Mahāpuruṣa Śrī Śrī Dāmodara-deva was a religious preacher of 'Vaidika Saṅātana Bhāgavatī Vaigāṇa Dharma ', of Assam. To give an efficacious shape of his sect, Dāmodara-deva strove by heart and soul. And through his perseverance, ultimately he became successful in giving definite shape of his sect.

Regarding the ideological basis of Dāmodariā mission, in this regard, B.C. Deva Goswami is of opinion that "Guru Deva Dāmodara's mission is, to liberate people from the unnecessary attachment for the phenomenal life. But it is undoubtedly a very tough job to educate people in that line, because ignorance (avidyā) plays a foul role in the divine nature of the self, and it is due to this ignorance that the individual self takes birth in the world and either suffers or enjoys the life, according to the nature of his actions. For the education of man regarding what is ignorance and what is knowledge (Vidyā)
and what is the phenomenal life and eternal life, we need a basis, on which a norm is to be set up. Guru Damodara deva took the Vedas and allied texts as the basis of his ideology, although in the writings of his disciples, the predominance of the Bh.P., the Gītā and some other devotional texts seem to be very obvious."

The knowledge of the world as real is ignorance, and it is to be given up. To educate people in that light Guru Damodara preached the monotheistic form of religion for mankind. This was the mission of Guru Deva Damodara to mankind.2

To propagate his religion Damodaradeva commissioned five principal 'Dharmācāryyas'. They were respectively - (1) Kaviratna Baikūṭhanātha Bhāgavata Bhaṭṭācāryya or simply Bhaṭṭadeva. (2) Vāmśigopāldeva (3) Bāladeva (4) Bhāgevānedeva and (5) Sentevedeva or Sentabhusanadeva.

Moreover, the following twelve persons were his chief disciples -

(1) Kaviratna Gopāl Miśra, (2) Gopālacarana,(3)ŚrīKṛṣṇa, (4) Kṛṣṇadeva, (5) Kapildeva, (6) Bhagavāṇa,(7) Nārāyaṇa,
(8) Vāmśigopāl,(9) Ādhār Yadumani, (10) Saṃkaraṇa
(11) Sarugopāl (12) Bhāgavat Miśra.
In addition to these, Dāmodaradeva initiated another twelve devoted sīṣyas to take up the mission. They were unmarried devotees (celibate). To conduct the daily ritual, namely prasanga etc. they were always with him. These twelve were viz. (1) Rāmarāya (not the writer of GL), (2) Rāmānanda, (3) Kṛṣṇānanda (the writer of the D.Vyā), (4) Hariatā (5) Jagannātha (6) Rāmadāsa, (7) Raghunātha Miśra, (8) Rātulacaraṇa, (9) Viṣṇudeva (10) Payonidhi (11) Madhu and (12) Parvānanda. In this respect, some other Satrādhikāras and the sīṣya-bhaktas of Dāmodaradeva come to our sight. They are, Arjunādeva, Vanamālīdeva, Niranjanādeva, Jayahari, Rāmakṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇacandra, Lākṣmīnārāyaṇa, Jayarāma Śrī Haridāsa, Keśavacaraṇa, Govinda Miśra, Dāmodara Dāsa, Kṛṣṇānanda, Ramānanda, Rāmakānta, Balorāmadvija and Rāmarāya (the writer of the GL).

Dāmodaradeva, first appointed the five Ācāryyas to spread the religion in all directions. Therefore, Vaṁśigopāladeva was sent to the east, Bhagavānadeva to the north, Santadeva to the south, Baladeva to the west and Bhaṭṭadeva was requested to stay at middle. Here the short life history, some of his disciples along with their lifelong contribution to the Dāmodaria Vaiṣṇavism are narrated below:
Bhattadeva: Kaviratna Balkūṭhanātha Bhāgavata Bhatacāryya or simply, well-known as Bhattadeva, was a famous and learned pundit in Sanskrit, in the northeastern region of India. Due to his unflinching devotion towards his religion and guru, he could easily develop into an unrivalled sīṣya.

Bhattadeva was born in 1480 saka or 1558 A.D. His father's name was Puruṣottama Kavisarvaṭī Tārādevi was his mother.

Regarding the birth place of Bhattadeva there are two opinions. According to Rāmarāya the birth place of Bhattadeva was Bherāgrāma. S.N. Sarmah and H.N.S. Doloi also support the same view. But, according to Nilakantha, the writer of Dāmodaracarita, Bhattadeva was born at the village named 'Bijankuchi' or 'Bichānkuchi'. It is eight miles away from the Pāṭḥāsi railway station, in the then district of old Kāmarupa. M. Neog, too, accepts the opinion given by Nilakantha Gurukṛṣṇa Goswami (the present sattrādīkāra, of Pāṭbāusi sattrā) writes, that "this village (Bherāgrāma) has already been submerged in the course of the river Benkī. Bichānkuchi is mentioned as the place of residence of Kavisarvaṭī, in the 'Dāmodaracarita' by Nilakantha. According to Rāmarāya Bherāgrāma is the birth place of
Bhattadeva. Regarding the life history of Bhattadeva, there is no similarity between the two works written by Nilakantha and Ramaraya. Ramaraya is senior to Nilakantha. He was a sincere and devoted follower of Arjunadeva. Arjunadeva was the establisher of 'Loch sattra' and a beloved disciple of Dāmodaradeva. So, Ramaraya's view more authentic than Nilakantha."

Now, it has been seen, that it is difficult to ascertain regarding the birth place of Bhattadeva.

The ancestors of Bhattadeva migrated from Kana, like other Brāhmaṇa family of Kamarupa. His great-grandfather was Priyottama Bar Ozāh and grand-father was Candrabhāratī. In the VSN Bhattadeva gives an account of his line of descendence. From this ancestral account, it can be known, that Bhattadeva hailed from an erudite family. The descendent of Bhattadeva belonged to parāsare gotra.

In time, Bhattadeva was initiated with sacred thread by his father. In the Tola of Gopala Acāryya of Barnagar, Bhattadeva studied, and could easily imbibe the whole essence of the four Vedas and fourteen Sāstras. Ultimately, he became an erudite scholar in the realm of Sanskrit literature. Having finished his education Bhattadeva married Padmāvati Devi, the daughter of the royal priest Kṛṣṇa Miśra of Āmguri.
After some days, Bhaṭṭadeva was advised by his father Kavisarasvatī to take sāraṇa at the feet of a sadguru. Thus, at the behest of his father, Bhaṭṭadeva, came out in search of a proper guru for him. 

Already he had heard about the name and countrywide fame of Dāmodaradeva. So, wishing to become a disciple of Dāmodaradeva, Bhaṭṭadeva arrived at Pāṭbāusi sattra. There he saw Dāmodaradeva seated with a glow of sunshine. Bhaṭṭadeva was enchanted by the effulgent appearance of Dāmodaradeva which was full of spirituality. Bhaṭṭadeva expressed his intention to come near Dāmodaradeva. He had to appear an test conducted by Dāmodaradeva. So, at the command of Dāmodaradeva, he recited the Bh.P. After seeing his smartness, skillfulness and scholarship, Dāmodaradeva became satisfy. Thereafter, Bhaṭṭadeva was to made in charge of Bhakti-hirā as per rule set by Dāmodaradeva. His unrivalled scholarship enabled him to become a favourite disciple of Dāmodaradeva.

As the pair of Sankaradeva and Mādhavadeva was called Manikancana Samjoga which helped lit up the flame of neo-Vaiṣṇavism, and excelled in composing Bhakti śāstra in Assamese, So also, the union of Dāmodara and Bhaṭṭadeva was named as Hīrā-Marakata Samyoga, the two guru
and disciple paved the way for the development of Assamese literature with fairly large Vaishnava sāstras. In this case, Dāmodaradeva is said to be as 'yantri' and Bhattadeva as 'yantra'. In this respect, Bhaftadeva was praised by Rāmarāya.

Having been pleased in his recitation of the Bhāgavata and its interpretation, Dāmodaradeva appointed Bhaftadeva as a Bhagavati of Patbāusi sattra. 17

'While he was in the Tola of Gopala Ācāryya of Barnagar, Bhaftadeva became the fast friend of Gopaladeva of Khudiā sattra. Once Bhaftadeva was invited to recite and interpret the Bhāgavata at the Śrāddha ceremony of the father of Gopaladeva. There, at the Barbhāq area, the scholars along with the general people were attracted by the interpretation of the Bhagavata of Bhaftadeva. Knowing him as a man of excellent virtues and good qualities, Bhaftadeva was appreciated and honoured by the members of the meeting (of this ceremony). He was awarded a title as "Bhagavata Bhaṭṭāchāryya" by his friend Gopaladeva and the scholars of the meeting. At the same time, the title 'Misra' was given to Gopaladeva by his beloved friend Bhaftadeva. The title 'Bhaṭṭācāryya' was also given to Baikunṭhanatha by his guru Dāmodara, at the time of his
appointment as satradhikara\textsuperscript{18} of Pāṭbāusi sattrā.

