Chapter IX

Literary Contribution of the Samhāti

1. Their extent and importance

In the field of literature, the contribution of the Samhāti is no less considerable than its contribution in the field of music and fine arts. The post-Sāṅkaradeva period of Assam is distinguished for its literary activity headed particularly by the sattras of the ruruṣa Samhāti. Around the personality of the poet-reformer, Sāṅkaradeva, a host of other minor literary figures appeared in the field¹, and the course swept affluenty till the days of the British rule. It further paved the way even to our period. It is one of the remarkable features of the Vaisnava movement of Assam that under the guidance and inspiration of the heads of different sattras, the tradition of literary activities continued till modern times. This was a period of imitators and petty writers, who continued to compose songs and plays abundantly.

¹ SHT., p.156.
from a literary point of view, the remark made by Dr S.K. De, in case of literature produced under the inspiration of Bengal Vaishnavism, holds good here. Inspite of the literary ability of authors, says Dr De, 'much of this literature is doomed to mediocrity because of the restriction imposed upon the poetic talent by the very nature of its theme. as well as by the imposition of a rigid literary and emotional convention. The subject, scheme, motifs, sentiments, ideas, imageries and expression are all prescribed; the language, the very metaphors, similes and other figures of speech, are all stereotype. There is, therefore, no temperance in the depths of passion, nor perspicuity and inevitability in its expression. The remark applies not merely to the Samhati but to almost all the literary products of post-Sankaradeva Vaishnavism of Assam. There can be no doubt that these compositions, most of which are yet to come to light, brought about a new

development in Assamese literature. The poets of the period followed mainly the tradition of their predecessors in case of literary convention in method, manner, form and diction, but archaism and employment of artificial Brajabuli form gradually became more simplified. The spirit and outlook were the same as found in the literature of Sāṅkaradeva's time and this is why some modern critics do not hesitate to opine that the literature of the post-Sāṅkaradeva period 'gained in breadth but lost in depth.'

The biographies of Assam, with few exceptions, are the product of the Vaisnavas belonging to the sattriya circle. This new branch of literature, written both in prose and verse, is perhaps the only earliest specimen of old Assamese prose of the dignified sattriya circle. The tradition of writing devotional songs and dramas as created by Sāṅkaradeva and

Madhavadeva was carried on far and wide. The Vaisnava dramas, however, had a promising beginning and a special technique of their own. These two forms of literature were composed in an artificial language mixing Maithili with the local dialect. The peculiarity of these dramas is its uninterrupted continuity from the sixteenth century down to the present age. But no systematic effort have yet been made to assess the achievements of the dramatists. According to a prevailing custom, the Adhikār of a Vaisnava sattra in Assam has to give proof of his poetical and musical talents by composing a drama. This was strictly followed by almost all the sattras. This is one of the reasons why the dramatic writings were detioriated in the period to a great extent. Kings and nobles, even though they belonged to other faiths, were attracted by such dramatic performances and they offered gifts and other presents. They thus helped for spreading of

the culture as well as the faith in an indirect way. Sattras affiliated to the Juraṭa Saṅhata seen to have played a dominant role in composing dramatic literature too.

2. DRAMATIC WRITING

As we have already seen, it has became a custom of sattras to stage bhāona performances on the occasion of the investiture ceremony as well as at the death anniversary of a Superior. It is for these reasons that numerous dramas were composed at different times. Thus a considerable number of dramas, written on the model of old anktiya dramas by Saṅkaradeva and Madhavadeva, have come to us. The dramatists borrowed their plots generally from the two epics— the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata or from Purāṇas. In most of these plays, battle scenes are to be met with while the devotional urge appears to be lacking. Even the same plot was given a dramatic form by different writers at different periods or even in the same period in different
sattras. In some cases, the themes are taken from the Kirtana-ghosa or from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa (like Syamanta-haraṇa, Kaṃsa-vadha, Ajīmilā-ūpākhyāna etc.). Inclusion of different types of verses, like 'vilāpa', 'payāra', 'lechārī', 'muktāvalī' etc., is another feature of the dramas of the period. The ability to write Sanskrit verses for the drama deteriorated in such a way that the so-called Sanskrit lines could scarcely be recognised as such. The artificial language, Brajabuli or Brahvalī-Bhasa, also deteriorated gradually. As regards the date of composition of drama, some sort of pseudo-Sanskrit verse is given at the end.

Quite a good number of dramas was produced by the Gosāis of each of the sattras. It is, therefore, not possible to give an account of all the dramas of the Saṅhati. These works lack variety and exhibit a general sameness of characteristics; and from that angle of vision, one specimen would suffice to give an idea of form and content of all the dramas. Moreover, it is not possible to provide with anything more than a rapid
survey of some important works of the four main sattras as well as of some other sattras.

Rārikānta Āṭā: The autograph copy of the drama being rare, the date of composition of the drama Syamanta-haran by Rārikānta Āṭā, could not be ascertained. The drama has eleven gītās where two new rāgas, not used by Saṅkaradeva and Kāṇhavadeva, are found. They are: 'Cāleugi' and 'Rāmahari'. The author nowhere mentions his name in the work. The verses used in most of the gītās are taken from the Kīrtana-ghosa.

Aniruddha, the biographer, who received patronage and encouragement from his guru Rārikānta Āṭā, informs us that Rārikānta composed the drama. It is written in a simple style. Although in giving a dramatic form of the theme Rārikānta based his work on the Kīrtana-ghosa of Saṅkaradeva, his originality in the act of dramatisation cannot be denied. There is another Syamanta-haran.

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6 Aniruddha, v. 394; also Nīharekhā, p. 186.
7 B. A. S., LS, No. 554; C. S. Library, LS, Nos. 505, 1434.
Rāmacandra Ātā: It has been already stated that Rāmacandra Ātā was an accomplished artist of repute.

On the consecration ceremony of the Vāsudeva image at the Vāsudeva Thān, he is reported to have composed the drama Kanda-vadha. In the last song of the drama (Kalyāṇa, kharana tāl), the eulogy of Vāsudeva is met with as follows:

'Jaya jaya sakala mahāla Vāsudevaṁ
sura sure karu yāka sevan'.

Reference to the performance of the above drama is also found in the Keśava-carita. It has been stated further that the performance was witnessed by Rāmarudra Ātā, a minor of the Korcoṅ-sattra. In the last gīta the name of the author appears. The Śākta king Sivasimha was so much impressed at the bhāona performance of the Narowā sattra that later on he invited the party on several occasions to perform bhāona at the capital.10.

8 Harinārāyaṇa, vv. 532-534.
9 v. 416.
10 Harinārāyaṇa, vv. 532-534.
The drama is of a high quality from the literary point of view. It is performed even today on the occasion of the death anniversary of Śaṅkaradeva.

As has been mentioned elsewhere, the drama includes three different types of dance. Amongst the dramatists of the period, Rāmacandra holds an unique position. The theme of the drama was taken from the Kirtana-ghosā, but the writer has been able to show his originality as a very successful dramatist.

