

# The Crest of the Tide of Renaissance

## Sankaradeva's Kirttan-Ghosā

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To read Sankaradeva's Kirttana click [here](#). To read a sample translation (English) of one of the Books, click

below: -

[http://atributetosankaradeva.org/Veda\\_Stuti.pdf](http://atributetosankaradeva.org/Veda_Stuti.pdf)

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Sankaradeva entered his fortieth year in His first pilgrimage in between his visits of Baraha Ksetra and Prayaga. It must have occurred about 1492 that he was made over his dukedom which he managed through his son-in-law, Hari Bhuya, and was also engaged in teaching and preaching his new faith sitting in his prayer-house built by his cousin Ramrai. These events were soon followed by recitation of the *Bhagawat* to him by Jagadis Misra of Trihut; but before this was done, Sankaradeva clearly told the Brahman that he had already composed verses and songs on the Bhagawat and would like to see whether the purports were in full agreement or not. While thus talking the Bhaktas came and sang the verses and songs of Sankaradeva in his prayer-house to the great wonder and admiration of Jagadis; and it is on the next day that he executed his mission.

Ramcaran clearly says that it was *Kirttan-Ghosā* sung as by Ojha-Pali (v. 2179). This took place sometime after the historic union between Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva, at Dhuyanhat where they stayed for fourteen years definitely. So the composition of the Kirttan-Ghosa was commenced sometime in the last decade of the fifteenth century, in parts. The fact of early composition of the Kirttan is also supported by Daityari when he says – “*Prathamate karilanta Kirttanar chanda*” (v. 96), and also by his verses (98-99). This appears to refer to the historical fact of invasion of the Kacari kingdom by the Ahoms in November, 1526, by Cuhunmung or the Dihingiya Raja (1497-1539).

But any way, the Kirttan Ghosā may not have been completed till very late in Sankaradeva's life at Patbausi. It is corroborated by the fact of its parts being found in lower Assam by Ramcaran and confirmed by the compact style of the work all through. But it seems certain that all the poems of the Kirttan-Ghosā were not collected together till after the death of Sankaradeva (1568), and till sometime before the death of Madhavadeva (1596) at Kocbehar where the complete collection was handed over to him by Ramcaran, the latter's nephew. A detailed account of it is given by Daityari (vs. 1656-74). It appears that the different poems of the Kirttan-Ghosā were thus scattered, for people took them away to make copies. But they must have been well-devised earlier, for when Madhavadeva got it from Ramcaran and examined whether it was in 'proper order' he found it quite all right (vs. 1576-77). Madhavadeva then divided and employed four persons to copy which they did in about eight days (v. 1577). Madhavadeva himself of course made an earlier attempt to collect the several poems of the Kirttan-Ghosā, but then he was busy in other things and the different poems were widely distributed, and because he came to Kocbehar, he could not accomplish it (v. 1575-76). This also gives a clue to the extreme popularity of the poems even at that time.

The Kirttan-Ghosa (*Kirttana-Ghosā*) consists now of nearly thirty little books. They are all written in a large variety of metres and rich in all virtues of true poems. The *Kirttan-Ghosa* and the *Dasam Bhagawat* by Sankaradeva and their companions *Nām-Ghosā* and *Ratnāwali* by Madhavadeva are the four great works anyone of which is placed on the altar (Thāpanā) instead of an image and is worshipped by the Vaisnavas of Assam. The *Kirttan-Ghosa* in particular occupies a place in no way inferior to the place occupied by the *Gita* in all-India Vaisnavism. As a literary masterpiece too, the Kirttan-Ghosa is no less worthy than the Gita for the Assamese mass people. It commands a poetic excellence and sublimity that may be equaled by few in any great literature of modern times.

Though in a modern Indian language, the Kirttan-Ghosa hardly lacks the majesty and serenity of Sanskrit. Sankaradeva combines transparence with terseness of language so much so that his translations run parallel to the original Sanskrit verses: -

*na ganga na gaya setum na kasi na ca puskarām  
jihbage vartate yasya Harirityaksaram dvayam*

Hari hena ito duguti aksar jihba agre thake yar  
ganga gaya kasi puskar setuk jaibaka nalage tar

yahar mukhat thake Hari hena nam  
ganga gaya kasi puskarato nahi kam

## CATURVIMSATI AWATAR

The First Book of the Kirttan-Ghosa is *Caturvimsati Avatar Varnan* (Description of the Twenty Four Incarnations) beginning with the verse: -

prathame pranamo Brahmarupi Sanatana  
sarva avatarara karana Narayana 1

First I salute Brahma Who is Narayan and the source of all incarnations.

This very first half-verse of the Kirttan-Ghosa brings home to the reader in clear terms the philosophy of Sankaradeva. The language has at once the serenity and majesty of classics and does not compare ill with such lines of Jayadeva - "*pralay-payodhijale dhritavanasi vedam*". If brevity and compact expressions are of any high merit in descriptions, the twenty-four incarnations clearly described in such as the following and other few lines of the first four poems (vs. 1-33) must be considered highly admirable. The following half-verses, giving the names of incarnations in the first two poems, are quoted for the rhythm and majesty which *pada* or *payar* of a modern language is capable of: -

tayu nabhi kamalat Brahma bhaila jata  
yuge yuge avatara dhara asamkhyata 1  
Matsya rupe avatara bhaila prathamata  
uddharila veda prabhu pralaya jalat 2  
Kurma avatara bhaila ksirodadhi tire  
laksa praharara pantha jurila sarire 3  
dibya jajna Baraha swarupa bhaila tumi  
lilaye dantar agre uddharila bhumi 4

adi daitya Hiranyakasipu baliara  
 Narasimha rupe hia bidarila tara 5  
 Bamana swarupe Aditir vakya pali  
 Indraka thapila chale Balik nikali 6  
 bhailaha Parasurama name avatara  
 pradaksina kari bhumi tini sata bara 7  
 Siriramarupe Kausalyata avatari  
 vanabasa khapila pitrira vakya dhari 8  
 Rohinita bhaila Halirama avatara  
 Dvibidara prana laila musthira prahara 12  
 Buddha avatare veda patha kari channa  
 bamanaya sastre mohi acha sarvajana 13  
 kalira sesata haiba Kalki avatara  
 kati-mari mleccchaka kariba bundamara 14

## NAMAPARADH

The Second Book *Nam Aparadh* deals with the sins accompanying disrespect for **Nam** (prayers, the Lord's Name) in two poems (vs. 34-72). Sankaradeva mentions that he narrates this from the Sarga Khanda of the *Padma Purana*, and that the original work came to him from Benares. On such authorities he says that the vilest of the sinners may be delivered from the miseries of the world by being initiated to Hari by means of devotion through the **Lord's Name**. To hold the devotees (Bhaktas) in contempt, to differentiate the merits of the Names and Glories of Visnu and Siva; to neglect Nam and even knowing it as (purport of) the Vedas, condemning it now and then, to argue against reciting the **Name of Hari**, to trifle the Glories of Nam (prayers), to contemplate doing sinful deeds in the name of Nam, to put sacrifices and pilgrimages etc., on the same position as Nam, to be indifferent to Nam while one is reciting it, to give the sacred gifts of Nam to those who are not really respectful to it, and lastly to hear the Glories of Nam every day and yet entertain no love for it : these ten are the sins against Nam. One can easily recover from these sins also simply by the panacea of singing the **Name of Hari** ever and anon.

Sankaradeva then brings home the seven successive psychological stages by which Nam works in human mind: First, it burns away all the sins; second, it arouses great merits; third, it brings aversion to worldly pleasures; fourth, it gives birth to **love for Krsna**; fifth, it generates the spirit of single-minded devotion to God; sixth, it burns to ashes all *maya* (illusion), and finally it makes the devotee one with Hari (God) Who is all-joy and all-life embodied.

## PASANDA MARDAN

The Third Book, *Pasanda Mardan* (Subduing the Vile) consists of four poems again (vs. 72-146). This was the book written as a retort to the Brahmans who envied the Bhaktas. Daityari says (vs. 712-24) that the first retort of Sankaradeva being too strong was modified by him at the instance of Madhavadeva: -

kariya kalita Kirttana ati  
 pawe Vaikunthaka cautrisa jati 73  
 satya yuge kari dhyana samadhi  
 tretata samasta jajna aradhi  
 dwapare puji nana Bhakti bhawe  
 kalit Kirttane si gati pawe 74

By Kirttan (recitation of God's Name and Glory) alone in the Iron Age, all the thirty-four castes of

people can secure Vaikuntha. What could be gained by meditation in the Gold Age, by sacrifices in the Silver Age, by [ritual] worship (*puja*) in the Copper Age, can now be secured in the Iron Age by **Kirttan** alone.

This is re-echoed in the *Nam-ghosa* (v. 399) by Madhavadeva.

