of being the first poet of the Vaisnava lyric songs in Bengal. But, as the Bengali poet Jayadeva's composition is in Sanskrit, in my discussion, I propose not to include him amongst the Bengali Vaisnava lyric poets. However, it must be admitted that in many places his language resembles Bengali.

Badu Candidasa, was the main poet of pre-Caitanya age. In regard to the ancienacity of language, Badu Candidasa's Krsna-kirtana may be placed next to the caryapadas. This is the earliest episodic-poetical manuscript on Râdhâ-Krsna cult, written in Bengali script and language, so far found. The date of composition of this kavya is uncertain. Scholars differ as to the ancienacity of the script of the Krsna-kirtana. Examining the script of the manuscript, Dr. Rakhaldas Bandopadhyaya, the eminent epigraphist and historian, opines that,
it was written before 1358 A.D., probably in the early part of the fourteenth century A.D.21 According to the scholars like Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Md. Sahidulla and others the language of this manuscript belongs to the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries.22 But some other scholars do not agree with them. For example, Dr. Radhagovinda Basak says that, the manuscript may not belong to the fourteenth century A.D. but it should not be placed in later than the early part of the sixteenth century A.D.23 Dr. Basak assumes that, the date of the manuscript is in between 1450 A.D. and 1500 A.D.24 Sri Asit Kumar Banopadhyaya says that, this poetical work was composed in the early part of the fifteenth century of the pre-Caitanya period.25 According to Jogesh Chandra Roy Vidyamidhi, it was written near about 1550 A.D.26

But even then the date of the composition of the Kṛṣṇa-kirtana remains uncertain. In view of the late style of the script as well as the paper and the ink used, Dr. Sukumar Sen opines that the date of composition of the work may be as late as the middle of the eighteenth century. He refutes the view of some scholars, who date the kāvya in the early fifteenth century. Mentioning about the late tendencies in sound change and in grammar as well as the vocabulary of the work, he comes to the conclusion that the language of the Kṛṣṇa-kirtana roughly dates in the sixteenth century. But the work originally may be older.27

Again, there is also doubt as to the name of the poet of Kṛṣṇa-kirtana. The problem about the name of Candidāsa arises, after finding out numerous verses in the name of Candidāsa. Numerous lyrics have been found in different names of Candidāsa such as Badu Candidāsa, Candidāsa, Dīna Candidāsa, Dvija Candidāsa, Dīna Candidāsa, Tarunī Ramana Candidāsa and so on and so

---

22. B.S. Itihāsa, p. 137
23. Ibid., p. 138
27. Dr.S.Sen, History of Bengali Literature, ed. 1, p. 71.
such, the scholars differ regarding by whom Caitanya was inspired. A detailed discussion about this is not necessary here.

Whatever may be, according to the Bengali scholars Badu Candidas was the earliest Bengali Vaisnava poet and he flourished before Caitanyadeva and as such the latter might have relished his writings. But from the point of Vaisnava sentiment, there is some doubt about it. Because in the matter of subject matter, thoughts and ideas, the **Krsna-kirtana** has no similarity at all with those of the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal. In thoughts and ideas as well as in language, in most places the book is full of amorous love. Some other scholars do not agree that Caitanyadeva was ever impressed by such thoughts and ideas, which are blunt and flamish according to the Vaisnava theology.

The **Krsna-kirtana** is a lyrical work of secular love. This original and fully illustrated poetical work has been done mostly on the basis of worldly and vulgar thoughts and ideas but following the **Bhagavata-purana** and the **Gita-govinda** a little. The story of the **Krsna-kirtana** is divided into some sections, namely, **Janma-khanda** (the birth episode of Radha and Krsna), **Tambula-khanda** (episode concerning Bejai's approaching Radha with the usual presents from Krsna), **Dhana-khanda** (episode of the tax collection), **Phar-khanda** (episode concerning the load), **Chatra-khanda** (episode concerning the umbrella's), **Vrndavana-khanda** (the episode of the Vrndavana park), **Kaliya-damana-khanda** (episode of quelling the serpent Kaliya), **Yamuna-khanda** (episode of the pool of Yamuna), **Har-khanda** (episode of stealing Radha's necklace), **Bena-khanda** (episode of the arrow), **VamSI-khanda** (the flute episode) and **Radha-viraha-khanda** (episode of suffering of Radha in separation from her lover).

The more important episodes on the basis of which Badu Candidas composed the kavya are not found in the known purana works. In the **Krsna-kirtana**, 27a Assamese scholars also claim Badu Candidas as an Assamese poet arguing that the word 'Badu' is an another form of the Assamese word 'Baouv' (Baouv). No doubt the **Krsna-kirtana** is mostly a Bengali kavya, but for the uses of Assamese vocables and grammatical peculiarities therein the Assamese scholars considers it as the common literature of both Assam and Bengal. Vide A.S.I., p. 70.
though Radhā and Kṛṣṇa have been described as the incarnations of Ṭaṁśi and Nārāyaṇa, in the beginning, their love episode follows no high thoughts and ideas, but shows vulgarity and indecency of the rustic youth and maids. Here Kṛṣṇa, being charmed at the beauty of eleven years old Rādhā, a married woman, wants to have her as His beloved one and inspite of Rādhā’s objections, Kṛṣṇa follows her by tricks and poses. Badāi Budi playing as the messenger of Kṛṣṇa, tries with various ways and means to persuade Rādhā. In this occasion, Kṛṣṇa Himself is braging His might and divine power. Atlast, Kṛṣṇa, by means of conjuring, infatuated Rādhā and thus bring her within His control. After this, unimaginable changes in both of their characters occur. After winning the heart of Rādhikā, Kṛṣṇa uses to yoga and takes a deaf ear to Rādhā’s eagerness for Him after she realises the divinity of love very late. The book abruptly ends here.

The above mentioned story differs far from those, narrated in all other Vaisnava literatures in addition to the padavali of the later period. From the preliminary discussion of the story, it is apparent that the Kṛṣṇa-kirtana completely differs from the Vaisnava padavali not only in form and technique but in the tone also. The purity and sanctity of the thoughts and ideas of the Vaisnavite lyrics are completely absent here. Except in the first and last sections, nowhere in the book, the touches of spirituality and high ideals are found. In the first section only, namely, Janmākhaṇḍa, there is a reference of a Purānic story, regarding the birth of Kṛṣṇa. In order to rescue the world afflicted with sins and vices, Nārāyaṇa Himself incarnates as Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, Lakṣmi Devī of Vaikuṇṭha, appears as Viṣṇu for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. On the basis of this birth episode, the poet tried to justify the unwedded love of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the following sections. In view of the eroticism found in the other sections, some scholars want to
say the *Kṛṣṇa-kirtana* as Sahajiyā work and they do not agree with the idea that Caitanyadeva was ever impressed by such kavya. Of course, it may be mentioned here that, the last two sections of the book, namely, *Vamsi-khanda* and *Viraha-khanda* are exceptions to this. Here we get love sentiment of Vaisnava Poetics. In this portion, we hear the tune of that Candīdāsa, who is well-known through the *padāvalī*.28 In *Vamṣi-khanda*, Rādhā laments:

"O Badāi, who plays on flute—
On the banks of Kālinī?
O Badāi, who plays on flute—
In the pasture of Gokula?
My body becomes restless, mind overwhelmed
Hearing the sound of the flute—
My cooking is deranged.
O Badāi who is he that plays on flute?
At his feet, I shall offer myself as a slave.
O Badāi, who plays on the flute to his heart content—
What a fault, I have done at his feet"?29

Such kind of lamentation of Rādhā bears similarity with that of the *padāvalī* of the later period. This is the tons of the *Vaiṣṇava padāvalī*, familiar to all.

Moreover, the *Dāna-khandā* and *Naukā-khandā* of the *Kṛṣṇa-kirtana*, have been duly accepted by the Vaiṣṇava Gosvāmīs. Sanātana Gosvāmi mentioned these two sections, in his *Vaiṣṇava-tosāni*, commentary on the *Śrīmad-bhāgavata*.”30 From this it appears that, Caitanyadeva might have relished Candīdāsa's *Kṛṣṇa-kirtana*, specially the sections namely, *Dāna-khandā*, *Naukā-

However, some scholars express doubt that Caitanayadeva ever relished the lyrics of Badu Candidāsa. On the other hand, they think that there was another Candidāsa of pre-Caitanya period and they also put forth some arguments that Caitanya was impressed by his lyrics. In this connection, Dr. Bimanbihari Majumdar's opinion is worth mentioning. At the outset of the introduction of his book Candidāser Padāvalī, he says that, going through twenty one old MSS. as well as five anthologies of the padāvalī of the eighteenth century, 120 such lyrics have been incorporated in the first part of the book as may be accepted as the compositions of Candidāsa of the pre-Caitanya period. This Candidāsa is known simply as Candidāsa and not Badu Candidāsa, Dwija Candidāsa, Dina Candlāda, any other early Candidāsa or rasik Candidāsa who wrote Sahajīyā lyrics. 31

The date of this poet is not known with certainty, but he may be contemporary of or a few years younger to Vidyāpati. In the matter of theme of the lyrics, this Candidāsa vastly differ from Badu Candidāsa. In Vamśī-khaṣṭa and Rādhā-viraha-khaṣṭa also the physical attachment predominates emotions whereas in Candidāsa's padas such attachment is almost absent.

In favour of the said pre-Caitanya Candidāsa, Dr. Majumdar refers to a portion of a verse, incorporated in Caitanya-caritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. It is said that this very particular verse impressed Mahāprabhu Caitanya. In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, it is stated that after taking the asceticism, Caitanya went to Advaita-bhāvanā at Śantipur and there Mukunda sang the following song to him:

"O friend! dearest to my heart!
What has befallen me, alas!
My mind and body, ablaze -
By the fire-like poison of (Kāhnu's) love.

The mind burns day and night,
Knowing no rest —
And would fly, there —
Where Kānu would be found."

Hearing that song the heart of Caitanya filled with emotion:

"Hearing (it) the heart of Prabhu rents
Self-reproach, sadness, cheerfulness, restlessness,
Pride and poverty,
All up fighting with Prabhu (the master)."

