

***Ankíyá-bháoná* of Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva performed in the Sattra Institutions of Assam : A study**

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The tradition of drama in Assam, is ancient. This tradition includes *Putalanác*, *Ojápalí*, *Khuliya-bháuriyá*, *Dhulia-bháuriyá*, *kushán-gán*, *Bhari-gán* etc. The different dramatic performance, enjoyed by Sankaradeva out side Assam, traditional dramatic performances of Assam and the selected portions of ancient Sanskrit plays helped in creating *Ankíyá-nát* in the Sixteenth century. This *Ankíyá-nát* was created for spreading the New *Vaisnava-Dharma* in Assam¹ and the very performance of this *Ankíyá-nát* is known as *Ankíyá-bháoná*

The pre vaisnavite *Ojápalí* dance-recital might have given to Sankaradeva the basic idea for the production of *Ankíyá* plays.²*Ankíyá-bháoná* has a distinctly religious origin and reflects the life and works of Krishna and Rama, the two accepted incarnations of *Vishnu*, the almighty. *Ankíyá-nát* is a written form while the *Ankiyá-bháoná* is the performed or the staged form of it. *Ankiyá-nát* is a form of religious theatre which originated and still exists in Assam, a beautiful but somewhat remote state in north-eastern India. The strength of *Ankiyá-nát* is in its close links to the religious beliefs of the Assamese people, particularly the devotees of *krishna*. It has sustained itself for centuries because it is prominent among the religiously Hindus of the state.³ The *Ankíyá-nát* of Assam represented by works of Sankaradeva (1449-1568) and his followers, is a type of drama which may be easily mistaken for folk plays of not very early date. But after a careful examination of its different feastures, it appears to be the relic of a form of drama which in all probability existed in India in the prehistoric period of this art⁴.The name *Ankíyá-nát* was not entitled by Sankaradeva or Madhavadeva. They used terms like *Nát*, *Nátaka*, *Nrítya*, *Játrá*, *Jhumura* to denote their creations. The biographers of the later period also used the term *Anka* to indicate their *Náts*. This *Ankíyá-nát* term is itself a poser ⁵.....

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