CHAPTER III

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The fulfilment of the Śāṅkaradeva movement:

The last days of Śāṅkaradeva were spent in peaceful environment with King Naranārāyaṇa providing his patronage and Mādhavaḍeva giving his dependable support of a co-worker. The work of propagating the Vaisnava faith went on with great success. Both Śāṅkaradeva and Mādhavaḍeva composed a plenty of songs, dramas, verse narratives and other types of literature, wherein they expounded and elaborated the tenets of the faith. These literary works acted as the chief instrument of propaganda and catered to both enlightenment and pleasure to the people. Śāṅkaradeva wrote out all his major poetical and dramatic works in this period. All his dramas except the Viṣṇu-patiṇi-prasāda, were composed and produced in the course of Śāṅkaradeva's stay in Kāmarūpa. It was during this period that he compiled the treatise, Bhakti-ratnākara, from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, the Bhāgavadgītā and other bhakti and vedantic texts.1 Cilaray on one occasion gave him a copy of a work, called Jānma-purāṇa, and Śāṅkaradeva had it reproduced.

1. S HT, p.117
into Assamese in verse by Madhavadeva. In the final year of his life Sankaradeva wrote and produced the drama Fama-vijaya at Cilrāy's request and with his help.

A brahman scholar, called Ananta Kandali, the king of Hedemda, the Muslim tailor Cāndsāi and many others joined the Vaisnava camp. With the number of supporters increasing and the patronage of the king forthcoming, Sankaradeva felt quite secure and the neo-Vaisnava movement gained a firm foundation to stand upon. Although a section of people tried to disturb the movement, Sankaradeva was able to carry on the mission with greater success and increasing popularity. Cilrāy managed to build him a sattra near the capital, which became later known as Bhalādāngar sattra.

Death of Sankaradeva: Madhavadeva's succession to the religious gaddi:

Sankaradeva spent his last days in Koc Behar with his son, Fāmānanda, and a few other followers. Madhavadeva was at Gaṅak-kuci at that time. With the sterling pliability of his personality, great profundity of his scholarship:

2. Daityāri, vv. 870-873
3. KGC, p. 273
4. ibid., p. 198
5. ibid., p. 252
and immense depth of wisdom as well as his sweeping mastery over art, music and literature, Śaṅkaradeva greatly impressed the people including the king and the commander-in-chief, both of whom received the saint with great veneration. The king was very much willing to take ordination from Śaṅkaradeva, but the saint had the principle not to initiate a king, a practising priest or a woman as his disciple. The king had pressed on him again to initiate him into his new faith; but the saint suddenly fell ill with a fatal carbuncle in some part of his body, which made him shuffle off his mortal coils without having initiated the king into the faith.

Śaṅkaradeva had nominated Mādhavadeva as his spiritual successor. It has been stated in the ancient biographies of the saints that when his son Rāmānanda approached Śaṅkaradeva in his last moments for spiritual instructions, the latter advised his son to approach Mādhavadeva to whom he had transfused all his spiritual authority. He also advised Rāmānanda to treat Mādhavadeva as his guru and not as a friend or a co-disciple. On the day of Śaṅkaradeva's śrāddha all the followers came to know from Rāmānanda very publicly what had been said by his father.

6. KGC, p. 281
7. Daityāri, vv. 916-925; KGC, p.287
8. Daityāri, v. 922; Bardowa-carita, ch. 33
9. KGC, p. 291
about his spiritual successor. Accordingly, in all cheerfulness they all bowed down to Madhavadeva, and from that day Madhavadeva held the pontifical position in the Order.

Śaṅkaradeva had a good number of brāhmaṇ disciples including Damodaradeva, Ananta Kandali and Rāmarāma guru. Instead of nominating any one of these brāhmaṇs or his son Rāmānanda as his religious successor he nominated Madhavadeva who was neither a brāhmaṇ, nor a kith and kin to him. He did this because he did not take into consideration high parentage or any blood-relationship in nominating his successor. He only sought for a person having high spiritual attainments, good organising capacity and unstinted personality. Madhavadeva was the only person, amongst those around him, enjoying all these qualities. But this act of appointing Madhavadeva as his successor and religious head created some annoyance to a section of people. Damodaradeva was not happy to see Madhavadeva, a colleague as well as a non brāhmaṇ, as his superior. Damodaradeva perhaps had nurtured a hope that Śaṅkaradeva would nominate him as his spiritual successor. He came out of the Order, now headed by Madhavadeva as an ācārya, collected a group of Vaisnavas to form a separate schism under his own leadership. Out of anger he went so far as to deny his fealty to many things (including Śaṅkaradeva's Bhakti-ratnākara) except the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. Finding his