Anantarāya alias Jagajīvana: About the same period of Rāmacandra Ata, Anantarāya composed the drama Ajūnila-ūpahāya. Only a recent copy of the work is preserved at the Kowānara-sattra, the original abode of the writer. As most of the dramas of the period lack originality in technique, diction and songs, Anantarāya’s drama is not an exception. Mention of this drama has been made by other writers also. Like other authors of the period, the opening verse

11 Rupreka, p.198; also G.T.Library,IS,No.472.
(हंदी-श्लोक) in the drama has been taken from Śaṅkaradeva's work. It is also based on the story as found in the Kirtana-chosa. In giving a dramatic form, Anantarāya follows the original story as faithfully as he could.

Ananta Ātā alias Hṛdayānanda: A poet of repute of the period was Ananta Ātā, the founder of the Kālśila group of sattras, who, besides some other valuable works, wrote the drama Śītā-haraṇa. There is another Śītā-haraṇa¹² ascribed to one Gopāla. It has now become difficult to obtain a copy of Ananta Ātā's work, but the last song of the drama is still remembered by some of his descendants. The creative genius of the writer is betrayed in this only available song of the drama. For, it was composed without the use of any vowel except the 'a'.

According to the Kesava-carita¹³, Bhagavāna Ātā of the Korcone-sattra has performed twelve dramas; but
these works are not named. His son Bhagñratha is said to have done twelve more dramas, like *putana-vadha*. We get another *putana-vadha* by Harendraarayana of the Bhetiy-an-sattra who flourished in a sufficiently later period. It is said that Bhagñratha composed a *gīta* and handed it over to Ramākanta Atā of the Narowā sattra to examine it. Ramākanta asked him whether his disciples will sing only those songs composed by their gurus and reject the use of other songs of Sankaradeva and Madhava-deva. At this, Bhagñratha put the *gīta* into fire.16

Bhadradeva alias Yadudeva: There is another *Sitā-haran* by Bhadradeva (Bali-sattra copy, 1255 = 1848 A.D.; another copy, 1893 A.D.). A similar copy ascribed to Lakṣmīdeva, his son, is found at the Dalaicubā Kālīlsattra, Nowgong, bearing the Saka 1805 = 1883 A.D. It is

14 vv.360-365.
15 *Rūprekhā*, p.189, gives the Saka 1340=1933 A.D., which might be the date of copying the work. As we shall see below, Harendraarārāyaṇa's date will fall anterior to that.
16 *Kesava-carita*, vv.390-402.
said that Chadradeva composed the following verse:

and asked his son to write the drama:

'pitr vākya ṛṇi nāme rāmacandra gailā vane
sodara lakṣmana sītā same
dandukāra māli vane sānti sītā raṇga manā
raī-sava dekhilā ḍūrane'.

Composing this verse, Chadradeva said: 'pāṭalāk de gai
yā, aṭ khan kāṭak' (= give it to leṭelā, his son Lakṣmī-
deva, to compose the drama). On this Lakṣmīdeva did the
work but put his father's name in the colophon, instead
of his own. The Lāli-sattra copy, however, bears both
the names of the writer, Chadradeva and Yadudeva. The
name of his son does not occur in the other copy (1893 A.D.).

In the first 'bhaṭimā', the verse 'riṇa arṇa-sava cedala
Bhedala khedala dhanu ṭañkārī' reminds one of Saṅkara-
deva's verse in the drama Rama-vijāya (cedala bhedala
kedala dāpe tāpe pālavata prāṇe'). Chadradeva has used
some rāgas like 'Kau', 'Dhupālī', 'Ahira' etc., which are

17 K.D. Goswami: 'Bardowāṭ Saṅgit Carccār Dharā', J.G.
students' Journal of the University of Gauhati, ed. by
not generally used in other dramas of the period. He was a good poet also. This can be discerned from some gītas of the drama. On the whole, the pathetic theme attained perfection in his hand.

Lakṣṇīdeva (Lakṣṇīkānta): Of the four dramas by Lakṣṇīdeva, the voluminous Hāvana-vadhā deserves special consideration. It has thirty-two gītas, including a new rāga, Bhūmat-kalyāṇa, not used by his predecessors. The first gīta in which the principal character enters the stage, is also peculiar in this play. This is to be sung in the rāga-śaṅkā, which was used by Śaṅkaradeva in his keli-gotā only.

Another gīta rich in poetic beauty and full of pathos

18 For example, rāga-śrī-gāndhāra, jariīl(śrīsūntaka śhālaśāraya rāgā pūrvaśākārā rāgā pūrvata śkāra//'), rāga-śāllegi, došūni tāl (śautukā jānelī śhālī śhāljuri juri hāta/ohi śvarṇa mṛga māṇike racita dehu mohe rāghunāṭha//'), and rāga-karuṇya-kedāra, cūt-kalā mān ('haiyā ākula ati vilāpa kamanta satī rāma pāwe rahu mora gati//') etc., may be mentioned.

19 A copy of the same is preserved at the G.U. Library, MS, No. 557.
is the Bhupalī-jautilalā's gīta which goes like this:

\[ \text{e bhaya lakṣāna he prīnera bājāya/} \\
\text{kaika gaile pāibō hena soqānua bhāi/} \]

The copy preserved at the Dāli-sattra bears the date 1873 A.D. (rāndrā ṛkāśa gajendu sake) which hints that it is not the original copy. It is said that the drama was first staged at Bhertheri, Jowal.20

The originality in style and treatment of the author is noticed throughout the work. There is another work with the same title21 ascribed to one Rānakantā. Of other dramatic works of Lakṣāntdeva, mention may be made of Kūmar-haraṇ written at the request of Candra-kāntasimha.22 There is another Kūmar-haraṇ by Kāma-deva of the Eleūgi group of sattras.23 Two more manuscripts of Kūmar-haraṇ by Lakṣāntdeva are preserved at

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20 Information gathered from Śrī Kāndā Kalitā (alias Dakarā Būghā), 67 year old bhākat of the Dāli-sattra.
22 Rūprekha, p. 137.
Kuji-sattra and the Bāli-sattra. Both the manuscripts are, however, undated. A transcript of the same is reported to bear the Sāka 1764 = 1862 A.D.\[24\] The other two dramas by the same author are Nṛśimha-yātra and Mara-mohan. The first is undated\[25\] and preserved at the Letort Salaguri-sattra, Howgong. A transcript of the same is also preserved at the Bāli-sattra, dated 1805 = 1809 A.D. Only one manuscript of the drama Mara-mohan\[26\] is there at the Letort Salaguri-sattra having no date. Besides Lakṣmīdeva, Nadan Ātā, son of Ucieva of the Juddal Sarumarī-sattra, also wrote a drama Hunar-haran. The work possesses the qualities of a good drama and bears the Sāka 1793 = 1571 A.D. This might be the original date of the work. The name Nadan Ātā is also found at other places also\[27\] but it is not mentioned whether he wrote

\[24\] Ṛṣeṇa, 167.
\[25\] Also G.L. Library, S, f. 1508. There is another copy by Sāityāri Ṛṣeṇa, D. A. 1, S, f. 535.
\[26\] Also preserved at the G.L. Library, S, f. 504.
\[27\] A.I.V., f. 6(a).
a drama or not. The same theme was also given a dramatic form by Uttamarāṇadēva under the title *Usā-harāj*.