The references to the various scriptures given even in poems supporting himself are interesting and they show how extensively Sankaradeva studied and how intensively he dived into his subject (vs. 77-87). In the second poem Sankaradeva asserts that even if one person condemns a man of low caste singing Glory of God, he at once loses all the merits that he acquired all through his life and goes to hell (v. 89). “If you would not believe in what I say, better consult the *Suta Samhita*”. Again, he says that the hearing and reciting the **Name of God** is the harvest reaped by sowing the seed of a selfless work dedicated to Visnu (God): -

amar bole apratyaya yaha  
Ekadasa Skandha bicari caha 96

If you would disbelieve my word, you may consult the Bhagawat, Book Eleven.

In the third poem of this Book, Sankaradeva pushes the point further and says: -

sito candalaka garistha mani  
yara jihbagre thake Hari bani 112  
sehise kulina vedaka buje  
yahar mukhe Hari Nama sije  
Parama Tattwa jani Dewahuti  
Trtiya Skandhata karila stuti 113  
nalage lina mukutiko tatha  
nahi Hari-pada pankaja yatha 114

That outcaste is certainly superior who has the **Name of Hari** in his lips. He alone is of high caste and understands the Vedas too who sings the **Name of God** freely. Knowing this great truth, Dewahuti, in the Book Three of the Bhagawat, prayed that she would not prefer the salvation to be merged in God where there is no adoring of the Lotus-Foot of Hari.

nalage dewa dwija risi huiba  
nalage samasta sastra janiba  
michate mare ana karma kari  
howanta Bhakatit tusta Hari 121  
Saptam Skandhata Prahlada bani  
dekhio vicara kariya ani 123

Need ye not be a god or a Brahman or a sage. Need ye not know all the scriptures. Needless it is to be mortified with the burden of rituals. God is well pleased with Love (Bhakti) [...] Find this as the message of Prahlad in the Book Seven of the Bhagawat.

In the fourth poem, Sankaradeva says that *tantras*, *mantras* and other things have the defect that the slightest departure may corrupt them, but **Nam** can well accomplish any noble object: -

sarira savaka mai bole citte  
mamata kare putra bharjya bitte 132  
tirtha buli kare jalata suddhi

pratimata kare dewata buddhi  
Vaisnawata nai isava mati  
garuto adhama Krsna vadati 133

Krsna says, he who mistakes the corpse of a body for the Self: pins his faith in his son, wife and money; wants to purify himself with water calling it pilgrimage; mistakes an idol for God ; must be more silly than a bullock. A Vaisnava (true devotee of God) cannot have such foolish ideas.

## DHYANAVARNAN

The Fourth Book is *Dhyana varnan* (Description of Meditation). It consists of two beautiful poems (vs. 147-174) full of classical splendour and able to match any such description in Sanskrit in the majesty of its verses. The first poem describes paradise and the seat there-in of **Narayana**. Then he describes the seat of God in Paradise which may easily match with the sublimity of description in any language. In the second poem Sankaradeva describes the person of Narayana (Visnu) from the Feet up to the Head, the outlines of which are so impressive that they may be better compared to a masterpiece of a Greek sculpture than to a Raphael's painting.

## AJAMIL UPAKHYAN

The Fifth Book (vs. 175-216) is *Ajamil Upakhyan*, the story of Ajamil, a Brahman who became fallen in a public woman and not only gave up his caste functions but also became addicted to the blackest sins possible and approached death. He had as many as ten sons by the woman, the youngest of whom was named 'Narayan' out of mere affection. At the last moment by dreading death he unwittingly called his youngest son by name, and immediately to his pleasant surprise four messengers of Visnu came for his rescue, for it was a **Name of Krsna** (God). So the first poem (vs. 175-84) of this chapter moralizes by saying that the blackest of sins are immediately washed away when the Name of God is pronounced even unwittingly. The other three poems also hang other advice on the efficacy of Nam on to the peg of this story. The second poem (vs. 185-94) commences with a discussion on the superiority of **Nam-dharma** as an atonement which lies in the fact that while after subjecting oneself to other forms of atonement one may fall back on it: -

citta sodhana Harira Kirttana  
papara alu ubhanje 185

Singing the Name and Fame of God (as an atonement) purifies the heart and uproots the very evil.

Sankaradeva gives many a simile to prove the efficacy of Nam to the hilt. He says that as the fire, whether intended or not, burns away all combustible materials before it, so the Name of God, pronounced wittingly or unwittingly, burns away all sins. Again, as a great medicine taken even without knowing its virtues, removes all diseases, so one who utters the Name of God even in spite of himself shall of course be delivered from all miseries (v. 187). Elsewhere he says: -

bisa buli amrtaka pile yito nara  
nuhibeka jano sito ajara amara

Is not a person sure to overcome old age and death when he takes ambrosia (*amrt*) by mistaking it for poison?

Thus in the third poem he repeats that prescribing any atonement other than Nam by the sages themselves, is like prescribing any medicine even when there is the king of medicines that can revive one to life. So also in the fourth poem he extols the glory of Nam and its suitability to the modern age, saying: -

kali yuge ara anyatra dharmata  
karo nahi adhikar 207

No one has any right to any other religion (save prayer).

Also, in the Solar Eclipse, it is prescribed to give one crore of cows to Brahmins, to stay in the water of the Ganges about Prayaga for long, and one may make a million of sacrifices and make gifts of gold; but all these heaped together cannot equal one hundredth part of merit that Nam (prayer) alone can acquire. Nay, he says much more than this: 'Nam can destroy the sins to such an extent that it is beyond the sinners to commit so many sins'. Elsewhere: -

Hari Name yata papa samhariba pare  
pataki tateka papa karite noware

## PRAHLAD CARIT

The Sixth Book is *Prahlad Carit*, life of Prahlad, the great Saint. It is of considerable dimensions and contains as many as twenty two poems. The first poem begins with the four accomplished persons (Siddhas), all born of Brahma's mind, coming to Vaikuntha and all naked. Sankaradeva gives a preliminary idea of Vaikuntha in a few lines of this poem of *Jhuna* metre: -

ati anandita Visnura sthane  
save caturbhuja purusa mane 219  
yateka ramani Laksmi pratyeka  
kalpa-taru sama brksa yateka 220  
gawanta Krsnara guna-carita  
anandate drawe savare citta 221

In this joyous place of Visnu, all men are four-handed (like Himself). All women are like the goddess of wealth herself. All trees are equal to the great wish-yielding tree. While they sing the life and Glories of Krsna, the hearts of all dissolve in joy.

In the second poem too Sankaradeva gives an excellent picture of Paradise with a few more brushes of his pen in the beautiful brief *jhuna* or brief-*Ekawali* metre: -

Vaikuntha Nagari nirupama  
nahi yata kalara vikrama 230  
murti dhari veda-sastragana  
kare berhi mahima kirttana 232

The city of Vaikuntha has no comparison. Time has no influence over it. The Vedas and other scriptures embody themselves in human forms and sing the Glory of God.

The four sages then came to the seventh gate of heaven which was kept by two persons also bearing resemblance with Krsna's appearance. The sages came in without asking the gate-keepers at which the latter, enraged, pulled the sages back. The third poem opens with the curse of the sages described in the *jhuna* metre now applied to express *vira rasa*: -

vaisnava bola tora duyोजना  
Vaikunthabasira nohe laksana 241  
parisada bolai karasa cati

nohika Vaisnava duyō kapati  
Vaikuntharo ana duryasa vara  
aira para tora duhanto para 242

You say you are two Vaisnavas. But you do not possess the virtues of the citizens of heaven. You pride yourselves as the attendants of Krsna, but you are not Vaisnavas; both of you are hypocrites. You are bringing bad disgrace for Vaikuntha itself. So get you down from hence.

The gate-keepers who were no other than Jaya and Vijaya, being thus cursed to be born of demons on the earth, fell on their knees and prayed not for pardon, but for blessings of loyalty to God: -

apona karme yao adhogati  
Prabhura pawe nacharoka mati 244  
tomasata mago eteka bara

We go down by our own misdeeds. But we pray that you will bless us to be faithful to the Feet of God.

In the fourth poem the four sages offer their prayers to Krsna who in the fifth poem Himself apologizes to them saying: -

sewake yadi kare apakara  
pawe apayasa swamika tara 266

If a servant does a mischief the discredit goes to its Master.

And in the sixth poem, the sages pray once more in beautiful quick verses of *Jhumuri* or *Gajagati* metre: -

Tomara vacana Swami : nubujilo eko ami  
apuni Iswara huya : bolaha kariyo daya 275  
manya kari Brahmanaka : siksa dila samanyaka 278  
dharma patha raksa kari : srsti pravarttowa Hari 279

O Lord, we fail to appreciate what you say. By showing respect to Brahmans, you simply teach the ignorant, and by keeping the religious ways intact, you are maintaining the creation. O God.

So on and so forth. In the ninth poem Sankaradeva describes how Brahma satisfied with Hiranya's meditation, granted the interested boon asked for: -

kato hante nuhibeka mohora marana 310  
namaribo ratri dinata mrityu nauka  
astre-sastre maribaka nowaroka moka  
miloka mahima mora tomara samana  
diyo ehi vara Brahma namagoho ana 311

My death will not take place in the hands of any being (created by Brahma), People of the three worlds shall seek shelter under my arms. I must not die by day nor at night. No weapon whatsoever shall kill me. Let my greatness equal yours. Grant me this much of boon, O Brahma, if you would. I seek no more.