10. KGC, p.291
11. Daityārī, v. 1232
12. ibid., vv. 1324-1327
unfaithful to Śaṅkaradeva's works and taking note of his act of accepting into his fold a few persons expelled by Mādhavadeva, the latter severed all connections with Dāmodaradeva.\textsuperscript{13} Thus in the first year of Mādhavadeva's pontificial career, a division was marked in the Vaiṣṇava Order. Naturally many of the śārta brāhmans took the side of Dāmodaradeva while most of the Vaiṣṇavas in general remained with Mādhavadeva. Some non-brāhmans also, like Satānanda, the cousin of Śaṅkaradeva who could not bear Mādhavadeva as the head, are said to have gone to Dāmodaradeva's fold.\textsuperscript{14}

Mādhavadeva made Gaṅak-kuci his permanent abode and occasionally used to visit Pāṭbāusi to see Śaṅkaradeva's wife and family. He then lived for about a year at Pāṭbāusi at the request of his guru's wife.\textsuperscript{15} After some time Rāmadāsa, who lived with him, left the place and made his abode in a village, called Dhusuri. Mādhavadeva also went to Sundarīdiyā and built his temple there.\textsuperscript{16} After the lapse of some six years, Rāmacarana, son of Mādhavadeva's sister, Urvasī, went to Sundarīdiyā to enquire of his uncle's health and to have lessons in the Bhakti-ratnāvalī and the Bhakti-ratnākara from him.\textsuperscript{17} But Mādhavadeva kept his nephew with him almost all through the remaining years of his life.

\textsuperscript{13} Daityāri, v. 1328
\textsuperscript{14} KGC, p. 294
\textsuperscript{15} ibid., p. 295
\textsuperscript{16} ibid., p. 298
\textsuperscript{17} Daityāri, vv. 954-957
Rāmacarana served Mādhavadeva in the same way as the latter served Śaṅkaradeva.

Deputation of pontiffs of sattras:

Mādhavadeva had delegated the authority of administering śarana (initiation) to neophytes to several of his followers — Bar-Visṇu Ātā, Mathurādāsa, Bhavānīpurīva Gopāladeva, Vaṁśigopāladeva and Adhaliyā Yadumaṇi. Mādhavadeva also admitted Śaṅkaradeva's youngest son, Haricarana and Purusottama, the eldest grandson of the saint, to a place in the Order. The men deputed by him as religious preachers possessed pronounced organising ability and they carried on the work of proselytizing with great zeal. With these holy men Mādhavadeva fairly organised the neo-Vaisnava movement founded by Śaṅkaradeva in Assam.

Bar-Visṇu Ātā:

One of the chief apostles of Mādhavadeva was Bar-Visṇu Ātā. Originally his name was Kaṁsāri and his home was at Bar-Karāibāri to the north of the Brahmaputra. He met Mādhavadeva at Sundarīdiyā through Thākur Ātā and was very much impressed by Mādhavadeva's attainments and personality. Mādhavadeva, too, received Kaṁsāri very kindly and renamed

18. **KGC**, p.426
him on ordination as Viṣṇu. Madhavadeva authorised him to initiate the members of his family and other willing persons into the faith. Viṣṇu was living at Malacā at that time. Soon people came in groups to Viṣṇu, took initiation from him, and Malacā thus soon grew into a good sattra. Madhavadeva himself visited the sattra and took part in a dramatic performance, Nṛsīṁha-yātra. Viṣṇu Ātā got the orders (ājñā) from Madhavadeva to propagate the faith in Daksinākol or the southern bank of the Brahmaputra. He was very good a preacher and became famous as Daksinākulīyā Viṣṇu, that is, Viṣṇu of the southern bank of the Brahmaputra. The Camariyā sattra of South Kāmarūpa emanated from him. In this sattra Muslims are allowed to enter the kīrtana-ghar once a year. It is a system similar to that at the Jagannātha temple of Puri. 'Govinda Ātā of the Gāros' also seems to have had relations with this sattra.