Moreover, an appellation 'Kaviratna', was also given to him, by the 'Modolas' of Barnagar.\textsuperscript{19}

To the treasury of Assamese literature, Bhatṭa deva contributed his most valuable works. These are considered as the priceless wealth to the Vaiṣṇavas of Assam. The works composed by him are the following:


In addition to these, he also composed some Bargītas and Bhatīmas.

"Bhaṭṭadeva's literature can be divided into three divisions - (a) Prose or Kathā in Assamese (b) Sanskrit and (c) Padas and Gītas.

(a) Undoubtedly, Bhaṭṭadeva is to be claimed as the father of Assamese prose-literature. His, Kathā Bhāgavata, Kathā Gītā and Kathā Ratnāvalī, are the
immortal works contributed to the Assamese prose literature.

(b) His Sanskrit works are - Bhaktisāra, Sarana-mālikā or Sarana-Samgraha. Bhāgavata Ahikaraṇa and Bhakti-Viveka.

The Dāmodara Vyākhyāna and the Santa-nirṇaya - are written in Sanskrit śloka and prose in Assamese.

(c) Sonāpati Deva Sarmāh mentions the name of a pūthi of Bārgita written by Bhaṭṭādeva. So, the gītas (songs) of Bhaṭṭādeva, published until today can be divided into three-fold manner - (1) Kṛṣṇa bhakti mūlaka (i.e. regarding the devotion to Kṛṣṇa). (2) Ādhyātmika or tattvamūlaka (i.e. spiritual) and the third is (3) Śrī Śrī Deva Dāmodara Gurura rūpa-guṇa-yāsa varṇanātmaka (i.e. it is descriptive, regarding the merits and fame etc. of Dāmodaradeva).

The devotional works (in pāda) Prasāṅgamālā, Viṣṇusahasra nāma, Nandotsava and Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa lilā kirtana were brought into light.

Bhaṭṭādeva's scholarship was lauded by many great scholars of India.

Ācāryya Prafulla Candra Ray was greatly moved by the prose writings of Bhattadeva, composed in
sixteenth century A.D. He wrote regarding the Kathā-gītā that - "Indeed the prose-Gītā of Bhaṭṭadeva composed in the sixteenth century is unique of its kind. I had an opportunity of coming across an excellent edition of this book, which we owe to the patriotism and scholarship of Pundit Hem Candra Goswami. It is a priceless treasure. Assamese prose literature developed to a stage in the far distant sixteenth century, which no other literature of the world reached except the writings of Hooker and Latimer in England. There has been a controversy for long about the independence and identity of the Assamese language. This is extremely foolish. This is due, I held to the provincial patriotism and the national conceit of the Bengalees living in Assam. The Kathā-Gītā shows clearly, that the Assamese literature developed to a century which the Bengali standard in the sixteenth literature had reached only in the time of Īśvara Candra and Bankim Candra. In fact, if some Assamese scholars now get up and say, that, it is the Bengalee who had borrowed his prose from Assamese literature and enriched his own, it will be very difficult to dislodge him. I think, the question may now be considered as solved and settled for good. I say this, not as a of representative Bengalee, but as the Ex-President of the Bengal Literary Conference".
Likewise, the great scholar and the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, late Sir Āgūtōṣh Mukherjee writes - "The people who could write Gītā in such prose in the sixteenth century, was not a small people."  

Besides these two laudatory versions given by the two stalwarts of Bengal, there is a third one from the same place, who was an international figure. He was Kaviguru Rabindra Nāth Tagore. Having read the Kathā Gītā, he commented "It is a very striking book, interesting from many points of view. You may very well be proud of the author of this book, who could handle prose in such a remarkably lucid style more than a century before we had any prose book in Bengal."

The language of the K.Gītā the K.Bh. and the K.Rt is not totally obscure, rather it is most conspicuous to every kind of reader. Cast and creedwise there is no bar in its perusal.

In the K.Bh, the beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is delineated in a lucid style.

The later writers were influenced by the prose-style of Bhaṭṭadeva. B.K. Baruah also praised the prose style of Bhattadeva.

Bhaṭṭadeva was a worthy disciple of a worthy preceptor. He was addressed as 'Apara Dāmodara' by his guru.
Damodaradeva. He obeyed his guru's order and advice, by heart and soul. At the behest of his guru Dāmodara, having stayed at Pāṭbāusi sattra, Bhaṭṭādeva propagated the religion to the people of all sections. He also practised all the religious practices in his sattra regularly. He was inspired by Dāmodara to write such a work - the K.Bh., the K.Gītā and the K.Rt.

Owing to his erudition in all directions, and his devotion to his 'Guru' and religion, Bhaṭṭādeva became able to occupy the seat of a fit disciple of Dāmodaradeva. The even-minded Bhaṭṭādeva worshipped him by heart and mind, considering him as embodiment of lustre, refulgence, knowledge of divine or spiritual truth and final beatitude.

The rudiment of his philosophy was "Supreme Lord". This 'Supreme Lord' is the cause of all causes like "Suddhah, saccidānanda-Vigrahah."

It is worthmentioning, that Bhaṭṭādeva was the brightest star among the galaxy of Assamese prose writers.

This very pious and great scholar left this mortal life in the year 1638 A.D.

Vamsīgopāladeva: Vamsīgopāladeva was the first Ācāryya among, the first five Ācāryyas of Dāmodaradeva. He was
born at the village Mālipur in Upper Assam, in 1443 saka. Dharmadeva (Dharmāl) Ācāryya or Baladeva was his father and mother was Yamuna Devī. He became orphan at his tender age. So he was brought up by his elder sister and brother-in-law. There, he took his education. Right from his childhood he was always leaning towards Vaiṣṇavism. At that time he came to know about the then 'Dharmācāryyas' - Śankaradeva, Dāmodaradeva etc. So, he came to Pāṭbāusi to be a disciple of Dāmodaradeva. Dāmodaradeva initiated him and established him in the seat of the first Dharmācāryya. After his initiation, Vamsīgopāla-deva stayed at Pāṭbāusi for long seven years. With the help of his guru Dāmodaradeva, he could conveniently acquire the knowledge of bhaktimārga.

He was a disciple of disinterested (Kevalia) in worldly affairs. He also gathered some religious knowledge from Madhāvadeva. But, according to his Carita Puthi, it is clear that, Dāmodaradeva was his preceptor.

Considering the order of his guru, Vamsīgopāladeva went to Upper Assam to spread the 'Sanātana Vaiṣṇava Dharma' among the general people. In Upper Assam, he established several sattras viz. Kāhikuchi, Kalābārī, Kāmādiāl, Mālipur, Deverāpar, Saurāni and Kuruābāhi.
Niranjanadeva was the most beloved disciple of Vaṃśīgopāla-deva. The king Jayadhvaja Śiṃha took sarāṇa at the feet of Niranjanadeva. The Āuniāṭī satṭra was established by the king Jayadhvaja. He also donated thousand pūrā of land free of rent (nīḥkara) to this sattra. After Vaṃśīgopāla-deva, the Kurvābāḥi sattra was conducted by one Banamālīdeva.

For preaching religion Vaṃśīgopāla-deva appointed forty-five (45) Medhis. Each of Medhis, established many sattras in order to propagate the neo-Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Vaṃśīgopāla's devotion to his guru is unique. He carried the dust of the feet of Damodaradeva (pāda-reṇu) in a pitcher from Pāṭbāusi. At the last moment of his life, Vaṃśīgopāla-deva, took the dust and departed from this world to heaven.36

Bhagavānadeva: Bhagavānadeva was one of the first five Ācāryyas of Dāmodaradeva.

He was born in the month of Māgha of 1435 sāka, at Śripur Devalaya, near Baramā (present Nalbari district) of then district Kāmarūpā. The name of his father was Hayagrīvadvija and mother was Laksāmī Devi.

While Dāmodaradeva was staying at Pāṭbāusi sattra (preaching his religion) then Bhagavānadeva went to him
to accept Dāmodaradeva as his guru. So, he was initiated by Dāmodaradeva. In order to spread his tenet among the tribal and other backward classes, Bhagavānadeva was sent to the north. In 1470 saka, Bhagavānadeva established a sattra at Govindapur. He established several sattras at Nimiṣā (Nimuā), Sonkuchi, Āmtalā, Kuchnā, Kārasānna, Batākuchi, Āmanī (Darrong district), and Phulguri (Goālpārā district).

Santadeva: Santadeva is also known as Santabhūṣāṇa. He was one of the favourite disciples of Dāmodaradeva. Due to his sincerity and ardent devotion, Dāmodaradeva placed him as an Ācāryya at the south. Santadeva was a pious Brāhmaṇa. He was born at the village Garemāra of Kāmarūpa district (Old). Āmrāṅgā, Garemāra and Khidir pukhuri are the sattras established by him. He fervently obeyed the orders of his guru Dāmodaradeva. Owing to his firm attitude in his duty he was also praised by Gopāla Miśra Kaviratna.