In the tenth poem Sankaradeva describes **Prahlad** as a great Bhakta indirectly reminding the

reader what a devotee shall be: -

Prahlada Vaisnava bhaila ati  
Visnuka cintanta dine rati  
indriyaka kariya niyama  
pranika dekhanta atma 321  
rupe-gune vidyata pargata  
nahi garba tathapi manata  
dukhato udbeg nohe citta  
nahi spriha sukhato kincita 322  
panca barisate mahamati  
krirha eri kararnta bhakati  
nitante Harika kare dhyana  
Hari bine nedekhanta ana 324

**Prahlad** became a great Vaisnava. He used to think of Visnu day-and night. He controlled his senses and considered all living beings to be like himself. In form, virtues and learning, he headed all others, and had yet no pride. He could not be moved by woe nor had he any desire for weal. He had a master mind even in his fifth year, and would be devoted to divine love giving up play. He would whole-heartedly meditate Hari and would see nothing but Hari.

In the eleventh poem is described how his teachers asked Prahlad who taught him that anti-demon doctrine and who led him astray and how Prahlad replied: -

cumbakara kache loha bhrame yena thane  
bhinna bhaila buddhi mora Visnu sannidhane

As the iron is attracted by the magnet towards itself, so my intellect is changed (from anti-Vaisnavite doctrine) by the presence of Visnu Himself.

kolata baisai ghane ghane ghrani sira  
hasi Prahladara katha sodhe mahabira 339  
kiba susobhana patha parhi acha tata  
guruta sikhila kiba kahio amata 340

The great here (Hiranya) seated Prahlad in his lap and out of extreme affection, frequently smelt his son's head and asked with a gentle smile: 'Do tell me what nice lessons you have learnt from your teacher'.

So the twelfth poem opens up with Prahlad's reply: -

Sravana Kirttana      smarana Visnura  
arccana pada-sewana  
dasya sakhitya      vandana Visnuta  
kariba deha arpana  
nava vidha Bhakti      Visnuta acare  
sehise patha uttama 341

That lesson is best which teaches the nine forms of Love to be applied to Visnu, namely Hearing, Singing, Thinking, Worshipping, Prostrating at His Feet, Slavery, Friendship, Invocation and Surrender of the body to Visnu.



Hiranya ordered his son to be immediately killed. All measures were resorted to, but failed. The thirteenth poem opens with Hiranya's only hope in 'wait and see'. Prahlad meanwhile advised other children: -

hena jani asura swabhawa save eri  
samasta pranika puja Visnu buddhi kari 360  
tevese alpate tusta haiba Narayane  
konano durlabha ache Hari suprasanne 361

So give up the nature of demons. Regard every being as God Himself. Then God will be easily pleased. And what remains there that cannot be attained when God is pleased?

The fifteenth poem opens with the continuation of Prahlad's preaching of the Vaisnava faith:-

Krsnara carane haibe yimate bhakati  
suna sawadhane taka sthira kari mati  
Visnu bhakatara sanga laiba prathamate  
Guru mani susrusa kariba bhalamate 376  
laia upadesa Madhawaka aradhiba  
yateka sukrti mane Krsnate arpiba  
Krsna katha sravanata suddha howe mana  
sarvada karibeka Krsnara Kirttana 377  
Krsnara Carana cintibeka hrdayata  
achanta Iswara Hari samasta bhutata  
hena jani pranadhika kariba satkara  
tevese Krsnata rati haibeka tomara 378  
Harira sewata kichu nahike prayasa  
apuni laibanta Hari hrdayata basa 379

Hear me with wrapt attention how a person can be truly devoted to Krsna. First of all, he must find the company of a devotee of Visnu. He must serve him with all propriety as a preceptor. He must meditate Madhawa in obedience to the advice of his preceptor. All good deeds he performs must be dedicated to Krsna. His mind must be purified by hearing the Glories of Krsna which he must always sing himself too. He must think of the Feet of God in his heart. God is present in every element and hence he should love and regard them all better than himself. Then alone he will have the Love of God in his heart. Then he will not have to worry so much about serving God Who will come of Himself and reside in His devotee's heart.

And he repeats once and again: -

samasta bhutate dekhibeke Narayana  
ata pare ana dharma save birhambana 383

Find God in every element. All religions else than this are useless.

The sixteenth poem opens with Hiranya's anger, in the excellent quick metre of *Jhuna* producing the effect of heroic sentiment (*vira ras*): -

Hiranyakasipu suniya hena  
krodhata kampe yama yena

jhankare matha kari ati darpa  
lathi pai yena fokare sarpa 388  
asura garje katakse cai  
khaibo aji tora munda putai 390

On hearing the report, Hiranyakasipu shivered in fury like death himself. He moved his head to and fro as does a snake when beaten with a stick. The demon roared by casting a glance at his son -  
'Son, I will eat up your head today.'

Prahlad, not the least moved, said yet humbly: -

satru mitra sava kario sama  
ehise Krsnara bhakti uttama 393  
nijini sarira satrucaya  
jinilo dasodisa keho kaya  
janiya pitr era ahankara  
Bhajiyoka Hari kahilo sara 394

The best love of God comes in that state of mind in which one can entertain the same feeling to a foe as to a friend. How can a person boast of universal conquest without conquering the enemies of his own body (lust, greed, anger, attachment etc.). So, father, do give up your pride and be devoted to God, I tell you in truth.

This added fuel to the fire and Hiranya burst out: -

moka bikarhasa are barbara  
mota pare ara ache Iswara 395  
Harise yadi jagatara Isa  
kaita ache tara kaha uddesa 396

O brute, dare you hold me to ridicule? Can there be any God other than myself? If Hari be the Master of the world, tell me then where he resides.

Prahlad simply said: -

savate achaya jagata-swami  
sfatika stambhato dekhoho ami 397

Lord of the world lives in every element. Sometimes I see Him even in yonder crystal pillar.

Sankaradeva's descriptions, as noted, are more like the linings of a fine Greek sculpture than the brushes in a Raphael's picture. They are always clear-cut. He has the master hand for delineating any mood or sentiment, soft as love or hard as wrath. So his description of the Man-Lion is quoted for its rhythmic effect in producing wonder (*vismaya*) by itself: -

tapta suvarnara varna jvale caksu dui  
parvata samana kai ache svarga chui  
sarirara loma candra same sukla varna  
tuli ache urdhaka stabadha dui karna 403  
baila mukha yena giri gahbara parai  
pracanda batasa yena nisvasa bajai  
prakasaya kesa sire rabira kirana

bhrukuti kutila mukha bikata dasana 404  
laha laha kare jihba yena ksura dhara  
jvale bahu sata tiksna nakhe camatkara  
bahal hridaya dirgha griha krsa kati  
jihba meli ache dui dasana prakati 405

And he describes the fight and final crushing of Hiranya in the eighteenth poem of nice quick metre of brief *Jhuna* having onomatopoeic effects: -

jhankarante sirara kesara  
urai save bimana svargara 419  
khalake sagara svasa lagi  
begata parvata pare bhagi  
Nrsimhara caranara gati  
talabala kare basumati 420

When (Man-Lion) shivered his mane, all the chariots of heaven took to flight. When he exhaled the air, the sea roared. When he went in speed, the mountains were leveled to the ground. And when he simply walked, the earth trembled.

Prahlad's prayer contained in the twentieth poem is unique; a few verses are quoted to show how the *dulari* or *tripadi* metre had been used to produce *santa rasa*: -

Brahma siddha muni adio napawe  
pujibe tomara pawa  
kiba stuti-nati kariboho ami  
asura krura svabhawa 441  
sito maha garbi vipre aponaka  
pavitra kariba nare  
Bhakata candale aponako tare  
samasta kula uddhare 442  
tumi Jaga-Jiwa tomaka pujile  
mile aponata jai  
yena mukha-srika pratibimba mukhe  
dekhiya darpana cai 443  
bhayankara kopa dekhiya tomara  
Prabhu bhaya mora nai  
samsara cakrara nikara dekhiya  
sadaye dhatu urai 444  
kimate bhakati karo pancendriye  
pancadike lagi dhare  
yena grhasthaka aneka sapatni  
sakale akula kare 446

The sages and others, and even Brahma himself cannot worship Thy Feet properly; how can I, being a demon of crooked nature, offer Thee my prayers? The proud Brahman cannot purify himself, whereas an outcaste who is a true devotee of God, not only delivers himself but also delivers all his line of predecessors and successors ... Thou art the Life of this world, and when a person worships Thee he really worships himself as one sees his own face by looking at the mirror ... O Lord, I am not terrified to see Thee in fierce wrath, for my life is already on fire seeing the agonies in the wheel of this world ... How can I be devoted to Thee, for the five organs of sense lead me astray in five directions, like a man running mad at persistent demands of many co-wives.