Dhaneśvara alias Bhavākānta: Three works, *Vāmanavijaya Dali-chalana*, *Draupadīr Svayamvara* and *Dāli-vadha* (all undated) by Dhaneśvara Ātā, the youngest son of Lakṣmīdeva, are there. The first one is important for its inclusion of the rāga- Cāleṇgi to be sung in the Un-jauti tāla. This particular rāga and the tāla reminds the reader of a similar gīta of the drama *Sya- manta-harāj* by Banākānta Ātā, his father's great-great-grand father. Some folios of the *Draupadīr Svayamvara* are damaged but was again completed by his son Śivendra-deva. Both the names of the author are found in the colophon of some of the gītas in the drama. At one place (rāga- Māhura), there occurs the line 'dīna bhava- kūnte bol', while at another (rāga- Māhura-dhanasri) it goes like 'kahe lakṣmīnāthara kikara' (says the servant of Lakṣmīnath). In the *Dāli-vadha*, the colophon of the first song (rāga- Bhañī, ek-tāli) is 'lakṣmīdeva
bhṛtye ehu gāya'; the same of the second gīta is
(rāga- Sindhūra, ek-tāli) : 'kahe dhaneśvara rāma
pāwe mora gati', while the colophon of the last gīta
(rāga- Kalyāṇa, khamā) has the line 'dīna bhava-
kānte gāya'.

In recent times, Sarasāndra nārāyaṇa, the eldest
grandson of Laksmaṇadeva, wrote Yaṅuvākṣar-yuddha
and Kurvāśā-bhojana (transcript, 1319= 1919 A....).
But whether he wrote the drama Sāda-arva ( 1320=
1930 A.D.) also, cannot be ascertained. One of his
brothers, Laksmaṇendra wrote two popular dramas, Abhī-
nānyu-vadha in 1900 A....(dāke Sātaṇa Mahja vasu ṣa-
sālka), and Rājaśya. The youngest grandson of Laksma-
ṇadeva, Śivendra-deva alias Suresvara, wrote six dramas.

28 There is another drama by one Aṣṭaśastra; J.Library,
135. p. 229.
29 J.L. Library, 136. 1429.
30 H. rekā, 192. the copy of the drama Kurvāśā-bhojana
referred to here, bears the date 1910 A.D. Sarasānd-
raṇa nārāyaṇa also wrote the drama Itanā-vadha (vide p. 336).
Another Itanā-vadha by one Kāmacarāga is found at
Daileubā, dated 1283, 17 Jaistha = 1876 A.D.
31 G. Deka : 'Śarowāt Pitṛ-kular Tarisamāpti', 4ainik Asam,
May, 21, 1907.
of which, only the following three are available:
(1) Sāhita-veda, (2) Subhadra-Haraṇa, and (3) Haraṇa-Parva. In the colophon of the Śita of the last work, composed in 1917, (veda acra rāme soma gāmīte), the following two interpretations may be suggested. The line is 'kṛṣa-la-pawe gati kahe ṣhavakānta dāse'. 'Kahe ṣhavakānta dāse' may mean 'says the dāsa (servant of Kṛṣṇa) Ṣhavakānta' or, it may mean 'says the dāsa of (son of) Ṣhavakānta'. At another place, however, colophons like 'dīna suresvare gāya' etc., are there. It is to noted that in the gītas, particularly of the dramas, there was a practice of putting the father's name instead of the writer's own. In other two works also, frequent mention of the name of his father is found. Moreover the practice of writing in the name of their patrons or gurus was also quite common in the satriya circle.

Few writers of the present generation belonging to the hardowa group of sattras are gaining much

32 Another Subhadra-Haraṇa by Śrīrāma is also there, ..
Tilakendra's *Bhīṣma-nirvāṇa* is a popular play where the author introduces himself as the son of Dharmaendra. His two other works are *Devajit* and *Śatāśura-vadha*. Asitendra's *Kirata-parva* also deserves mention. His *Trikāṇkur-svargalābhā* is a popular drama. *Sudhāvā-vadha* is another work by the


34 The verse dialogue of Kirata, a tribal character of the drama, is, however, written by his uncle Śivendra-deva in the dialect of the Lāluṅg community. The first few lines of a gīṭa sung by the Kirata are:

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'āi  āi ālilaṅg  tālilaṅg kāk lāgi āhilāṅg
sālāṅg ki nesālāṅg bhāte
more honāiṭi āi
ā  ā' sālāṅg ki nāsālāṅg āji hūdā bhāte
petate lāgichi bhake,
bāṭar bāṭaruvā ānār hauāiḥāt āi
  de āi jalān make'.
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same author, written in 1934 A.D. (rasa vana gajendra šāke). The second drama was composed in 1935 A.D., while Agni-purāṇa, another drama was written in 1941 A.D. His first drama, Virā-tārava, is said to have been composed in 1920 A.D. (gaja veda vasu candra šāke).

Yaduvānta of the Lateri Salaguri-sattra, a contemporary of Laksīdeva's son Mahēśvara, also wrote a drama Rāvana-vāda. Two manuscripts of the work, both undated, are preserved at the above sattra. Another copy is found at Aihāeti Na-sattra, Jorhat.

Kuṭakānta of the Salaguri-sattra wrote Lākā-dahān in 1941 A.D. A copy of the drama is preserved at Sojārī-gāon, near Marigaon. The drama Kṣams-parva Salya-parva found at Rātrabarī, bears no name of the author. The date of its completion is not mentioned, but the first gīta has the name Kuśakānta, while in some gītas at the middle part of the drama, the name Kuṭakānta appears in the colophon. Kuṭakānta's another work is Dāli-vāda preserved at Rātrabarī, which, however, has no date.
A drama, Hariscandra-upākhyāna, found at Medeluvāgāon, Nowgong, (undated), bears the name Turjakanta. There is no doubt that all these works came out from the pen of Turjakanta of the Salaguri-sattra. His son Lavakanta is said to have written five dramas of which Bhīṣma-parva, Abhimanava-vadha, Kālī-kānda and Kala-parva deserve mention. The last one is preserved at Sarasvati, Nowgong, bearing the date 1941 A.D.

Another Kālī-kānda ascribed to one Gopāla, is found at the Dalaicuhā Kālsila-sattra. At the end of the work, there is the date 1240, which means 1933 A.D., as the date of the work. Another work by Gopāla is Durvāsa-bhājana found at the same sattra, having the date 1913 A.D. There are few more dramas ascribed to Gopāla. Of these, Jarāsandha-vadha (1370 A.D.), Sitā-haran (1942 A.D.) and Sitūr Kālī-ramana (1933 A.D.) may be mentioned.

35 There is another copy referred to in Ruprekha, p. 138.
36 Another copy of unknown authority is preserved at the D.I.A.S., MS, No. 143.
37 Also D.I.A.S., MS, No. 806.
38 Ruprekha, p. 186.
There are two unknown works, one *kāta-vyācha* (dated San 1290 = 1305 A.D.), preserved at the Leteri Salaguri-sattra, and the other is *Kirata-parva* of Patrabari. The last work is undated but the colophon gives the name Mādhava, meaning probably Mādhavadeva.