In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, there is reference of only the first four lines of the poem discussed above. But later on, Sri Hare Krishna Mukhopadhyaya discovered the complete poem in the village Muḍāmāu of Birbhum district and published the same, the latter portion of which is as follows:

"O cruel fatal praise be to you!
You have made me helpless, and laden with life-long sorrow
Always do I burn—
Whether indoor or outdoor, within the heart or outside
Why does Kṛṣṇa act as an enemy—
To this sinful heart?
Alas! had I been dead— the unlucky one,
All would have been well.
Says, Candīḍāsa—
Talk not thus, O lady!"

Ten years after the discovery of this poem, Sri Mukhopadhyaya along with Dr. S.K. Chatterjee edited Candīḍāsa-padāvalī, where the said lyric has been stated as

32. Caritāmṛta, Madhyalilā, Sec. III, p. 164.
33. Ibid.
34. Quoted in C.P., p.9.
the composition of Badu Candidas. But refuting it Dr. Majumdar says that throughout Badu's Kṛṣṇa-kirtana, Rādhā expresses her bereavement to Badai, never to the sakhis even through mistake. These sakhis about whom he gives references by the way are either Rādhā's rivals or scandal-mongers. 35 In support of Dr. Majumdar, some scholars also argue that, the very lyric which impressed Caitanya was written not by Badu Candidas but by another Candidas who also flourished in the pre-Caitanya period, on the ground that, in that lyric Rādhā expresses to the sakhis about her secret and sincere love for Kṛṣṇa. It may be again assumed that Badu Candidas himself composed the said lyric in different way, bringing a change in the role of sakhis. Refuting such assumption also the scholars say that, the depiction of the contradictory role of the sakhis was unnatural for the same poet in those days. 36

However, there is no doubt about the authenticity of the contents of the Caitanya-caritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. In view of the similarity of the first four lines exactly with those of the complete lyric, discovered later on, there can not be any doubt about the bhanitā. The said lyric may be a composition of some other Candidas of the pre-Caitanya period. However it is difficult to ascertain the padas of each of the two Candidāsas as in many of the anthologies of the padas these are incorporated indiscriminately. Therefore, while discussing the lyrics of the pre-Caitanya period, I have taken into consideration the padas inserted in the name of Candidas in some of the important anthologies.

The lyrics of Candidas are the best work full of literary beauty, in Bengali literature of all ages. These are the expressions of the simple mind free from all sorts of bindings of the art of rhetoric. In this connection it may be mentioned here that, the customary rules and bindings laid down by Rūpa Gosvāmi in his Ujjvala-nilamani have made the Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal conventional. But it seems that there is no such influence.

35. Ibid., p. 1C.
on the lyrics of Candidas. Rather, he simply expressed as it were, the real feelings of human beings, in a way of spontaneous outburst of feelings, through Radhas love. The fragrance of eternal truth, that was hidden in the core of the real life, spread out through his writings— as if the poet wanted to express with heartfelt emotion, the compassionate and graceful feelings of real life.

The lyrics of Candidas are the expressions of eternal love. Depicting the character of Radha-Krsna, as the symbol of united-love, the poet sang with great enthusiasm and emotion, the glory of divine love. For example in the utterance of Radha towards Krsna we find:

"O Binod Ray hear—
I become confined— in Thy love.
Nothing but Thou shines in my mind,
In my sleep and dream—
I see Thy beauty,
And by mistake—
Write Thy name— in the earth."37

Not only Radha becomes impatient with the love of Krsna, conversely, Krsna also. Being overwhelmed with the joy of Radhas-love, Krsna utters:

"The arrow (of love) pierces—
Through the core of my heart.
The worn out heart is lying
And I become senseless."38

The love expressed in the lyrics of Candidas, is amazing. There lies no difference between the beloved and the worshipful God in the union of Radha-Krsna—rather

37. V.P., pp. 55-56; C.P., p. 54.
38. V.P., p. 47; P.G.V, p. 3.
the Beloved is focussed there through God. At the time of union Rādhā says to her Beloved Kṛṣṇa:

"O dear!
What more I tell Thou—
Be the Lord of my life—
In my life and death
And every life.
The string of love—
Binds my heart with Thine blissful feet.
Sacrificed all that I have.
I become Thy servant whole-heartedly."

The sincerity and depth of love makes a man free from all sorts of bindings and barriers. The world and the society are nothing but trifling before the true love. In comparison to the bindings of the religious treaties as well as the customs and usages, the value of the heart of human being is much higher. Candīdāsa proclaimed such free thoughts and ideas openly:

"Whatever ill of me let men speak.
I shall not forshake Śyāma— the loveliest.
That grace and loveliness—
Is sticking to my heart.

* * *

Let the customs go away.
Let the desire fulfilled.
My heart stream with tears always—
Searching Kānu.

39. V.P., p. 72; C.P., p. 54; P.C.V., p. 62.
O Rāi (Rādhā) you think well.
So says Cāndīdāsa,
Whom asked about your love?  

Although Cāndīdāsa's padas do not obey the religious treaties, but these are not the verses devoid of religious enthusiasm. The practice of love, revealed in the lyrics of Cāndīdāsa is spiritual—freed from the trace of lust. The deep perceptions of Cāndīdāsa, as if, have covered all the vulgārisms and superficial ideas of his padas, that are of erotic sentiment, with a fine touch of mysticism. Rādhā becomes impatient hearing even the name of Kṛṣṇa.

She utters:

"Who that utters the name of Sūma! 
Through ear straight to my heart it comes 
And distresses me. 
Know not how much honeyed— 
In Sūma's name. 
The lips never forsake. 
The more I utter and utter— 
More fatigued I be. 
Forgetful how to be or the lane."

Such an attraction of Rādhā towards Kṛṣṇa is not of ordinary love—
as if it is the symbol of an universal and endless aspiration—a spontaneous expression of the deep spiritual and supernatural perception.

Vidyāpati was another remarkable Vaiṣṇava lyricist of the pre-Caitanya period. This poet of the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries, although a Vaiśālī poet, he cannot be ignored as a Bengali Vaiṣṇava lyricist. The Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal is connected firmly with the golden string of Vidyāpati's lyrics.

40. V.P., p. 69; C.P., p. 22, with a little difference.
41. V.P., p. 45; P.C.V., p. 1; according Majumdar it is a composition of post-Caitanya Cāndīdāsa, vide intro. to C.P., p. 57.
The various poetic sentiments, the sacred tune of devotion as well as the charm of beauty which Vidyāpati infused in his lyrics, being inspired by the thoughts and ideas as well as the style of Jayadeva, the short poems bearing love sentiment in ancient Sanskrit literature and also Kṛṣṇa's sportive activities described in the Bhāgavata, were reflected in the post-Caitanya lyrical literature. Following various phases of love as well as different situations of the heroine in relation to the hero, as referred to in classical Poetics, Vidyāpati described the love episode of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in his lyrics. Different stages of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love, such as: pūrvarāga (dawn of love), milana (union with the lover), mohana (lover's huff), viraha (pangs of separation), punarmilana (reunion with the lover), bhāva-sammelana (union in spirit) etc. have been nicely depicted in Vidyāpati's lyric songs. Also, the poet beautifully described in his lyrics, different conditions of Rādhā in relation to Kṛṣṇa, such as: vāsaka-sajjā (Rādhā adorns herself and decorates bed-chamber in expectation of Kṛṣṇa), abhisarīka (Rādhā goes to a love tryst), vipralabdha (Rādhā is disappointed by the absence of Kṛṣṇa), khandita (Rādhā becomes angry at the sight of marks of cohabitation with another in Kṛṣṇa), kalahāntarita (Rādhā repents being separated by quarrel) and so forth.

In fact, Vidyāpati was the first poet, to introduce lyrical image of the Vaiṣṇavite lyrics prior to the Caitanya period. In the Kṛṣṇa-kirtana of Badu-Candīḍāsa, there is no other poetic sentiment except the feelings of union and separation of love and as his kāvyā relates to the story only, definite form of lyric is not asserted therein. Vidyāpati gave the form of the lyric for the first time by expressing different feelings of mind in a deeper note, through some lyrics and also giving a passionate remark along with his name in the last couplets of the lyrics.

Vidyāpati turned the godly deeds into human ones by representing the rustic eroticism as well as unrefined life, in the love episode of Rādhā
and Kṛṣṇa, but at the same time, the poet developed the poetical excellance and the human feelings of the same, giving it an elegant touch of the higher practice of life and the scholarly ideas and taste of the royal-court. Vidyāpati gave Rādhā, a new shape, by depicting her as a thoughtful virgin and producing in her heart, that love as was expected from a girl, who was at the juncture of virginity and youth (vayabhṛndhi). In the lyrics, relating to such age of Rādhā, there are descriptions of the physical and mental changes of Rādhā, who just crosses the virginhood and attains youth. All the beauties of youthfulness gather together in Rādhā and the delight mixed with fear as well as the pleasurable emotion of free desire, that is usual in such stage, have been depicted in new manner, in these lyrics. The confusing feelings of Rādhā, due to the fickleness of maidenhood, free childlike attitude mixed with the consciousness for beauty and self-hiding attitude of the youth, have been expressed in these lyrics. Young Rādhā, blossomed with the touch of maiden-love, becomes puzzle as to whether she will expose or hide herself, out of her modesty, fear and pleasure.

