

## GLOSSARY

Vernacular Terms	Meaning in English
<i>Abhinaya</i>	Mimetic expression by an actor/dancer illustrating an emotional state of a character or a situation
<i>Adhikara/Satradhikar</i>	The Chief of Sattrā, pontiff
<i>Adhyapak</i>	A teacher. In Sattriya Dance, he is the mentor in a particular discipline of music and dance
<i>Agni-gada</i>	A fire arch placed at the entry in an Ankiya Bhaona performance
<i>Ahom</i>	A Mongoloid Tai group who ruled Assam close to six centuries.
<i>Aldhora</i>	Personal Assistant/Attendant to the Satradhikar
<i>Ankiya Nat</i>	The play tradition introduced by Sankardeva and Madhavdeva to spread the <i>bhakti</i> faith
<i>Ata</i>	Grandfather; it is also a designation applied to very senior Vaishnava saints
<i>Atoi</i>	An honorific address to a Sattrā inmate
<i>Batcara</i>	A gate-house; entry gate to the Sattrā compound
<i>Bargit</i>	Devotional songs composed by Sankardeva and Madhavdeva set to <i>ragas</i>
<i>Bhagvata Purana</i>	A canonical text celebrating the faith of <i>bhakti</i> and the unity of Godhead believed to have been composed between 9 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries
<i>Bhagavata Path</i>	Recitation of the <i>Bhagavata Purana</i> in Sanskrit or Assamese

<i>Bhajana</i>	An intensive discourse for a devotee
<i>Bhakat</i>	A resident disciple of a Sattra
<i>Bhakti</i>	Unflinching devotion to a personal God. It refers more to ideal of medieval Vaishnavism
<i>Bhaona</i>	A dramatic performance of the Ankiya Nat
<i>Bharali</i>	A store-keeper of a Sattra
<i>Bhatima</i>	Eulogistic religious poems
<i>Bhava</i>	Thought/Emotional state of a devotee/individual
<i>Bayan</i>	Percussionist/s in a Sattra
<i>Brajavali</i>	A stylized language adopted by medieval <i>bhakti</i> poets in Mithila, Bengal, Assam etc.
<i>Cari-hati</i>	Four clusters of hutments which are the residential quarters of the <i>Bhakats</i> or the disciples
<i>Carita</i>	Biographies of the Gurus (oral or written)
<i>Deka-Adhikara</i>	A chosen heir apparent to the pontifical seat of a Sattra
<i>Deva</i>	God
<i>Dhemali</i>	A preliminary orchestral music in a <i>Bhaona</i>
<i>Ekasarana</i>	Total surrender to the Supreme Lord
<i>Gayan</i>	Singer/s in a Sattra
<i>Gayan-Bayan</i>	An orchestral group presentation of percussion and singing in the prayer services as well as in the ritual performances in the Sattra.
<i>Gita</i>	A lyric or poem for singing
<i>Guru</i>	A spiritual guide. In this case it refers to Sankardeva or Madhavdeva
<i>Hati</i>	Rows of huts where the <i>bhakats</i> live
<i>Kaivarta</i>	A community residing in Assam

	recognized as a Scheduled Caste by the Government of India
<i>Karapat</i>	vide <i>Batcara</i>
<i>Katha</i>	Prose; the word <i>Katha</i> is generally prefixed to the title of the literary works written in prose
<i>Katha –Carit</i>	Narratives in prose depicting the lives of the saints
<i>Kewaliya</i>	A celibate monk who has dedicated himself to the service of God
<i>Khol</i>	A type of percussion instrument which is the most important instrument in a Sattrā
<i>Khol-prasanga</i>	Prayer service with the playing of the khol. It is a type of a ritual performance
<i>Kirtana</i>	Congregational devotional singing
<i>Kirtana-ghar</i>	The prayer-hall which constitutes to be the most important centre of all activities in a Sattrā also known as <i>Nam-ghar</i>
<i>Krisna</i>	Lord Vishnu in his human manifestation and the most praised god in Assam's Vaishnavism
<i>Mah-prasad</i>	Cereals made as offering at the Sanctum
<i>Mahapurusa</i>	Extra-ordinary human being ascribed to Sankardeva
<i>Mahapurusiya</i>	Neo-Vaishnavism in Assam propounded by Sankardeva and his chief disciple Madhavdeva
<i>Manikuta</i>	A <i>sanctum-sanctorum</i> inside a <i>nam-ghar</i> or a <i>kirtana-ghar</i> where the <i>guru-asana</i> and scriptures including idols (where necessary) are placed
<i>Moholodiya</i>	A ceremony observed in the Kamalabari Group of Sattras in which a musician is put