Mathurādāsa Budhā Ātā:

Another principal follower of Madhavadeva was Mathurādāsa Budhā Ātā, who was earlier known as Gopāla. Originally a resident of Khana-khokora, somewhere in the Ahom

19. KGC, p. 305
20. ibid, p.306
21. ibid., p.314
22. Daityārī, v. 1169; Bhusāna, v.834
23. SHT, p. 136
kingdom, he settled, through many struggles in life, in the village Tātikuci or Barpeṭā and took to the profession of weaving. Mathurādāsa was one of the chief weavers (marā) who did the 'vrndāvanī vastra' (the celestial scarf), when it was being prepared by Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva.\(^{24}\) He had earlier followed the faith of Caitanya until he came in contact with Mādhavadeva and fell under his influence. Mathurādāsa with his eighteen followers was brought to the saint by Thākur Ātā. They met Mādhavadeva at Sundarīdiyā and were converted to his faith.\(^{25}\) Soon Mathurādāsa became a faithful disciple of Mādhavadeva and dedicated himself heart and soul to the preaching of dhākti. He arranged to take Mādhavadeva from Sundarīdiyā to Tātikuci, where a sattrā was started. When Mādhavadeva left for Koc Behār, Mathurādāsa was kept in charge of the Barpeṭā sattrā. Later Mādhavadeva presented him with a big piece of cloth (wrapper), two one rupee coins and a garland of mālati flowers, thus recognising him as ācārya, and placing him in permanent charge of the Barpeṭā-sattrā.\(^{26}\) After the expiry of Mādhavadeva, the Barpeṭā-sattrā became the centre of activities of the Vaiśnāvas with Mathurādāsa as its head. This noble hearted devotee had strictly followed the rules of the faith and had organised the sattrā and its functions and ceremonies in a systematic way.\(^{27}\) Even to-day

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24 KGC, p.271
25 ibid., p.339
26 ibid., p.649
27 Barpeṭā-sattrar itihās, p.38
the name of Mathurādāsa Budhā Ātā is remembered in Barpētu
with deep respect as the founder ācārya of the sattra.

Gopāla Ātā:

Gopāla Ātā of Bhavānīpur was a direct disciple of
Mādhavadeva. He took ordination from Mādhavadeva when the
saint had to leave his fellow devotees due to some troubles
and had to stay with him at Bhavānīpur for six months. When
Mādhavadeva returned to his own sattra, Gopāla followed him
and after staying with his guru for some days returned to his
own place at Bhavānīpur. After the death of Mādhavadeva, he
founded a sattra at Kāljār on the western bank of the small
t river Parolā.

Gopāla Ātā appointed from among his chief disciples
twelve apostles for preaching the faith, six of them being
brāhmaṇs and six non-brāhmaṇs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-brāhmaṇs</th>
<th>Chief sattras originating from the apostles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Yadumani, the</td>
<td>Bāhbarī, Dīhiṅg or Śilikhātal, Namāṭi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>senior*</td>
<td>Lēngdi, Sarmarā, Ḍhal, Telpānī,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Yadumani, the</td>
<td>Gajalā or Saukājān, Āmtalā, Cirāṭiyā,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>junior*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Aniruddha</td>
<td>Mayāmarā (or Mōwāmarā),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Narāyaṇa</td>
<td>Dahaghar, Hāladhiṅi, Cakalā, Kāthākucā,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Sanātana</td>
<td>Nagariṇī or Naghariṇī,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Kṛṣṇānanda</td>
<td>(No sattra)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. Pūrvānanda, Gopāldeva-carita, 17b–18 a
29. ibid., 32 a–b
Some writers, however, seek to include the following names:

- Paramānanda
- Pūrṇānanda
- Sanātana
- Saru-guru (the junior Brahman)
- Kṛṣṇa (No sattra)

Badaluwa Padma Āṭā:

Padma Āṭā met Mādhavadeva in Koc Behār. He was introduced to Mādhavadeva by Bhāṭamukucīyā Keśavacaraṇa, already a disciple of the saint. Padma Āṭā's earlier residence was at Nārāyaṇapur and he had joined the army as a shieldsmen (bāruwati) and had gone to fight against the Dafla. The sorrows caused by war touched him to the quick so deeply that he soon gave up the profession and began to spend his days.