Vidyāpati's lyric songs on the theme of separation of love are one of the best specimens of lyric poetry. They present in a quite new colour the selfless love of a woman's heart and her desire to surrender to her beloved. Such lyrics particularly those relating to māthura-viraha are seen to become quite poignant by virtue of their depth and seriousness of thoughts and sublime sentiments. Rādhā is shown to unfold here the exuberance of her love for Kṛṣṇa, yet her emotions are controlled by a sense of purity of heart and a heavenly love above physical considerations:

"O Loved One,
In tears I float and I do pray;
Thou not leave Thine land in such rain."
How One should'st leave for other country,
When this woman so intensely needs Him?
Thou art the virtue-embodiment, the paramour,
Beautiful Master mine.
Hearing that Thou art leaving,
Tears intorrents flow
And Thy sweet name, only I do relish."^42

In all the lyrics whether lyrics relating to dawn of youth (vayah-
sandhi), huff of Rādhā (māna), her going to a love tryst (abhisāra) meeting
of the lovers, (sambhoga milana), Vidyāpati does not deviate from the theme
of life—the day-to-day life tinged with thousand colours of worldly experi-
ence. But in the lyrics on the theme of separation in love (viraha), Rādhā,
in her spiritual height, is no longer a mere love-lorn woman but a sincere
devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
fied by the pangs of Kṛṣṇa. Here she stands like a tragic figure with a heart puri-
42. *T.P.*, p. 119.
influence of the religion propounded by Caitanya; yet like a true Vaishnava devout poet, with a feeling of humility he poured forth in his lyric songs the eulogistic terms like jagata-tara, dina-dayama, Hari or Madhava and surrendered himself completely to Lord Krsna. Tired of this temporal world he expressed his dissatisfaction of soul and a desire for surrender to God. In such descriptions one can trace the spirituality, the sublimity of thoughts and emotions to be found in the lyrics of the post-Caitanya period. For example:

"O Madhava, a thousand requests to Thou,

With the sacrificial tulasi and tila

Do I offer this mortal being of mine

Deprive not me (O Lord;) from Thine kindness.

* * *

So says Vidyapati much aggrieved,

To cross the ocean of the world—

Thine petala-feet only I take recourse to,

Give the same,

For a moment only, O Dinabandhu.43

Vidyapati's songs are however, saturated with popular taste. The tone of spirituality in some of them seems nothing but accidental. Vidyapati was primarily a court-poet; however he sometimes emerged as a devout-poet. As he wrote mainly to satisfy the royal taste, the exuberance of his description of love-sports was not often checked by spiritual injunctions. Herein lies the difference between his writings and those of the later Vaishnave poets. But we can not hold Vidyapati responsible for this lapse, because it is not possible for one to be immune from the influence of the circumstances and to stand against the popular taste of the age. In those days the physical side of love was given

43. Ibid., p. 132.
more importance than the spiritual one. There was unrest in the political and spiritual set-up of the country. National life was passing through stormy days. People lost taste for higher or more refined thoughts and ideas. The poets of the age had to write with an eye to the current trend in literature. Yet, we hear in their writings, a welcome note for the great change that was on the way. Recognition of human value is rather a new note in their lyrics. In their conception of love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, mortal and heavenly love are blended into one. Never was love given such a dignified place in literature. That love is the primary instinct and also the strongest instinct in man has been clearly proved. The truths that even impossible can be done by virtue of love. That God, Who eludes our grasp can be won easily by love have been confirmed. It was that love which the later Vaiṣṇava poets glorified in their lyrics.

One thing needs mention here that in no lyrics on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult, of the pre-Caitanya period, the influence of Vaiṣṇavism could be traced, in the true sense of the term. As a matter of fact, the recognition of the theology and philosophy of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism is the most significant thing in the Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal. But in Bengal such theological and philosophical concepts did not take shape till the days of Caitanya. As such, it was quite natural that such aspects could not be expected to be found in Candilāsa and Vidyāpati. Even then it is possible to ascribe the philosophy and rhetorical characteristics of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism to their lyrics. And in this sense these two early poets may be called the two bright precursors of the Vaiṣṇava poets of Bengal.

While discussing about Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of the pre-Caitanya period, we must mention Śrīkṛṣṇa-viśva of Mālādhara Vasu, who was a court-poet of Nawab Rukmuddin Barbak Shah. The Nawab conferred on Mālādhara the title of Guparāja Khān and under the orders of the former the latter wrote Śrīkṛṣṇa-viśva as an
Mālādhara commenced his work in 1473 A.D. and completed it in 1480 A.D. This work may be taken as an introduction to the Vaisnava tradition in Bengal. The tenth canto describes incidents beginning with Kṛṣṇa's birth till his activities in Dvārakā. In the eleventh canto Lord Kṛṣṇa's repentance and the ruin of the Yādava dynasty have been dealt with. This is all about the story. But in course of the conversation between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Uḍḍhava some philosophical and religious truths have been discussed. Mālādhara primarily described Lord Kṛṣṇa's divinity and power and in that eulogistic description, we see the budding of devotion to Kṛṣṇa which have had its full bloom in the Caitanya period. The following verses may be cited for example:

"The Gokula sustains a void to-day,
Kṛṣṇa the jewel of Gokula left for Madhupuri
Vṛndāvana of enjoyment is too
sustain a void to-day.
Who else is there, with the cow-boys
Would go for tending the cows?" ⁴⁴

Though Caitanyadeva did not have the privilege of meeting Mālādhara Vasu, the former spoke highly of the latter. This praise helped Mālādhara Vasu acquire a place of honour in the Vaiṣṇava society of Bengal. The later Vaiṣṇava poets of Bengal, following the appreciation of Caitanyadeva for Mālādhara, attributed great honour to him. According to them, it was Mālādhara's kārya that the concept of Vaiṣṇavism as propounded by Caitanya, first took shape.

Rādhā's character was not found in the original. Mālādhara Vasu innovated it in his Bengali translation. And the poetic passages describing Rādhā's deep spiritual love was the key-note of the love lyrics on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa of the later Vaiṣṇava poets of Bengal.

⁴⁴. Ibid., p. 133.
A short lyric poem, describing the eagerness of a girl of Vraja (supposed to be Radhā) for a sight of Kṛṣṇa has been found in the name of Yasorāja Khān, who was an officer of the Nawab Husain Shah and whose real name seems to have been Dāmodara Sen. Yasorāja Khān composed a narrative poem, *Kṛṣṇa-madgala* and this very short lyric poem was included there. No manuscript copy of this narrative poem has been found. In the middle of the seventeenth century a Vaisnava poet, Pitāmbara Dāsa by name wrote *Rasamāñjari*, a work on Vaisnava rhetorics. In this rhetorics, he inserted this particular short lyric. In the last couplet, Yasorāja Khān mentioned his name as well as the name of his patron Husain Shah, the Nawab of Bengal. So, this lyric is supposed to be composed sometime between 1493 and 1519 A.D., the reigning period of Husain Shah. This lyric may be considered as one of the earliest specimens of Middle Bengali lyric poetry as well as one of the two oldest specimens of Brajabuli lyrics in Bengal.  

The *Pādāvali of the Second Period*  

(1) The Caitanya Period:  

It was in the Caitanya period that the Vaisnavaite lyrics of Bengal saw their fullest development. Lyric in the true sense of the term, belongs to that age. The Vaisnava poets of the Caitanya period had their themes in the fascinating, ecstatic state of Gaurāṅga’s life, being immersed in love and devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa. They composed lyrics following *Vidyāratī*, yet gave them new colours. Gradually they by passed the theme of the *Caitanya-līlā* and began to draw inspiration for their lyrics from Lord Kṛṣṇa’s *Vṛndāvana-līlā* — the source from which Caitanyadeva drew inspiration. Vaisnava *Rasa-sāstras* by Sanātana, Rūpa Gosvāmī and some other works on devotional love were com-

---

45. The other being the composition of Rājpandit Jñāna, a court-poet of Dhanyamānikya (1490-1522 A.D.) of Tripura. And as such it is supposed to be composed sometimes during the reigning period of Dhanyamānikya.
Posed in that period. In that way, the advent of Caitanyadeva and the compositions of Vaiṣṇava scriptures strengthened the foundation of Vaiṣṇava philosophy in Bengal, leading Bengali Vaiṣṇavite lyrics towards perfection.

Again, when Caitanyadeva left for Nilacala, at the age of twenty-four, the grief-stricken disciples composed songs on that theme. Some of them wrote eulogising Caitanya or describing his activities, which they named as the Gaura-candrikā. Some again composed pālā-gāna (narrative opera) on themes like Caitanya's childhood, boyhood, youth and his renunciation. Thus they were the fore-runners in composing the beautiful lyrics glorifying Śrī Caitanya. Most among those who first wrote the paddle were Caitanya's close followers and sincere disciples and they mainly described the Gaura-līlā. Among those lyricists the names of Murāri Gupta, Narahari Sarkar the three brothers Vasudeva Ghosh, Govinda Ghosh and Madhava Ghosh, Vamsi Vadana, Ramananda Vasu and Paramananda Gupta were worth mentioning. They were contemporaries of Caitanyadeva and witnessed the Gaura-līlā with their own eyes.

Among the direct followers of Caitanya, Murāri Gupta, an elderly devotee of Caitanya, coming from the Vaidya family, was one of the earliest and best lyricists. He did not compose much lyrics. In Bengal and Brajabuli, his lyric songs were not more than seven or eight, two of which are among the best of the Bengali Vaiṣṇavite lyrics. In these two lyrics, the intensity of Rādhā's love has been expressed. Murāri Gupta also wrote lyrics in praise of Caitanya describing the latter's childhood and boyhood.

The earliest lyricist to compose lyric songs on Gaurāṅga were Narahari Sarkar Thakura (1478-1580 A.D.), hailing from Śrīkhanda. Senior to Caitanya in age, he was a well-known follower of the former. Formerly he wrote lyrics on the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme. But after Caitanya's renunciation, he wrote exclusively on Gaurāṅga.
Among the three brothers, Govinda Ghosā, Mādhava Ghosā and Vāsudeva Ghosā, the youngest Vāsudeva composed the maximum number of Gaura-padāvalī. He wrote eighty such lyrics in collaboration with Dīnabandhu Dāsa.