A similar work of doubtful authority, found at the Ṇōkaṭā-sattra, is *Durvāsā-bhojana*, where the name Amantadeva (Ādayānanda) is found in some gītas.

It is to be noted that devotees, other than the members of the Gosāi community, also used to write some dramas and they put their names nowhere in the work. Rather it was customary to put the name of the guru or of the founder of the sattra.

Sambludeva of the Cārākāhala-sattra wrote *Govardhana-yātrā* and *Amrta-mathā*. Another *Govardhana-yātrā* by Lakaśākanta, dated 1032 A.D., is preserved at Bājārīgarha. The writer might be a person belonging to the Salaguri group of sattras. Visvākhara of the Kaliyākar Cānaguri-sattra wrote two dramas—
vadha\textsuperscript{40} and \textsuperscript{41} and Bālī-vadha. The first was copied in 1907 A.D. There is one undated Kṛṣṇa-jāraṇa by Hari-
caraṇa (probably of the Sālāguri-sattra) found at So-
nārīḡāon. One Mūṣakānta of Sōnārīḡāon wrote three

\begin{itemize}
  \item (1) Lāraṇa-vihāra,
  \item (2) Bā khacūda-vadha,
  \item (3) Kulačala-vadha.
\end{itemize}

Only the last work bears the date 1338 = 1931 A.D.

One Ramākānta, belonging to the Elleṅgi group of
sattras, wrote Pralamba-vadha\textsuperscript{42}(1887 A.D.). Another
work is Subhadra-haraṇ\textsuperscript{43}(1901 A.D.) by Śrīrāma of the
same group of sattras. Bhavakānta Vipra Mahanta of the
Phulbāṛī-sattra wrote Samvarāsura-vadha at the request
of king Kamalesvarasimha\textsuperscript{43}. One Ratnesvara of the Kōvā-
mara group of sattras composed three dramas- Sahasrā-
jūma-vadha (dated Saka 1557 = 1933 A.D.), Gayāsura-
upākhyaṇa (Saka 1558) and Saiṭya Gāda-parva (1933 Saka).

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{40} A copy is in the 2... A.S., No. 303.
  \item \textsuperscript{41} Another copy is found at the Jārī-āī-sattra, Nowgong,
        having no date.
  \item \textsuperscript{42} ... A.S., No. 322.
  \item \textsuperscript{43} Rūpyrekha, p. 153.
\end{itemize}
All the three works are preserved at the Anantara,
Kovānakā-sattra, Biṣṣāgar. Another
undated work, Kāra Sāilya-arva of unknown autho-
ality is also there. There is another Kāra-arva
where the author introduces himself as a son of one
Kṛṣṇa. Asvākara Jaṅgāsura-vacha is another such
work, where there is no concluding benediction (muktī-
maṅgala Bhātinā). Two dramas of the Department of
Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, deserve
mention. One is Sīndhura-yātra by Laksminātha and
the other is Anrta-manthana by Santadāsa. The manus-
cript branch of the library of the University of Gau-
hati preserves some dramas collected from the Sala-
guri-sattra, the Kovānakā-sattra and the Kāli-sattra.
Of these, mention may be made of Sītā-varjana, Pa-
nāknā Lhojana, Lavakusā āru Ṛmār Yuddha and Sīndhu-yātra.

44 G.I. Library, S, No. 173.
45 MS, No. 206.
46 S, No. 175.
47 G.I. Library, S, No. 173.
49 G.I. Library, S, No. 164.
50 G.I. Library, MS, No. 335.
The last drama is by Purnakanta and has the date 1333 Sana. There are two dramas, one by Ciraŋjiva Dūsa half ant the other by Jayadeva. The themes of the two dramas are based on the Rāmāyaṇa. The dramas are named as Sitār-jātāl-gamana and Rāma-vanavāsī respectively. The identity of the above two authors, however, could not be known. There is another drama, Jarāsandha-vadha, ascribed to one Gopa-la. There are few more works of unknown authority. Only two dramas are obtained from the Bhogbāri-sattra. One is Bāli-vadha by Mohakanta and the other, Drona-parva by Priyakanta. There is no date of composition in both the works. Yogānanda of the Kāsilā-sattra wrote two dramas—Baghāsura-vadha and Daksāya-yajña—In the last work, the author introduces himself as a son of Prthūrama (rāga- Sīndhūrā). The play bears the

51 D.H.A.S., MS, No.830.
52 D.H.A.S., MS, Nos.831,832.
53 G.U. Library, MS, No.558; D.H.A.S., MS, No.296.
54 In one copy of the Usā-haran (G.U. Library, MS, No.1497), the name Uttamaraṇa appears as author, but the other copy (No.874) of the same Library bears no name of the author. Prabhaṣa-yātra (No.465), Pāndava-vijaya (No.620) etc., are such other works, preserved there.
Mention may be made of two more works of unknown authority. The one is *Jayadrathavadha* and the other is *Sataskandha Rāvana-vadha*. One Baroram Saikia of Calcali gaon wrote *Dhruva-caritra* (undated) preserved at the Lāḷitāī-sattra. Ramākanta of Aibetti Na-sattra wrote *Vijayāsura-vadha*, a copy of which is found at Pitrabarī (undated). Atmananda of the same sattra is attributed with the writing of some five dramas like *Dandi-parva*, *Agni-purāṇa*, *Pāṇḍava Svarga-rohana*, *Abhimanyu-vadha* and *Śrīvatsacintā*. Ravicandra of the Sukdal Barbarī-sattra wrote his *Rajasūya* in as late as Saka 1371 = 1964 A.D. This shows how the tradition persists till modern times. Mention also be made of Torkra's *Yaduvamśa-dhvamsa* (1926). The author belongs to the Kāśilī group of sattras. Rādhā-haraṇ by Yaṉendradeva (now rare) and Hariścandra-ujākhyāṇa and Kulācala-vadha by Vamśīdhara of Bardowa also deserve mention. This period produced

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55 *B.U.A.S.*, MS, No. 142.
56 G.U.Library, MS, No. 337.
57 A copy under the same title is preserved at G.U.Library, MS, No. 556.
produced dramatists and poets even from the humblest ranks of life.

In recent times, the language of dramas in eastern Assam has become the spoken language instead of the artificial Brajabuli or Bhajavali-bhāṣā. They call it mātr-bhāṣā (mother tongue) which has replaced the artificial dialect and made it easy for the dramatists.

3. BIOGRAPHY AND OTHER SIMILAR WORKS

Next to dramatic composition, the biographies which are the product of the sattrā circle, deserve attention for their value as historical documents. These works contain ample materials related to the cultural, social, economic and political conditions of the whole period, besides religious. The writers followed the traditional method of Vaisnava poetry, but the themes were quite new and a novel type of prose was employed in it. The literary value of this branch of literature, therefore, can easily be imagined.
As was recorded either from the personal experience of the writer or from the tradition came down to him, this form of literature may be considered as the most valuable sources of information of the Vaisnava faith and movement as a whole. Some of them, of course, make confusions of some facts. The biographies may be divided into two groups—'carita' or 'caritra' and 'vamsā-valī'. The main difference between the two is that in the latter variety, the name of the author does not appear anywhere. Likewise in the prose caritas also, the author's name is not found in the body of the work. It is remarkable that the earliest and authentic biographer Daityārī Thākur was an admirer and follower of both Purusottama and Caturbhujā. Even his father Rāmacarana, Caturbhujā's maternal uncle, showed due respect to Caturbhujā when the former tried to settle some differences of opinion between Mathurādāsa and Caturbhujā.

