The early history of the Vaisnava faith and movement in Assam has been ably studied by scholars and literary men of note, and has thus been able to draw the attention of scholars in India and abroad. But very little is known outside about the later history and development of the movement: 'The Vaisnava history of Assam is a history of splits'. After the passing away of Sañkaradeva the main body of the Vaisnava Order tended to divide into groups. These divisions, known as Samhatis or Sañghatis, played important roles in the religious, literary and cultural life of the State. Of the four Samhatis of the post-Sañkaradeva Vaisnnavism, the Purusa Sañhathi, which claims to have retained the original features of the Vaisnnavism of Sañkaradeva and Madhavadeva, has been able to carry on with full vigour their activities in the fields of religion, literature, art and culture of the period with great zeal and some success. The other three Samhathi have also tried their best to maintain the tradition.
But the contribution of the Purusa Samhati in these spheres is of more considerable volume and importance than that of the other three Samhatis. It will have been seen in the following pages how the pontiffs and monks of the Purusa Samhati sattras earnestly carried on their activities despite economic hardship and the political unrest of the period under review.

The narrative is calculated to show in what ways the post-Sankaradeva Vaishnavism, particularly the adherents of the Purusa Samhati, developed their own special features in the later period. The materials are chiefly derived from the original sources which represent what may be called the Sardowa tradition. My study covers the phase of activities and teachings of the leaders like Purusottama and Caturbhujas, grandsons of Sankaradeva, and other followers of the faith down to the nineteenth century.

In October 1965 I started my work under the able supervision of Dr Maheswar Neog, Jawaharlal Nehru Professor and Head of the Department of Assamese of
the University of Gauhati. I remember with regret
the great help rendered in this connection by my
father, the late Shri Sivenara Deva Goswami, Sattra-
dhikāra of the Kāti-sattra. It would not have been
possible for me to complete the work without the
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in the post-graduate Department), who took a very
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I have to express my indebtedness to these two gurus,
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the present study came.

In preparing the map, I had to follow the map
given in Dr Neog's Sāmkaradeva and His Times. I have
to express here my gratitude to many individuals who
have very kindly helped me in my work.

Dibrugarh University
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Kesavananda Dev Goswami