Baladeva: Baladeva was another bhaktā-śisya of Dāmodaradeva. He was a great Sanskrit scholar. He had depth knowledge, specially in the Bhāgavata. Therefore, he was taken to Cooch Behar by his guru Dāmodara, and appointed him as Bhāgavati.

After initiation at the feet of Dāmodaradeva, Baladeva was appointed as an Ācāryya, for preaching the
Vaiṣṇava religion. So, he was placed as an ācāryya of the west. After Dāmodaradeva, he became the satrā-dhkāra of Cooch Behar Sattra (Baikunṭhapur sattra). He conducted this sattra as he was directed by Dāmodaradeva.

Hereunder we give some information about some other sīṣyas and their contribution to the Dāmodariā Vaiṣṇavism:-

Kaviratna Gopāla Misra: Kaviratna Gopāla Misra was contemporary to Dāmodaradeva. On the other hand, he was also a beloved disciple of Dāmodaradeva. He was an erudite Sanskrit scholar. He is believed to have flourished between 1436 śaka era and 1500 śaka era. His birth place was Khudia near present Nalbari. After his initiation by his Guru Dāmodaradeva, Gopāla Misra was enjoined to establish sattra for preaching the neo-Vaiṣṇava dharma. His first sattra was Ulubāri. Thereafter, he established a sattra at the village Khudiā. He got the title 'Kaviratna' (already mentioned about it in the present chapter). He was popularly known as 'Khudiār Kavi-Ratna'. His works are Ghoṣā-Ratna, Sankhacuṭabhadha, Mahiṣāsurabhadha, Bhāgavata (3rd skhandha, translated into pada) etc. Among these works - the GR, excelled in the sphere of Vaiṣṇavism.
The GR deals with the topics, that are meant for ascertaining and achieving the Supreme End of human life. The GR is equal to NG of MadhavaDiva, and in this regard, Rit. Hem Candra Goswami is of opinion that the GR is earlier than the NG.

Through their writings, Gopala Misra, with his Sakhā (friend) Bhattadeva, tried heart and soul to give a complete shape, in the Bhāgavat dharma (of Brahma samhāti). Both were diligent and active. To keep intact, the rules and regulations of Sarana-Bhajana, Nama and the systems of Prasānga etc. they strove as far as possible. Ultimately their joint effort was successful in the field of Dāmodarism.

Gopālacarana: Gopāla caraṇa was the disciple of Gopāla Misra Kaviratna. His date of birth is sixteenth century A.D. Having been stayed at Baikunṭhapur sattra, Gopālacarana translated the 3rd and 8th skandhas of the Bh.P. into padas. He also translated the BR. of Sankaradeva into prose.

Kesavacarana: Kesavacarana was the grand son of Bangayāngiri, the brother of Sankaradeva. He was a devoted disciple of Dāmodaradeva. He translated the 9th skandha of the Bh.P. into Assamese pada. He hailed from Hājo of Kāmarūpa district. At present, his progeny are living at
Arjunadeva: Arjunadeva was a most devoted disciple of Dāmodaradeva. Viśvarūpa Bhūyān was his father. Devayānī was the name of his mother. Unfortunately, in his boyhood, Arjunadeva, lost his parents. After the death of his father, he could realise about the unreality of this material world. Therefore, he disowned his home. He accepted celibacy, and came out of home in search of a 'sad-guru'. He heard about Dāmodaradeva. Dāmodaradeva's name and fame attracted him. So, without delay, he eagerly came to meet Dāmodara guru. But, already, Dāmodaradeva had to leave Pāṭbāusi for Vijayanagar. There, he lived at the house of Vediā Vipra. Having collected the complete information, Arjunadeva, rushed to Vijayanagar. He met Dāmodaradeva. With full honour and deep devotion, he surrendered himself at the feet of Dāmodaradeva. Dāmodara, too, ardently accepted him as his disciple.

Arjunadeva established the sattiras viz. Loch, Bālikuchi and Raṇasthali. He was a bosom friend of Bhattadeva. Before his departure to heaven, Bhaṭṭadeva delivered the 'Bhakti-Hirā' to Arjunadeva. Thenceforth, Arjunadeva shouldered the responsibility of the 'Madhya-khandā' (Pāṭbāusi sattrā).
Manoharadeva or Manohara Kāyastha: "It is known, from an unpublished Carita Puthi of Manoharadeva, that Tāmradhvaja was the another name of Manoharadeva. Before his initiation he was known as Tāmradhvaja. At the time of his initiation, he was named as Manoharadeva, by his guru Dāmodaradeva". He was the son of Veṅkatagiri Bhūyān, of ‘Phoolguri-Bijni’, near Bajali. Veṅkatagiri was an royal officer (Ujīr) of the then king Naranārāyaṇa. After the death of his father, Manoharadeva became Ujira of Phoolguri-Bijni. He was a Kāyastha by caste, but by religion was a devout Šākta. Bhagavānadeva was vehemently oppressed along with his bhaktas by Manoharadeva at the time of preaching the Bhāgavata dharma. The limitless heinous deeds of Manohara, pained Bhagavānadeva. So, he went to Pāṭbāusi and explained all the happenings to Dāmodaradeva. Manoharakāyastha was summoned by Dāmodaradeva with full honour. Manohara came to Pāṭbāusi. Having seen the embodiment of brightness, refulgence, an image of Dharma, within Dāmodaradeva, spontaneously, Manoharadeva fell down at the feet of Dāmodaradeva. Dāmodara accepted him and gave him a job of Medhi.

Tilārāya Pāṭgīri was another Medhi of Damodariyā sattrā. Like Manoharadeva, Tilārāya was not a Brāhmaṇa by caste. But, the evenminded Dāmodaradeva, did not indulge any caste discrimination. So, Manohara and Tilārāya, got
the place at the feet of Dāmodaradeva.

Hariātā: Hariātā was well known as Vṛddha Hariātā. He was a Brāhmin by caste and was a celibate. Some songs were composed by Hariātā, which were popular in Pāṭbāusi sattra. Many of them were published. He was a very sincere devotee. So, on the eve of departure from Pāṭbāusi to Vijayanagar, Dāmodaradeva, requested Hariātā to maintain the religious deeds of sattra. Hariātā composed the padas of the 3rd and 5th skandhas of the Bhāgavata. His composition of the Bhāgavata pada is earlier than Bhaṭṭadeva. Gopāla Miśra Kaviratna mentioned him as Mahābhāga.

Haridāsa: Haridāsa or popularly known as Haridasātā, was one of the sixty (60) kevalia bhaktas of Dāmodaradeva. He was a regular and intimate companion of Dāmodaradeva at the time of Prasanga. As it is found in the Gurulilā of Rāmarāya, even, during the period of Dāmodaradeva's adversity Haridāsa ātā did not leave him. In the GR, he is addressed by Kaviratna as Subhāsaya. He breathed his last at Baikuṇṭhapur sattra of Cooch Behar.

Bhāgavata Miśra: It is difficult to determine the date of Bhāgavata Miśra. "He translated Vis.P. into Assamese verses in the first decade of the seventeenth
century A.D. He also composed the 'sātvatatantra' into a 'Pada-puthi'. In this 'Sātvatatantra' he identifies himself as the disciple of Dāmodara'.

Govinda Misra: Govinda Misra (16th/17th century A.D.) was a famous Vaiṣṇava poet. He translated the Sanskrit Bhakti Viveka, into Assamese pada. The famous 'Pada-gītā' also composed by him. Bhaṭṭadeva was his preceptor. In the Pada-Bhakti Viveka', Bhaṭṭadeva is admitted as his 'īgṭa guru'.

Jayarāma: Jayarāma or Jayanārāyaṇa was the disciple of Gopālacaraṇa. He translated the first and second chapters of the fourth skandha of the Bhāgavata. He established the Balākuchi sattra, near Nalbāri. In the name of the son of Gopāla Misra, Jayarāma, wrote a biography named 'Lakṣmīpatir carita'.

Dāmodara Dāsa: Dāmodara Dāsa, was an inhabitant of Barpeṭā. He was contemporary to Bhaṭṭadeva. He was the son of Kamala Dasa and was a disciple of Bhaṭṭadeva. Dāmodara Dāsa translated some padas of the Sālya parvan and the Drona parvan of the Mbh.

Rāmarāya: The name of Rāmarāya first comes to our mind as the writer of 'GL'. His GL, or Santayasāmṛta is an immortal work and is an unique contribution to the
Damodarism. During the reign of the Koch king Candra-nārāyaṇa (1640-1660 A.D.), Rāmarāya composed this famous work.58

Rāmarāya was a sīṣya of Arjunadeva, who was the Adhikāra of Loch sattra.

Ramanānda: Ramānanda was a disciple of Vamsīgopaladeva, the first Dharmācāryya of the sect of Dāmodaraguru. He composed the "Vamsīgopaladeva carītra".