58 Vidyānanda, vv.408-412.
59 Vidyānanda, vv.191-215. As for the work ascribed to Rāmacarana, see below.
It is seen that most of the biographers in Early Assamese belong to the Purusa Samhati. The entire biographies, written in prose, are the product of the persons affiliated to this schism. From that point of view, the contribution of the Samhati towards Assamese literature is of considerable importance. The prose literature of the mediavel Assamese period gained its ground within the sphere of the Samhati under review and it can, therefore, be accepted as the language of the Purusa Samhati sattras.

(A) Caritas written in verse:

Bhusanananda Dvija: It has already been noted in chapter I, about the work of Bhusana. The work gives an account of the Samhati. Bhusana's Sahkaradevar-carita, therefore, deserves special mention. The writer was a disciple of Purusottama Thakur and composed the biography in verse after the death of his guru. He was also the author of two dramas, Ajamila-upakhyaña and Syamanta-haran. Bhusana had undertaken the task of composing the

60 IKKI, p.29.
biography as desired by holy men. The author admits his own limitations saying that he has not been able to put everything perfectly. The biography, having more than nine hundred verses, paved the way for a host of writers on the life of the two gurus as well as of other saints of the faith. Bhūṣaṇa uses mostly two forms of metre, 'pada' and 'dulaḍi'.

Vidyānanda Ojha: Contemporary to Bhūṣaṇa, Vidyānanda is another prolific writer of the Samhati, who was a disciple of Caturbhūja Thākur. In his Thākur-caritra, of more than six hundred verses, Ojha declares himself as a disciple of Caturbhūja.61 Upto verse 119, Vidyānanda narrates the life and deeds of Purusottama briefly and then devotes the rest of the work in narrating about Caturbhūja. The rift between Caturbhūja and Mathurādāsa is recorded in his work. The biography consists of eighteen chapters written in three different metres, viz., pada, dulaḍi and chabi. Only four chapters are written in chabi metre and seven in dulaḍi and the rest in pada metre. For the study of the life of the

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61 v.121.
above two Thākurs, Vidyānanda's work is most reliable. The main reason for reliability is that the writer gathered his experience personally.

Vaikunṭha Dvija: Another biography, supposed to be of the same period, is Santamālā by Vaikunṭha Dvija. Though the identity of the author could not be traced, his writing proves that Vaikunṭha was probably an admirer, if not disciple, of one of the above two Thākurs. From the internal evidence of the work, however, its date will either come further down or will indicate some interpolations therein. In some recently copied manuscripts, where the name of the author is wanting, some sectarian and parochial statements are found. To put the garb of antiquity, some interpolators might have grafted such statements in Vaikunṭha's work. The author declares that he was asked by Purusottama Thākur to undertake the attempt in verse.\footnote{For an explanation of the work Santamālā, it may be referred to the article 'Santa Kathār Asanta Abhipraya' by K.D. Goswami, pub. in the Nowgong College Magazine, ed. by P. Patar, 1967-1968.}
Jayahari Dvija and Ratikānta Dvija: There are two minor works—both entitled Thākur-carita—one by Jayahari Dvija and the other by Ratikānta. Jayahari's work consists of two parts—Bar Thākur-carita and Saru Thākur-carita. The second part of Jayahari's work is, however, rare. As we have already noted, some of his verses resemble Vidyānanda's. Ratikānta's Thākur-carita is obtained incomplete. Ratikānta may be placed as a contemporary or even a posterior to Dāmodara Atā of whom he records some valuable information.

Bhadracāru: A celibate Gosāi of the Bhogbāri-sattra, Nowgong, Bhadracāru writes a biography of his maternal grandfather Anantarāya in more than one thousand verses. The work is important as it gives a picture of Gadādharasimha's persecution of the Vaishnavas. The poetical merit is also noticeable in this work. His presentation of the life of Anantarāya and his associates, as depicted in the biography, is vivid. The

63 vv. 412-506.
The evolution of different satras is given in the form of a question and answer between Anantarāya and Cakrapāṇī Vairāgī Atai. The author derived his inspiration from the work from one Deuri Atai and also from his maternal uncle Sopārāī. It must be admitted that Bhadracāru possessed considerable literary skill, though he composed the work in unconventional metres.

Aniruddha: A contemporary of Bhadracāru, Aniruddha, possibly of the Kowāmarā-sattra, wrote Guru-varṇāṇā in a small handy volume of four hundred and thirty-five verses. The author introduces himself as a disciple of Ramākanta Ata of the Narowa-sattra. Aniruddha mentions the dates of each important incident in his work. The biography exhibits the author's literary acumen and merit.

Hariaarayana: The Koreohg-sattra contributed a good number of works related to the Vaisnava faith and...
movement of Assam. Harinarayana, the great-great-grandson of Kesava Ata of the Korcoong-sattra, wrote a Thākur-carita of five hundred fifty verses in two parts. The work narrates up to his contemporary Rāmacandra Ata, grandson of Dāmodara Ata. The second part of the biography starts from verse 293, and from verse 313, Harinarayana starts saying about Purusottama.

The appointment of apostles by the two Thākurs as well as by Dāmodaradeva is clearly described by him. The work, from the literary standpoint, is of considerable value.

Candradasa: The writer of the Kesava-carita is Candradāsa, who gives his identity as a grandson (descendant) of Kesava Ata. The only available manuscript which goes up to verse 505, breaks off with an incomplete verse. Besides some valuable accounts of the life of Kesava and his associates, the Kesava-carita furnishes with some facts not found elsewhere. Whatever might be the value of the content of the work, it cannot be

67 v.543.
68 v.4.
admitted that the author was more than a mediocre poet. Candradasa possesses little originality in idea and expression, and as such, the work has hardly any poetic quality. In short, Candradasa is an ordinary poet. The author, however, employs different metres including jhumuri in his work.

