

## The View from Brindavan

IN THE CHAPTER JUST concluded we saw that the plot behind the plot of the four *sampradāys* took us not to the south, where the story itself suggested we should look for its origins, but to the north, where it points—specifically, to the bhakti communities that formed in eastern Rajasthan in the course of the sixteenth century. One of these communities—the Rāmānandīs—was decidedly monastic in its conception of itself, just as the four-*sampradāy* paradigm seemed to mandate. The other, by contrast—the Dādūpathīs—had a lay component as well. One might think that a strictly world-denying ascetic environment would have served as the likely habitat for a *nirguṇ bhakti* version of the four-*sampradāy* idea, but it actually happened in the mixed environment represented by the Dādūpathī Rāghavdās.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, the Rāmānandīs were much more comfortable with the kinds of worship that focused on images and invited participation in the narrative worlds to which they gave access. It was this broader vision of bhakti that shaped the *Bhaktamāl* of Nābhādās.

Such a mindset facilitated the Rāmānandīs' connection to royal power, and not surprisingly Nābhādās lay quite some emphasis on the motif of monarch-as-bhakta.<sup>2</sup> As for the Kachvahas themselves, they needed the power of the gods to be firmly ensconced in their midst as icons who could be served in rituals of state and honored with *pūjā*, but they also felt a need to tap into the wellsprings of power that had long been associated with ascetical practice at Galtā. The Rāmānandīs responded to that desire in ways that would befit their new role at court. By representing themselves as heirs to the ancient Śrī *sampradāy*, these monks claimed for themselves the ritual potencies of the great Vaishnava Pañcarātra tradition

and deflected any criticism that they were somehow newcomers on the block, even when the story of Kṛṣṇadās Payahārī's relatively recent confrontation with Tārānāth seemed to say just that. Their belonging to one of the four *sampradāys*—indeed by most accounts the oldest—put Kṛṣṇadās's victory in a deeper historical context and conferred on the Rāmānandī order a dignity commensurate with its new connection to the Kachvaha state. The fact that the community derived a fair amount of its quickly expanding power from the practice of liberally recruiting members from the lower castes also gave special urgency to the task of asserting a tie to the Brahmins of ancient Srirangam. It would render their bhakti not only venerable but pure.

Hence while there is little justification for thinking that the idea of the four *sampradāys* emerged from the south itself, there is every reason to understand how it might have germinated at Galtā. Perhaps part of the reason Rāghavdās took it up in the course of the seventeenth century is that the Dādūpanth too, just then, was beginning to develop a degree of military muscle that would bring it into a new sort of conversation with the Kachvaha state. It might have been useful—for both sides of the conversation—to have these bhakti warriors comfortably situated in the terrain charted out by the concept of the four *sampradāys*.

Yet these Rajasthani voices, explicitly interlinked, were not the only ones eager to put forward an argument about how the communities to which they belonged could be traced to one of the four *sampradāys*. Claims were also made on behalf of some of the religious communities who had established themselves in Braj in the course of the sixteenth century. We saw in Chapter 2 how the Braj they helped constitute—specifically its spiritual center at Brindavan—came to be envisioned as magnet and conduit for what would later be called the bhakti movement. Before long we shall also see that both the Gauḍīyas and the Vallabhites, principal players in the new drama being staged in Braj, joined the Rāmānandīs and Dādūpanthīs in asserting a connection to the four *sampradāys*. Indeed, if our sources are to be believed, they were actually the first to do so, even before Nābhādās proposed this connection on behalf of the Rāmānandīs.

In Chapter 5 we will discover how all this came to be, considerably expanding our conception of how, when, and why the idea of the four *sampradāys* was embraced from various sides, and how that concept, in turn, created a platform for later ideas about the bhakti movement. But

before we can do this, we need to understand a good bit more about the dramatic acts of migration—"bhakti movements," you could say—that contributed so fundamentally to the creation of Brindavan and the rest of Braj in the course of the sixteenth century. Were these transpositions what actually undergirded the south-to-north progression that gets enshrined in the idea of the four *sampradāys*? And if not, what might have lain behind the Vallabhites' and Chaitanyites' desire at a certain point to connect their own histories with that master narrative, causing it to be considerably more persuasive than it otherwise might have been?