Vāsudeva wrote systematic padas on various events and incidents beginning from the birth to the asceticism of Caitanya. The Gaura-padāvalī of Vāsudeva have similarity with those lyrics written on Kṛṣṇalīlā. These lyrics had the touch of Gaura-nāgara-bhāva. The poet's attachment for Gaurāṅga and his suffering therefrom was similar to those of the gopa-vadhūs of Vrajadhāma in relation to Lord Kṛṣṇa. In simple language the Gaura-līlā was but another form of the Kṛṣṇa-līlā. Vāsudeva's padas generally form the Gaura-candrika. This poet, an eye-witness to Caitanya's state of ecstasy wrote lyrics in simple language mingling his experience with simple thoughts and emotions. He wrote on Caitanya's childhood and adolescence, his activities in Nilācala and Navadvīpa, his renunciation, Śaśi's lamentation and the like. Vāsudeva's lyrics on Gaurāṅga's childhood were the first to depict the parental sentiment. These closely resemble the lyrics written on Kṛṣṇa's childhood. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that, the lyrics on parental sentiment were the innovation of the Caitanya period. The lyrics about the childhood of Kṛṣṇa and Gaura, bearing the sentiments of parental and also friendliness, marked a new trend of this period for no lyrics with such sentiments are found in the writings of Vaiṣṇava poets of the pre-Caitanya age. Again, those written on Gaurāṅga's Navadvīpa-līlā or Nilācala-līlā had the touch of the poet Vāsudeva's practical experience. The historical and literary values of these early lyrics have been fully recognised in the sphere of Bengali Vaiṣṇavite lyrics.

Govinda Ghosā and Mādhava Ghosā presented in their Gaura-padāvalī, graphic and appealing pictures of Gaurāṅga's renunciation and his activities at Nilācala.
Vamsi Vadana (B 1498 A.D.) composed many lyrics on the Radha-Krsna theme in simple, lucid language, most of which were in Bengali. In his *Gaura-padavali*, one may feel the impressions of an eye-witness.

Ramananda Vasu, son of Malabhara Vasu, wrote a few lyrics both in Bengali and Brajabuli on Krsna's childhood as well as in praise of Caitanyadeva.

Paramananda Gupta, another lyricist, contemporary of Caitanya, composed a few *Gaura-padavali*.

Another lyricist, Govinda Acarya by name was supposed to exist in the days of Caitanya. His lively description of Gauranga's *Nilacala-lilā* or Nadiā-nagari-bhava is an important characteristic of the lyrics of the Caitanya period.

Narahari and his disciple, Locanadasa developed this doctrine in which the devotee regards Caitanyadeva as the Nāgara (Krṣṇa) and himself as a nagari (gopi). Narahari Sarkar, belonging to the Caitanya period was the precursor of this new type of Vaisnavite lyrics and he wrote a number of *nadas* of this type.

In the Caitanya period, several poets wrote many lyrics about Gauranga, which bore erotic sentiment. To cite an example, in the following song by Murari Gupta, Gauranga has been attributed with the qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the pangs of separation of the love-lorn woman has been described in an appealing tone:

"O my friend, why are Gorā so cruel to me?"

** My heart become restless—
Offering it to Gorā's love, I can't remain in home calmly.
Had I known of it before, Would not have I fallen in love, Devoted my soul to it neither."**

46. According to some, grandson.  
47. V.P., p. 139.
Whatever might be the spiritual meaning of these lyrics, such amorous descriptions relating to Gaurânga in the line of the Kṛṣṇa-līlā could not be easily accepted by the group of conservatives of the Vaiṣṇava school. Of course, the songs bearing the Gaura-nāgara-bhāva reflect the devotion and sincerity of the poets concerned. For example in the following verses of Narahari Sarkār:

"O my young Gaura Kiśora!
I know not whether day or night—
Smiles without cause,
The morning dawns in fallibility of mind.
Sometimes I sings loudly,
Whom shall I approach for consolation—
Where is my Beloved?
Sometimes I shiver in cold,
Jump repeatedly,
Where shall I get (Him), with whom shall I go?"

Thus in the lyrics of this age written by poets like Vāsudeva, Mādhava-dāsa, Yadunandana, Yadunātha and some others, a link has been established between the Kṛṣṇa-līlā and the Gaura-līlā, the latter being imagined in the line of the former.

In the lyrics on the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme, composed by the poets of the Caitanya period, the depth of Rādhā's love and her emotions have been revealed. In such lyrics, the image of Gaura that stands in the back-ground becomes self-illuminated. The descriptions of Rādhā's love lighten up here and there, Caitanya's own love for Kṛṣṇa. In many lyrics, the echo of Candidaśa's songs has been heard. In many others, the intensity of Lord Kṛṣṇa's love and His pangs of separation have been revealed nicely. Kṛṣṇa's grief on hearing the sufferings of Rādhā,

48. Ibid., p. 144.
afflicted by separation, Kṛṣṇa himself lamenting for His separation from Rādhā, these and many such pictures have endowed many lyrics of the age with matchless beauty of imagery and thought. For instance in the following lyrfe of Narahari Sarkār:

"On hearing the distress of Rāi,
The witty lover is aggrieved,
And keeps on eagerly asking about her,
Leaving His own house,
The Great-lover treads the way,
Touching the nose frequently."49

In this way, the devout poets of the Caitanya period wrote lyric songs on the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme and on the master, with a refinement of taste common to all of them.

There is a great difference between the lyrics of the pre-Caitanya period and those belonging to the Caitanya period. In the spiritual feeling that has been revealed through the deep emotions and sorrows, in the lyrics of Vidyāpati and Cāṇḍīdāsa of the pre-Caitanya period, a devotional sentiment for Lord Kṛṣṇa, which is common to the Hindus all over India has been marked but never been so as the literature of any particular sect. Following the ideals of the Bhāgavata, the Viṣṇu-purāṇa etc. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-līlā has been described in these lyric songs in the Sanskrit rhetorical style. Here earthly feelings as well as the devotional sentiment have been blended together. The lyric poets of the pre-Caitanya period described in their lyrics both the divinity (aīśvarya-līlā) and the eternal erotic sports (mādhurya-līlā) of Lord Kṛṣṇa. But in the Caitanya period, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mādhurya-līlā became prominent whereas His aīśvarya-līlā became secondary. The Vaiṣṇava poets of Bengal, who composed the lyrics

49. Quoted by Dr. Sen in B.S. Itihāsa, p. 411.
taking the ideal of the theology and philosophy of Bengal Vaisnavism, paid
greater attention to Kṛṣṇa's sweet feelings. Under the influence of the ideal
of Caitanyadeva's philosophical knowledge of devotion, a great change came in
the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal. Because of the spiritual outlook of the poets
of that age Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa came to be characterised in almost new colour with
greater subtlety and refinement. Since the days of Caitanya the philosophy of
rāgānuga-bhakti as well as the concept of devotional practices of Bengal
Vaisnavism became apparent in the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal. In the first
half of the sixteenth century, lyrics on the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme, composed by
Caitanya's retinues showed one marked characteristic. Rādhā's characterisation
has reached a greater height in these lyrics. There, she is no longer an ordi­
mary woman but has gradually reached a state of mental elevation— that of one,
'maddened by the wonder of unsurpassed ecstasy' (Mahābhārata: Preūpini). Again
after the acceptance of the philosophy of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult, as the history of
Caitanyadeva's inner life, in the interpretations of the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana,
there came a great change in the emotional aspect of the lyrics of the Caitanya
period. The image of love-lorn-Rādhā as enshrined in the world of Caitanya's
imagination thrilled the hearts of the poets of this age.

(ii) The Padavali of the Post-Caitanya Period:
The greatest poets of the padavali appeared after the death of Caitanya
in the middle and towards the end of the sixteenth century and they made a rich
contribution to the padavali literature. Generally speaking there is nothing
new about the sportive activities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the post-Caitanya period
— the old tradition was followed mostly. Of course, some poets invented minor
diversions in the lyrics by varying the occasions for the union of Rādhā and

50. See supra, (Chapt. 1)
Kṛṣṇa—e.g. Suvala-milana, kaśaṇḍa-bhaṇḍana, Kṛṣṇa-kālī, Bāirājā, Kṛṣṇa's union with Rādhā in disguise of the conjurer and the female hair-dresser etc. In this connection, it may be observed that the system of padāvallī singing (kīrtana) took shape during this period. It was mainly due to the efforts of Narottamadāsa, the system of singing, that had been in use since Jayadeva's time, acquired new rāgas and tālas and the system of the padāvallī-kīrtana was introduced. The padāvallī-kīrtana was not created for the common people, but for a minority of educated connoisseurs. The padāvallī henceforth did not remain scattered lyrics but formed a narrative opera relating to the cycle of the activities of Kṛṣṇa. This may well be called the second phase in the history of the Vaiṣṇava lyric poetry of Bengal, for during the Caitanya period the kirtanas were not cast into a sequence.

One important characteristic marks off the devotional practice of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism in the post-Caitanya period. During the Caitanya period, Lord Kṛṣṇa was worshipped as a Beloved by the devotees. Caitanya worshipped Kṛṣṇa with sweet emotion (kānta-bhāva). But during the post-Caitanya period, sakhl-sādhanā (to relish the divine sports of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa following the feelings of the confidantes) was introduced in worshipping Kṛṣṇa. The devout poets, with the same state of feelings as of the sakhibs or mañjarīs, relished the divine sports of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from a distance. Thus in the post-Caitanya period, the guru appeared in between the adorable God and the devotees. This guru was none but the sakhi or the mañjarī. But in the Caitanya period there was none in between God and the devotee.

Further, from this period the Vaiṣṇava sect and society of Bengal, began to regard Caitanya as an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. His humanity was lost in the deification.
In the post-Caitanya period, the poets started relishing the Radha-Krsna sports (lila) vicariously through Caitanya. The depth of devotional sentiment as well as of longing for love to Krsna as found in these lyrics, composed after witnessing Caitanya's state of ecstasy, were not found before in the lyrics. Caitanya, worshipped the Lord Krsna by assuming the attitude of the gopis or Radha. The eight Sanskrit verses (the Sikṣāstaka) that Caitanya had written for the edification of the Vaipāvaya also contains this idea. Following the manner of the gopis, the devotees must submit to the Lord Krsna in nirupādhi love, must serve the Lord without hope of reciprocity. In the lyrics of the post-Caitanya period, we came across an elaboration of such idea of the gopis-love for Krsna. The life and devotion of Caitanya gave a hint about expressing the divine-sports of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and it was the method which was generalised into a cult by the poets of this period. Of course, over and above the cult characteristics one also comes across individual characteristic in their works.

The language of the devotional lyrics also reveals an interesting richness, with various combinations of Sanskrit, Bengali and Brajabuli.