Dvija Narayana and others: We have three different works under the title Bar-bhakta Vamsavali by three writers. Dvija Narayana, probably the great-great-grandson of Ramarama guru, is one of them. He writes about Bāpu Kṛśna alias Śrīkṛṣṇa, son of Satōnanda Bar-bhakat, in three hundred eightyeight verses. Ramarama’s grandson Narottama is another author who has written about Bāpu Kṛśna in two hundred ninety verses. The third one is written by Rāthak Vrajanātha, a disciple of the Eleṅgi group of sattras. This is obtained incomplete having only 31 folios. It can be better termed as a Vamsavali for it gives the ancestral history of Śrīkṛṣṇa. Another Ramanātha, a descendant of Śrīkṛṣṇa, is said to have
composed a biography under the same title.\textsuperscript{69} One Gadadhara composed a \textit{Thākur-caritra}, a copy of which is preserved at the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, Gauhati. Vibhunātha's \textit{Etaka Mahantar Satra-sthājanar Juna} and Yadunātha's \textit{Santamāla}, a small work written in the Kusuma-mālā metre, are two other minor works. One Īrāmānanda wrote \textit{Guru-gunamōla}\textsuperscript{70} of four hundred sixteen verses in the same metre. Beginning with Sāṅkaradeva, Īrāmānanda concludes the work with the description of Dāmodara's installation to the Superiorship.\textsuperscript{71} Few works of unknown authority may also be mentioned. \textit{Āi Lakṣmī-caritra}, \textit{Amūlya-ratna} and \textit{Āi Kana-kalatār-caritra} are the products of the Purusa Samhati, which are evident from the subject matter of the works. The question as to the authority of Rāmacarṇa \textit{Thākur}\textsuperscript{72} is a matter of dispute. Anyway, it is also a product of the Samhati under review.

\textsuperscript{69} Rūprekha, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{70} Pub. by M.C. Dev Goswami, Gauhati, 1963.
\textsuperscript{71} p. 44, v. 400.
\textsuperscript{72} SIT., pp. 22-23.
(B) Caritas written in prose:

It is already said that most of the prose biographies are the products of the Purusa Samhati sattras. Indrajit Gabharugiri, son-in-law of Purusottama Thakur, was the first man to write a biography in prose. Unfortunately, the work could not be obtained and, therefore, no remark can be given on it.

There is another prose carita ascribed to Rama-carana Thakur. But whether he is the same person who is said to have written the biography in verse, could not be known. The language of the available copies of Ramacarana's work suffered much at the hands of modern scribes. It is a small work giving Sankaradeva's activities in brief. Another biography, commonly known as Bardowa Carita (redacted by Puwaram Mahanta of the Khatara-sattra of the Salaguri group in the Bahil, vol. II, issue No. I to vol. V, issue No. II) was found in Bardowai.

73 SHT., p. 14; MKI., p. 144.
74 MSS preserved by (i) Purna Mahanta of the Sukdal Barbarisattra and (ii) Baladev Mahanta of Sojirigan, Nowgong. The first copy appears to be older than the other.
The most important work in prose, printed under the title Katha Guru Carita, has been able to draw attention of scholars and casual readers as well by virtue of its large mass of materials. Recently a manuscript has been obtained, where the name of the work appears as Ata Purus-savar Vamsavali Caritra.

In the second part of the work, the life and deeds of its orator Cakrapani Vairagi Atai, is narrated. Cakrapani used to reside at Bardowa and later on the work was recorded by some scribe.

(C) Vamsavali:

The Vamsavalis like Carita-puthi are also written in verse as well as in prose. Verse Vamsavalis are few in number. There are numerous prose works where lists of associate bhakats of each of the Gosais of a particular sattra is given. In both the cases, the name of the author or of the scribe is not found. Each devotee of a sattra used to keep such records in their own possession. Two different types of literary works may also

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75 SHT., p.15.
be added to this group. They are- (i) Vamśāvalīr-dīha
dīha, a kind of choral song which describes the genealogy), and (ii) Vamśāvalīr-gīta (song, describing a genealogy). Another peculiar form is shakat-māla, where the name of the Superior of a sattra along with his associates are recorded. This is performed by the successor to the Superior. The days of birth and death of principal bhakats are also recorded there. Bhagesvara ātā wrote Śankaradevar Urdha-adhah-purusar Vamśāvalī wherein the history of the four main sattras is given in brief.

We have only few Vamśāvalīs in verse. The Sarovā Gosāi Vamśāvalī76, the Satdal Vamśāvalī Caritra79 and

76 The system of preserving this holy scripture reminds one of the Ādala-āḷia, reserved at the Jaganmāthā temple at Āuri.

77 So far only one such work is found preserved at the Śāli-sattra. There is a process of enlisting the name of a devotee to be done by his successor.

78 Few verses of the work is quoted in H.H., p.142; also Rūprekha, p.181.

79 H.H., p.244, gives few verses from it; also Rūprekha, p.181.
the Kālsīlā Gosāi Caritra are the only three Vamsāvalīs in verse so far known. In the colophon of the last work, the line, 'Gopesvare bhare ḍāki bolā rāma rāma', is there. The identity of this Gopesvara, however, could not be traced.  

Innumerable Vamsāvalīs in prose are found in all the sattras of the Samhati. Moreover, some manuscripts of such works are preserved by some bhakats. These anonymous Vamsāvalīs are of various size and volume. The Diciyāl-vamsāvalī gives an account up to Caturbhūja Thākur and then starts saying about the origin of the Diciyāl-sattra founded by Khorā Gopāla. Another work, entitled Śrī Sāṅkaradevar Vamsāvalī-caritra, is obtained from the same sattra. It gives accounts of the Narowā, the Kowāmarā and the Korcong sattras. The work is, however, incomplete. The Čario-ghati Mahantar Thān-sattrar Vamsāvalī, obtained from the Āibheṭi Na-sattra, is a small

80 HKKI., p.248. Also the MS under the same title, found at Dalaiçubā, Nowgong.
work describing the development of almost all the sattras of each of the Samhatis. It is remarkable that these works embody some facts not found elsewhere. The Śrī-caritra collected from the Sukdalbarbarī-sattra gives the account upto Dānodaṛa Ṛtnī and the list of deputies of the two Phākurs.

The Guru-vahṣāvallī and the Dui Mahāpurusar Vahṣāvallī, both obtained from the Śrī-sattra contain records upto the beginning of the two principal sattras of the Samhati. The second work gives two separate lists of deputies of the two Phākurs. A Vahṣāvallī by one Naradeva was collected from Lalsicūṭa, Kougara, where similar accounts are available. A manuscript of the same nature was collected from the Koreāḥ-sattra, Kougara. Moreover, Vahṣāvallīs are obtained from the Śrī-sattra, Tusākanta Deva Goswāmi and Śraddhi Śāhīlagowā of Sardowa.31

Another work is by Candracara32, received from Śraddhi Śāhīlagowā of Sardowa. Few verses are also found

31 References to the last two works are made frequently in the work.
32 The name appears in the HCC, p. 322.
in the middle of the work. It concludes as follows:

'caṇḍacātra sânhe nata sare ṛti nāi/
'kālūti karīyā nāro peda-tale ṭhāi'//

(C) i. Vamsāvalīr-dihā:

Each sattra has its own dihā, describing the genealogy of the sattra concerned. Only the names of the deceased Superiors are included in such dihās. It is composed and sung by the women-folk at the end of their congregational prayer on certain occasions. Numerous dihās are composed in different sattras at different periods.83

83 The following may be taken as a specimen. The dihā belongs to the Kālāsilā-sattra, obtained from Suramāi Mahanta of the Naokatā-sattra, Marigaon, Nowgong.