### Mughal Brindavan

In the course of the sixteenth century, Brindavan fairly exploded onto the religious landscape of north India. As the century began, it may not have been much more than the forest to which its name entitles it—the verdant retreat evoked in texts like the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and a raft of others, home only to wandering herds of cattle. So at least was it recalled—"all jungle and uninhabited"—in a legal document (*parwānā*) issued by the Mughal governor of Agra, Mukhtār Khān, in 1709.<sup>3</sup> Earlier Mughal records, however, bear testimony to the existence of small settlements at places such as Barsānā, Govardhan, and Arīṭh, the last bearing a name that carries a memory of the confrontation between Krishna and the bull-demon Arīṣṭha. Early in the century it was renamed Rādhākuṇḍ, as mendicants from Bengal and elsewhere came to settle there. By the 1540s, when the great Chaitanyite *gosvāmīs* Raghunāth Dās and Jīv Gosvāmī bought land there, it was quickly becoming a major beachhead for a new form of Krishnaism. And by the end of the century settlements such as Rādhākuṇḍ constituted, in the words of the Mughal historian Irfan Habib, "a well differentiated village society."<sup>4</sup>

But had it yet been fully remapped as the holy domain of Krishna? In 1594 the Kachvaha ruler Mānsingh, who wanted to acquire land in Brindavan, found himself dealing with an association of peasant headmen (*pañc*) who lived in a village called Dosāīch and two hamlets nearby called Nagū and Bhanān.<sup>5</sup> This is one indication among several that the religious identity soon to be indelibly stamped on these places—the great *paurāṇik* idea of Brindavan, Krishna's playground—had not altogether overtaken the preexisting villages and hamlets of Braj, even their legal names. Yet we

do know that immense changes were under way. Dosāich was by then home to the massive temple of Govindadev, the largest monument in India that had ever been designed as a single structure. It had been consecrated four years earlier, in 1590, as the centerpiece of Mānsingh's desires for this new Brindavan—his and those of his father Bhagavāndās, who ruled on the throne of Āmer until his death in 1589. The land purchase of 1594 only added further drama to the major real estate transformation in which the Kachvahas participated, with far-reaching effect. A century later these new acquisitions would serve as the treasured retreat of Rājā Jaisingh II, a child prodigy whom the emperor Aurangzeb dubbed *savāi* (not just a single exemplary human being but “one and a quarter”), who became the architect and builder of Jaipur, a city he founded from scratch, and who was the greatest Kachvaha ruler of all time. To say this is no small thing. It puts Jaisingh a step ahead of even Mānsingh himself.

It is hard to imagine a place where old local conventions and new imperial realities could have made for a sharper set of contrasts than they did in Braj during the time of Mānsingh, who held the Kachvaha throne from 1589 to 1614 and was Akbar's most trusted general and governor from the 1570s onward. If the political transitions of the sixteenth century were breathtakingly rapid, this was hardly less true in the religious arena, especially in Braj. Speaking of the earlier part of the sixteenth century, Charlotte Vaudeville has argued that “prior to the arrival of the Vaiṣṇava reformers in Braj, there was hardly any Krishnaite shrine in the whole rural area.”<sup>6</sup> Yet at century's end, in 1598, a *farmān* could be issued from the court of Akbar, then located in Lahore, making it clear that the temple of Govindadev was to be regarded as the central point of reference in an extensive inventory of major religious sites that crisscrossed the area. Thirty-five temples receiving grants and guarantees from the Mughal throne were listed on the back of this *farmān*, and of this total more than half—eighteen, to be precise—were to be found in Brindavan itself. In comparison, only six belonged to the old mercantile and pilgrimage center of Mathura not far away.<sup>7</sup>

