The Bhakti movement began in the Tamil South in the 7th century, gradually spreading northward throughout the Indian subcontinent and reaching its zenith in the 15th and 17th century. Far from being a homogenous movement it comprised various groups each with its particular emphases. These Bhakti groups were strongly regional, so that they were distinguished not only by their doctrinal content but also by their separate histories. Thus, one finds traditions as different as the orthodox Sri Vaishnava and Saiva Siddhanta schools of the Tamil South, the North Indian cult of devotion to Ram, the Krishnaite sects of Vallabha in Western India and Chaitanya in Bengal.

Despite these regional and doctrinal differences there remain thematic similarities. The Bhakti poetry was generally written in the vernacular language of the region and therefore accessible to all social classes. Furthermore, the Bhakti poets, who came from all strata of society and included men as well as women, tended to de-emphasize ritual, and instead focused on singing and chanting the name of God.

Their major vehicle was not the written text but songs and poetry, in which they preached against brahmanical ritual beliefs and the caste-system, and advocated a pure, monotheistic faith.

Among the books purchased from Professor Callewaert are editions of the works of the disciple of Dadu, Rajjabadasa (shelf mark: nsp 2.33 B 2003/598) as well as the works of Sundaradasa (shelf mark: nsp 2.33 B 2003/586) and Guru Nanaka (shelf mark: nsp 2.33 B 2003/522). Besides, there are also studies on Bhakti traditions from various Indian and European scholars (shelf marks: nsp 8.12 G 2003/194, nsp 8.12 G 2003/514, rel 51 L 03/326, rel 51 L 03/397). All books have been catalogued in the SWB and HEIDI and are available to the users.