'Rāmacandra yadudeva ananta āchilā
eṣa koṭi jale nāmi tole kāl-śilā//
E hari bhuvāneśvara bhailā
rāmadevāt dharma thāpi vaikuṇṭhe calilā//
rāmadeva rāmānanda devānanda deva
kṛṣṇasūryya ātāra caraṇe karō seva//
E hari jīvaraṇadeva bhailā
rādiḥkānte dharma thāpi vaikuṇṭhe calilā//
E hari pārṣakānta bhailā
yogānandat dharma thāpi vaikuṇṭhe calilā//
E hari vānērārāma bhailā
soṇīrānate dharma thāpi vaikuṇṭhe calilā'//.
These dihās have come down through oral tradition only.

34 The following dihā, describing the genealogy of Saṅkara-deva, belongs to the Narovā sattra:

'A hari e he daivakī-nandana ghāna śyāna
mandra tuliya laiā govardhana nāna/
A hari e he Saṅkara svarupe bhagavanta
bāri-mukhe bhāmaīyo daśāve yāra asta/
A hari e he Saṅkara svarupe tāni hari
śringāka nardilā prakā paśu bāri bhūja dhari/

* * * * * *

A hari e he purusottama caturbhujya deva
daśodara devara carahe karo seva/
A hari e he Saṅkara sāke rānṅkānta
tāhāra carahe mārā bhakati cānata/
A hari e he tāṅkha tanaya rāmacandra
āṅk-bharna pravartīyā jīva tārila/nta/
A hari e he tāṅkha tanaye rāmadeva
tūni vine śīrā vāsāha nāhi keva/
A hari e he tāṅkha tanaya bhāradeva
tūni vine aśātira gati nāhi keva/
A hari e he tāṅkha tanaya ākṣādeva
tāṅkha carahe pari nāhi karō seva/
A hari e he tāṅ kha chaya putra ańjìla
kapiṁthā dhanaśvara balīsatrre rāilā/
A hari e he sattra bhāgavata teho pāli
āṅk-bharna pravartīyā jīvāka tārīla/
* * * * * *

A hari e he vaiśīkhaara dūklī dovādaśi
vaikunthe saru ātā asta gaitā śī/nta/
A hari e he gana gana bolo rāma śīpī
saṅkīra tariśā yeve nāma lovhī śī?
ta//
In some sattras there are gītās instead of diivas giving the genealogy of those particular sattras. Such gītās are sung by the gāyan-bāyan party on a particular occasion. It is, therefore, not confined to the womenfolk alone. But in the four main sattras such gītās are not available.\(^{85}\)

\(^{85}\) The following gītā is obtained from Ramacarana Saikia, a devotee of the Koroṅga-sattrā, Jogong. The sattrā is one of the main sattras of the Bar Bāra-janīyā group headed by Brāhma Superior.

\[\text{Nara prabhu rāma keśava keśava hari} \]
\[\text{prathivita śila prabhu nara rūpa chari} //\]
\[\text{thākura deva saṅge bhakati labhila} \]
\[\text{sehi bhakti bhagavāna devata thā ila} //\]
\[\text{bhagavāne bhagTratha śirata thailanta} \]
\[\text{bhagTratha bharatat thā iyā gailanta} //\]
\[\text{bharatāko bhakti kariniśyaṇat dila} \]
\[\text{rāmacandra śire thā ila vaṅgūthe caila} //\]
\[\text{sehi bhakti jayacandra deva saṅpila} \]
\[\text{jayacandra rāmacandra devaśi cīla} //\]
\[\text{rāmacandra kṛṣṇa-līla kari prakāśila} \]
\[\text{rānarudre vaṅgūvali kathā prakāśila} //\]
4. **SONGS AND ADAS:**

Turuṣottama ḍākura was a poet of repute. His verses bear testimony of his learning and literary skill. His ṛa-ghosā is in no way inferior to the ṛa-ghosā by Lādhavadeva except that it followed the work of Lādhavadeva. As has been noted, Ludaṇ-bhāṣya and Santa-sāra are two other literary works ascribed to Turuṣottama. He also wrote a good number of songs (gīta) of which the following two are very popular:

(i) 'nigama kalpa-taru phala gālita haiyā ačhe/
    śuka mukhe dravi phala bhumiḥ parihe//'

It is written from the original Saṁskṛt work Bhāgavata purāṇa. The other popular gīta is an eulogy of Śaṅkara-deva. The first two lines are:

(ii) 'jaya jaya śrīmanta śaṅkara guru sāra/
    sugama bhakati pantha karilā prācāra//'.

Turuṣottama's younger brother Satrubhuja also wrote few gītas.86.

**Ananta Atā alias Ṛṣayānanda**: Ananta Atā, the founder of the Rāṣīlā-sattrā, is famous in the field

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86 Huprekaḥ, 167.
of Assamese literature for his popular work *Srīrāma-Kīrti*. Written on the model of the *Kīrti-Ghosa* by Sāmvara-deva, the work was completed in 1655 A.D. ('aśva ṣūna vaṇa caudra' = 1577 sāta). Another work on bhakti by Ananta Atā is *Arnalata* 57. In the work, the necessity of devotion is affirmed with appropriate citation for obtaining mokti (salvation). The author puts much emphasis on 'saprena-bhakti'.

Raghunātha Mahanta: The most important figure in Assamese literature of the early half of the eighteenth century is Raghunātha Mahanta, a descendant of the Eleōgi group of sattras. Some of his works are well edited by some scholars in recent times. Raghunātha may be honoured with the epithet of 'Rāmāyaṇa-kavi' (poet of the Rāmāyaṇa) for, all his works are

57 As declared by some (e.g., *Asamīyā Sāhitya Itivṛtta*, ed.5, 1967, Guahati, p.166), the work is not rare. There are two copies of the work, one with Pokra Mahanta, Kāmulīlā, Howgong, and the other with Lāda Mahanta, Kālīcūlā, Howgong. Both the possessors are descendants of Ananta Atā of the Elāsīlā-sattra.
related to the theme of the Ṛāmāyana. His Kāthā-rāmāyana brought him to the forefront of all his contemporaries. Kaghunātha’s prose style follows the predecessors like Saṅkaradeva and Bāchevadeva as found in their dramatic writings. Moreover, his prose is in the style of Kāthā-bhāgavata and Gītā-kathā by Vaiṣṇavānātha Bhaṭṭadeva. But at some places, Kaghanta’s prose appears to be simpler which shows a closer touch with the spoken language of the time.

As a poet of originality, Kaghunātha in his Adbhuta-rāmāyana reminds us of the ‘vāda-kāvyas’ by Cāndu-sarasvatī who, like the former, contributed some original works based on the Mahābhārata. The subject matter of the Adbhuta-rāmāyana is not found either in the original Ṛāmāyana or in the Dāchava Kandali’s translation. The verses of the work are suitable and attractive.

Another work of Kaghunātha is Satruṇījaya, written in 1735 A.D. The work is also named Kālir Digvijaya. The poet introduces his person in this work.

88 Rūpekhā, p. 174.
Karttikeya, the author of Śeṣker-carita, wrote a good number of songs, myths and dramas. The poet's command over different metres can easily be perceived in these songs.