Thus in content and form the Vaishnava poets of this period made important innovations, though the general tradition of the padavali remain intact. In fact the Vaishnavite lyrics of Bengal reached the highest pinnacle of development towards the end of the sixteenth century A.D., with the contributions of Jñānādāsa, Govindādāsa, Balarāmadāsa, Rāy Sēkha, Lōcanādāsa, Candīdāsa, and many other lyricists. An analysis of their works will give us a glimpse into the above mentioned development along with the thoughts and ideas as well as of rasa of the devotional lyrics of this period.

51. Having none of the primordial qualities of a created being, namely, sattva, rajaḥ and tamah.
A Brief Discussion on the Post-Caitanya Lyrics: The Work of the Two Masters, Jñanadāsa and Govindadāsa:

Jñanadāsa and Govindadāsa are called the two jewels of the post-Caitanya stage of the Vaisnāvite lyrics of Bengal. The lyrics of these two great Vaisnava poets are unique treasures of Bengali literature. They display the finest classification of emotions and all conceivable forms of tender feelings. From the dawn of love (pūrvarāga) to the final separation caused by Kṛṣṇa's going to Mathurā (māthura-viraha), the various phases of love are portrayed in their lyrics with great subtlety.

Jñanadāsa:

Jñanadāsa was pre-eminent among the great masters of the padas of the post-Caitanya period. He possessed great depth and intensity of feeling, and he knew how to express it in concentrated form. Hence his lyrics are true lyrics. In describing the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the poet identified with them completely and he touched it with the life of his own personal feelings. At the same time it attains the universality of all true poetry as the utterance of the heart.

Jñanadāsa was born in the Kandrā village of the district of Bīrbhum, in 1530 A.D. His guru was Jāhmavi Devī, the wife of Nityānanda, herself a leader of the Vaisnāvas. This great poet, composed an immense number of lyrics in Bengali, mixed Bengali-Brajabuli, and Brajabuli. Though lyrics in Brajabuli preponderate, it is his Bengali lyrics that established his reputation for posterity. Sri HareKrishna Mukhopadhya in his edition, Vaisnava Padāvali has included 311 of Jñanadāsa's lyrics. Dr. Bimanbihari Majumdar has incorporated 504 lyrics of this poet in his, Jñanadāsa O Tahār Padāvali. In the devotional lyrics of this Bengali Vaisnava poet, the influence of two predecessors, Vidyāpati and Candīdāsa is conspicuous. In Brajabuli he followed the example
of Vidyāpati and in Bengali he followed the footsteps of Candidāsa. Moreover, following the art of rhetoric of Vidyāpati, Jñānadasa beautified and glorified his lyrics. Again, with a view to bringing an artistic easy flow in expressing and sketching thoughts and emotions, he imitated Candidāsa, which made his lyrics introspective and thought-provoking. Yet, while Jñānadasa imitated the rich rhetoric of Vidyāpati and the emotional richness and purity of expression of Candidāsa, he achieved an unique personal expression in his lyrics. The pathos and gravity of his feelings have justly earned him the reputation of a pioneer of the Bengali Vaiṣṇavite lyrics.

Scholars are of the opinion that, Jñānadasa’s lyrics on the love of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa owe a lot to Candidāsa who flourished before Caitanyadeva. Both of them dwelt on the theme of love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with intense concentration. Notwithstanding this spiritual affinity, there are significant differences in content and form between the lyrics of the pre-Caitanya master and that of his post-Caitanya follower. After all, between them had intervened the life and the tradition of the devotional practices of Caitanya, the philosophy and theology of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism as well as the Vaiṣṇava Poetics. All this had restrained and moderated the throes of blind personal passion in Jñānadasa. It is as though Candidāsa had been an eloquent singer of the deepest heart-ache of love while Jñānadasa became its most perceptive painter. In Candidāsa, the appearance of Kṛṣṇa was contemplated in meditation, in the deepest recess of the soul, while the same image was contemplated by Jñānadasa with the eye of a painter. This observation finds ample illustrations in the lyrics relating to rūpānurāga (love of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty). Candidāsa meditated on the appearance in his mind’s eye and his lyrics reflect this rapt meditation while Jñānadasa was contemplating this beauty through the medium of the Caitanya tradition and revealing in the process, the sharpness of the painter’s eye.
Jñanadāsa was primarily the poet of erotic sentiment. His lyrics are steeped in the dream of love. Other Vaiṣṇava poets created a halo of spirituality around the union of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Jñanadāsa immersed them in the tender dream of love. He wrote on all the phases of love ranging from the dawn of love (pūrvarāga) to the pangs of final separation (māthura viraha).

In the Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal all aspects and phases of love are treated fairly, frankly. Jñanadāsa's lyrics on love, are also not an exception in this respect. The delineation of the beauty and charm of the lovers, the longing for union, the burning intensity of unfulfilled longing and the wonder of the unintelligible nature of love, the moaning cry of separation and the deep, untroubled delight of fulfilment—all such aspects find unique expression in Jñanadāsa's lyrics. To be sure, his lyrics is an expression of his devotion to God, and the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is a symbolic form for this devotion. The lyrics of Jñanadāsa represents the trend of development of the thoughts and ideas of the post-Caitanya Vaiṣṇavite lyrics.

Jñanadāsa also depicted Kṛṣṇa as frantic with longing for Rādhā, but he was always conscious of Kṛṣṇa's divinity. Kṛṣṇa in his lyrics, is not merely a lover, He is the human incarnation of God. The superior rāja cannot have a glimpse of Him after aeons of penance, but He is bound by an ordinary milk-maid's love. Kṛṣṇa is accessible only to the devotion of an ardent heart. This fact has been also underlying in many of the lyrics of this period.

The Rādhā-concept was expressed as the highest spiritual realisation (parama-tattva) in the lyrics of this period. And this has been echoed in Jñanadāsa's padas. From the time of Caitanya Śrī Rādhikā has been held worthy of respect and adoration. This is where the later age of Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal differ from the pre-Caitanya period. The devout poets of the post-Caitanya period wrote about the love-smitten Kṛṣṇa ceaselessly repeating Rādhā's name and
even yearning to serve at her feet. Let us consider certain specimens bearing such ideas from Jñanadāsa's padas:

"Krṣṇa brushes the dust of (Rādhā's) feet—
With His own yellow robe."52

Again, in another lyric, Krṣṇa expresses his desire to Suvala:

"I tell you—it is my desire
To serve at the feet of Rādhā ceaselessly."53

Jñanadāsa has also lyrics to his credit, expressing the sentiments of filial love as well as of friendship. There are some simple and touching lyrics about the love of cow-herds for their companion Krṣṇa. Certain other lyrics describe vividly the scene of Krṣṇa going out with the friend to graze the cows.54 Jñanadāsa's lyrics bearing the sentiment of filial love reveal an interesting feature of his mind. He wrote a sequence of three lyrics about Rādhā's childhood, whereas all the other Vaiṣṇava poets had written about the childhood of Krṣṇa, who appears in their contemplation as Bala-gūḍa (Child-Krṣṇa). Rādhā appears in the full bloom of the dawn of her youth and of womanhood.

In Jñanadāsa's lyrics, written in praise of Caitanyadeva, it is Caitanya's lustrous beauty that reveals indirectly the image of Krṣṇa. For example:

Burnished gold or gem like is the body of Gaura
His arms reach His knee, body is radiant with bliss.
Darkness is dispelled by His body's brightness.
People of Kali-yuga are lucky to have Him.55

53. Ibid., p. 168.
54. Ibid., pp. 101-110.
55. Ibid., p. 94.
It may be mentioned here that, while in some lyrics, Jñanadāsa referred to Gaurāṅga as Nāgarā, he did not describe His manners as Nāgarā. Here a few lines may be stated in connection with the post-Caitanya Vaiṣṇavite lyrics as well as Caitanya-concept. As already mentioned, the Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal center round the divine sports of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. A remarkable Vaiṣṇava tradition, of installing the adorable God on the altar of the Beloved, has been noticed in the devotional lyrics of the post-Caitanya age, where the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend has been depicted in variegated forms. The divine sports of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa influenced the Vaiṣṇava sect of Bengal, so much so, that, the Caitanyaite poet-devotees felt that there could be no song without Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa). Similarly, the influence of the life and activities of Caitanya was so great that, the devout poets also came to feel that songs about Kṛṣṇa were incomplete without songs about Gaura. Since Caitanya’s time, the Vaiṣṇava poets of Bengal relished the flavour of the sportive activities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, through the medium of the life of Gaurāṅga. The beloved became God and God became the Beloved bringing God closer to man.

Govindādaśa:

Chronologically speaking, the next great post-Caitanya poet was Govinda, who was roughly a contemporary of Jñanadāsa. Jagadbandhu Bhattacharya in his introduction to Gaura-pada-taraṅgini remarks that he was born in 1537 A.D., was initiated in 1577 and he died in 1613 A.D.56

His best works are in Brajabuli, though there are also a few lyrics apparently by him in simple, lucid Bengali. Some scholars believe, he wrote only in Brajabuli. Most of the Bengali lyrics ascribed to him are actually the works of a certain Govinda Gakravartī. Govindādaśa was the successor of Vidyāpati, in form and content of his lyrics. He also completed many lyrics left

56. Cited by Dr. Majumdar in G.P.T.Y., p. 397.
unfinished by Vidyāpati. In many instances, his ideas, language and cadences echo Vidyāpati. For instance the following verses may be cited:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Jahā jahā pada-juga dharaī!} \\
\text{tahi tahi sararuha bharai II} .^{57}
\end{align*}
\]

(Vidyāpati)

("Wherever the two-feet step in—
The lotuses bloom thereat.")

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Yahā Yahā aruna caraṇe caλa calai} \\
\text{tahā tahā thala-kamala-dala khala} II .^{58}
\end{align*}
\]

(Govindadāsa)

("Wherever the morning sun-like feet—
move in dancing pose,
The land-lilies bloom thereat.")

Notwithstanding these echoes, there is an outstanding difference. In Vidyāpati, Rādhā is the woman in love, in Govindadāsa, she is the devotee.