Balorāmadvija: Balorāmadvija was the son of Nityananda- dvija. He translated some padas of the 'Kṛṣṇajanma' of the 'Brahmavairvarta Purāṇa'.

Ramākantadvija: Ramākantadvija was the writer of the "Banamālīdeva carīta". He was born in seventeenth century A.D.

Nārāyaṇadeva: He was a disciple of Dāmodaradeva. At the behest of his Guru, he went to Darrang, in order to preach the 'Bhāgavatī Vaṁśāvāna Dharma'. He established many sattras and recruited disciples from tribal people along with other general people. In stead of 'Vigraha' (image), Nārāyaṇadeva placed the wooden sandal (pādūkā)
of Guru, in the manikūṭa of the sattra. He was one of the twelve (12) chief disciples of Dāmodaradeva.

Kṛṣṇānanda: Kṛṣṇānanda was another devoted disciple of Dāmodaradeva. He composed some devotional songs. Some of them have already been published.

Yaduṣeṣeṣe: Yaduṣeṣe hailed from Upper Assam. His preceptor was Dāmodaradeva. He was charged to preach the Vaiṣṇava religion in Upper Assam. So, he went to Upper Assam with Vamūgopāla. Yaduṣeṣe established the Mahāra sattra, at the village Ādhaliā, near Māthiācigā. Yaduṣeṣe is also known as Ādhar Yaduṣeṣa.

Kapiladeva: Kapiladeva was generally known as Kapila-muni. He was a favourite śiṣya of Dāmodaradeva.

The forefathers of Kapiladeva hailed from Kāñyakuvja. Narottama Miśra was his great-grand-father. Mukundadeva Ācāryya Śiromaṇi was his grand-father. Kapiladeva was popularly known by two names - Umāpati and Parvānanda. From his very childhood, Kapiladeva was a calm and quiet and self-restrained person. So he was named as Kapilamuni. He studied at the Sanskrit Tola, at Śilā, in the then district Kāmarūpa. Within a few period he became well-versed, in all śāstras. Puruṣottama
Vidyāvāgīśa, the famous writer of the Ratnamālā-
vyākaraṇa, was to be known as the classmate of Kapiladeva.

He was initiated by Dāmodaradeva, at Pāṭbāusi. Kapiladeva was one, among the twelve selected disciples of Dāmodaradeva. He was ordered by his guru to preach the Vaishnava religion. He established the Pākā sattra (in the present district Nalbari). 'Vamśīgopāla' was the Vigraha (icon) of this sattra, installed by him. But, unfortunately, the fatal earthquake occurred in the Assamese year 1304, effected the Pākā sattra badly. The Gosāins of this sattra was somehow rescued. They took shelter at Tihu, Nakharā, Bangāon (in the Sariha Mouja) and at the village Muguriā near Bajāli. Pāt. Jīneśvara Goswami was a great Sanskrit scholar, a philosopher, the Vedānta Sāgara, the Sañjādarsāna tīrtha - was a descendant of Kapiladeva.

Parvananda: Being a devoted disciple of Dāmodaradeva, Parvananda worked as a cook. He was a very pious man. As he was the cook of Dāmodaradeva, he was better known as Rāndhanī Gosāin or Rāndhanī Bāpu. He had been selected as the next Satrādhikāra to Baladeva, of the sattra Baikunṭhapur or Bhitaruāḍhapa by Dāmodaradeva.

Banamālīdeva: Banamālīdeva was an inhabitant of "Udayarājya." He is referred to as 'Chota Banamālī' by
Ramaraya. He was initiated by Vamsigopala. Due to his amiable nature, he was a 'dearest one' to Vamsigopala. After the death of his Guru, Banamalideva set out for pilgrimage in the west. On his way to pilgrimage he met Bhatadeva at Patbaisi. Thereafter, he moved to Cooch Behar. In the sattra, Baikunthapur, he got a job of Patha (reader of Bhagavata). From Cooch Behar, he went to Jagannatha. An icon of 'Yadavarai' was bought by him from Jagannatha. He established the Dakshinapat sattra on the south bank of the river Brahmaputra. This sattra is situated at Majuli. The Dakshinapat sattra was constructed by Svaragadeo Jayadhvaja Spha, the then Ahom king. Banamalideva installed the icon of Yadavara (taken from Sriksret) in the manikuta of this sattra. In order to observe the Vaisnavite ritualism, Banamalideva worshipped regularly the Salagramasila and Laksminarayana taken from the Baikunthapur sattra.

Niranjanadeva: He was the first Satradhikara of Auniati sattra. Formerly he was a Patha of the sattra 'Kuruavahi'. Niranjanadeva was a very devoted person. Having noticed in him, all the qualities, fit for a Satradhikara, Jayaharideva determined to place him in the sattra Kuruavahi.

But "Bhagara or Curampha took resolution to time place Niranjanadeva in the Auniati sattra. In the mean/
Bhagaraja was dethroned due to his misdeeds. In 1556 sāka, his brother Nariārāja or Cutyingpha became the king. The king Cutyingpha established Āuniāṭi sattra. Niranjanadeva became the Satrādhikāra of this sattra. 

"Besides the sattra Āuniāṭi, Niranjanadeva established three other sattras - viz. Kāndigrama (Kādīgāon) Govindapur (near Hārhi) and Bācabara. These three sattras are known as Pākhi-sattra". Niranjanadeva died in 1580 sāka.

Lakṣmīnārāyanadeva: Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa was a Kevalī Adhikāra of Gadimūr sattra. Svarcādeo Jayadhvaj Simha constructed this Gadimūr sattra and established Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa as the Satrādhikāra. 'Vamśi vādana gopāla' is the adorable icon of this sattra.

Śrīkṛṣṇadeva: Śrīkṛṣṇa was the first disciple of Dāmodara-deva. He was the nephew of Dāmodara-deva. To preach the Vaiṣṇava religion, he established the sattra 'Pomārā'. During the Mughal invasion, the sattra was shifted from Kāmarūpa (Pomārā) to Paṅjara Bhāṅgā.

In addition to these, Dāmodara-deva had many other śiṣya-pra-śiṣyas, santa-mahantas in Upper Assam and Lower Assam and in Cooch Behār also. They preached the neo-Vaiṣṇavite tenets produced and promulgated by Dāmodara-deva.
To mount at their goal, the Vaisnava bhaktas set up some Vaisnava monasteries and 'nāmaghāras' in old Kāmarūpa district. The countrywide influence of 'Sanātana dharma' enabled the thousand of bhaktas to keep aloof from this material world.

Network of Satras: "The most notable characteristic of the Vaisnivism of Assam is the sattra institution, through which the faith has been propagated and stabilised. It may be monastic as well as semi monastic in form. The former type resembles, to a certain extent, the Buddhist monasteries of ancient times and the Mathas of the mediaval age. But the importance of the institution lies in the fact that it is intimately connected with the Assamese society, and it has become a part and parcel of Assamese life. Contributions of this institution towards the spread of Vaisnivism in particular and the cultural development of Assam, in general, are indeed, great. The high percentage of people professing Vaisnavism in Assam is accountable to the activities of this institution, during the last four centuries of the Christian era. It is because of the evangelical activities of this institution that many non-Aryan tribes profess Vaisnavism today in Assam."  

In his "Praṇamālīka" Bhattadeva gives a meaningful definition of sattra. According to his definition
"It is called sattra, wherein everyday, the ninefold-bhakti like śravaṇa-kīrtana are exercised; and to enhance the pleasure of the Supreme Being, are solemnly performed the pure and good religious deeds. Being a place of religious activities, it has turned into a place of the Vaiṣṇavas (i.e. sattra). And the Vaiṣṇavas of this place (sattra) are always inclined to the name of Hari. That is why, they are also fit for worship by the gods. "The etymological meaning of the word sattra is - sacrifice, ever vowed or always engaged in a vow, always engaged in donation (dāna) and the safe place for the saintly person". But, to some extent, it is different in the present forms of sattras. It is called sattra, wherein the religious discussion takes place among the Vaiṣṇava bhakatas, Gosāins and Mahantas, and in which the God is invoked and worshipped.

In Assam, the sattras were just budded during the time of Śankarādeva. "In fact, the origin and development of the institution is intimately connected with the growth and development of the neo-Vaiṣṇavite movement in Assam. The religious activities of the Vaiṣṇavite house-holders are also conducted in accordance with the direction of sattras. Therefore, the study of the sattra institution covers the entire field of Assamese Vaiṣṇavism, since its beginning in the sixteenth (16th) century".
Due to charm of personality, Dāmodaradeva, became the pivotal point to his disciples. So wherein he stayed he was encircled by his śiṣyās. By such way, a religious atmosphere automatically grew-up. To increase its scope, Dāmodaradeva took initiative to organise the sattras. So he gave the idea to make the manikūta in the pattern of garbhagrha. In this respect, he is the pioneer. Such type of colourful institution could not be shaped by Śankaradeva and Mādhavadeva.