30. SHT, pp.138-139
31. KGC, p.589
singing holy songs. Although he had been married to a beautiful girl, he abandoned all worldly attachments. In such a state of mind he met Mādhavadeva and got initiated into the cult of bhakti. Then he went out on a pilgrimage to the Ganges, and on return from pilgrimage, Mādhavadeva, presenting him a copy of the Nāma-mālikā, deputed him to the Āhom kingdom for preaching. He stayed for some days at Kalānibhetī where he started his preaching mission. After the demise of Mādhavadeva he established the Kamaiābārī sattra in the Mājulī. Several sattras were started at his direction, one of them was the Jarābārī sattra founded by Gopīnāth of Tipam.

Bhātāukucīya Keśavacarana Ātā:

Keśavacarana was a man from Bhātāukuci village on the bank of the river Kācikata in the present-day Lakhimpur district. On hearing about Mādhavadeva's reputation he came all the way to Kāmarūpa and met Bar-Visnu Ātā there. Visnu took him to Mādhavadeva, and the latter gladly accepted him. Keśavacarana was initiated into the faith and was accommodated into the cloisters of monks. He followed Mādhavadeva from Kāmarūpa to Koc Behār and remained with him till the latter's death. After that he continued his stay at the Madhupur-sattra in Koc Behār until Badaluwa Padma Ātā.

32. KGC, p.611
33. ibid., p.622
34. ibid., p.630
took him to the Ahom kingdom. Later on he started a sattra in his own village Bhataukuci. Three disciples were said to have received his order (ājñā) to found sattras: Jaya Āṭa of Jatiyārāṅg (Barjaha). Jagajīvana Āṭa of Cakala and Damodara of the Bhogpur-sattra.\(^{35}\)

Rāmacarana Thākur:

Mādhavadeva had once said that his foremost disciple was Rāmacarana,\(^{36}\) son of his sister Urvaśī. Rāmacarana’s father Rāmadāsa took his ordination directly from Śankaradeva. Rāmacarana lived with Mādhavadeva when the latter was in his old age and served him with all sincerity. After the expiry of Mādhavadeva he stayed at Guwāgachā where a sattra was started.\(^{37}\) His three sons and their descendants established different sattras. Rāmacarana had a good hand and he was a good copyist, a good reader and, moreover, a playwright as well.

Śrī-Hari:

Śrī-Hari, another disciple of Mādhavadeva, established a sattra at Lāiāṭi in the Majuli. He was a

\(^{35}\) Santa-sampradāya-kathā, p.20

\(^{36}\) Daityāri, v. 1526

\(^{37}\) Dutta Barua, Prācīna Kāmarūpar Kāyastha Samājar Itivṛtta, p. 282
native of Narayanapur. After he had undertaken a pilgrimage
he met Madhavadeva at Sundaridiya\(^{38}\) where he stayed for
fourteen years with him. Madhavadeva gave him directions
\(\text{\textit{\text{\tiny\ajn\u0101}}}}\) for receiving proselytes in the eastern part of the
country.

Govinda and others:

Madhavadeva deputed Lecākaṇīya Govinda to propagate
the faith in Darrang. There he established a sattra at
Khāṭarā or Khāṭpāra.\(^{39}\) While Madhavadeva was residing at
Hājo under orders of the king Raghudeva, he had the devout
services of another disciple, Lakṣmīkānta\(^{40}\) who also
established a sattra at Hājo which branched off into
Dhopāguri, Bardadhi and Sarudadhi. At Sundaridiyā
Madhavadeva initiated another Madhava, of Kāmarūpa, who had
been in the robes of a mendicant and had gone on a
pilgrimage also before meeting the saint. After his initia-
tion into the bhakti cult he turned a Vaisnava monk and got
orders (\text{\textit{\text{\tiny\ajn\u0101}}}}) from his guru to initiate people into the
faith. He settled at Heremda where a sattra was established
too.\(^{41}\)