Some of the most important temples in Braj—that of Hari Gopālraī (or Haridev) at Govardhan and those housing the deities Madanmohan and Govindadev in Brindavan itself—reflected the direct patronage of the Kachvahas, with whom the Mughals had become so closely intertwined in battle, marriage, and administration. Evidence of the last of these connections

is provided by the fact that the *farmān* of 1598 records itself as having been prepared during the watch (*caukī*) of Rāmdās Kachvaha, a favorite among Akbar's court officers.<sup>8</sup> It was commissioned by none other than Abu'l Fazl, Akbar's principal advisor, historian, and record keeper, and it evidently reflected the views of an elite group of four Brahmins whom Abu'l Fazl trusted to help him make sense of a religious complex that had grown so rapidly as to require legal review and conceptual systematization. The result was not only the reaffirmation and consolidation of earlier commitments but the extension of the state's patronage to many other sites that appeared on the list, for a total commitment of one thousand *bīghās* according to Akbar's newly expanded definition of the term.<sup>9</sup> These were heady times.

The great octagonal *śikhara* of the Govindadev temple, which apparently rose to a height of some three hundred feet until it was dismantled in circumstances we still do not fully understand (the rest of the temple, except for the *garbhagrha* over which it stood, was left standing), would have been visible at a great distance.<sup>10</sup> This was so not only because of the height of the temple itself but because of the hillock on which it stood, located not far west of the River Jamuna. This site may have had earlier associations with a goddess. As reckoned at the Govindadev temple itself, she was the goddess Vṛndā, who is associated with the *tulsī* plant sacred to Vishnu.<sup>11</sup> Her hill was not the only high point in Brindavan's landscape—another, even more dramatic, had been claimed as the site for the sister temple of Madanmohan—but these two promontories are quite exceptional in the general sweep of Brindavan's riverine landscape. Utterly different from Galtā, we have here a vast alluvial plain, flooding generously during the monsoon (Figure 4). Doubtless Brindavan became a sort of boomtown during the reign of Akbar, but not a densely populated one. Its new buildings, whose architecture was nicely consistent though not strictly repetitious, were laid out at a comfortable distance from one another. They must have represented striking additions to a pastoral and agricultural scene that they modified but did not destroy.

The great urban concentration remained elsewhere—at Mathura, the ancient city lying on the right bank of the Jamuna seven miles to the south of Brindavan. The highest point in Mathura's terrain had achieved its eminence in part because of the rubble that had been deposited there by the remains of city after city, built and rebuilt over the course of fully two

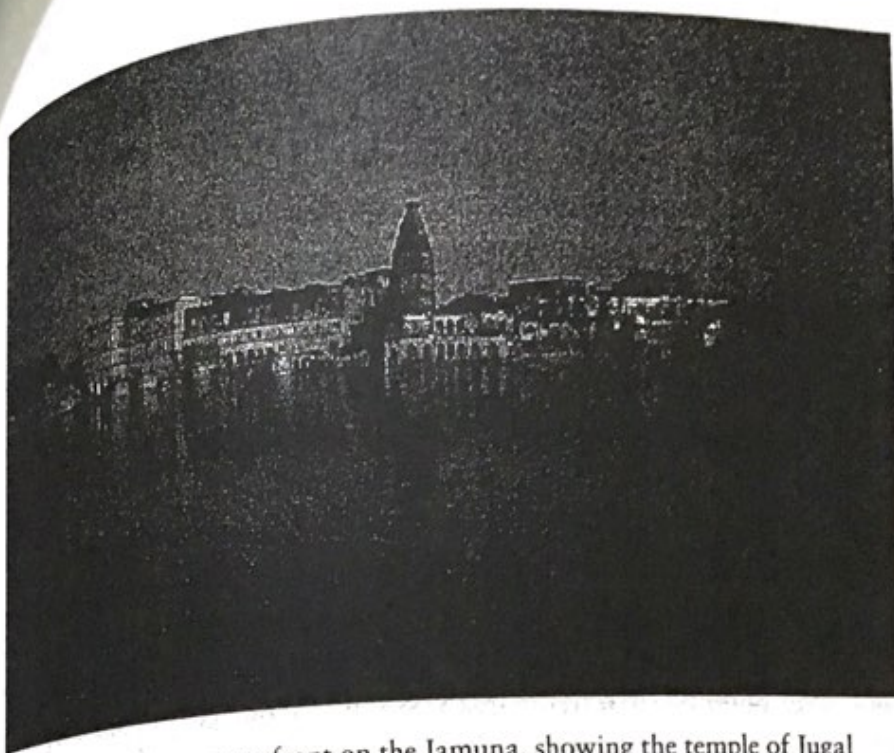


Figure 4. Brindavan waterfront on the Jamuna, showing the temple of Jugal Kīśor. Photo by Robyn Beeche.