Visnu in the Man-Lion was well pleased. So the twenty first poem begins with Visnu's offer to Prahlad: -

Bhakatar puro manoratha  
dio kama moksa dharma artha 449

I satisfy my devotee's wishes; and give him his desire, salvation, religion and wealth

But Prahlad flatly refused: -

Bhaktise parama labha jani  
Visnuka bolanta hasi bani 450  
banche fala taju kari krtya  
sito baniyyara noho bhrtya 451  
Tomara akama bhrtya ami  
Tumio niskama mora svami 452  
suni Nara-Simhe hasilanta  
jano tumi Bhakata ekanta 453

Knowing thoroughly well that Love is the greatest reward, (Prahlad) said with a smile to Visnu, 'I am not a slave to that bargain which seeks profit by worshipping Thee. I am Thy selfless slave, and Thou art my disinterested Master'.

On hearing this, the Man-Lion smiled: 'I know you are a selfless devotee.'

But he asked Prahlad to take his father's throne and advised: -

sadai suniba Mora Katha  
Mora Rupa cintiba sarbatha  
Kirttane palaiba papacaya  
bhoga bhunji punya kara ksaya 454  
tora yasa byapibe jagate  
ratri dina Moka sumarante  
save karma-bandha haiba hina  
antakale Mota jaiba lina 455

Always hear My Glories. Think of My Form by all means. By singing My Glories, Thou wilt remove Thy sins. Then wilt thou spend thy merits by enjoying (as a king). Thy name will spread far and wide. By remembering Me day and night, Thou wilt loose all the bindings that the deeds may bring, till at last Thou wilt merge in Me.

The twenty second poem begins with the Man-Lion's reply to Prahlada apologizing for his father's sins: -

Nrisimha bolanta hasi sunio Prahlada  
dibaka nalage tok isava prasada  
parama Vaisnava tai putra bhaili yara  
ekais purusa tara karili uddhara 460  
yaita thake Bhakta mora udara caritra  
kita-patangako tatha karay pavitra  
nakare pranika himsa nahi eko sprha

The Man-Lion said with a smile - 'Hear Me, O Prahlad, need you not such a blessing. A great Vaisnava as you are, you have delivered as many as twenty one generations of the line in which you are born. Where My Bhaktas of the most noble character reside, even the worms and insects of that locality are made pure. Such a Bhakta never envies any living being, and dedicates even his body to Myself'.

## GAJENDROPAKHYAN

The Seventh Book is *Gajendropakhyan*, the story of the Lord of the Elephants. It consists of three poems. The mythological story has been utilized to illustrate how any person addicted to power and pelf can be delivered from the world only by devotion to God. The helplessness of the lord of elephants is the exact condition of any man of pride. By the Grace of God, the miseries of the lord of elephants were removed forthwith.

The classicism of Sankaradeva is evidenced also in the description of the mountain of *Trikuta* in the Sea of Cream. It is quoted for the rhythm and music of the verses that may also suggest the majesty of its diction by themselves: -

ksira sagarar maje Trikuta parvata  
prakasante ache tini lokata vekata  
suvarna rajata loha jwale tini srnga  
caksuta jamaka lage dekhite biringa 475  
ano yata sringa ratne kare tirimiri  
das disa prakasiya sobhe sukla giri  
sahasra yojana juri jwale giribara  
ucchrita dekhia dasa hajara prahara 476  
ksira sagarara dhau caubhiti uthale  
pakhale parvat susitala dugdhajale  
thane thane ache bhumi aneka udyana  
fula jakamaka gandhe nahike samana 477  
nadi nada asesa bisesa sarobara  
sfatika nirmala jala dekhi manohara  
vidyadhari save tata nami kare snana  
pakhali sarira bawe sugandhita ghrana 478  
parama amulya gandha uthale sadai  
dasadisa prakasia bayu bahi jai  
dekhi susobhana bana nava upabane  
yata nite krirhe dea dibya narigane 479

To crown this description, Sankaradeva adds: -

ano yata taru-bana save kalpataru  
chaya rhitu eka kale basanta udaya  
bhramare gunjare kuli pancama puraya 481  
bahaya malaya bayu amodita mana  
nritya-gita kare tate apesaragana 482

All the trees and creepers there are all like the wish-yielding tree itself. All the six seasons appear together in the form of Spring, the bees humming and the cuckoos singing charmingly. The gentle breeze blows filling the mind with joy, and the heavenly damsels sing and dance there everyday.

Within the mountainous region of *Trikuta* there is a lake which is described in the second poem in a few verses like these in the *Jhuna* metre: -

suvarnamaya padma ache juri  
bhramare tara madhu piye pari  
rajahamsa adi yateka paksi  
pari pari thake najai upeksi 484

(The lake) abounds with gold lotuses, and the black bees drink their honey to their hearts' content.  
The wild goose and other birds that enjoy here never intend to leave the lake.

## HARA-MOHAN

The Eighth Book is *Hara-Mohan*, telling how Siva was charmed by Visnu in the form of a beautiful woman. Of the ten poems (vs. 512-609), the second commences with the grand prayer of Siva to Madhawa (God) which in a nut-shell reveals the philosophy of Vaisnavism as preached by Sankaradeva: -

namo namo Madhawa vidhira vidhidata  
Tumi jagatara gati-mati pita mata  
Tumi paramatma jagatar Isa eka  
eko bastu nahike tomata byatireka 520  
Tumi karya karana samasta caracara  
suvarne kundale yena nahike antar  
Tumi pasu paksi surasura taru-trna  
ajnanata murhajane dekhe bhinna bhinna 521  
Tomarese mayaye mohile sarvaksane  
Tumi atma Tomaka najane ekojane  
samasta bhutar Tumi acha hridayata  
tattva napai Tomaka bicare bahirata 522  
Tumise kewale satya micha save ana  
jani jnanigane kare hridayata dhyana  
namagoho sukha bhoga nalage mukuti  
Tomara Carane matra thakoka bhakati 523  
mukhe lauka Nama mora karne Taju katha  
hridayata Pada-padma thakok sarvatha  
Sajjanara sanga nugucoka sarvaksane  
eteke prasada mago Tomara Carane 524

I bow to Thee, Madhawa, the commander of the framer (Brahmā) of the commands of God. Thou art the progress, the Mind, the father and the mother of the world. Thou art the Great Soul and One God of the universe. There is nothing in this world besides Thee. Thou art the Cause. Thou art the Effect. Thou art the Universe itself, as there can be no difference between gold and an ear-ornament made of gold. Thou art all animals. Thou art all birds. Thou art all gods. Thou art demons. Thou art the trees. Thou art the creepers. It is through sheer ignorance that people find them different. It is by illusion that all are blinded. Thou art the Soul, but nobody knows Thee. Thou livest in the hearts of every being. They do not know the mystery. They search Thee outside. Thou art the only Truth. All else are false. The wise know it and so they meditate Thee in their hearts. I do not beg enjoyment of bliss, of Thee. I do not need salvation. Let my love lie for ever at Thy Feet. Let my mouth sing Thy Glories. Let my heart cherish Thy Lotus-Feet for ever and for ever. Let me not for a moment be off from the company of the noble. This is the only blessing I beg of Thee.

Siva expressed his desire to see the *Mohini rupa* of Visnu exhibited in *Samudra Manthana* but Visnu warned: -

ghora nari maya sarva mayate kutsita  
maha siddha muniro katakse hare citta  
darasane kare tapa japa yoga bhanga  
jani jnanigane kaminira ere sanga 529

The gross illusion generated by women is the worst of all illusions. The mind of even the best sage is moved at a glance. Sight of women can spoil all meditations of God. It is why the wise abandon the company of women.

Siva smiled and said: -

maha yoga bale suddha kari acho kaya  
brahmamaya dekho ki kariba pare maya 531

I have purified my body by deep meditation. How can illusion harm me.

Madhawa simply smiled and agreed to comply with his request. With “the light that never was on sea or land”, Siva saw a divinely beautiful flower-garden shining presently wherein too he happened to catch sight of a paragon of excellence which Sankaradeva describes in its fourth poem using the *Chabi* metre for waves of amorous feelings: -

koti Laksmi sama nohe      katakse trailokya mohe  
bhanta kheri khele duyoy hat  
tapta suvarnar sama    jvale deha nirupama  
lalita valita hata paw  
caksu kamalar pasi    mukhe monohara hasi  
saghane darasai kama bhaw 541

Crores of beautiful women like the goddess of wealth herself cannot match her in beauty. A sidelong glance of hers could fascinate the three worlds. She took a little ball and played with her two hands. Her form, unparalleled as it was, glittered like gold in its freshness. Her hands and feet were sweetly long and harmonious. Her eyes were like lotuses. A charming smile always played in it and displayed amorous gestures.