\(^{38}\) Bardowā-carita, ch. 38
\(^{39}\) ibid., ch. 35; KGC, p.438
\(^{40}\) KGC, p.600
\(^{41}\) ibid., p. 629. His life is given in the old prose work
Parhiya Atar Carita, ed. with intro. by Maheswar Neo. The sattras coming from him are mostly situated at
Suwałkuchi in Kāmrūpa.
Gopāladeva or Vamśīgopāladeva\(^42\) was another disciple and active associate of Mādhavadeva. He also established different sattras at different times. He had been sent by Mādhavadeva to Dāmodaradeva for ordination. After the ordination he came back to Mādhavadeva and with spiritual delight spent seven years with him. He received orders from both Mādhavadeva and Dāmodaradeva to propagate the faith in the eastern part of the country. In this mission he had to face much troubles from some 'Baudhas'. Later on, he founded the Kāhīkuchi-sattra, but here also he met with difficulties and moved to a place called Kālābārī in the easternmost part of the Darrang district. Later he got help from two Āhom officers and established another sattra at Deberāpār on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra.\(^43\) In this sattra he installed the Madangopāla vigraha left by Sankaradeva at Dhuahat.\(^44\) This sattra, for some reason or other was subject to persecution by the Āhom royal quarters and Gopāladeva had to fly from place to place. But such was his organising capacity that he established as many as twelve sattras at different places during his flights from place to place.\(^45\) At last he established the Kuruābahī sattra on the bank of the Brahmaputra off the estuary of the Dhanśiri. His successors

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\(^42\) Bardowā-carita, ch. 37
\(^43\) M. Neog, intro. Vamśīgopāladevar-carita, p.xiv
\(^44\) Bardowā-carita, ch. 38
\(^45\) SHT, p. 144
established two great sattras of the Majuli, viz., Auniati and Gadamur. His early disciple, Banamalideva established another famous sattra, known as the Daksinpat sattra.

Vamsigopala was accompanied to the Ahom kingdom by Yadumani, a brahman disciple of Madhavadeva. Both of them got orders from the guru to propagate the faith and initiate people into the bhakti cult in the Ahom kingdom. Yadumani settled at the Adhaliya-grama and engaged himself in the work of preaching. The sattra originating from him and his sons are: Adhar, Mihar, Gharmara, Patiyari, Dokhoramukh and Kamalabarlya.

The persecution of Madhavadeva by the king of Kamarupa and his migration to Koc Behar:

Madhavadeva lived at Sundari for about twelve years. His work of propagating the faith was going on full swing and the common people came in great numbers into the fold of Vaisnavism. While at Sundari, he used to visit the surrounding areas of Bhavanipur, Kaljar, Barbhuti, Hajo, Ksetri, Jaberikuci, Vijaypur and Nilacala and initiate the villagers into the faith. Madhavadeva's visit to Hajo was occasioned by his desire to see Rajguru Kanthabhusana and

46. Auniati Sattra Burañji, p.47
47. Daksinpat Sattra, p.7
49. Daityari, vv. 1092-1106
the one to Vijaypur was planned so that Madhavadeva might meet the Saiva scholar, Asurāri Bhaṭṭācārya, who was greatly impressed by Madhavadeva's scholarship. Later on Bhaṭṭācārya suggested Madhavadeva to go to Nīlācala and Hājo so that the sharp oppositions of the enemies might be chiselled. Madhavadeva took up this suggestion and visited Nīlācala and Hājo although he refused to go to Kāmākiyā's shrine and "see the genital organs of the Mother". The Madhavadeva had to face some difficulties due to constant pillages caused by some wicked persons. Finding it troublesome to stay at Sundarī, he accepted the invitation of Mathurādāsa and left for Tatīkuci. Subsequent to his arrival, Tatīkuci became the centre of Vaisnavism for the bhaktas. Mathurādāsa and other apostles of Madhavadeva offered help to the guru in various ways. They felt the need of a big prayer-house and at the suggestion of Madhavadeva a temple was made by them on co-operative basis. It was decorated with glittering sand-mica sheets and tin-foils and its main doors were beautifully engraved with designs of flowers and creepers. It became a grand attraction for people and it came to have the names 'Rangiyāl ghar' or gladdening house, 'bar-ghar' or big hall and 'nautā-ghar' or 'dancer's (actor's) hall'. People from different places

50. Daityāri, vv. 1205-1223
51. KGC, p.451
52. Daityāri, vv. 1286-1287
came to Tatikuci to visit the temple and they embraced the faith in thousands. 53

Although Śaṅkaradeva had once advised Mādhavadeva not to build 'big prayer-halls' and not to arrange dances (connected with religious themes), it was at the suggestion of Nārāyaṇadāsa 54 that Mādhavadeva urged his people to build the large temple at Tatikuchi. With his quick insight Nārāyaṇadāsa felt that it would very much help in the work of propagating the faith by attracting more and more people to it, as there was Damodaradeva preaching from his sattra and attracting people to his side. Mādhavadeva accepted the suggestion and when the large hall was completed, various music, dance and drama programmes were performed in it. The playlets Bhojana-behār and Dadhimathana were staged in the inaugural ceremony of the temple. 55 Tatikuci at once reverberated with the sounds of songs and nāma-kīrtanas.