Govindadāsa assimilated the ideas and language of Vidyāpati and mingled them with the thoughts and ideas of the Caitanya age to create an unprecedented sequence of lyrics. This is not to deny the depth of his feelings or the weight of his thoughts. Above all, the general tradition of devotion and practice of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, revealed in his lyrics have brought about the fulfilment of his poetic genius. In a sense, Govindadāsa's lyrics are the expressions of the entire tradition of the devotion and practices of Caitanyaism of the post-Caitanya time. His lyrics express not merely an individual voice, but the feelings of an entire age, a generation of Vaiṣṇava devotees. From this

---

57. Ibid., p. 120.
58. Ibid., p. 119.
Point of view Govindadasa was an outstanding representative of the post-Caitanya Vaisnavite lyrics. Dr. Bimanbihari Majumdar has collected 856 lyrics by Govindadasa from numerous anthologies, though the authorship of a few of them remains doubtful.

Govindadasa was a Vaisnava poet, whose devotion to Krsna was coloured by the raganuga-bhakti. The speciality of his padas consists in his exposition of the mañjari-bhava. The poet-devotees of Bengal Vaisnavism considered themselves confidantes (sakhis) of Radha and Krsna—and that is how they are supposed to have a glimpse of that divine love. Hence their worship is also known as sakhi-sadhana. The confidantes themselves may be sub-divided into two groups: the sakhis who are close to Radha and Krsna, eternal witnesses to their dalliance and the mañjaris, who are the followers rather than the confidantes. The sakhis stand in a higher footing, they are Krsna's real and eternal retinues (parikars) and they can experience and reveal the union of Radha and Krsna in all its intimacy. The sakhis are the revelation of Krsna's intrinsic energy. The mañjaris are like the dedicated hand-maidens of Krsna. In many of his devotional lyrics, Govindadasa expressed his intense devotion to Krsna with the feelings of the mañjaris. In the bhanitas of most of his prayer songs he expressed the intense regret of privation, but in the temple of his heart the form of Krsna remained constant. That is why the poet could say with much firmness:

"Thus speaks Govindadasa

Listen Thou Syamaraya (Krsna)

There is no one who holds my heart

with the exception of Thyself."59

Govindadāsa's attitude of servicing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, with maṇīlālībhāva is wonderful and inimitable. For example, in one lyric, he imagines himself as waiting in early dawn, outside the chamber with a water-jug, so that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa can wash their face when they awaken.  

Govindadāsa is generally known as the poet of the love-tryst (abhīsārā).

The Bengali Vaiṣṇavite lyrics on abhīsārā carry the suggestion that the devotion through love is a difficult undertaking. Personal prestige and the pride of family are trifles, there are far greater trial and sacrifices for attaining union with the Beloved. Hence, patience, serenity and depth transcend all agitations and disquiets in these lyrics. There is no frivolity, nor any violent exaltation, in the union attained after so much sacrifice and suffering. There is only the inexhaustible bliss of the suprême union. Everywhere there pervades this serene glory of the final union. Govindadāsa was a singer of this deep bliss, a spokesman of this strand in the post-Caitanya tradition of thought. He was unparalleled as a poet of the suffering, pain and difficulty of union:

"O Madhava, how can I express
the woes of my fate!
Even if I had a million mouths—
I would not be able to express—
the trials of the secret meeting.
When I left the temple on foot,
My limbs trembled at the glimpse of the night.
The road lay covered in darkness
and appeared formidable,
Snakes coiled around my feet."  

---

60. Ibid., p. 31.
61. Ibid., p. 194.
Under the influence of Caitanya, Govindadāsa also gave greater value to Rādhā. His predecessors were mostly concerned with Rādhā's dalliance, her love, her coyness, her beauty, dressing and toileting. She is fulfilled only in dedicating everything she has to Kṛṣṇa. But in Govindadāsa she is not simply someone dedicated to the Lord, she is also one who enchants Kṛṣṇa, Who is driven frantic by love for her:

"Listen O lovely, pleasure-giver Rādhī (Rādhā)
I implore you, I know nothing other than you.
Wherever I look, without you, there is only darkness.
You are the star of my eye,
The redeemer of my heart's sufferings."62

The Vaishnava padakartās had so long contemplated Kṛṣṇa's lotus-like feet, but Govindadāsa found ecstasy in the contemplation of Rādhā's feet. Several of his lyrics express the thrill of contemplating Rādhā's feet. Under the influence of Caitanya, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa became one in Govindadāsa's thought. The love-smitten Kṛṣṇa even wipes the dust of Rādhā's feet:

"With His own lotus-like hands,
Wipes her feet clean.
His eyes gaze at her.
She is the living goddess of love.
I worship her—
Whose sight equals fulfilment of all happiness."63

Of course, it was not Govindadāsa alone, but all the Vaishnava poets of the post-Caitanya period, who thus shed their inhibitions at the touch of love. All of them were immersed in the unearthly ardour of the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

62. Ibid., p. 143.
63. Ibid., p. 145.
One may mention in passing another poet bearing the same name, one Govindadāsa Cakravarti, who happened to be his contemporary, as well as a disciple of the same guru. He also won fame by writing lyrics in Brajabuli. Hence it is difficult sometimes to separate his work from that of the greater Govindadāsa. Especially, most of the Bengali lyrics of Govindadāsa have been ascribed to him. Dr. Bimanbihari Majumdar has identified 24 lyrics by him basing himself on ancient and authoritative sources. In Vaishnava Padavali, Sri Narekrishna Mukhapdhaya assigns 94 lyrics to Govindadāsa Cakravarti, where only 19 lyrics ascertained by Dr. Majumdar are included. At any rate his lyrics are distinguished by the Nadiyā-nāgara-bhāva.

The Padas of Other Padakartās of This Age:

This apart, a study on the lyrics of certain other eminent poets of this age, adds to our knowledge about the trend of development in thoughts and ideas, rasas and so forth.

Balarāmadāsa:

Another famed poet of the post-Caitanya period left lyrics in both Brajabuli and Bengali. His Bengali lyrics are rather finer than his efforts in Brajabuli. A disciple of Nityānanda, most of his lyrics deal with the childhood of Kṛṣṇa and the dominant sentiment is filial affection. Indeed he was the most distinguished Vaishnava poet to deal with this sentiment after Vasudeva.

In the lyrics of Balarāma, the childhood of Kṛṣṇa and the mother Yasodā's love for Child-Kṛṣṇa are expressed in a most natural manner:

"O mother, I'll go to the pastures,
I'll graze the herds in the company of—
Srīdāma and Sudāma.

64. Vide Introduction to C.P.T.Y., p. iv.
Dress my hair and give me my flute.

On hearing Gopāla, mother Yasomati
Began dressing up (Gopāla) to her heart's content.

Says Balarāma— after having decked him up,
Queen Yasodā tenderly watched the face of Gopāla.65

Even in his lyrics containing erotic sweetness, we find a glow of
the filial sentiment. Here especially the lyrics of rasodgāra (recollection of
the moment of bliss in a state of being overwhelmed with deep love) are worth
mentioning. Balarāmadāsa's lyrics in this category differs, markedly in the
thoughts and ideas from those of Jñānedāsa and Govindadhāsa. The tenderness of the
parental sentiment touches his lyrics containing the emotion of rasodgāra.
These lyrics are as if lacking in the intoxication and fervour of love. The
description of the moment of bliss also lacks the warmth of heart. It will not
be out of place to cite the remark of Sri Sankari Prasad Basu in this connection.

Sri Basu observed that Balarāmadāsa discovered in the lover two personalities—
husband and the father. His Kṛṣṇa is the second type of lover.66 This is probably
the reason why in his lyrics of rasodgāra the parental sentiment mingle with
the erotic sentiment. In these lyrics in place of the beating hearts of the
lover we rather find a restrained expression of tenderness. For example, in the
following verses of Rādhā's recollection, the touch of filiality in Kṛṣṇa's
love for Rādhā is prominent:

"How He dresses me in flowing sārees of silk
And makes me walk before Him,

65. V.P., p. 726.
Witnessing my gait, delighted He
And comes up to me, stretching arms."\(^{67}\)

If we are not told specifically that these verses refer to lover we might well have thought them to be about a father and his child. Of course, Balarāmādāsa also followed the tradition of the *padāvali* in dealing with various phases of love like, *rūpānurāga*, *āksepānurāga*, *khandita*, *bhāva-samnelana* etc. Again in his depiction of the pangs of separation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, we find the picture of Caitanya pining away with the pangs of separation.

Balarāma has also some lyrics on *Nādiya-nāgara-bhāva*. His verses about his preceptor Nityānanda also throbs with heartfelt fervour.

Two other recognised names in the lyrical literature of the post-Caitanya period were Locanadāsa (B 1523 A.D.) and Rāy Sekhara (late in the sixteenth or early in the seventeenth century).

Following the Gaura-nāgara doctrine of his guru Narahari Sarkār, Locanadāsa exposed in his *padas* the *nāgara-bhāva* ascribed to Caitanya. The speciality of Locana’s *padas* consists in his adaptation of the vogue of ancient Bengali *dhāmāli* songs, in a simple, homely and colloquial language. This marked a new trend of development in the history of the Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal. To quote an example:

\[
Āra sunyāchā ālo sai
gorā bhāver kathā
koner bhiṭar kulabadhū
kāṇḍā ākul tathā
haldi bāṭite pari
basila yatane
\]

\(^{67}\) V.P., p. 738.

\(^{68}\) The *dhāmāli* is a type of burlesque, where satire is mainly marked. The *dhāmāli* songs written in popular tripping metre, elegant diction and feminine taste came originally from the domain of women’s recitals.
halud varan garācād
            radyā gala mane
kiser rāndhan kiser bādhan
            kiser haldi bātā
ākhir iale buk bhijila
            bhasya gala pāta

"Listen, 0 friend—
    How love for Gorā is!
Sitting in the corner of her house,
    The housewife weeps out her heart.
As Gorī sits down carefully—
    to grind the turmeric,
The turmeric complexioned Garācād—
    comes to her mind.
What is the use of cooking and serving?
    What is the use of grinding?
Tears drench her breast—
    And wash away the grinding stone."

Thus, Locanadāsa made the divine sports of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, accessible
to the common audience by setting it to popular melodies and applying homely
diction.

In the prayer songs, prayers are said to not only Lord Kṛṣṇa but also
Nitāi-Gaura.