Dāmodaradeva was a very intelligent person. Due to his profundity of knowledge, he achieved success, in every step of his life. Every work, done by him, was well planned. Thus, he laid emphasis, to make sattras for preaching his religion. With the help nāma, Bhāgavata and bhaktas he established sattras. In these sattras, Brāhmaṇa and saintly persons were given advice of devotion after their initiation. In fact, the sattras were in bud, effloresced in the hands of Dāmodaradeva. In addition to these, the posts, like Adhikāras and Mahantas etc. were created and charge of the sattrā handed over to some expert and efficient śiṣyās.

Before going to describe the net work of sattras, a short description of Dāmodariā sattras is given below:-

The sattras of Dāmodarism were well-fenced. Within the boundary, line by line trees were planted. The
pleasing and attractive flower garden put on and the store-house and the kitchen etc. were well arranged.

The Garbhagṛha or Manikūṭa, is the main thing of a sattra. Because the principal icon (mūla-vigraha) is installed in this Manikūṭa. In this case, Dāmodaradeva was very conscious. The nāmāgharas or kīrtanaghāras were made conveniently. For the bhakta-Vaiṣṇavas, Cāri-hātis were constructed, in rows. The abode of Adhikāragośāin or the Gurugṛha was attached to the sattra. There was one Paul Mandapa on the north of the Manikūṭa. Besides, for water there were well-planned wells. A big sized and decorated gate enhanced the beauty of the entrance to the sattra.

Rāmarāya, nicely delineated the sattra of Baikunṭhapur or Bhitaruśdhāpa.

The head of the Sattra: The head of the Dāmodariā sattra, is called as satrādhikāra or Adhikāra Gosāin. If the satrādhikāra comes from other caste but Brāhmaṇ, he is called then Mahānta. Both Gosāin and Mahānta are of equal rank.

The second head of the sattra: The next dignified person is known as Dekā satrādhikāra. But, now-a-days, the post of this Dekāsatrādhikāra may not found in all sattras.

The main persons of a Dāmodariā sattra, are as follows:
(1) Satrādhikāra, (ii) Dekāsatrādhikāra (iii) Bhāgavati (iv) Pūjārī (priest), (v) Pada-pāṭhaka (vi) Prasanga pāṭhaka or nāma lagoā (one who begins the nāma). Moreover, there were some efficient persons. They are Gāyān-bāyana Ojā-pālī, Ādhārā, Majumār, Deuri, Rājmedhi, Pācāni, Cāul (rice) bhāndārī etc. The priest (pūjārī) of the Āuniātī sattra is known as par-deuri. And, the Bhāgavati (the reader of the origin Sanskrit Bhāgavata) is known as vāgīṣa.

Management of sattra: The sattra was run under the leadership of the Satrādhikāra. He was also assisted by his subordinates. In some other sattras some committees were formed for smooth running of various functions. Here also, the leadership of the satrādhikāra was indispensable.

prasangas of sattra: In the path of religion of Dāmodara-deva, the name of the God was the primary factor. The Karmakāṇḍa was considered as the secondary factor. Thus, the attainment of dharma is possible through the worship of icon and nāma-prasanga.

Regarding the systems of prasanga and its practices, Dāmodara-deva had already been given some 71 advices to his disciples. Generally the prasangas are divided into three shifts: viz. (1) Prātah prasanga (prasanga, of the morning), (2) Āvelīra prasanga (prasanga of the afternoon) and (3) Godhūlīra prasanga
Dvādaśa-prasanga: The dvādaśa (twelve) prasangas are produced from the abovementioned three prasangas. But the worship of God (performed in the manikūṭa) is not included in these twelve-fold prasangas.

Ṣoḍaśa prasanga: The ṣoḍaśa prasangas are observed occasionally. In special tīthi parva, and sapkrānti, four (4) other prasangas are added to the dvādaśa prasangas. But in the sattras of upper Assam, the system of these prasangas are different from those of lower Assam - in some way.

Fatbāusi was the Ādi dhāma or the first sattra of Dāmodaradeva and Bhaṭṭadeva. In this sattra, this prasangas run as follows:

The systems of prasangas:

1. Prātah prasanga: (a) The first phase:
    (i) The song of dawn, singing with the accompaniment of small symbols (Khuti-tāla).
    (ii) Chanting of spiritual dictum (ghosā-kirtana)
    (iii) The inception of the name of God (nāma-dākani),
    (iv) Loud blessing (jaya dhvani)
    (v) Remembrance of the nāma (nāma-smarana),
    (vi) Prayer (prārthanā)

(prasanga of the night).
(b) **The second phase**: The discourse (pravacana) of the original Gitā or the Bhāgavata.

(c) **The third phase**: Recitation of the pada-pūthi (pada-pūthi pāṭha)

(d) **The fourth phase**: Guru-bhātīmā.  

(e) **The fifth phase**: The songs of morning.

(2) Āvelira-prasanga: i.e. the prasangas for afternoon:

(a) **The first phase**:

(i) Chanting of spiritual-dictum (ghoṣā-kīrtana)

(ii) The inception of the name of God (nāma dākāni)

(iii) Loud blessing (jaya dhvani)

(iv) Remembrance of the name (nāma smarana)

(v) Prayer (prārthanā)

(vi) Benediction (āśirvacana)

(vii) Loud and simultaneous utterance of the name of Hari (hari dhvani)

(b) **The second phase**: The discourse (pravacana) of the original Sanskrit Gitā or the Bhāgavata.

(c) **The third phase**: Vyāsa-kīrtana (recitation of the songs composed by Dāmodaradeva or Bhaṭṭadeva, with the accompaniment of tāla and khola).
(3) **godhūlira prasanga**: i.e. prasangas for the night:

(a) **First phase:**

(i) Chanting of spiritual dictum (*ghosā-kirtana*)

(ii) The inception of the name of God - (*nāma dākani*)

(iii) Loud blessing (*jaya dhvani*)

(iv) Remembrance of the nama (*nāma smarana*)

(v) Prayer (*prārthanā*)

(vi) Benediction (*āśīrvacana*)

(b) **The second phase**: The discourse (*pravacana*) of the original Sanskrit *Gītā* or the *Bhāgavata*:

(c) **The third phase**: Recitation of the *pada-puthi* (*pada puthi kirtana*)

(d) **The fourth phase**: *Gītā-kirtana*.

**Ṣodasa prasanga**: With the *dvādaśa prasangas* another four prasangas are added. Specially on the tithi of *Ekādaśi* and Samkrānti it is observed as per rule of the *sattra*. *Ojā pāli* and the dance of *Natūā* are also included with the *Ṣodasa prasanga*. Moreover, keeping relevance with the three prasangas, the *satradhikāra* worships the *Ṣālagram* and *Śiva linga* and his tutalary God *Viṣṇu*, in his personal place of worship. Simultaneously, the tutalary God, the *Śiva linga* and the *Śalagrama* of the *sattra* are worshipped by the priest.
Icon worship of sattra: The worship of icon (mūrti-pūjā) is an indispensable part to the Dāmodariā religion. It is the easiest process to obtain the grace of God, through the worship (icon-worship), following the Vedic rites. "Śrī Śrī Dāmodarādeva, himself, worshipped the Vigrahas (icons) of 'Lākṣmī-nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva and Govinda'. So, in all the Dāmodariā thanās and sattras, icons are installed, and worshipping are going on.

Of the 'Rājasattras' of Upper Assam, the Adhikāra, the Dekā Adhikāra and the priest have possessed of their own icons. So, they perform their daily worship, as one's own accord. But, the icons of viṣṇukṛṣṇa (as-tutalary God), must be there in every Dāmodariā sattra and thana. In almost all sattras, in the Manikūṭa, the Bhāgavata occupies one altar, near the Vigraha (icon)

Offerings (naividyā) of worship: There is well arrangement to offer the virtuous (sāttvika) offerings during the time of worship. The main ingredients of a Naividyā are - gram pulse, mung pulse and ārai-rice. Besides these, a Naividyā is not completed without sugar, ghee, salt, ginger, banana and varieties of fruits. "Bhojyotsarga", is done in Janmāśṭamī and in three main Ekādasai titnis and in Navānna (new-rice). The Kāṭi-Bihu is performed by Bhojyotsarga and Deepotsarga. At the time of 'Bhogāli Bihu' - cīrā (flat rice, made out of parched, half boiled
paddy), pitha (cake) and laddu are given along with Naividya. On the first day of Rangali-Bihu, one Bihuアン is given to the icon at the Manikuta.

Mala-Nirmali and Paddodaka: It is most essential to sip the Paddodaka of Visn. Flowers, green or black basil and the leaves of Bilva - are taken as the Nirmali of worship. In Visn puja, basil gets the exalted position.

The installed Salagrama, or the icons of Visnu-Krsna, made of stone, or brass or silver or of gold is bathed at the time of worship, with milk and pure water as per vaisnava-usage.