Mādhavadeva and his disciples, Gopāla and Viṣṇu, composed lively songs and wrote suitable plays for staging in it. The stage representation of the Rāma-yātra 56 brought the masses to the side of Mādhavadeva. These programmes served to a very great extent the propagation and popularisation of the cult introduced by Śaṅkaradeva. The increasing popularity of

53. KGC, p.453
54. ibid., p.443
55. Bardowā-carita, ch. 37
56. KGC, p.519; Bardowā-carita, ch. 37
Madhavadeva, at the same time, displeased an envious section of people. They did not hesitate to bring allegations against Madhavadeva, and even went to the extent of approaching the court of King Raghudeva. It was reported to the king that Madhavadeva had a temple built of gold and silver and he enjoyed dances by young maidens and embraced them in open. Raghudeva sent an officer, Surānanda Chawālya by name, with a batch of sepoys to Barpeta. They came to Madhavadeva and with sweet words entreated him to arrange for dances and holy songs for their enjoyment at the temple. While Surānanda was enjoying the dance and music of the playlet, Dadhimathana, at the temple, his men stealthily entered the residential huts of the monks and looted them. Surānanda, on the other hand, examined all the 'gold and silver' of the temple and found them to be mere tin-foils and sand-mic sheets. Examining the 'female dancers', he found that they were only young lads wearing artificial hair, coconut-shells, breasts and female costumes, and not girls as had been reported. Talking to Madhavadeva and his followers inside the temple the corrupt officer demanded of them two thousand rupees. The saint naturally expressed his inability to pay the fine. After this insulting behaviour Madhavadeva and some

57. KGC, p.555
59. KGC, p.556
60. ibid, p.556
of his men were taken by Surānanda to the capital. There the saint was kept in the bakhar-bhandār (magazine). Luckily, he got the help and services of a bhakta Gandharva Maji. This time Mādhavadeva did not have to face the royal court for trial as the hostile group withdrew all the charges against him. The saint was released with honour and the looted property of the monks also was returned to them.

On his way back to Barpeṭā Mādhavadeva had to initiate hundreds of people into the faith at Vijaypur. Thus after a stay of six months at the capital the saint returned with all honour. But before he reached Barpeṭā, Surānanda came again and tortured the monks by demanding a rupee from each. Mādhavadeva was deeply hurt at this act of Surānanda.

After one month and a half of his stay at Barpeṭā following this incident, a rumour was set afloat that the king was sending Surānanda again to arrest Mādhavadeva and his followers. Mādhavadeva decided not to face the king's men and, therefore, shifted soon from Barpeṭā to Sundarī under cover of nocturnal darkness. With twelve fellow monks he

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61. KGC, p. 558
62. KGC, p. 562; Daityāri, vv. 1440-1446
63. Daityāri, v. 1456
64. KGC, p. 563
65. ibid., p. 562
66. ibid., p. 566
67. Daityāri, v. 1458
came to Rāmacarana's house. The latter built a house for his uncle at a solitary place. After a month when they had learned that the rumour was a false one, Madhavadeva prepared to come back to Barpeṭā. Meanwhile, the king Raghudeva sent a writ to Madhavadeva to transfer his place of abode to Hājo. The Kathā-guru-carita says that the saint had sent a request to the king for a grant of land to sing the holy name. The king was instigated by some cunning persons to send Madhavadeva to the holy Vrndāvana. When the royal orders were issued to Madhavadeva accordingly, the people felt sorry taking the orders to be aimed at his exilement from the country. Due to the interference by some people, the king, however, agreed to send Madhavadeva to Hājo.