Ray Sekhara:

There are quite a few number of Bengali Vaiṣṇavite lyrics, bearing the
name Sekhara in the colophons: Sekhara, Ray Sekhara, Sekhara Ray, Kavisekhara,
59. V.P., p. 460.
Kaviṣekhara Ray, Dukhiya Sekhara Ray, Papiya Sekhara, Nava Kaviṣekhara, Sekhara Dāsa, Dvija Sekhara Dāsa are some of the names thus, mentioned in the colophons of these devotional lyrics. In the collection entitled Ray Sekharer Padāvalī, edited by Jatindra Mohan Bhattacharya and Sri Dvaresh Chandra Sarmacharya, there are 253 lyrics in all of this type. The diction and the manner indicate that all those names refer to one and the same poet. The epithets papiya and dukhiya express typical Vaiṣṇava humility. It seems to us that Ray Sekhara may well be the full name of the poet.

Again, there are a few lyrics, with the name Kaviṣekhara, in the last couplets, where the language closely echoes Vidyāpati, the Maithili poet. But the very history of the Brajabuli language suggests that there could be no question of Vidyāpati ever having composed in Brajabuli. Hence real identity of the poet is shrouded in mystery. But it is assumed that this poet belonged either to the late sixteenth or the early seventeenth century A.D. and whatever be his identity there can be no doubt about the sweetness and grace of his lyrics.

Indeed Ray Sekhara's position is next in rank to Jñanadāsa and Govindadāsa. He was imitating Govindadāsa in his lyrics written in Brajabuli and simple Bengali.

The Rādhā-mood (Rādhā-bhāva) is the cornerstone of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. Rādhā is the highest energy of bliss and Kṛṣṇa is all-pervading Absolute Being and the sport of the both is the world itself. The individual self (jīva) is Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the Highest self. The individual self exists for the sake of Kṛṣṇa. The love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa beckons to the individual self to surrender itself to the Supreme Being. This love has five kinds of manifestation: the sentiments of quietude, servitude, friendliness, filiality and erotic. In Ray Sekhara's lyrics, the holy tradition of the Vaiṣṇava padāvalī, based on these five sentiments becomes eloquent. In Kaviṣekhara's lyrics one comes across,

70 Vide the intro., J. Bhattacharya and D. Sarmacharya (edit.), Ray Sekharer Padāvalī, P. v. (6)
Krśna's sportive childhood, Yasōdā's maternal love, the pastoral activities and sports of Krśna (gōsthā-līlā), the dawn of love (pūrvaraṅga) of Rādhā and Krśna, different phases of Rādhā-Krśna's love etc. Moreover, Caitanyadeva becomes completely identified with Krśna. It is as though, he was called to life to manifest the erotic sweetness of Rādhā's emotion. Hence, in the Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal along with the sportive activities of Rādhā and Krśna, the activities of Gaurāṅga as well as his associates have been described. And Ray Sekhara also followed suit.

In Ray Sekhara's lyrics on rūpanurāṇa and abhīṣāra, there is a distinct flavour. Not only the poet described the form of Krśna in the eyes of Rādhā and the form of Rādhā in the eyes of Krśna, he also depicted the pair of divine lovers as they appear in his enamoured gaze:

"To what shall I compare their two lovely faces?

It is as if the moon and the elephant had met in one place.

When Krśna is the lover and Rādhā the sweetheart.

It is as though gold and the sapphire blend their lustre." 71

In some of his lyrics, the charming beauty of Caitanya as Nādiyā-nāgara has been depicted.

In this poet, who was a worshipper of beauty, the lovers' meeting has a secondary place compared to the description of their beauty. Even in the lyrics relating to the love-tryst emphasis has been given to a depiction of the beauty of lovers. The typical lover's journey described in the pādās which symbolises the obstacles and difficulties of Caitanya's journey towards Krśna is scarcely to be found in Sekhara's lyrics. The poet is more interested in the ravishing

71. Ibid., p. 42.
beauty of Radhā than in the love-tryst she is going to keep. It is as though Radhā's progress has been stopped not by difficulties of the road, but by her brimming youth. It is not the conventional thorn, the snake, the watchful eyes of the elders that prove obstacles of the road, but in Ray Sekhara's lyrics it is the body of Radhā blossoming out in youth and radiant in grace that proves the main obstacle:

"Unable to proceed far the weight
of brimming youth,
(Rādhā) grasps the hand of her friend."\(^72\)

A remarkable feature of Ray Sekhara's lyrics about the childhood of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that these have an erotic element. In the depiction of childhood, the Vaiṣṇava poets normally deal with the sentiment of friendliness. In Vaiṣṇava padāvalī there is no attempt to admixture the sentiment of erotic love with that of friendly love. Ray Sekhara was an exception. In course of dealing with the boyhood days of Kṛṣṇa he invented a romance between cow-herd Kṛṣṇa and princess Radhā. The part played by the Kṛṣṇa's friends in the romance is somewhat irritating.

Even in lyrics dealing with the filial sentiment, the poet introduced the erotic and thus marred the serenity of such sentiment. For instance in the systematic padas\(^73\) dealing with Yaśodā's feeding of Kṛṣṇa and his friends, the poet brought in Rādhā and made Yaśodā pleased to her presence—thus violating a convention of the Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal.

In this connection the remark of Sri Sankari Prasad Basu, regarding Ray Sekhara's lyrics may be mentioned. He opines that though Sekhara was a Vaiṣṇava poet, his devotion was not unalloyed. He observed the divine sports of Radhā and Kṛṣṇa not with the ardour of the devotee, but with the curiosity and rest of a lover of life. His Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are primarily man and woman. His

\(^72\) Ibid., p. 275.
\(^73\) Ibid., pp. 121-135.
Piety was not for the sake of salvation alone. It also includes some appetite for secular human life.\(^74\)

Besides the above mentioned Vaisnavite poets, there were post-Caitanya poets like, Yadunandana, Madhava Dása (Mádhavacárya), Ananta Dása, Nayanánda, Síva-nànda, Devakí-nandana, Purúscottama, Jágannátha Dása, Kánu Dása, Paramásávara Dása, Kávira-nkjána or Choṭa Vidyápati, whose contributions enriched the treasury of Vaisnavite lyric poetry in Bengal. But they scarcely merit any comparison with the eminently gifted geniuses like Jñánadása, Govindadása and Balarámadása.

By and large, the golden age of the Vaisnavite lyrics of Bengal stretched from the death of Caitanya to the beginning of the seventeenth century. During the seventeenth century too many lyrics were composed. But in comparison with the compositions of the preceding period they were insipid. To be sure, Caitanyaism spread far and wide in Bengal in the early part of the seventeenth century; new preceptors and leaders arose; the Bengali Vaisnavite circles had a new spirit of life. But the lyrics of this period definitely marks a period of decline. The number of poets certainly increased, but there was no variety or freshness about their lyrics. The only element of novelty lay in imagining in novel pretexts for the union of Rádhá and Krsna—something that appears to have been inspired by Káma-sástra and the principles of Muśtami of Sanskrit literature. For instance one may mention Krsna's going to a tryst as a conjurer or as a female hair-dresser or a female gardener or Rádhá's coming in the disguise of Suvala. There are also descriptions of the feelings of both Rádhá and Krsna during twelve months of the year (báramásyá). In Gaura padávali, also there is a description of Víspur pivá Devi's báramásyá.\(^75\)

We may glance briefly at the work of a few representative poets to have a notion of the main trends of this period:

\(^{74}\) Basu, op. cit., p. 249.
\(^{75}\) Vide, V.P.S.P.O.U., p. 249.
The triumvirate, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Narottama (Datta) Dāsa and Śyāmānanda Dāsa:

It has been mentioned above that the Bengal Vaiṣṇavism expanded in the seventeenth century thanks to the advent of a few notable preachers (acāryas) and leaders. They were the triumvirate, Śrīnivāsa, Narottama and Śyāmānanda, from whom Vaiṣṇava activities in Bengal received a new impetus. They popularised the ideas and doctrine of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism in all level of society. This trinity of preachers helped spread the teachings of Caitanya to Northern and Western Bengal and Orissa. They were also gifted poets.

They composed mainly in a style marked by homely Bengali and Brajabuli diction. Though their lyrics are graceful by reason of their charming style and ardent emotions, they lack originality and sharpness of feelings. The only exception is the devotional lyrics of Narottama, marked by the intensity of heart-felt devotion and depth of his desire for God.

Candīdāsa:

Earlier on we had referred to the contributions of four poets bearing the name Candīdāsa to the lyrics dealing with the amorous sports of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Of these four, two were from the pre-Caitanya period while the other two were from the following period. The former two were Śadu Candīdāsa, author of the Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana and the author of the padāvallī respectively. Of the two later poets, Dīna Candīdāsa, though a historic figure, was the duller, less inspired poet. He wrote a massive verse-tale about the activities of Kṛṣṇa. None of his lyrics has found a place in the standard anthologies of Vaiṣṇavite lyrics, none has ever vied for recognition as a work of the better-known Candīdāsa. He thus easily calls attention to himself as an independent individual poet of the later period.

In his lyrics the story-element dominates the expression of sentiment. He has included the various legend of Kṛṣṇa to be found in different purāṇas in
his lyrics. He departed from the traditional form of padavali literature—the expression of the phases of divine love through various short lyrics and adopted the more ancient narrative mode of the Mahāgala-kāvya.

Again there are some high standard lyrics with the name of Candidāsa in the colophons, enriched with the thoughts and ideas of the post-Caitanya period; but none of them has been incorporated in any of the collections of the lyrics of Dina Candidāsa. Such excellent lyrics cannot be expected from a duller poet like Dina Candidāsa. Thus we find some immortal lyrics in the treasure house of the padavali literature of Bengal but unfortunately the real composer of these lyrics is yet to be found out.

In addition to different Candiḍāsas mentioned earlier, the name of Candiḍāsa is also found in many padas containing Sahajiyā idea. It has been assumed that there were more than one Sahajiyā poets with this name in Bengal. There are also a large number of padas attributed to Ghanāśya, Camnati, Jagadānanda, Prasāda Dāsa, Rādhā-vallava Dāsa, Śyāmadāsa, Rasikānanda, Viśvanātha Cakravartī and so on in the collections of the padas. They are fairly conventional and uninspired, lacking both depth of thoughts and sweetness of feelings.