Unlike Vidyapati or Candidas, true to life as such pictures are, Sankaradeva is naturally not in them. Like Kalidasa, in *Sakuntala* for instance, he rather uses these events as sticks with which to beat the ghost of worldly pleasures. So at last, in its eighth poem, Siva, after coming to himself, expresses his remorse: -

Visnura agata mai parama ajnani  
jinilo mayaka buliloho garba bani 590

I am ignorant of the ignorants before Visnu. It is why I boasted that I overcome all illusions.

bicarat kichu dos nahike amar  
Yar maya pase baddha sakal samsar  
hena Hari muhile apuni nari hui  
ata anusoc ave karo kona mui 589  
katakse srijanta brahmandako koti koti

egota dimar mai Rudra eka guti  
Yahar angat caracar bhaila baj  
hena Hari mohile ihata kona laj 590

To sit in judgement, I am not so much to blame. Why should I be remorseful when I had been charmed in the form of a woman by Visnu Himself Who subjects the whole world to His charm. He can create crores of universes at a glance. I am a Siva, master of one of such universes. What disgrace have I in being deluded by the One Whose production of a certain limb is but this universe?

Siva's apology and prayer includes the moral: -

yata dekha caracar Harimay nirantar  
Harit prithak kono nahe  
yijan bhakati-hin si dekhe Harik bhin  
Harir mayaye tak mohe 600

All this universe is nothing but God. Only he who is devoid of divine love, thinks God as apart. Such a person is charmed by His illusion.

## BALICHALAN

The Ninth Book is *Balichalan*. It is complete in five poems, showing how wonderfully devoted was **Bali** to Visnu, and this is expressed even in a few brushes of Sankaradeva's pen: -

jagatake pavitra karanta Daityapati  
Hariro bismay dekhi Balir bhakati 620  
antarikse mahima bakhane siddha muni  
henato Vaisnava natu dekhi natu suni 621

The king of the demons (Bali) sanctified the whole world (by his devotion). Hari Himself wondered at his Bhakti (Love). All the great sages extolled and praised Bali, and said that such a Vaisnava could neither be seen nor be heard of.

## SISU LILA

The Tenth Book is *Sisu Lila*. The first poem commences with the unveiling of Sankaradeva's beautiful pen-picture of Visnu in Which person Krsna incarnated Himself. The music of the verses may be noted: -

Krsna rupe Daivakita bhaila avatara  
sankha cakra gada padma karata Tomara  
pita bastre sobhe ati syama kalewara  
kamala locana caru aruna adhara 643  
sundar nasika karne makara kundala  
kanthata kaustabha sire kiriti ujjvala  
apadalambita vanamala jvale gale  
sobhe ati sribatsa bahala baksasthale 644  
caru cari bhuja jvala ajanulambita  
karikara sama uru bartula balita  
Carana kamala yena nava padma kosa  
Yaka dekhi bhakatara parama santosa 645



It is almost a pan-Indian classical medium of expression invented by Sankaradeva. The superb humanism of this movement in Indian renaissance is beautifully revealed through Sankaradeva in delineations of simple events of Krsna's childhood. Yasoda was ready to inflict corporal punishment of the child for the allegation of eating some earth. When she caught him by his hands, he feigned fear: -

mukhaka cahante lagaya betha  
kiya mati khaili sodhanta katha 667

Looking at his face, (Yasoda) felt compassionate, and asked him (gently) why then he ate some earth.

Denied the charge, he was asked to open his mouth which he did to the great surprise of Yasoda: -

Yasoda sundari dekhanta pache  
samasta jagata garbhate ache  
satokhana dwipa sato sagara  
giri vana nadi grama nagara 671  
vayu surjya sasi disa akasa  
taragane taita kare prakasa  
samaste jiwa jyotisteja jala  
sattwa-raja-tama indriya bala 672  
mana buddhi kala karma yateka  
savako garbhate dekhe pratyeka  
yateka dhenu gopa gopi jaka  
Yasoda dekhe taite aponaka 673

The graceful Yasoda then saw that the whole world is within him. The seven islands, the seven seas, and all the mountains, forests, rivers, villages and towns, the atmosphere, the sun, the moon, the directions, the sky, the stars shining, all animals, the light, the fire, the water, (the three virtues) *Sattwa, Rajah, Tamah*, and the force of the organs of sense, the mind, the intellect, Time and Actions! She saw everything vividly. She also saw the cows, the milkmen and milk-maids and above all, Yasoda saw herself within Krsna.

Sankaradeva describes the psychological situation in a few lines of the quick metre of *Jhuna* to add to the emotion: -

kiba bhrama bhaila mohaka paya  
dekhilo swapna kiba deva maya 674  
kiba jane maya mora tanaya  
kariba nowaro eko niscaya  
nuhikanta mora putra manusa  
ehentese Visnu Adi Purusa 675

What illusion do I undergo through some charm? Is it a dream or some god deludes me? Does my son know any charm? I am at a fix. Surely my son is no human being. He must be the Origin of Man.

karila Vaisnavi maya bistara  
gucila Visnu jnana Yasodara 679  
Krsnata putra buddhi bhaila jata

dhula jari tuli laila kolata  
parhanta cuma mukhe stana diya  
mora ayu lai putai jia 680

(Krsna) applied His magic Vaisnavite power. Yasoda could now no more think of Krsna as Visnu. She began once more to feel that Krsna is her son. She removed the dust off his body and took him up in her lap. She kissed his face and gave him her breast to suck. She blessed him, 'O my son, may you live longer heaping my duration of life on your own'.

Sankaradeva uses such mythological stories to show that the Cult of Love is a happy short cut to attain God. Again Sankaradeva takes another superb snap of Yasoda at her work and one sees in it an Assamese housewife in her toil: -

dineka Yasoda Nanda-jaya  
apuni mathanta dadhi gaia  
Krsnara saisawa lilaka smari  
Krsna gita gawanta sundari 68  
ksauma vastra pindhi dibya kache  
katita mekhala bandhi ache  
putra snehe srawe duyo stana  
ajorante lare ghane ghana 685  
runajhuna karara kankana  
srama jale ujjwala badana  
karnata kundala dole ati  
khasi pare khopara malati 689

It so happened on a day that Yasoda, the consort of Nanda, was churning the milk herself. While at work this graceful woman was singing songs all about the early sports of Krsna, all the time thinking of Krsna alone. She was quite agreeably dressed in silk, her lower garment hanging from her waist. In affection for her son, the milk of her breasts overflowed itself. The breasts moved gently, off and on, as she worked. The bracelets of her hands made a sweet jingling sound. Her face shone with drops of perspiration in it. Her ear-rings moved to and fro, and the *malati* flower dropped off the bunch of her hair.

At this stage Krsna came and stopped his mother's work by force: -

hasi kole laiya Nanda-jaya  
dila stana putra mukha caya 688

The consort of Nanda smiled and took Krsna in her lap, and gave him to suck her breasts looking all the while at her son's face.

In the meantime their milk in the pot was about to overflow boiling, and she left her son for it:-

stana piba napaya Krsnara  
kope kampe aruna adhara  
dasana kamuri ati canda  
silaye bhangila dadhi bhanda 689

Failing to continue sucking his mother's breasts, Krsna's lips reddish as the rising sun shivered in wrath, and he bit his lips, threw stones at milk-pots and broke them.

She turned up, saw all these and took a stick in hand: -

pache pache Yasoda khedanta  
bhaye laga mawaka nedanta 693  
yaka yogi napawe dhyanata  
hena Hari palanta bhayata  
putraka khedanta maha sati  
sronibhare akramila gati 694  
begata melana bhaila khopa  
khasi pare malatira thopa 695

Yasoda chased Krsna at his heels, and he would not allow her to overtake for fear. Hari, Who cannot be conceived in the mind by Yogis in deep meditation, now takes his flight out of fear. The speed of the noble lady was however arrested by the dimensions of her hips. In her haste, the fine bunch of her hair opened and the *malati* flower over there dropped down.

Any way, Krsna allowed himself on some plea to be caught, and she now cried out in triumph:-

bhanda bhangi abe jaibi kotha  
khaibo aji Krsna tora matha 696

Whither will you be going now after breaking down the milk-pot? O Krsna, surely, today I will eat your head.

He now looked frightened; and Yasoda would now chain him instead: -

nahi adi anta purbapara  
Purna Brahma Jagata Iswara  
tahanka tanaya mani bale  
Yasoda bandhanta urukhale 698  
bandhanta Krsnaka ani dhari  
nojore anguli dui jari  
aru jari ani jora dila  
sio dui angule natila 699  
hena dekhi aro jari ani  
Yasoda bandhanta tani tani  
sarirara bala diya ate  
tathapi angula dui nate 700  
grhata paileka yata jari  
ehi mate juriya sundari  
urukhale ere bandhe capi  
nate dui angule tathapi 701

One Who has no beginning, no end, no predecessor, no successor, Who Himself is the perfect Ego and Lord of the Universe, it is Him that Yasoda calls her son and binds to the great mortar per force. She catches and binds Krsna, but the string ran short by two fingers' breadth. She got more strings and even then it ran short of the same. Seeing this, she got more strings and bound Krsna as tight as possible. She fastened him with all the strength in her body, and yet it ran short the same. Yasoda joined all the strings that could be found in the house and fastened Krsna quite close to the great mortar, and yet, the strings ran short the same.