Accordingly the saint moved to Hājo which soon became the centre of attraction for the people in large numbers. At Hājo there was already one familiar attraction, namely, the temple of Hayagrīva-Mādhava. After Mādhavadeva's arrival at the place, the idol began to be called by people 'marā Mādhava' (lifeless Mādhava), whereas the saint went in contrast by the name, 'jiyā Mādhava' (living Mādhava).

All the way from Sundarī to Hājo the saint was received by large throngs of people coming to see him. At Hājo, he was received with great honour. The sound of holy

68. Daityāri, v. 1464
69. p. 368
70. Daityāri, v. 1468
songs and presentation of dramas and dances, all relating to stories from the scriptures and concerning directly or indirectly the God of his faith only, charmed and attracted people from far and near.\textsuperscript{71} The largeness of the gathering on the campus where Mādhavadeva was living exceeded by far the number of visitors to the ancient temple of Hājo. Mādhavadeva, therefore, rightly felt that this increasing popularity might generate envy among the brāhmaṇ priests. Fearing further disturbance he decided to proceed to Koc Behār.\textsuperscript{72} So, with some of his monks Mādhavadeva left Kāmarūga and with the help of an pious brāhmaṇ, Bhṛgu, managed to escape the eyes of Raghudeva's watchmen at Kumārguri check-post on the Sonkos and soon reached the capital of King Laksminārāyaṇa.\textsuperscript{73} There he stayed at Bhelādongā.

Further royal persecution resulting in the recognition of his faith as the state religion:

Mādhavadeva's arrival at Koc Behār gave pleasure to the people of that place. They came from all classes and sections and from all quarters to see him and were very much impressed by his personality. With the permission and help from the king Laksminārāyaṇa his followers managed to build

\textsuperscript{71.} KGC, p.571  
\textsuperscript{72.} Daityari, vv. 1467-1469  
\textsuperscript{73.} ibid., vv. 1486-1493
their residential huts and a prayer-hall as well. After spending six months Mādhava deva and his followers moved to Bhelā Madhupur. Soon he found it difficult to maintain his sattra because of a famine breaking out there. The monks had to return from day-long begging without any alms. However, the liberal rich people of the locality willingly offered donations so that the saint and his associates could live in comfort. Mādhava deva was very much respected by the officers of the royal court. The king's son, mother and nurse all came to him and got initiated into the bhakti cult.

Virūpākṣa Qāji, the king's minister, was highly devoted to Mādhava deva. But after sometime a sudden change came in the attitude of Virū Qāji when the latter found that two of his relatives who had already got initiated to the faith of Mādhava deva had refused to take cooked rice at his place. This enraged the Qāji, and his anger centred round Mādhava deva. He arranged for a debate between Mādhava deva and another man of same name Mādhava who was a brāhmaṇ from Bengal. But this Mādhava was exposed by Mādhava deva to be a man of no straw before Mādhava deva and his profound scholarship. The other brāhmaṇs in the gathering continued.

74. KGC, p.604
75. ibid., p.605
76. ibid., p.607
77. Daityārī, v. 1502
78. ibid., vv.1591-1594
79. ibid., v. 1595
80. ibid., v. 1601
the disputation, but all their points were sharply disowned by Madhavadeva. The Qâji could not bear the defeat of his men and the triumph of Madhavadeva. He would not, in particular, accept the latter's declaration about the superiority of Visnu to Mahesa. With the brâhmans the Qâji then took the foul way of insulting the saint with harsh words. The brâhmans, however, had the proper reply from Râmacarana.

Virûpâksa Qâji then went to the king and complained against Madhavadeva's alleged wrong teachings and his acts of demoralising people. The king arranged debate between Madhavadeva and some scholars from the west. Once again Madhavadeva's scholarship as well as his faith came out triumphant. This time the king honoured Madhavadeva by declaring his faith as the state religion.