The instruments, used in the worship and prasangas: Conch -shell, bell, barkahan, dundubhi or nagara are used at the time of worship. During the time of prasanga, khusitala, khol, patitala, bhor tala, mrdanga and Khanjari are used.

It is worth mentioning, that a worship cannot be performed in full without any musical instrument. Otherwise, it is considered as an offence, according to the rules of Sastras.

The books used in the prasangas: During prasangas the original Sanskrit Git 등 and the Bhagavata are recited. In addition to this, the following books are used - the K.Rh K.Rt., K.Gita, P.M., VSN of Bhatadeva, the GR of Kaviratna.
Gopał Miśra and the *Carita puthis of Dāmodaradeva* written by Rāmāraṇya and Nīlakaṇṭha, are considered as sacred for recital.

The religious festival of sattra: The religious festivals are - Janmaśṭami of Śrīkṛṣṇa, Nandotsava, Pacati, Daul- yātra, Rāsayātra, Janmotsava of Gūrudeva and his Tithi are observed as the religious function of Dāmodari sattra. Some of these festivals are described briefly below:

**Janmaśṭami**: The Janmaśṭami is observed in the Assamese month of Bhādrapada. It is believed that Śrīkṛṣṇa was born on the eighth day of dark fortnight (Kṛṣṇaśṭami) of the month of Bhādrapada. So all the Vaiṣṇavas celebrate this day as the Birth-day of Śrīkṛṣṇa. They observe fast whole the day and night and institute nāma-kirtana at midnight.

**Nandotsava**: The next-day of the Janmaśṭami, is observed as Nandotsava, Nanda, the foster father of Śrīkṛṣṇa, and the king of the Gopas, celebrated this festival. So, it is known as Nandotsava. Besides the nāma-kirtana, mūrī-play is an important part of this festival.

**Pacati**: Pacati or Pācati is the another festival, observed by the Vaiṣṇavas. On the fifth (5th) day after Janmaśṭami it is instituted. It is also known as Bhāonā i.e., a
theatrical performance in the old Assamese style. The early sports of Śrikrṣṇa is exalted here. Woman also can take part in this festival.

Daul-yātrā: Daul-yātrā is celebrated in a joyful haste, in the full moon day (Pūrṇimā), in the month of Fālguna.

"The word 'Dol' means Dolā or Jhulnā, i.e., one kind of Assamese litter. The image of "Daul Govinda or Kaliā Thākura is the emblem of this festival. Therefore, Daul Govinda or Kaliā Thākura is worshipped keeping 'Him' in a litter. Again the word 'Daul' or 'Deul' means temple or a series of steps raised upwards. In this Daul, the image of Śrikrṣṇa is set. This function is solemnised on the eve of the full moon day of the month of Fālguna. This day is also recognised as Adhvāsa. The people of Barpeta district, celebrate this day with squib, cracker etc."

In the Pāṭbāusī sattra, the Vigraha of Daul-govinda is worshipped in the 'Daul grha of the sattra'.

In some other Dāmodariā sattras, Daul-Govinda is worshipped as per ritual and religious rites. The last day of the festival is known as 'Sueri'. On that day, the festival authority makes up a processions within the sattra. 'Daul-Govinda' was taken at the first row of
the procession. Every house-owner is waiting at their
gate, to pay their heartiest offerings to the Lord 'Daul
Govinda' coming in the procession. At the end of the
procession, 'Daul-Govinda' is seated in the Manikūta as
before.

Rāsa-yātra: Rāsa-yātra is described in the BhP.\textsuperscript{86} it
recalls the Rāsakriḍā of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This festival is
observed in the Assamese month of Kāṭī. Besides the
public places, it is observed and celebrated in most of
the Vaiṣṇava sattras in Assam. This 'utsava' (festival)
is continued for five to fifteen days, in the different
places of Assam.

In Rāsa-pūjā, Lord Kṛṣṇa, is the sole God
to be adored, yet in some places Lord Kṛṣṇa is adored
accompanied by Rādhā. The salient feature of this festi-
val is to exhibit the different phases of life of Kṛṣṇa.

In the sattras of Dāmodaradeva, the tithi of
'Tirobhāva' (death anniversary) of Śrī Śrī Dāmodaradeva
is religiously observed. The Pratipada tithi of Śukla
pakṣa (white fortnight) in the Month of Vaiśākha - is
falling the Tirobhāva tithi of Gurudeva. In the Pāṭbāusi
sattrā, the Tirobhāva tithi of Dāmodaraguru is observed
with seven days long programme.\textsuperscript{87}
In addition to these in the tithi of Ausi, Ekādaśī in Pūrṇimā, and in Śiva caturdaśi special nāma-kīrtana are held in the Dāmodarīa sattras.

Formerly, in the Dāmodarīa sect, there was no arrangement for pāl nāma. But, gradually it entered in some sattras. Institution of pāl nāma is famous in the Āuniāṭi sattrā in Upper Assam. So also, the Rāsa Utsava is famous in the Dākṣinpāṭ sattrā of Mājuli. Phalgutsava (Paul Utsava) is not observed in the Āuniāṭi sattrā.

The loud blessing (joyadhvani) system in prasanga: In the sattras of Dāmodarīa sect, loud blessing (jayadhvani) is indispensable during prasangas. Sattrawise, this jayadhvani system is different. Practically, the following are to be observed:

(1) Jaya Kṛṣṇaka smari Hari bola.
(2) Jaya nāmaka smari Hari bola.
(3) Jaya Gītā Bhāgavataκ smari Hari bola.
(4) Jaya Deva Dāmodaraguruka smari Hari bola.

Thereafter, the Jayadhvani parva is concluded, uttering the name, of the Satrādhikāras, right from the beginning up to the present day.
Remembrance of nama: (nama smarana): It is included in the prasanga ceremony. The nama is started by the Pathaka. After Pathaka, Vaisnava-bhakatas utter the name of the God by this way:

Pathaka - O Hari,
Bhakata - O Rama,
Pathaka - O Rama,
Bhakata - O Hari,
Pathaka - Jaya Krsnaka smari -
Bhakata - Hari bola.

Prayer: In prasangas prayer (prarthana) is used as follows:

(1) May Hari bless His majesty.
(2) May Hari bless the bhaktas, who duly perform the sravana and kirtana.
(3) May Hari bless the disciples of Mahaprabhu Dāmodara.
(4) May Hari bless all the men and women and all of subjects.

Really, such type of prayer is an instance of magnanimity and excellence. Here, through this prayer God is invoked for the protection of the king. Because, a king is the saviour of his country and at the same time of the religion also.
Thus, it has been seen, that such open-hearted prayer can give the peace in the minds of bhaktas.

**Bhakata-Vaiṣṇava:** "Those bhakata vaishnavas are considered as the 'Brahmathula' or the 'lively and formative icon' of 'Supreme Being', who are holding the posts in the daily prasangas and their associates". In reality, nama is similar to Brahma; thus the Vaiṣṇava-bhakatas are worthy of worship, even to the satradhikāra. The Udāsina and grhi bhakatas are united in the nāmaghara at the time of prasanga.

The system of initiation: "In the Dāmodarīṇī sect of Vaiṣṇavism, śāraṇa, dikṣā and bhajana are taken from the same guru. Dāmodara-deva himself is the living instance in this case. He was initiated by the divine sage Nārada. Likewise, Bhaṭṭadeva and Gopāla Miśra, the devoted disciples of Dāmodara-deva, nowhere is mentioned about their spiritual guru, except Dāmodara-deva".

The procedure of śāraṇa etc. are given below:

**The first phase:** Śāraṇa in the name of the Supreme Being (ŚrīKrṣṇa)

**The second phase:** Śāraṇa in the name of the Supreme Being (parama-Brahma) or in Deva.

**The third phase:** Śāraṇa in the name of vaisnava bhaktas.

**The fourth phase:** Śāraṇa in the name of the Gītā and the Bhāgavata sāstra.
The fifth phase: Sarana in the name of the promulgator of the sect (i.e. Sri Sri Dāmodaradeva).

In such a way, disciples are initiated.

Sarana for woman: In the Dāmodarism, women are initiated only in the nāma, deva and in bhakta-vaishnavas. Sarana, for woman, in the name of guru and śāstra are prohibited. Because, it is said that woman has no right in śāstra, and except husband they have no other guru.

Dikṣā: It has been found, that in the Dāmodarīa Vaiṣṇavism, there is a usage for sarana and dikṣā. Indeed, sarana and dikṣā are not same. Dikṣā is given to a worthy person. "According to the tantric system, using the astrology the 'raśi-jorā' of bhakta and mantra are examined. In doing so, if anybody is found as desireous, he is given the vija mantra. In case of dikṣā, mantra is given after performing a sacrifice (Homa-vajña). Dikṣā is given by a Vaiṣṇava guru in the mantra of viṣnu."³⁰

Characteristics of Sarana: Regarding sarana a special characteristic, has been seen in the Dāmodarīa sect of Vaiṣṇavism. In the basis of fitness, sarana and dikṣā, both are given by the Satrādhitkāra. The selected place for sarana is sattra or nāmaghara or the abode of guru (thāna).
If, Satrādhikāra goes for outing, then the acts of śarāṇa are carried on, staying in a temporary camp. To give śarāṇa, the guru does not move house to house. In this sect, all sorts of devotees, indiscriminately may take śarāṇa.