This problem is rather allegorical than arithmetical. Krsna cannot be bound by anything else than love, and by any one but a true devotee. Yasoda's love was beyond question, but she had two defects. She yet had 'aham' (Me) and 'mama' (Mine). The last trace of her 'self' was not still gone, she still clung to her apparent authorship and outward belongings, so she was about to bind, but could not do so even for two fingers' breadth. The milk-maids laughed. Yasoda perspired so much wondering and worrying over it. Her precious pride in her authorship (*aham*) and her vanity over her belongings (*mama*) was gone. She has now felt: 'I cannot bind, and Krsna cannot be my son'. Her love was now suddenly free from the two slight (finger-breadth) defects. It became full and Krsna was now automatically bound.

hena dekhi Prabhu Narayana  
snehe laila apuni bandhana 703

The great prayer of Brahma in its eighth poem is significant from its emphasis on the superiority of a devotee's life: -

garbhata thakante udarata ghale pawe  
tara aparadhaka nadhare yena mawe  
Tomara kuksite ami acho caracara  
hena jani ksamiyoka dosa Damodara 750  
ito Brahma pada Prabhu amaka nalage  
kita patangata janma hauka karma bhage  
Tomara Bhaktara maje huya eka jana  
sewa kari thako Prabhu Tomara Carana 751  
kino dhanya dhenu Gopi ito Gokulara  
yara stana pane tripta bhaila Damodara  
kono punya kari Gokulara brikse trne  
Tomara Carana renu pawe pratidine 753  
sariraka mai bolo buddhi bhaila hata  
hiyata haraila Tumi khojo bahirata 754  
Brndabane trna haibo teve mahabhaga  
paibo Vrajabasira Carana renu laga 755

As a child in the womb strikes his mother with its feet and yet she takes no exception to it, so, O Damodar, pardon our faults, for all of us in the world really live within You. I would not prefer, O Lord, this great prestige of being a Brahma. Let me be born and re-born as worms and insects. O Lord, let me be one of your humblest devotees to serve at Your Feet. How fortunate are the cows and milk-maids of Gokula for Damodar has been nutritioned by their milk. What merits have the trees and creepers of Gokula acquired that they receive the dust of Your Feet every day? Our intellects have become so dull that we identify ourselves with our bodies and by missing You in our hearts we look for You outside. I would deem myself very fortunate if I could be born as a creeper of Vraja to receive the dusts of the Feet of its inhabitants.

When Krsna got down in the lake, the Kali snake bit him and he lay dead to all appearance:-

dekhi sisu sava marila prai  
dhanugane aura trna nakhai  
Krsnaka cahiya thakila rahi  
caksura lota dhare jai bahi 772  
Krsnara sundara badana cai  
Yasoda kandanta guna barnai

godhuli kone jaibe bamsi bai  
 kone moka gaiya buliba ai 779  
 dhula jari kaka karaibo snana  
 kone karibeka gorasa pana  
 kaka bichai dibo sitala tuli  
 dakibo kaka jaga Krsna buli 780  
 sundara badane bajaya benu  
 prabhate kone caraibeka dhenu  
 ki bhaila aji Krsna mora Bapa  
 morio neraibo tora santapa 781

Seeing (Krsna, in swoon) the children felt themselves all but dead. The cows would eat grass no more; they looked steadfastly at Krsna, and tears flowed down their eyes. Yasoda came singing the Glories of Krsna and wept looking at the face of Krsna. 'O, who will again come home at dusk by playing on the flute? Who will call me mother once more? Whom shall I wash daily by removing the dust off his body? Who will drink milk from my hand anymore? For whom again shall I prepare the bed? Whom shall I once more awake in the morning saying 'O my Krsna, arise'? Who again with a beautiful face will play on the flute and go to keep the cows in the field with the rising sun? O my son, Krsna, what has happened to you? Your bereavement shall survive my death'.

## RASA KRIDA

The Eleventh Book of the Kirttana-Ghosa is *Rasa-Krida*. The Bhagawata story is retold here in eighteen poems dwelling on the salient points, by Sankaradeva. In the beautiful autumnal night of full moon, Krsna played on his flute on the bank of the Yamuna, and the milk-maids left their daily jobs, restless and beside themselves in passion to meet him. Krsna feigned not to know their minds, wondered why they came at all, showed the misfortunes that might attend. Among other things, he said: -

ulati Vrajaka jaha kande sisugana  
 tasambaka pratipali piayoka stana 823  
 upapati same kria garihita karma  
 svamika susrusa kula strira maha dharmā  
 yadiba amaka snehe aila gopigana  
 moka ave dekhila sijila prayojana 824  
 vidurate thaki kare sravana-kirttana  
 barhe mota bhakati nirmala howe mana  
 dekhante sunante sada hēla howe mati  
 janiya grhate thaki kariba bhakati 825

Go back to Vraja. Your infants weep. Give them your breasts and take care of them. The greatest virtue of a chaste wife is to serve her husband. Playing with a person other than one's own husband must be condemned. If, O milk-maids, you would say that you come for the love of me, your desire is fulfilled at the sight of myself. Hear and sing my glories from a distance, then your Love will thrive, and your minds will be purified. If you see and hear me every day, you may be neglectful. So stay at home and have love for me.

The milk-maids, in their utter disappointment, slowly replied: -

Bhakta-batsala tomaka jani  
 kene bola hena ghatuka vani 829  
 kahila yito kula strira karma

tomate achoka sisava dharma 830  
tumi atma hena jani samprati  
tomatase kare bhakate rati 831

You are known to be ever obliging to Your devotees. Why then do You utter such cruel words ...  
What You have said about the duties of a chaste woman, let them all merge in You ... Your devotees  
are attached to You knowing that You Yourself are the Soul of the world.

They further said: -

tomaka eria nachale bhari  
vrajaka gaia ki karibo Hari 833  
jwale kamanala tomara gite  
nimayoka taka adharamrte 834  
namara puria isata hasi  
Purusa-bhusana kario dasi 835  
tomara sunia amrita-gita  
nohibe moha kona strira citta  
achoka ana brksa pasu paksi  
preme pulakita tomaka dekhi 837

O Hari, what shall we do going back to Vraja? Our legs do not carry us away from you. Your music  
fans the fire of carnal desire in us. Do put it out by showering the nectar from your lips. Do not burn  
us to ashes by your gentle smile; Oh, the Ornament of Man, make us your slaves ... What woman is  
there whose heart will not be charmed on hearing your ambrosial songs? Not to speak of woman,  
the very trees, the animals and birds are all in a thrill of the sensation of love when they see you.

Compliance of Krsna, after long, generated pride in them, and he disappeared forthwith to  
remove their pride. This had its desired effect and the milk-maids became mad after him once more,  
and were left crazy by his separation. The deep feeling of absence in the Gopis has been so  
beautifully expressed in the short metre: -

ucca brksa dekhi sodhe sadari  
sunio aswaththa bata pakari  
yahante dekhila Nanda-Kumara  
nenta curi kari citta amara 854  
he kurubaka asoka campa  
kahia katha kara anukampa  
maninira darpa karia cura  
janaha Krsna yanta kata dura 855  
oba tulasi samidhan dia  
tumi Govindara carana priya  
yahante dekhila Nanda-kumara  
pranato adhika priya amara 856  
he yati yuthi sakhi malati  
Krsna parase ki labhila gati  
samaste Gopira jiwana dhana  
dekhila yahante Nanda-nandana 857  
he ama jama vela vakula  
nahi upakari tomara tula  
Krsnara birahe dekho andhara  
kowa kaika gaila prana amara 858

Krsna guna gante prema opaje  
Krsnate mana samudai maje 863

Seeing the tall trees the milk-maids enquire of them full of affection: 'Hear us, O *Aswaththa*; hear us, O *Bata*, O *Pakari*; you must have seen the son of Nanda, while making his escape by stealing our hearts. O *Kurubaka*, O *Asoka*, O *Campa*, do this act of compassion by telling us how far must Krsna have gone after crushing the pride of beauty of these women. O *Tulasi* plant, thou art much beloved of Govinda's Feet, please make me a reply - Have you seen on the way the son of Nanda, dearer to us than our own life? O friends, the plants of *Yati*, *Yuthi* and *Malati* flowers, have you been delivered of this world by a touch of Krsna? Have you seen on the way the son of Nanda, the life and soul of all the milk-maids? O Mango, O *Jam*, *Bel* and *Bakul*, surely none else are more helpful than yourselves; we see a veil of darkness before us in separation of Krsna. Do tell us whither goes our Soul' ... Thus singing the glories of Krsna, love was generated in them and their hearts became drowned in Krsna.