millennia.<sup>12</sup> It is possible that this hill—this tell—may have supported a major temple to Vishnu for many of those years. If so, it was the one great precursor to the plethora of impressive temples built for Krishna in the Braj countryside as the sixteenth century advanced.

But was this Mathura temple actually dedicated to Krishna? The historical record is far from clear. We know from the report of the Jesuit Antonio Monserrate that there was an exciting hubbub of activity at the site when he visited there sometime between 1580 and 1582. According to Monserrate, Brahmins insisted on the tonsure of “huge crowds of pilgrims from all over India” on the banks of the Jamuna before they would let them worship at the temple that stood at the top of the hill.<sup>13</sup> Only when Virsingh Bundelā, king of Orccha and a close ally of the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr, built a new temple on the site in 1618 does its Vaishnava status become clear. At that point, we know, it was called the temple of Keśavdev or Keśavrāy, a title that may refer generally to Vishnu or specifically to Krishna. Probably the temple took its name from earlier structures on the site: the *farmān* of 1598 to which we have been referring does mention a grant to a temple of Keśavrāy in Mathura. Significantly, however, for all

the press of pilgrims that Monserrate observed, that grant is considerably smaller than those made to the temples of Govindadev or Madanmohan in Brindavan—the revenue from forty-five *bighās* of land as against seventy or one hundred.<sup>14</sup> And its focus was probably quite different. To judge by the other looming structure that Virsingh Bundelā built in the region, the Chaturbhuj temple he had constructed in Orccha itself, it may very well have housed a four-armed image of Vishnu rather than a two-armed one of Krishna.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless its glory would have rivaled—and was probably intended to rival—that of Govindadev, whose design Virsingh copied for the Chaturbhuj temple in Orccha.<sup>16</sup> The Venetian traveler Niccolao Manucci tells us that its golden spire could be seen all the way from Agra some fifty miles away.<sup>17</sup>

The contrast and indeed rivalry between Mathura and Brindavan is truly significant. Let not all this talk of magnificent buildings with soaring towers obscure the fact that in Brindavan, by contrast to Mathura, the reason for building such structures was actually the pastoral landscape in which they were set: the land where Krishna had roamed, the site of his idylls with Radha, the gopis, and his cowherd friends. If Brindavan took on some of the features of urban grandeur in the course of the sixteenth century, as it undoubtedly did, this was owing to its ties to royal centers located at some remove—Āmer, Agra, Fatehpur Sīkrī—rather than on the site itself. Brindavan was built not to be a capital city but to recover the natural garden that cityscapes, however carefully conceived, tended to destroy. At the same time it was, in its way, a monument to the newly far-flung connections that the Suris and Mughals made possible, for it rose at the center of a newly pacified ring of territories that extended coast to coast and from Kabul to the Deccan. If in an ideal Sultanate or Mughal city the palace garden was intended to serve as the quiet, capacious heart of the urban complex as a whole, then by analogy Brindavan and all of Braj seemed to have been fashioned by their Rajput and Mughal architects as the vast garden situated at the center of the new Rajput/Mughal cosmopolis. And at the heart of Brindavan lay, in turn, a garden: *nidhi-ban*, the “treasury-wilderness” that was most closely associated with the love play of Krishna and Radha.