One Śak-sālaga-nīrāgava by Śrīnanda is a work on Bhakti presented in the form of a conversation between Śākdraveśa and Nāḍavadeśa. Copies of this small work are found at many places. If we have one Śrīnanda, the associate of Śaṅkara, the identity of Śrīnanda is not ascertainable whether he wrote the book or not. Bhaṭk-t-pramāna-valī by Narottana is another work on Bhakti. The author states that he took his subject from the Śaṅkara-vata-urāna. Copies of this manuscript are available at many sattras of the Śaṅkara although nothing can be spoken of the author's identity. Tāṇa Ḍīrā wrote Lakti-pāñcāla which was redacted by one Lakhatarāṇa. The identity of the persons could not be traced.

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30 i. 3 of (i) the Koroneg-sattrā, f.13(b) and (ii) Candraśāna. 90 praktekā, 171.
A considerable number of songs and akadas were written particularly by the Gosāis of the Saṅkati. Of them, Rāmākānta Ṭātī first among these in point of time wrote some songs, eulogising Saṅkara-deva and Īḍhavadeva. These songs, with a refrain at the beginning, were put to music. As in Sargīta, Rāmākānta puts his name in the colophon of each such gītas. Cakrapāṇi Vairāgī Ṭātī also composed a good number of songs, particularly Bhāṭinās, on the model of Saṅkara-deva, the poet writes:

'saṅkarara bhṛtya kāke raṁākānta dākī boldī raṁā raṁā'.

At other place we find:

'heī saṅkarara sai bhṛtya raṁākānta cāraṇe sārām lailī dīyoka ekānta'.

Eulogies of Īḍhavadeva start with alike refrain:

'sārāva niṁchava niṁchave gati niṁchavara ūnc raunča nirvala bhakti'.

91 The eulogy of Īḍhavadeva begins with:

'nano niṁchava karī paritrānī riño bhikṣārī nāgō bhakti āṁā'.
Here the Vairāgī introduces himself as a disciple of Rāmākānta Ṭātī:

'raṁākānta cāraṇe lāgī ohi gīta rānta īśu vairā Ṭā'.

The poet puts his other name Vṛndāvaṇadhāsa in the concluding verse of his eulogy of Caturbhujā:

'vṛndāvaṇadhāsa kahe ohi tēśī nāme, raṁā kraṣṇa nāma nāra raḥoka vadana'.

92
of the guru bhaṭṭimā by Ṛdhava-deva. Similar bhaṭṭimās of other saints were composed at different times. Some of these, however, do not bear the name of the writer. Such a fine piece of writing is the 'vairāgī ātair-bhaṭṭimā', the eulogy of Cakrapāṇi, by some unknown author.93. Madan Ātā, son of Ruparāma Čākhara, and father of Candrasena, wrote some eulogies of Purusottama, Caturbhuj, Lāmodara and Kanākanta. Some of his verses are very fondly remembered by some old bhaṭkats of Čārdoṣ group. Apart from their devotional value, the literary importance of his verses cannot be underestimated. It is to be noted that his eulogies contain

93 It begins like the following:

'jaya jaya cakrapāṇi bhakta-vāḍava rāma
tonāra carāya kara śadāye prapāna'.

The last two lines of the eulogy are:

'tāna ṛte nora nana rahoka sadāya
kṛmā kṛmā hari rāma sadā ghorā pāya'.

Vairāgī had ten names like Āgarī-boṭalā, Ājīvāyā, Āuraṣā-迦urumā, Kanalaločca, Āśa, Čanvaručchā, Kegāi etc.
some important informations. We have two eulogies (bhātīmās) of Cakrapāṇi (airaVyr L 'cai, one of which is composed by Candrācāru. The identity of Candrācāru, however, could not be fixed. The other bhātīmā by some unknown poet, gives the name of Kamalalocana— the other name of Cakrapāṇi. Another Nadan Ātā of the last

94 In his eulogy of Caturbhujā, however, the name of the author is wanting. It is as follows:

'dharma śāstra bhāgavata sahite āmāra
āji dhari dāmodara jānā adhikāra
ēhi buli cali gailā vaikuṇṭha nilaya
bolā hari hari yata saubhāṣada caya'.

The next eulogy, written in praise of Dāmodara Ātā, bears the name of the poet:

'tālāne santati ranākānta aūne tānte dhāma thāḍilanta/
seki eine guhe śravane kṛtane adyāpi tānte ācārata//
tāna jāda jāda hṛdaye dhariyā vacane aeroka hāna/
ādane kakaya samājika caya qāri sabā rāna rāna'//.
The word 'adyāpi' suggests that he was a contemporary of ranākānta Ātā. Nadan Ātā was a disciple of ranākānta :
'tānte nora gati e dīlā saubhāṣati aūna bhaktā pura deva'.

95 The name of the poet is given at the end:

'candrācāru aūne nota pare ṛāji ṛāji
rākūti mitāνa vāgī pāda-bale ṛāji'.

96 It begins as follows:

'jaya jaya kamalalocana māla śiśta
yāta pare nākī nākī bhaktā garīṣṭa'.

century, who belonged to the Suddha Sarvarit-sattr, wrote few verses. Son of Aniruddha, Vada also wrote the drama Kaveran-param in 1671 ... In one Bhakti, this Vada mentions one Aniruddha. This Aniruddha may probably be a grandson of Anataraya. Besides some popular dramas like Sama-Vacha, Lakshadeva or Lakshmitanta wrote a book entitled Vaisnavahita. The rules for daily observances of religious formalities by the Vaishnavas are laid down in this work. Lakshadeva is not to be confused with Lakshmitanta Ata, grandson of Anataraya. Lakshmitanta was a scholar of repute and a good poet. His 'thi varnaharita' 97.

97 The Bhakti starts in this way:

'jaya jaya aniruddha tumi prakhu suddha buddha
santa rupa avatari asi bha deva hari
maharajacara dharna pravortiyai amkrana
lokata sichtara bhedo Tcaranta a jireeda
manto kanto rudra deva tumi 'jane karo soma'......

98 The gita gives the description of the Khandaka Sana:

'jaya jaya Latadrau vaiyatho dehy a
sahi thane niha jure Bhakti adaya',
Lakshmitanta's 'catina' (Hindi- Cantisā; lines beginning with the members of the alphabet) is another remarkable song.
song, has an extensively wide popularity. We have few more verses on different topics by different writers. Mention may be made of 'kewal-nām' where names of bhakats belonging to different periods appear in verse. It is notable that most of the Gosāis possessed poetical talent of a marked quality for such composition. But it must be said that in most of the writings of the time, spontaneity and inspiration is found wanting. The verses are conventional and imitative.

There is a particular form of aphorisms called 'phakara' or more commonly 'bhakatiyā phakara', which are the works of some Gosāis of the Samhāti and their followers. Nārāyaṇadāsa Ṭhākur Ātā, a contemporary of Sāṅkaradeva, and Purusottama Ṭhākur are commonly attributed with the coining of such aphorisms. In the period posterior to them, more such aphorisms obtained currency in the common language of the people.

Thus the Puruṣa Samhāti over a period of about three centuries had its own success in continuing the traditions
of Vaisnava poetry and drama, established by the great saints Śāṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva within, of course, certain limitations imposed by an age of decadance coming after a great period.