More of the human element is expressed by Sankaradeva in the love-complaints of the Gopis: -

sarata kalara bikasa padmara  
udarake srika ninde  
henaya netrara katakse amaka  
maricha Tumi Govinde 892  
nikinila dasi bhajilo ho asi  
gitate huya dagadha  
katakse marile badha nalage ki  
astre katileka badha 893  
Vraja hante dhenu caribaka yaha  
amara mane asukha  
jano pada padme trna sila lagi  
Prananathe panta duhkha 899

O Govinda, you are killing us by a glance of the eyes that hold the lotuses of autumn in full bloom, in contempt. You have not bought us slaves. We have offered ourselves. We have offered ourselves so being charmed by your flute. Is it murder only to kill by weapons and no murder to kill by side-long glances? You go from Vraja to keep cows, and we are unhappy at hearts lest the Lord of our life should be hurt by blades of grass or by stones in his Lotus Feet.

It may be observed that unlike as in some other parts of India, Krsna here is concerned with all Gopis, symbolizing all lives, as originally in the Bhagavat, and not with one Gopi in particular.

Sankaradeva then interprets *Rasa-Krida* and defends how it does not encroach the moral latitude of society: -

dehata yar nahi ahamkar  
tahara karmata nahi bicar 972  
sringar rase yara ache rati  
ake suni hauka nirmala mati  
Bhakatar pade apuni Hari  
krirhila range nara-deha dhari 975  
ito Rasa krirha katha Krsnar  
ekanta cite sune yito nar  
Krsnata bhakati barhibe tar

kama sagare sukhe haiba par 978  
ito kama jaya Krsnar katha  
suna nara-deha nakara brtha 979

There can be no judging of actions of one who does not identify himself with his body. Let those who have carnal desires have their minds purified by hearing this. For the good of His devotees, Hari assumed the human form and played this. He who hears this in rapt attention shall have his bhakti increased and shall easily cross the sea of carnal desires. Hear all these Glories of Krsna that will enable you to conquer carnal desires. Do not abuse this, your human form.

## KAMSA BADH

The Twelfth Book is *Kamsa Badh*, consisting of fifteen poems. Sankaradeva depicts the acute feelings of the milk-maids, in the brief metre adding to the emotion, in connexion with Krsna's leaving for Mathura, which, both for the music of verse and felicity of expression, is so remarkable: -

rathe cari larila Murari  
pari pari kande gopa-nari  
Harir birahe deha tawe  
yena bhaila batula swabhawe 1053  
Krsna Krsna buli geri deya  
amar pranak kone neya  
krura Akrura bhaila bairi  
jiwa karhi neya kene kari 1054  
kino Hari nidaruna bhaila  
Gakula anatha kari gaila  
Krsna bine ki kare jiwane  
aura kone yaibe Brindabane 1055  
prabhate rakhiba kone dhenu  
kone baiba sulalita benu  
kone caiba katakse niriksi  
juraiba hrdaya kaka dekhi 1056  
kone diba bamsir niswan  
ki dekhi rakhibo ave pran  
amar jiwane nahi sukh  
aura nedekhibo Krsna mukh 1057  
nila akuncita yar kes  
sire ratna kiriti subes  
bhruvayuga madanar cap  
darasane hare hr-di-tap 1058  
rucikar kamala locan  
sudha sama madhur bacan  
susama lalat ganda sthal  
caru karne makar kundal 1059  
nasa tila kusuma sundar  
sobhe ati aruna adhar  
dasana darhimba dibya panti  
hasye jine candramar kanti 1060  
kambu kanthe kaustubha prakase  
surya yene udita akase  
simha bandha skandha suprasanna  
bhujayuga ratnara molana 1061



keyur kankan tara jwale  
 ratnar gulia sobhe gale  
 hiat sribatsa kare kanti  
 yena meghe balakar panti 1062  
 pitabastre sobhe tanu kala  
 apadalambita vanamala  
 tate pari aneka bhramare  
 madhu lobhe paria gunjare 1063  
 baksasthale mukutar har  
 akasi gangar yena dhar  
 ratnar mekhala kati maje  
 sonar kinkini tate baje 1064  
 karikar uru nirupam  
 Caran pankaj manoram  
 dhwaja braja ankuse ankit  
 ratnamay nupure ranjit 1064  
 Bhakatar hrday ranjan  
 nedekhibo sihen Caran  
 kandarpa kotiko rupe jinni  
 Gokule prakase Yadumani 1066

Krsna left (for Mathura) on the chariot and the milk-maids lay weeping on the earth. Their bodies burnt as it were for the separation of Krsna and they almost became insane by nature. They shouted “Krsna, Krsna” ... ‘O, who takes away our life itself? The hypocrite Akrura has become our enemy. How has he snatched away the very Soul out of our bodies. O Hari, how cruel have you been. You have left Gokul so helpless. What avails our life without Krsna? Who will go anywhere to Brindaban? Who will keep the cows in the morning? Who will play on the flute so sweetly? Who will cast a side-long glance at us? Whose appearance will set our hearts at rest? Who will signify his arrival by a note on the flute? For what hopes shall we live any more? Our life will know no happiness any further; for we shall no more have a sight of Krsna’s face. Oh! For the sight of him who has the blue curls of hair and beautiful crown of gems on his head, whose eye-brows are like Cupid’s bow removing all the agonies of heart instantly. His lotus-eyes are charming; his sweet words are like the nectar. His forehead and cheeks are symmetrical and earrings jingle in his beautiful ears. His nose is beautiful like the *tila* flower and his lips shine like the rising sun. His teeth are like two rows of pomegranate seeds, and his smile outdoes the luster of the moon. The *kaustubha* necklace beautifies his conch-like neck and it appears like the rising of the sun. His shoulders are beautiful as those of the lion and his arms are like the lotus-stem ornamented with gems. Ornaments decorate the hands, and chains of gems beautify the neck. The curl of hair beautifies his chest like lines of cranes in the clouds. The yellow cloth beautifies his black body as does the garland of wild flowers flowing down to his legs. There a number of black bees hum in the hope of getting honey. A garland of pearls beautifies the chest like a Ganga from heaven. He has the lower garment of gems, and chains of gold jingle there. His thighs are beautiful as the trunk of an elephant and his Lotus-Feet are charming. The three characteristic signs of Krsna’s Feet were there and they are beautified by the jingling ornaments of gems. Oh, no longer shall we see those Feet that are themselves ornaments in the hearts of devotees. Krsna, the necklace of the Yadu race, used to shine in Gokul outdoing crores of Cupids in beauty’.

Then Akrura’s excellent prayer with such touches: -

najani loke ana dewa puje  
 sio bidhihine Tomaka jaje  
 yehena nada-nadi samudai

Through ignorance people worship other gods. Such anti-religious people too really worship you:  
for all rivers, great and small, actually run on to the sea through different ways.

The twelfth poem gives the interesting preamble to the duel, Krsna and Balarama were to encounter: -

karila prakasa Rama same samajata  
dekhe dasa prakare Krsnaka sibelata  
male bole kino bajra sama kalewara  
anya jane bole ehentese narabara 1182  
narigane bole murtti dharila madane  
amarese bandhu buli mane gopa gane  
amarese sasta bole dusta rajacaya  
Vasudeva Daiwakiyo bolaya tanaya 1183  
kamse bole ehi Krsna antaka amara  
ajnani sakale bole Nandara kumara  
yogigane bole ehentese Brahma tattwa  
vrsni vamse bole ente kulara daiwata 1184  
kachia achaya yena nata dui prai  
nabhaila trpiti loka duiro rupa cai 1185  
caksuwe piyaya yena celeke jihbai  
bahuwe alingi nasikai sunge prai 1186

Krsna made His appearance along with Balarama before the audience. On this occasion people saw Krsna in ten different forms. The wrestler thought him to be one with a body hard as thunderbolt. Others thought him to be the supreme among men. The women saw in him the Cupid himself. The milkmen thought him to be their companion. The wicked kings knew him to be their chastiser. Vasudev and Daiwaki found their son in him. Kamsa imagined Krsna to be his destroyer. People unawares thought him to be Nanda's son. Those divine meditators knew Him to be Brahma (Ego) personified. The people of Vrsni family imagined him to be the god of their line ... The two brothers now well-dressed looked rather like two dancers, and people's thirst in seeing them was not quenched. They would drink their beauty with their eyes, lick it with their tongues, embrace it with their arms and smell with their noses.

**GOPI-UDDHAVA SAMBAD** is Thirteenth Book of Kirttan-Ghosa describing the reactions which the news of Krsna at Mathura initiated in the Gopis, and reflections of Uddhava: -

Uddhawe Gopir dekhia bhaw  
bismay huya siharaila gaw  
Nandar Vraje yata Gopijak  
sire bando tana pada dhulak 1255  
ratri dine gawe Hari caritra  
tinio lokak kare pavitra 1256  
kino tora sawe karila punya  
sadaye goa Govindara guna  
Harit majila ati hrday  
kino Tomasar bhagya uday 1257  
Harir arthe pati putra eri  
karila puja yena sawe ceri  
janilo samsar tarila sukhe

barnaibo ara kata mor mukhe 1258

Uddhava saw the feeling of the milk-maids and wondered, his hair standing on an end. 'O milk-maids of all Vraja ruled by Nanda, I would bow down and receive the dust of their Feet with my head. They sing the glories of Hari day and night, and purify the three worlds ..... O, what merit have you acquired that you can sing the Glories of Govinda every day. O, how your fortune smiles on you that your hearts dissolve in Krsna. You have become maids again by sacrificing your husbands and sons for the sake of Hari. What more should I say? You are sure to be delivered from all miseries of this world'.