I do not mean to imply that the Mughal rulers themselves conceived Brindavan as the heart of their empire. That honor would have to go instead to Agra, a city of half a million at its peak and a huge military

garrison; or for a while to Fatehpur Sīkrī, Akbar's dream-capital and home to the tomb of Shaikh Salīm al-Dīn Chishtī; or to Delhi, which poets could depict as "a little Mecca."<sup>18</sup> Indeed one would have to acknowledge the whole string of cities that pointed back from Agra to Delhi to Lahore to Kabul—and thereby to the Timurid past. The throne itself was a mobile throne, traveling in response to military and administrative demand. Yet at least from the point of view of the Mughals' firmest allies, the Kachvahas, and in concert with the vision of the religious immigrants of whom we shall soon speak, Brindavan lay at the center of it all. It was the religious reality that turned the iron of trade and conquest to gold. No wonder the old *Mathurā Māhātmya* had to be rewritten in such a way as to shift the emphasis at least somewhat from Mathura to Braj. Once exclusively a paean to the ghats, tanks, and images of Mathura, several of which are forms of Sūrya or Shiva, this text became in its new version a much more Vaishnava document, one that made a place for a survey of the Braj country as a whole, conceived as "forests," and that alluded specifically to the deity worshipped in the temple of Govindadev.<sup>19</sup> Tradition attributes the new improved *Mathurā Māhātmya* to the creativity of Rūp Gosvāmī himself—and who was he? Among many other things, he was the man in charge of the temple of Govindadev, the person to whom the deity is said originally to have revealed himself in 1535.<sup>20</sup>

As we indicated in Chapter 2, however, the temple of Govindadev that Rūp oversaw was the first structure on the site, not the splendid second temple that Rājā Mānsingh caused to be consecrated in 1590. Apparently Mānsingh had it built to fulfill a vow he had taken many years earlier: that if he should return victorious from the campaigns that took him to Gujarat in 1572 and 1573 and perhaps to Mewar in 1576, he would thank Govindadev and his initiating guru Raghunāthdās for their agency in making it all happen. We do not have actual text for this vow—perhaps it was oral rather than written—but it can be reconstructed with some plausibility from the relevant documents that do survive.<sup>21</sup> If Raghunāthdās initiated Mānsingh in front of the Govindadev image he served, it may have been after Rūp's death. Dated written works do not emerge from Rūp's hand after 1550, but in a *farmān* of 1568 we learn he had stepped down as *adhikārī* of the Govindadev temple, passing the role on to his nephew Jiv. The wording of the document suggests that he was still alive.<sup>22</sup>

Rūp's fortunes must have been tied, at least indirectly, to the Mughals—perhaps Babur and Humayun, certainly Akbar. One even wonders whether the earliest *farmān* to have survived in which such a tie is formalized might have been issued in the year 1565 in view of Rūp's advancing age, making sure that the royal connections he had developed would be formalized for posterity. Yet we must remember that a major part of Rūp's life in Brindavan would have transpired not during Mughal times *per se* but in a period when the Afghans had reasserted their control. The first Mughal ruler, Babur, held the throne from 1526 to 1530; the second, Humayun, from then until 1540, at which point he lost it to the Afghan Suri rulers Sher Shāh and Islām Shāh. Humayun recaptured Lahore and Delhi in 1555 but died shortly thereafter, being succeeded by his son Akbar.

We often forget the contributions that the Suri rulers made to the consolidation of empire that had begun under the Mughals. These were crucial to the Mughals' later success. For one thing, Sher Shāh Suri (r. 1540–1545) excelled in making common cause with a range of leaders we could generally call Rajput, as the Mughals were later to do.<sup>23</sup> Equally important, he devised an exacting system of administrative control and revenue collection, which was perpetuated by his son Islām Shāh (r. 1545–1554). Most celebrated of all perhaps was the excellent network of well-protected roads and caravansarais that he created, which not only reconnected Bengal with the northwest, but tied the new capital at Agra with places as far south as Burhanpur in the Deccan, a system that was critical to later Mughal successes. It was Sher Shāh Suri who built the new highway that connected Delhi and Agra on the right bank of the Jamuna, making it possible to travel quite directly between the two cities, rather than crossing the river and taking the considerably longer route that made use of the great road that connected Delhi to Kanauj and Banaras. Pointedly, this new road had the effect of inserting the great bulk of the Braj country, which lay west of the Jamuna, into the very center of imperial concourse. Brindavan grew up not far away on the shores of that other major artery connecting the two cities, the Jamuna itself.