The usage of tax for guru: 'Guru kar' or the tax for guru is to be paid by the śīgyas. Of course, this guru-kar may be of different, in different sattras. Generally, to the sattra and guru, money, raiments, rice, areca nuts and betel-leaf, varieties of fruits etc. are supplied by the śīgyas, according to their ability.

In addition to these, according to the process of śarāṇa, and the rules of sāstra, the satrādhikāra should be given the seat (āsana), dress, gold, silver etc., if the śīya is permitted by his economic condition. In the history of our sattras, it has been seen, that the wealthy persons, like - kings and zamindars have contributed soil, cows etc. to his sattras. Moreover, to get rid of the misdeeds, done knowingly or unknowingly - such kind of tax should be paid.

The Dāmodaria sattras are maintained according to some rules for punishment of the evil-doers. If the denizen of the sattra or śīgyas have done any heinous deeds, which is detrimental to the religion, then he or
they are to be sent for trial. In the presence of satrādhikāra, in the sattra, a council of judgement may decide, to give proper punishment to a guilty one. This sort of punishment is known as 'Dharmadanda'. But, the lack of council, the satrādhikāra may take resolution for punishment, with the help of his bhakata-vaiṣṇavas. This is an excellent instance of Vedic rule, known as 'Pārṣad'.

Again, in the case of fearful crime, expiation and the act of shaving head, is an indispensable part to a Dāmodariā sattra, otherwise, he is socially boycotted.

Procedure to creat a new Adhikāra:— It is a prestigious and holy ceremony. To speak in concise way the old Adhikāra selects a new one. In doing so, the unanimous consent is needed from the bhakata - vaisnavas. The new Adhikāra is given a garland (mālā) and nirmāli by the old Adhikāra. As a whole, a social customary ceremony is instituted on behalf of a new Adhikāra.

In the four 'Rājasattras' (Āuniati, Gādmūr, Dakṣinpāt and Kuruavāhi), the approval (anumodana) of the king is essential at the time of coronation of a new Adhikāra. The Satrādhikāra may be a house-holder or a celibate. Pāṭbāusi, the main sattra of Dāmodaradeva, was initially a udā sina sattra. During the days of Bhaṭṭadeva
it turned into a *grhi* *sattra*.

**Education system in the *sattra*:** Sanskrit *Tolas* are the main centres of education in the *sattras*. It is an integral part of a *sattra*. The *Tolas* of the *Pāṭbāusi sattra*, were established by the great Sanskrit scholar *Bhaṭṭadeva*. To preserve the old scriptures, there was a library in a big *sattra*.

**NOTES AND REFERENCES:**

1. It has been taken from the introduction II of the work GR, of *Gopal Miśra*, ed. by Goswami, N.N.D., Manipuri Basti, Guwahati-8, p. xxi, 1976

2. Ibid, p. xxxv


śunā vaṃśīdeva tumī pūrva diśe cali yāhā
      uttara diśata Bhagavāna;
Santadeva dakṣinata Baladeva Paścimata
      haivā save mahanta pradhāna.
Bhaṭṭadeva dvijavara madhya diśe thākā tumī
      bhāgavata dharma pravartai,
Kapila Gopāla ādi vaiṣṇava sakala thākā
      madhye madhye hariguṇa gāi.

(It is taken from the P.M. of Bhāṭṭadeva, ed. by Goswami, Ramadeva (ex. *Satradhikāra*) Pāṭbāusi *sattra*, 1867 saka, p.6).
4. See, GL, 277

5. Introduction of K. Gita, ed. by Sarmah, S.N.


7. See, DDC, by N.K. Das, Pada, 473-478


9. Goswami, G.K., Bhaṭṭadeva, Sāhitya Pratibhā; Pāṭbāusi sattra, 1960, p.2

10. Read, VSN

   kahe kaviratna varaozāh parināti,
   yāra pitāmaha bhailā sri Candrabhāratī;
   pitā kavi Sarasvati jagate prakhyāta,
   mahāsanta yata āche guṇa asamkhyāta.

   (as quoted in the Bhaṭṭadeva, Sāhitya Pratibhā;
   by Goswami, G.K., Pāṭbāusi Sattra, 1960, p.3)

11. According to Bhūṣaṇadvīja -

   śunā bāpu bhaṭṭadeva kariyoka mana,
   vaishnavara pade yāi laiyoka' saraṇa;

   (Quoted in the Bhaṭṭadeva; Sāhitya Pratibhā; by
   Goswami, Gk, Pāṭbāusi Sattrā, 1960, p.4)

12. See, GL, 647

13. See, GL, 280

14. Ibid, 966
15. See the introduction of K.Gītā by Pdt. Hemcandra Goswami (ed.)

16. See, GL, 903

17. "According to 'Dāmodara Carita' of Nīlakaṇṭha, after his marriage, Bhaṭṭadeva stayed at Metūkuchi or Tāntikuchi of Barpeta district (Old). There, at the 'thāna' named Porābhithā, at the request of Mathurā-dāsa buḍhā ātā, Bhaṭṭadeva recited the Bhāgavata. Thereafter he went to Pāṭbāusi to take sārāṇa at the feet of Dāmodara. He expressed his desire to Dāmodara -

'tayu caraṇata sevi nityāgata
thākiva khojoho āmi'.

And such way, he was initiated by Dāmodara."

(The abovementioned is quoted in the book DDG by SDS, p.iii; and Bhattadeva: Sāhitya Pratibhā, by Goswami, G.K and MSSDD, by Goswami, N.N.D., Habrāghāṭ Dāmodara Sangha, Goālpārā, 1985, p.45)

18. 'āmāra ādesā Bhaṭṭācāryya nāma divā,

Bhaṭṭācāryya nāma ānka dive bulicanta .

Dāmodara ājā iṭo sûna save santa /639

Harimāre dhari Bhaṭṭācāryya nāma dilā /640

āsāṃsiyā Bhaṭṭācāryya nāmaka bulilā

sehi dina dhari Bhaṭṭācāryya tāna nāma.

Nilakantha 641

(as quoted in the DDG, by SDS, ed. by Goswami, N.N.D. Manipuri Basti, Guwahati,8, pp. 124-25)
19. See, GL, 290-91

20. SDS, DDG ed. by Goswami, N.N.D., Manipuri Basti, Guwahati-8, p. 130


22/23/24: these three quotations have been taken from the book DDG; by SDS, ed. by Goswami, N.N.D Guwahati-8, pp.115-117

25. See, GL, 927

26. Read KBh.1/9

tribhūvana sundarah śyāma kalevarah pītāmbara-
dharah vanamālī cāru caturbhūjah alakā āvṛta mukha kamalavijaya śaśīn tomāta mora mati rahauka.

(as quoted in the SSKřLK (introduction) ed. by Goswami, G.K. Govindapur sattrā, Pāthsālā, 1988, p. 28)

27. "Bhaṭṭādevas works are important steps towards the great achievements of Assamese philosophical and narrative prose. He created a sure-footed expository prose-style with an eye to grammatical perfection. His aim was to explain religious matters in a logical and clear manner, and in this Bhaṭṭādeva succeeded to a large extent. His conversational and argumentative prose style
of K. Gita served as a model and pattern to the Vaisnavite prose-writers of philosophical matters of later years and his simpler and freer style of K. Bh. greatly influenced the writers of Carita Puthis.


28. See, GL, 335
29. Ibid, 336, 344-45
30. Ibid, 333
31. Read, BhV. 15/654

īsvarah paramah śuddhah saccidānanda vigrahah;
anādirādi govindah sarva kāraṇa kāraṇam.

32. According to Nagenra, N.D. Goswami, the date of birth of Vaṃśilopāladeva was 1470 śaka. It is mentioned in his MSSDD, p. 40.

33. See, GL, 263-64
34. Sonapati Deva Sarmah writes in his book "Deva Dāmodara Guru (p.93) that "as somebody wants to say that Dāmodaradeva was the śiṣya of
Sankaradeva or Râmarâma guru or Caitanyadeva, likewise such persons want to discover clue to say, Mâdhava-deva was the guru of Vâmsigopâladeva. But in the Dâmodara carita and Vâmsigopâladeva carita, Vâmsigopâla is found as the sîsya of Dâmodara-deva. Of course, the Sankara caritas and Mâdhava-devar caritas, none of these caritas is mentioned about it. So it is easy to understand, that, among the 'Dharmagurus' off and on religious discussions were going on ".