**KUBJIR ARU AKRURAR VANCHA PURAN** are the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Books. These stories are used as two pegs whereon to hang Sankaradeva's pet theories: -

yata nada-nadi            sio tirtha hay  
   silar pratima dew  
tesambe pavitra            kare yeve punu  
   bahu kal kare sew  
dekhile matrake            bhakate pavitra  
   kare lok nirantar  
dewe tirtha jana            Bhakat janar  
   anek mahadantar 1282

Rivers, great and small, may be sacred for pilgrimage; stone and images may be equivalent to gods. They can purify a person after they are worshipped for a long long period. But all persons can be purified immediately at the sight of a Bhakta. This is the great difference between a god or a sacred place, and a Bhakta.

**JARASANDHA ARU KALAJAVAN BADH, MUCUKUNDA STUTI, SYAMANTAK HARAN** are the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Books. The last is about possessing the gem of Syamanta, virtues of which have been briefly described as: -

manir mahima ki kaibo ar  
suvarna nite srave asta bhar  
jithane thake sito syamantak  
nahike durbhiksa mari-marak 1415  
nahike byadhi byaghra sarpa bhay  
eko upasarga nopaje tai 1416

O, what should I say about the glories of this gem? It yields eight pairs of loads of gold daily. No famine, no epidemic, no diseases, no fear of tigers' attacks, of snake bites should be apprehended there.

The fight with Jambawanta is described in the short *jhuna* metre very aptly to echo quick and sharp action which the rhythm and music alone can express: -

hena suni Jambawanta; dhaila maha valawanta  
nicini Svamik pache; dharilanta juddha kache 1429  
samanya manusya buli ; maha krodhe gaila jvali  
najani prabhawa ati; lagaileka hatahati 1430  
duio huya maha krudha; lagaileka ghora juddha  
duio matangar lila; barise parvata sila 1431  
kato beli hane gach; kato kope cape kach  
yujilanta mala-bandhe; dhari bhari bhari chande 1432

duiro duiko nahi tusti; hane vajra sama musti  
mamsar karane yen; yujanta dugota sen 1433  
eho bale nohe ksin; yujanta athais din 1434

This poem is onomatopoeic and echoes sense of this duel fight between Krsna and Jambawanta. The metre has also been effective in producing the heroic sentiment (*vira rasa*).

#### **NARADAR KRSNA DARSAN, VIPRA PUTRA ANAYAN**

In between, in a recent book of some later publishers is *Rukmini Prem-Kalah*, consisting of four poems evidently of inferior merit. Both contents and subject matter and other circumstances suggest its spurious character. In *Vipra Putra Anayan*, Sankaradeva describes Krsna flying through space with Arjuna and meeting his own counterpart in heaven. This is again in short *Ekawali* metre to show quickness of speed in effect: -

sato khan prithivi eraila  
gaia sato sagar charaila  
dhari maha manojay gati  
gaila lokalokar sibhiti 1552  
prabesila ghor andhakare  
ghora ara yaibaka napare  
hena dekhi Yogeswar Hari  
agak hanila cakra dhari 1553  
maha rasmi punje pasarai  
agat kirane fari yai  
yena Raghawar sar jake  
bidaray raksas senake 1554  
hajarek surjya yena jvale  
tahar pachat ghora cale  
ghor tamo taria satvare  
jyotispunja paila tata pare 1555  
rasmi lagi caksu fute dekhi  
mudila Arjune dui akhi  
taka eri jal paila gai  
ghor urmi bayu uthalai 1556  
pache Dhananjay Jaduraje  
prabesile sehi jala majhe  
duio gaia dekhile pratyek  
sfatikar stambha hajarek 1557  
dibya grha prakasante ache  
pasila bhitara tara pache  
Anantaka gaia bhaila bheta  
tuli ache hajareka feta 1558  
phana mani kare tiri-miri  
prakasanta yena sukla giri  
tana sarirata sukhasane  
prakasanta basi Narayane 1559

They left the seven worlds and crossed the seven seas. With great speed they came far beyond all worlds. They entered thick darkness which the horses of their chariot could not penetrate. So Krsna with His discus pierced through the darkness and there shot great light. As the army of the demons were pierced through by the showers of arrows of Rama, so the darkness was pierced through and there came a great light like that of thousand suns, and the horses proceeded. By crossing the region

of darkness they now came to the region of light. The light was so bright that Arjuna shut his eyes lest they should be blinded by the rays. Then they came to the region of water where winds excited great waves. Then Krsna and Arjuna came through the water and each saw a thousand crystal pillars. They came to an excellent house and saw the great snake Ananta with a thousand hoods. The gems on them glittered like snow-clad mountains, and on the body of Ananta shone **Narayana**.

### **DAMODAR VIPRAKHYAN, DAIVAKIR PUTRA ANAYAN, VEDASTUTI**

Some later collections include another book *Bhrgu Pariksa*, not found in earlier collections. This book also seems spurious. Next are *Daivakir Putra Anayan* and *Veda Stuti*, with touches here and there in regard to the non-dualistic philosophy of Sankaradeva combining the cult of love in it in his own way: -

Tomar advaita rup param ananda pad  
tate mor magna hok cit  
bhailoho dasar das jani ave Narahari  
amaka neriba kadachit 1670

**LILA MALA AND SRIKRSNAR VAIKUNTHA PRAYAN** come last. In *Lila Mala*, within the small range of seven poems, is described the entire Life of Krsna, and then *Sri Krsnar Vaikuntha Prayan*, where Krsna gives His last and the most essential advice to Uddhava: -

Uddhawaka sambodhi matanta Krsne pache  
karma-bandha eraiba pravandha yara ache  
Vaisnavara sanga sito laiba prathamata  
Mohora Caritra sunibeka Bhakatata 1818  
Mora Nama Kirttana kariba sarvaksane  
hrdayata Mora Rupa cintiba yatane  
Mora Jasa gaya yito kare gita-nrtya  
nahi tara bhay sito bhaila krta-krtya 1819

Krsna then addressed Uddhava and said, "He who desires to escape the sufferings for his past actions must first of all find the company of Vaisnavas. He should then hear about My Glories from sincere Devotees of Mine. He must sing My Glories every moment. He must carefully think of My Form in his heart. Thus he who can sing and dance by declaring My Glories should of course entertain no fear and he is sure to be sanctified".

samasta bhutata byapi acho Mai Hari  
savaka maniba tumi Visnu buddhi kari 1820  
brahmanar candalar nibicari kul  
datat corat yen drsti eka tul  
nicat sadhut yar bhaila eka jnan  
tahakese pandit bulia sarvajjan 1821  
bisesata manusyaganat yito nare  
Visnu buddhi bhawe sarbadai manya kare  
irsa asuya tiraskar ahamkar  
save nasta howe teve tawaksane tar 1822  
dekhi sakhigane jono hase asi berhi  
mai sadhu ito cor hena lajja eri  
kukur candal gardabharo atma Ram  
jania savako pari kariba pranam 1823  
samasta bhutat Visnu buddhi nohe jawe

kayamanobakye abhyasiba ehi bhawe  
Visnumay dekhe yito samasta jagate  
jiwante mukuta howe acir kalate 1824  
sakal pranik dekhibeka atma sam  
upai madhyat ito ati mukhyatam 1825  
Bhakatese More hrdis janiba niscay  
Bhakatjanar jana Amise hrday  
Mai bine bhakate nicinte kichu an  
Bhakatat pare Mai nicintoho an 1829

I, who am God, pervade every object. Do therefore regard all and every thing as though they were God Himself. Seek not to know the caste of a Brahman nor of an outcaste. Look to a thief with the same eyes as to a great donor. He, who thinks the noble and the ignoble as the same, can alone be regarded as an omniscient scholar. Envy, malice, condemnation and pride forthwith vanish from the heart of a person who particularly regards all human beings as Visnu. Abandon all such false conceptions as 'I am a saint, he is a thief, I may be a laughing-stock in the circle of my friends'; know that the soul of the dog, of the outcaste and of the donkey is that of God Himself, and prostrate before them with all your heart. Practise in person, mind and speech such things until and unless you can thus feel that every object is no other than Visnu. He is at once free while he is yet in the corporeal cage who can see this world consisting alone of Brahma. This is the best way: consider every being as yourself .... Know ye, that the Bhaktas are My heart and I am the heart of the Bhaktas who have no other thought than that of Myself, and I have no other thought but of them.

Sankaradeva's Kirttan-Ghosa practically ends here. *Sahasra Nam Brttanta*, consisting of six poems by Ratnakar Kandali; *Uresa Barnan* by Sankaradeva Himself; *Ghunuca Kirttan* by Sridhar Kandali, are appended to the collections of K.G., but they form no integral part of it.

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*Editing Note: - Dimbeswar Neog spelt the name of Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva as 'Sankardew' and 'Madhawdew' respectively.*