The padas of Vaiṣṇava Muslims:

In the second period of Vaiṣṇava padavali a few Muslim poets also composed excellent padas based on the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme. This is an astonishing and extraordinary development in the history of Bengali Vaiṣṇavite lyrics. Most of these lyrics were composed in the seventeenth century. In these lyrics also one comes across ardent devotion and self-surrender as in the lyrics of the Caitanyaite poet-devotees. Some of these Muslim poets not only prostrated themselves at the feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa but also expressed sincere devotion towards Caitanyadeva.
It is not easy to explain the popularity of the cult among Muslims. Probably the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa was used symbolically in their lyrics. It is also quite likely that to the Sūfis, the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa was a fit symbol for the love of man and the deity. Nor can we rule out the probability that many of the recent converts among the rank of the Muslims could not quite forget their Hindu past. Especially the Bhakti cult of the sixteenth century coloured by rāgānuga-bhakti, had a tremendous impact on their minds. On the whole the extent of its influence included the composition of devotional lyrics steeped in the thoughts and ideas as well as in rāsas of Bengal Vaisnavism. It must be made clear, however, that these Muslim poets never became formally connected to Caitanyaism. Their liberalism stopped short of actual conversion. Yet their lyrics by no means differ in comparison with the lyrics by Hindu Vaisnava poets. In many of those lyrics the fervent self-surrender of the Vaisnava devotee finds beautiful expression. The following verses from Saiyad Martuza's lyric may be cited as an instance:

"Hear my prayer, O Hari!  
Thus says Syed Martuza,  
Supplicating at Kāṇu's feet.  
In life and in death,  
He will dedicate to Thy feet,  
Neglecting of everything else."  

Some of the lyrics of this Vaisnava Muslim poet also sometimes echo the characteristic strain of Candidasā.  

Altogether 28 lyrics, have been found so far, in the colophons of which, the writer introduces himself as Martuza. Some of his lyrics have found their way to some famous anthologies of Vaisnava pādas. Other eminent Muslim poets of the pādāvall include Nasir Māmūd and Āli Ākbar. The former's lyrics are also found in well-known Vaisnava anthologies. In his lyrics parental love is accompanied by the feeling of complete self-surrender.
Jill RSja followed Vaisnava tradition in his lyrics about Rādha and Kṛṣṇa. For instance in one lyric Rādha wails:

"What a moment I chose for coming down to the river!
At the sight of the world-enchanting (Kṛṣṇa)—
Son of Nanda,
My heart is nearly bursting."\(^{78}\)

The Muslim poets also wrote lyrics on the life of Gaurāṅga, with devotion:

"Long live Gorāḥ, who has stolen my heart,
He dances himself, absorbed in his own delight.
The khol and the hand-clap sound in beats,
And the devotees accompany with their ecstatic dance."\(^{79}\)

The thoughts and ideas as well as sentiments of the Bengali Vaisnava lyric songs are followed beautifully in the compositions of a few other eminent Muslim exponents like Cāmaṅgājī, Mohammad Kāsim, Kamār Ali, Wāheb etc. Of course, these Vaisnava poets did not identify themselves completely with the object of their devotion. They maintained a respectful distance between the devotee and the Lord, and their main objective was to express the people's desire for liberation.

The Padavall of the Third Period:

This period marks the decline of Vaisnava padavall literature, when the torrent of ardent emotion shrunk into a thin stream. Imagination degenerated into conventionality, the depth of feeling gave way to glibness of expression, elaborate rhetoric and longwinded eloquence. Vaisnavism decayed from a nationwide movement into a mere sect, and divorced from the deeper urges and feelings of the nation, assumed artificial and exaggerated postures.

\(^{78}\) Quoted in B.S.S. Itihat, p. 278.
\(^{79}\) T.P., p. 1098.
Social conditions were also no longer in favour of the further growth of this cult. The Ṛṣṭi regained its hold on the mind of the people, the Ṛṣṭi-kāvyas and the Sākta-padāvall revived their matriarchal loyalties, and corruption and sectarian strife further weakened the hold of Vaiṣṇavism. Vaiṣṇava literature lost its momentum.

Yet this period of decadence also saw, the tradition continuing in a weakened form in the works of Narahari Cakravarti, RādhāmohamThākura, Dinabandhu, Naṭavara Dāsa, Premadāsa, Gokulānanda, Candrasekharā, Saṣisēkharā, Akiṣcana Dāsa, Rādhānātha Dāsa, Viśvavara Dāsa. But their works are entirely devoid of originality. Their language is characterised by the macaronic style and pomp of imagery. Another characteristic of the padas of this period is that, these were written in Avahatthā style. But most of these works are incompetent imitation of old achievements. For instance RādhāmohamThākura who flourished in early eighteenth century imitated poorly the style of Govindadāsā.

Narahari Cakravarti was a distinguished writer of the padas. He showed great skill in use of the Avahatthā idiom. To cite an example:

\[
ājū ki ṣānda bhēla prathama milane
tile tile kata abhilāśa uthe mane\]

This period, however, is known for its outstanding collection of the Vaiṣṇavite lyrics from the earlier times. These anthologies preserved the most excellent and charming Vaiṣṇavite lyrics of Bengal from the ravages of time.

The earliest anthology of this type is Rāḍā-Kṛṣṇa-Rasakalavall or Rasakalavallī of Rāmagopālādāsā alias Gopālādāsā. The exact date of compilation of this anthology cannot be ascertained. H. Mukhopadhyaya assumes that it was compiled either in 1565 Śaka or in 1585 Śaka or in 1595 Śaka. According to Dr. B. Majumdar the date of its compilation is 1565 Śaka or 1643 A.D.

80. Ibid., p. 830.
81. Vide Mukhopadhyaya, intro. to V.P., p. 147.
82. Majumdar, intro. to G.P.T.T., p. 110.
Dr. S. Sen places it in 1675 A.D. Dr. D. Bhattacharya says that the compilation was completed in the seventh decade of the seventeenth century. The second and choicer selection is Viśvanātha Cakravarti’s Kṣapadā-gītā-cintāmani or Gītā-cintāmani, compiled either at the end of the seventeenth century or in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The compiler inserted in it 500 padas composed by 45 poets. Gītācandrodava—a voluminous anthology with 1170 padas was compiled by Narahari Cakravarti (Ghanasūryadāsa) in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Gauracaritra-cintāmani is his another anthology.

Pādāmrta-samudra a notable anthology of the padas by Rādhāmohana Thākura contains 746 padas. There is divergence of opinions as to the date of its compilation. Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen places it towards the end of the sixteenth century. But Dr. Majumdar assumes the date as the middle of the eighteenth century. Dr. D. Bhattacharya says that the compilation was made in 1730 A.D. Gokulānanda Sen alias Vaisnavadāsa compiled Pada-kalpataru or Gītā-kalpataru with as many as 3,101 padas. It is known as the Mahābhārata of the padāvalī. Scholars differ regarding the date of its compilation. According to Dr. D. Sen it was compiled early in the eighteenth century whereas to Dr. Majumdar and Dr. Bhattacharya it was the third quarter of the eighteenth century and C 1750 A.D. respectively. Saṃkritanāmṛta by Dīnabandhudāsa contains 494 padas. Scholars like Dr. Sen and Dr. Bhattacharya assign its date of compilation to the early part of the eighteenth century. But to Dr. Majumdar it was 1771 A.D. Another anthology entitled Kirtanānanda (or Saṃkritanānanda) was compiled by Gaurasundaradāsa in the last part of the eighteenth century with 650 padas.
of 60 poets. Rasakalikā (early eighteenth century) by Nanda Kisoradāsa, Nāyika-ratnamalā (towards the end of the eighteenth century) by Candrasekhara-Sañjīshēkhara, Pada-ratna-kara by Kamalakāntadāsa and Pada-rasasañāra by Nīmānandadāsa (both in the early nineteenth century) are some other notable anthologies. There are also some smaller anthologies, such as, Pada-kalpatati by Gauramohandra, Gīta-cintāmanī by Harivallabha, Pada-cintāmanimalā by Prasādadāsa, Rasamañjarī by Pītāmbaradāsa etc.

In this way in the last period of padavali literature, the custom of composing the lyrics practically stopped and a trend of compilation and classification of the old lyrics began, as if, the force of a flowing river, stopped, forming a lake of motionless water. Although the padavali literature suffered a diminution in this stage, yet with the help of it, a link between the old and new literature has been established, which has been expanding till today.

Even till the modern period in the nineteenth century, the trend of composing Vaisnavite lyrics in imitation of the padaś, also continued. Janmēn-jaya Mitra composed many padaś putting his name as Sankarṣeṇa in the colonhons. This Vaiṣṇava poet of the modern period might be the youngest of the old generation of the Vaiṣṇava lyrical poets. In 1860 A.D. he published Sangītā-rasārpava, wherein in addition to his own compositions he incorporated some Braja-balī lyrics composed by his grandfather Pītāmbara Mitra also. Another Vaiṣṇava poet Raghunandana Goswāmi, contemporary of Jañmēn-jaya, also wrote many beautiful Vaiṣṇava lyrics.

The influence of the Vaiṣṇava padavali have been traced even in the writings of some eminent poets of modern Bengali literature. For instance, the influence of the padavali is noticed in Michael Madhusudan Dutta’s (1824-1873) short lyrical poems, published under the title Brajarāgā (1861) as well as also in the lyric songs of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), where the poet introduced himself as Bhānu-siṅha or simply Bhānu in the last couplets of the lyrics.94

Thus the devotional lyrics of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism spanned more than four centuries. The literature of the entire period in Bengal was dominated by this form of lyric. The onset of the modern age saw an extinction of this mode of writing. But the popularity of these lyrics is yet to suffer a diminution. Rather, one may affirm that the tradition passed into the modern period and its creation in new guises. The old and the new were thus blended in the origins of modern Bengali literature and it is this fortunate coincidence that has made Bengali poetry one of the richest and finest literary heritages of the world.

94. These lyrics (or rather songs, as most of them were set to music) appeared for the first time in Bhāratī (1877 et seq).