Finally, there were continuities of personnel that tied Afghan patterns of rule to their Mughal successors. The most important figure who comes to mind is the famous Ṭodarmal, a Khatri Hindu from Avadh who served in Sher Shāh's ranks and then became chief financial officer to Akbar early on in his reign (1560). Ṭodarmal was later employed by Akbar in a

number of other capacities, some of them military. One instantly sees how such things matter to our story when one recalls that in 1584 a seasoned, all but invaluable Ṭodarmal would personally grant the income from one hundred *biḡhās* of land to the temple of Madanmohan in Brindavan. He made this grant on behalf of Akbar to Gopāldās, the man who served Jīv Gosvāmī as priest (*pujārī*) not only in the temple of Madanmohan, but also at Govindadev, and was elsewhere referred to as his legal representative (*vakīl*).<sup>24</sup> It is said that Ṭodarmal too, like Mānsingh, was an initiate of the Gauḍīya *sampradāy*, having been given the mantra by Raghunāth Bhaṭṭ, another of the celebrated “six *gosvāmīs*” who worked alongside Rūp, his brother Sanātan, and his nephew Jīv.<sup>25</sup> Thus we see that it was not only the Kachvahas who mediated between the highest levels of Mughal authority and the religious institutions that were blossoming at Brindavan; others were also involved. Note, too, the geographical distance represented in Ṭodarmal’s career. Like Mānsingh, who served from Ahmedabad to Kabul to Bengal, when this easterner came to Brindavan he brought the empire with him.

### *Immigrants from the South: When and Why?*

All that we have just said suggests that the building of Brindavan commenced in the Suri period or during the reign of Akbar. Indeed, for every architectural development of which we have a dependable record, this is true, and it is not wrong to imagine that the immense political and economic advances made from 1540 onward created the conditions that made it possible for Brindavan and other parts of Braj to thrive in a new and newly conceived way. Yet we must keep in mind that in Mānsingh’s time Rūp was remembered as having discovered the image of Govindadev in 1535, during Humayun’s rule, and it seems to have been during the last phases of the prior dynasty—the rule of Sikandar and Ibrahim Lodi (1489–1526)—that others among the new “Braj pioneers” arrived on the scene. As we saw in Chapter 2, it is hard to draw a straight line between the depiction of bhakti traveling from south to north that we get in the *Bhāgavata Māhātmya*, on the one hand, and the on-the-ground realities of the Brindavan toward which she is said to have been heading, on the other. Yet if our sources can be trusted, there is no denying that many of the bhakti immigrants who built new and lasting institutions in Braj

around the turn of the sixteenth century did indeed come from the south. The question—now to pick up the thread from Chapter 3—is whether they did so as vanguards of the four *sampradāys*.

Take, for example, the figure of Nimbārka. If one reads the standard account of how the *sampradāys* of Braj came into being, one meets Nimbārka's name at the head of the roster of Krishna bhaktas who arrived in Braj and established an enduring sectarian presence there. This standard is well represented in a book published in 1968 as one weighty volume in a trilogy devoted to explaining all aspects of the cultural heritage of Braj: Prabhudayāl Mītal's *Braj ke Dharma-Sampradāyoṅ kā Itihās* (History of the Religious Communities of Braj). According to Mītal, Nimbārka made his appearance in Braj at the conclusion of what he calls the early medieval period (*pūrvā madhya kāl*), that is, just before the onset of Mughal rule.<sup>26</sup> Mītal tells us that Nimbārka made his residence in Nīmgāoṅ, near Mount Govardhan, a place that takes its name simultaneously from his and from the great *nīm* tree that grows there. Mītal then goes on to list the names of three other prominent figures who inherited Nimbārka's mantle before the time of Akbar: Gāngal Bhaṭṭācārya, Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ, and Śrī Bhaṭṭ. These four Nimbārka *mahants* comprise almost half of Mītal's pre-Mughal list. Only one other figure dating to this period—Vallabhācārya—joins them in taking a clear place within the framework articulated by the idea of the four *sampradāys*.