The last days of Madhavadeva:

Although he had to face so many troublesome situations all through his life, the last phase of Madhavadeva's life was comparatively peaceful. Recognition and patronage by King Lakshminarayana also helped his faith to stand on a firmer footing with renewed strength and vigour. During this period, he offered bhakti-dharma to six scores of queens and

81. Daityari, vv. 1612-1619
82. ibid., vv. 1620-1624
83. ibid., v. 1639
the other members of the royal family. He conferred the religious title 'medhi' upon a woman, Dayāla, to act as spiritual adviser to the queens. Viru Qāji and the brāhmans, who had stood against his faith could no more find an excuse to do him any wrong consequent on the establishment of the truth of his faith on a wider basis in the open debates with the scholars. In such a state of mental calm Madhavadeva was engaged in achieving two of his lasting performances. One was the composition of the ghosas (verses) of the final part of the Nāmaghosa which had already been composed partly and had been almost complete during his quiet stay at Sundarī. Now these compositions were arranged in order to form appropriate parts of the Nāmaghosa. The other and no less important task was performed at his orders by Rāmacarana Thākur. It was to collect the different sections of the Kirtana-ghosa of Sankaradeva, all lying scattered in several places, to give it the completeness of one single volume. Madhavadeva was exceedingly glad to see Rāmacarana Thākur to have done this work so ably, arranging its chapters in proper order. During this period Madhavadeva also translated, at the request of Virū Qāji, the Sanskrit work Nāma-mālikā of Puruṣottama Gajapati.

85. KGC, p. 662
86. Daityāri, v. 1565; Bardowā-carita, ch. 38
87. Daityāri, vv. 1576-1583; KGC, p. 651
88. Daityāri, vv. 1508-1509; KGC, p. 628. Puruṣottama Gajapati was a king of Orissa.
saint could not have much satisfaction at his rendering as he had derived while completing his own Namaghosa. In the concluding verses of the Namaghosa there is vivid indication of a fully composed and peaceful state of mind of the saint.

Madhavadeva had borne with complete ability the heavy burden of preaching the cult placed so rightly on his shoulders by his guru, Šāṅkaradeva. He was a great organiser who could unmistakably spot out the abilities hidden in the individual fellow devotees who flocked around him. As a result of the united efforts of the group, the neo-Vaisnavite doctrine took definite and firm shape with numerous branches of sattras that had been established. But the heaviest task that the great preacher Madhavadeva had to perform was to select a worthy person as his spiritual successor. The task was not an easy one. Once before he had admitted Purusottama, grand-son of Šāṅkaradeva, to a high place in the Order by offering a wreath on his head. On another occasion he had said that Šāṅkaradeva's youngest son, Haricarana, and his nephew, Ramacarana, were the real disciples to represent him in Hari-kīrtana. Yet, perhaps, he seemed to have some hesitations, and when the monks wished to know explicitly as to who was to be his successor, he had to muse deeply as he had really seen none with proper integrity to be worthy of

89. Nāma-mālikā, v. 10
90. KGC, p.426
91. Daityārī, v. 1524
the burden. His guru, Śankaradeva, was in a far advantageous position in this respect in finding in Mādhavadeva himself the person of his choice. But now Mādhavadeva saw no suitable person amongst his fellow bhaktas bearing the proper qualifications. Although he had appointed twelve selected devotees specially to preach the faith, he could now point at none particularly as his religious successor. So he adopted a novel procedure and offered to his following as his 'successor' the holy Nāmaghośa, in which all his lifelong experiences had been reflected. He remarked that those who would want him would be able to find him in the very heart of the Nāmaghośa itself. He had stored in it everything that he had to give to his fellow devotees and to all others.

In the last few years of his life, as has been already mentioned, Mādhavadeva spent his time quite peacefully, living it fully and having enjoyed life to the brim in perfectly spiritual benignity. He could draw respect and honour from everyone who came in contact with him. King Laksmīnārāyana had expressed his desire to take initiation to bhakti from him; but before it could be given effect to, the end came soon to his life, which occurred due to some troubles of the kidney. He breathed his last on the second

92. Daitrāri, vv. 1561-1565; KGC, p.650
93. KGC, p.650
94. ibid., p.749
bright (lunar) day of the month of Bhādra, 1518 Śaka (August-September, 1596 A.D.).

Mādhavadeva's life was one of continued self-sacrifice and one absolutely dedicated to the service of his guru and the Order. Catholic in his views, he was an uncompromising reformer. Already making his mark as an officer of the state at Bandukā and a tradesman, Mādhavadeva, with his versality, supplemented Śankaradeva's genius in art and in organization of the Vaiśnava movement, which accelerated the pace of a renascence of literature and fine arts. With his great personality, silver voice and magnetic touch of his pen, Mādhavadeva brought a new light to the social, cultural and literary life of Assam.

95. Daityārī, v. 1714; KGC, p. 757; Bardowā-carita, ch. 38