35. "iha paraloke mora, Deva Dâmodara guru jânivâhâ sakalabhâkata
dvîcâra yugutî kathâ, kaho āmi yathâ tathâ
tâka pâilo âtâ mâdhavata" Vâmsigopâladevârâ carita.
(as quoted in the DDG, by SD3 ed. by Goswami, N.N.D., Guwahati-8, p. 94).

36. Deva Dâmodara pada-reenuka pûrvata, thâiyâ âche tâka âni dileka mukhata,
Krsna buli deve gaganaka câhilanta bhaîla thira nayana vâkyaka erilanta. 975 Sîr Sîr Vâmsigopâladeva carita;
(as mentioned in the DDG, ed. by Goswami, N.N.D., Guwahati-8, p. 98)
37. Read, GL, 272
   Bhagavāna gosāika thāpilā uttare;
   Bhagavānadeva bole loka nirantare
   and
   GR, 718, Bhagavāna uttarata
   Dāmodara anugata.

38. See, GL, 273, 799

39. Read, GL, 716
   dakṣinata Santadeva,
   avirate kare seva
   meru mandarara sama
   namre raśā nirūpama.

40. SDS, DDG, ed. by Goswami, N.N.D., Guwahati-8, p.100

41. See, GL, 799-80

42. Read, GR, 717
   Baladeva pāscimata,
   sadā bhailā anugata.
   prabhura viśvāsa raśā
   uddhava sadṛśa bhailā

43. Preface of GR; Hem Candra Deva Goswami, p. 12
   (as quoted in the 'introduction no.III of the, G.R.,
   foot-note, p. xxxvi)
44. Read, Lakṣmipati Carita, 83

ulubāḍī satrata āchilā kato kāla;
khudiāta sattra pāche pātilā gopāla.

(It has been taken from GR, by Kaviratna Gopal Misra, ed. Goswami, N.N.D., Guwahati-8, p. 101).

45. GR, (introduction III), p. xxxviii

46. As mentioned in the DDG by SDS ed. Goswami, N.N.D.; Guwahati-8, p. 102

47. Nagendra Narayanadeva Goswami writes in his MSSDD p.111 (Habrāghat Dāmodara Sangha, Goālpāra, 1985) that - "he (Keśavacarāṇa) is found as the translator of the 7th, 8th and 9th skandhas of the Bhāgavata."

48. See, GL, 969

49. It is taken from an article named 'Devadāmodaraguru kāyastha sīṣya Ācāryya Manoharadeva' by Śrī Anjan Kumar, Bapujī college. The said article is included in the souvenir of the 500th birth Anniversary of Śrī Śrī Dāmodaradeva, Bhagavānadeva kṣetra, Govindapur, 1988, p.77

50. Goswami, N.N.D., BMDDG, Govindapur sattra, Pāthsala, 1988, p. 40

51. See, G.L., 330-31

52. PM.of Bhattadeva (From the preface). Compiled by, Goswami G.K. Pāṭbāusi sattra, 2nd ed. 1390, Bangabda, p.8
53. Read, GR, 732
Hariātā mahābhāga;
śravaṇata anurāga.

54. See, GL, 347, 425, 559, 791

55. Read, GR, 733
Subhāṣaya Haridāsa,
prabhura caraṇe āśa.

56. śunā sarvaloka mora nīja guru
Dāmodara kṛpāmaya;
tāhāna mahimā kai nāpāo sīmā
ananta guṇa ālaya.
(as quoted in the SSDG, by Goswami, G.K., Bajali.
pp. 69-70)

57. Bhakti-viveka
Bhāgavata Bhaṭṭadeva caraṇa dukhāni;
Śīre tuli lau mai mahā lābha māni
bhakti vivekara nava pariccheda
emāne samāpti kailo;
bhāgavata Bhaṭṭa deva iṣṭa guru
viṣṇu pāda māthe lailo. 562
(as quoted in the SSDD by Goswami, G.K., Bajali,
p. 71)

58. Goswami, N.N.D., MPSSDD, Habraghat Damodara Sangha,
Pdt. Jivesvara Deva Goswami was born in 1891 A.D. at Pākā sattra. His father was Hariścandra Deva Goswami. The name of his mother was Kāmesvarī Devī. Owing to the catastrophe (violent earthquake occurred in 1897 A.D.), they had to leave the Pākā sattra for Bangāon. He started his academic life at Bangāon in the year 1899 A.D. From 1910-1926 A.D, he studied all the Sanskrit śāstras in different places of India. He secured the title - Kāvya tirtha, Tarka-tirtha and Saḍadarśana tirtha, under the Board of Sanskrit Examination, Calcutta Sanskrit Association and Behar and Orrissa Sanskrit Association.

In 1930 A.D., he established the "Srikrṣna- Vidyālaya" at Haladhibari, near Tihu, in the present district Nalbari. He was the Principal of "Nalbāri Sanskrit Mahāvidyālaya" in 1941-45 A.D. His works are - 'Manohara Padyamālā', Jīvesvara tattva, Nitya- karma Paddhati, Jyotīṣa Cintāmaṇi, Hāsyarasa Taranga (nataka), Sabdārtha Vicāra, Dāmodariya Darśana and Mumukṣu Gāthā.

On 9th June, Thursday of 1961 A.D. Pdt. Goswami, left this mortal life.

(This short biography, has been taken from the preface of the 'Srimaddāmodariyadarśanam',)

61. Goswami, N.N.D., MSSDD, Habraghat Dāmodara Sangha, Goalpara, 1985, p.116

62. Jayaharideva was the ex-satradhikāra of Kuruavāhi sattra. Before the end of his life, he selected Niranjanadeva as the next satradhikāra. So he says:

Niranjana bāpu bhāgavatata sujāna,
raja prajā sakolo karaya tānka māna.
parama gahīna dhīramati mahāsanta
sattra adhikāri yogya tehese hovanta.
(as quoted in the ASB, by Sarmah, T.N. Āuniāti sattra, 1975, p. 114)

63. Ibid, pp. 120-23

64. Ibid, p.127

and also see, GL, 904

66. Sarmah, S.N.; NNVSIA (quoted from the introduction) p. xii, 1966

67. yatracaranti saddharmān kevalā bhagavat priyāḥ,
navadhā bhagavadbhaktirpratyahāṁ yatra vartate;
tat sattramuttamaṁ kṣetram vaiṣṇavāṁ suravanditam
tatras̄thā vaiṣṇavāṁ sarve harināma parāyaṇāḥ.

Śaraṇamālikā
68. Ibid, p. 24
69. Sarmah S.N., NVMSIA (from the introduction), 1966, p. xi)
70. See, GL, 685-88
71. See, GL, 344-45
72. Tīthī - Ekādaśī, Pūrṇimā etc.
Parva - Kṛṣṇajanmāśṭami, Daul etc.
Sāmkṛānti - Bihu (Raṅgālī, Bhogālī, Kaṅgālī)
(simply - the last day of a month is called Sāmkṛānti)
73. A class of Vaiṣṇava hymns, e.g. :
    jayajagadīśvara prabhu deva dāmodara
    yāhāra sama nāhi keva;
    sādhujana ranjana bhakati parāyaṇa
    tāhāka karu sata seva.
    (as quoted in the PM of Bhaṭṭadeva, p. 63)
74. A dancing boy dressed as a male or female.
75. PM, of Bhaṭṭadeva, compiled by Goswami, G.K., Pāṭbāusi sattrā, p.42
76. The Rāja sattras are, Āuniāṭi, Daksīnpāṭ, Gādmūr and Kuruāvāhī in Upper Assam.
77. Rice, made from paddy dried in the sunshine
78. Edible things are consecrated in the name of God.
79. The three main Ekādaśī tithis are - Sayana ekādaśī, Utthāna ekādaśī and Pārśva-parivartana ekādaśī.

80. 'Deepotsarga' means, consecrated of lamp.

81. A new cloth (specially, it means Gāmocā) used during the Rangālī Bihu. For the icons of the Maṇikūṭas, indeed, small sized Gāmocās are woven in the looms. Moreover, the names - Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Hari are composed in these Gāmocās.

82. The water, where Lord Viṣṇu is bathed.

83. 'Asama-Gaurava' APP, p.176

84. PM. of Bhaṭṭadeva, p. 35 (details has been given in this present writing. So, here simply is used as PM of Bhaṭṭadeva.)

85. In the Kairārā sattra and Kudiā sattra of Nalbari district

86. BhP. 10/29/1

87. PM, of Bhaṭṭadeva, p.48

88. Goswami, N.N.D., SSDD, Dvipar sattra, Kaithalkuchi, 1987, p.31

89. PM of Bhaṭṭadeva (from the preface) p. 40

90. Goswami, N.N.D., SSDG,Dvipar sattra, Kaithalkuchi 1987, p.32

91. Read, Prāyaścittasāra:

"cattāro vedadharmajñāḥ parṣat traśvidyameva vā, sa rūte yaṃ sa dharmah syādeko badhyātmacintakah"

(as quoted in the SSDG by Goswami, N.N.D., p. 34, 1987).