

# Srimanta Sankardeva

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- Vaishnav Saint of Assam Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva was born in 1449 into Baro-Bhuyans family near Aalipukhuri, Assam.
- The Baro-Bhuyans family were independent landlords in Assam, and belonged to the Kayastha Hindu caste.
- He was a Vaishnavite, social and religious reformer during 15th-16th century.
- He inspired the Bhakti Movement in Assam.
- His ideas were based on Bhagavata Purana.
- Sankaradev is widely credited for developing new forms of music (Borgeet); theatrical performances (Ankia Naat, Bhaona); dance form (Sattriya), and literary language namely Brajavali.
- His teachings are credited to have integrated different castes and groups of people in Assam into one cultural unit.

## Poetic works of Srimanta Sankardeva (kavya)

- Kirtana-ghosha
- Harischandra-upakhyana
- Rukmini-harana
- Ramopakhyana
- Bali-chalana
- Kurukshetra-yatra
- Gopi-uddhav-samvad
- Amrta-manthana
- Krishna-prayana-pandava-niryana
- Kamajaya

## Bhaona

- Bhaona is a traditional form of entertainment, always with religious messages, prevalent in Assam, India.

- The history of Assamese drama begins with the plays of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva (1449-1568) written in the early sixteenth century.
- These plays are popularly known as Ankiya Nats and their staging is known as bhaona.
- It is a simple drama which shows the victory of truth at the climax, generally using fictitious or mythological kings, queens, demons, Gods, soldiers etc.
- Bhaona was created by Sankardeva. He himself wrote seven dramas (called Ankia Naat) for performance in Bhaona.
- 'Ankiya' means one act and 'Nat' means drama. Therefore, 'Ankiya nat' simply means one act play.
- These plays are composed of an orchestra who are called 'Gaayan'(singers) and 'Baayans'(instrumentalists) and actors.
- There is one Sutradhar who begins the play by narrating the story of the play who acts as the chorus of the English plays.
- Khol, Taal, Doba and Nagara are some musical instruments used in the play.