	to test his expertise
<i>Muktiyar</i>	Secretary of the Sattrā who looks after the Sattrā Estate, liases with the outside world and has the legal rights to take decisions and sign in absence or on behalf of the <i>Sattradhikar</i>
<i>Nama</i>	Chanting the name of the Divine
<i>Nam-ghar</i>	The prayer-hall which constitutes to be the most important centre of all activities in a Sattrā also known as <i>Kirtana-ghar</i>
<i>Namghosa</i>	A religious text written by Madhavdeva
<i>Nam-prasanga</i>	Congregational chanting
<i>Nirmali</i>	Benedictory object conferred by a <i>guru</i> to a disciple
<i>Oja</i>	An expert or leader of the choral singers
<i>Oja-Pali</i>	A choral dance performed by a group of dancers illustrating scriptural stories
<i>Ora</i>	The basic stance for a dancer in Sattriya Dance
<i>Paik</i>	A person appointed by the Ahom king for specific duties to the state or a Sattrā prevalent in medieval Assam
<i>Pal-nam</i>	A special prayer service observed in many of the Sattras where a religious text is recited before an assembly with certain verses sung as refrain ( <i>pal</i> ) with utmost devotion
<i>Pali</i>	An accompanist to the <i>Oja</i>
<i>Prakriti</i>	Female/the Feminine
<i>Purusha</i>	Male/the Masculine
<i>Purvaranga</i>	Preliminaries held before a Classical Sanskrit Theatre/Traditional Indian Theatre as prescribed by the <i>Natyashastra</i>

<i>Raga</i>	A melodic mode in Indian music
<i>Rasa</i>	The playful episode in the <i>Bhagavata Purana</i> (Book) where Lord Krishna dances and plays with the Gopis in Vrindavana
<i>Rang-pravesh</i>	A ceremony in which a dancer is blessed to make his/her beginning as a soloist
<i>Sabha</i>	Religious congregation where prayer services are held
<i>Sabda</i>	Word/Voiced sound
<i>Samhati</i>	Association of sect
<i>Sarana</i>	The initiation ceremony in which a person is required to surrender himself to the fundamental principles of the particular Sattra
<i>Shastra</i>	A religious or a sacred treatise
<i>Sattra Griha/Guru Griha</i>	The abode of the preceptor
<i>Sattriya Nac/Nritya</i>	All the performance forms which evolved and developed in the Sattras of the past 500 years
<i>Sakta</i>	A follower of the Mother Goddess/ A Hindu sect propitiating Saktism
<i>Saiva</i>	A follower of Lord Siva/A Hindu sect propitiating Saivism
<i>Sisya</i>	The laity
<i>Swara</i>	A musical note
<i>Sutradhar</i>	The actor in Sanskrit theatre who introduces the play to the audience after the preliminaries. In <i>Ankiya Bhaona</i> , the <i>Sutradhar</i> plays a major role till the end of the play by connecting scenes, commenting on significance of action
<i>Tal</i>	Cymbals
<i>Than</i>	A sacred shrine

<i>Tithi</i>	Literally a Lunar Day but refer to the Death anniversary of Sankardeva or Madhavdeva
<i>Tol</i>	A centre for Sanskrit learning
<i>Visnu</i>	A Vedic god venerated as the preserver of this cosmos and the supreme deity in Vaishnavism. Visnu has ten incarnations and all are equally worshiped
<i>Vraja</i>	Refers to the mythical place (now in Uttar Pradesh) where Krishna spent his childhood in merry company of its residents. It finds a place of profound importance in medieval <i>Bhakti</i> poetry of India including that of Assamese <i>Bhakti</i> poets
<i>Zikir</i>	A set of Islamic Sufi compositions in Assamese introduced by Azan Fakir, a seventeenth century Sufi saint, hailed by the Assamese people

## **Note on the Appendices**

During my field work for this dissertation, I conversed and interviewed many people who helped me shape the research formally. However, for practical reasons one cannot give a detailed account of all the interviews. But the 6 interviews and personal conversations that are given here have directly influenced this research work.

**Appendix I** is a personal conversation with Prof. Pradip Jyoti Mahanta in the capacity of an academician and not my Supervisor, who was a part of some very important decisions which changed the dynamics of Sattriya Dance.

**Appendix II** is one of the personal conversations with Guru Ghanakanta Bora, who was a Bhakat from Kamalabari Sattri which got washed away in the floods in Majuli and was re-established in Titabor. He was one of the monks who travelled outside Majuli and Assam. A Sangeet Natak Akademi and Padmashri awardee, Guru Ghanakanta Bora witnessed and was a part of some very important changes in the journey of Sattriya Dance.

**Appendix III** is a personal communication with Dr. Anwesa Mahanta, Guru Ghanakanta Bora's disciple and a Sattriya dancer on the proscenium stage. Anwesa was the first "Sattriya" student who had a formal '*rang-pravesh*' which was a milestone in the Sattriya Dance pedagogy. An Artist-in-Residence at IIT- Guwahati, Anwesa continues to experiment with the content and the grammar of Sattriya dance without losing its core neo-Vaishnavite philosophy. She has performed extensively at various National and International platforms.

**Appendix IV** is an interview with Dr. Bhabananda Barbayan, a celibate monk from the Uttar Kamalabari Sattri who has travelled all across the world to teach Sattriya. He is one of the very few monks who have not yet opted for a domestic life but at the same time have stepped out of the 'confines' of the monastic order in the capacity of an exponent and a teacher.

**Appendix V** is an interview with Gargi Goswami, a young dancer and a disciple of Bhabanada Barbayan, who continues to learn and practice Sattriya Dance in Delhi, a place away from Assam.

**Appendix VI** is an interview with Dr. Mallika Kandali, a Sattriya dancer and a teacher who views the Sattriya Dance not as a "religious" but as a language of expression. She has experimented with the content of Sattriya dance which otherwise is based on the neo-Vaishnavite faith.