Alas, a series of difficulties are embedded in Mītal's reconstruction of history. To begin with, nothing in the work most reliably attributed to Nimbārka, the *Vedāntapārijātasaurabha* (The Fragrance of the Heavenly Tree of Vedānta), which was conceived as his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*, betrays a specifically Krishnaite orientation.<sup>27</sup> This text does not even cite the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which may be an indication of its early date but may also signal the lack of a theistic orientation that would align its author comfortably into the Vaishnava frame proclaimed by the idea of the four *sampradāys*. Evidently that came later. Moreover, skipping ahead to the Braj aspects of the story, there is no real reason to associate the *nīm* tree that appears in the name of Nīmgāoṅ with the *nīm* that figures prominently in the story of how Nimbārka/Nimāditya got his name, the one that Priyādās reports.<sup>28</sup> What is critical is the turn to Radha (and, simultaneously, to the vernacular) among some who claimed Nimbārka as their guru—the remainder of Mītal's list—but again, that came much later.

Nothing in the writings that can best be attributed to Nimbārka himself shows any awareness of her.<sup>29</sup>

A similar tale would have to be told about the community's establishment at Dhruv Ṭilā near Viśrām Ghāṭ in Mathura. Again, there is no reason to associate this place with Nimbārka himself. Its proprietors are able to trace their family's presence there only as far back as the sixteenth century. Of course, that date is extremely significant from our point of view, as is the fact that this sanctuary is located in Mathura, for it is there that one can trace the bulk of the older religious activity that occurred in the Braj region, as against what happened in the newly "colonized" rural parts of the area. Very likely we should think of the Nimbārka presence on Viśrām Ghāṭ as following from the arrival in the course of the early sixteenth century of Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ, the important Nimbārka ascetic whose *samādhi* lies a short distance away.<sup>30</sup>

That too makes for an interesting story. The earliest versions of Nābhādās's *Bhaktamāl* neglect to mention Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ, but a *chappay* singing his praise had evidently been added to the *Bhaktamāl* corpus by the time Priyādās wrote his *Bhaktirasabodhinī* commentary around the work in 1712. By then memory may have become foggy and it was appropriate to explain how Keśav Bhaṭṭ came to have the moniker Kāśmīrī attached to his name. Priyādās therefore provides us with several *kavitts* in which Keśav's wide travels and philosophical prestige are extolled. In the course of doing so, he also features an encounter between Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ and Chaitanya, which is said to have occurred after the former had subdued the intellectual pretensions of the pundits of Navadvīp, the clan among whom Chaitanya was born.<sup>31</sup>

An equally vivid aspect of the citation for Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ, as given in this stratum of the *Bhaktamāl*, concerns the endpoint of these travels: Mathura itself. The *chappay* attributed to Nābhādās calls Keśav a veritable axe in the cause of his firm devotion to Hari, a weapon capable of chopping off the stems of other religious traditions.<sup>32</sup> One might well take this as a reference to the cogency of Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ's philosophical writing, in which the positions of opponents are engaged—perhaps those at Navadvīp, as Priyādās makes us think—but the *Bhaktamāl* takes things in a different direction. It says that Keśav's warlike personality displayed itself at Mathura itself. There Keśav issued a forceful challenge to the foreigners (*mlecch*) who ruled the place, causing these *qāzīs* to fear

the very mention of his name. A *kavitt* of Priyādās associates this confrontation specifically with Viśrām Ghāṭ, using the alternate name Viśrām Tīr. There, says Priyādās, Keśav Bhaṭṭ, accompanied by thousands of followers, found himself confronted by the sight of Muslims circumcising those who had presumably removed some of their clothes so as to bathe. Keśav flared with anger at these oppressors, told them to remove their own clothes (reducing their sartorial status to that of the religious Hindus), and proceeded to drown them one and all.<sup>33</sup> A later tradition, reported by the commentator Rūpkalā, conjures up further details—a terrible circumcising machine that the Muslim authorities had set up, and its destruction when Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ appealed to the countervailing and even more terrifying power of Vishnu's disk, the deadly *sudarśan cakra*.<sup>34</sup> It may not be incidental that Nimbārkīs regard their founding guru as a manifestation of just this weapon.

We must remember that all these stories were written well after Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ's death and seem to have been added to his biography in stages. A rudimentary statement of how he routed the Turks and *qāzīs* from Mathura occurs in Rāghavdās's *Bhaktamāl* (§245), probably written in 1660, and more elaborate versions of the story may well have circulated in the aftermath of Aurangzeb's destruction of the Keśavdev temple a decade later. There was indeed a *qāzī* in residence at Mathura in early Mughal times, but the city did not become an administrative center independent of Agra until 1629. Nothing in records associated with the Mughal court indicates that there were any major controversies, except for an instance in which a local Brahmin was accused of misappropriating material that had been amassed by the *qāzī* with the purpose of building a mosque. The matter seems to have been handled judiciously, accommodating especially the concerns of members of the imperial harem, perhaps especially those who were Hindu.<sup>35</sup> The real tensions—and they may have been more political than religious in nature—boiled up later, in the course of the seventeenth century. It seems likely, then, that Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ's role in a Hindu-Muslim confrontation was dreamed up after the fact, perhaps as a reflection of the martial sensibilities of at least some Nimbārkī ascetics. Keśav himself probably came to Mathura not as a defender of the faith but for the simple reason that it was a major destination on the pilgrimage routes of his time. He was by then old, as Nimbārkī sources affirm, and simply did not go farther, but the ashram that grew up around him, with its lay patrons, remained.<sup>36</sup>

Later, as Brindavan flourished, Nimbārki theology turned distinctively to Radha and the order established a center in Brindavan—the Śrījī temple, which remains a major site of worship today.<sup>37</sup> As the name would seem to imply, though it also refers to Śrī = Lakṣmī = Radha, this temple is closely associated in memory with the figure of Śrī Bhaṭṭ, one of whose poems is included in the middle section of the Fatehpur anthology of 1582.<sup>38</sup> Brindavan's highly respected Nimbārki scholar, Brindavan Bihari, affirms the four-*sampradāy* model, yet so far as I have been able to discover, there is no Nimbārki text of any considerable age that attests it. All we have is the unchallenged conviction that Keśav Kāśmīrī Bhaṭṭ hailed from a Tailangana family, which, in turn, is said to have been connected to that of Nimbārka himself. So far so good, but the family until recently resident at the Dhruv Ṭilā site where his *samādhi* lies traces its lineage not to the south but to a Gauḍ Brahmin heritage in the north.

Of course, the matter of southern origins is very significant for our concerns, and this is not the only place where there is a strong suggestion of its importance in generating the great transformations that occurred in Braj sometime around the turn of the sixteenth century. In Chapter 2 we mentioned the figure of Gopāl Bhaṭṭ, whom Chaitanya is said to have inspired to depart for Braj when he met him as a young man at Srirangam, and who belonged to the priestly family of that great temple. We also noted that he represents quite a different connection to the milieu of Rāmānuja than is suggested by the Rāmānandīs' claims, even though Gopāl Bhaṭṭ, like Rāghavānand and Rāmānand, remained celibate. And there is no question about his impact on the ritual life of Brindavan-style Vaishnavism through his *Haribhaktivilāsa*, even if he himself never became the householder whom those ritual prescriptions, enshrined at the temple of Rādhāramañji and honored elsewhere, would require for temple service.<sup>39</sup>

A similarly great impact on the emerging Vaishnava culture of Braj can be traced to another immigrant whose family had roots in the deep south—Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ, the author of the *Vrajabhaktivilāsa* (Devotional Enjoyments of Braj), a massive work completed in 1552. A late seventeenth-century biography written by one of his descendents, Jānakīprasād Bhaṭṭ, reports that Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ's father hailed from Madurai, the city whose name is the Tamil equivalent of Mathura and whose mythology connects it pointedly to its northern prototype.<sup>40</sup> According to this same account, however, and also according to the *Vraṅjotsavacandrikā* (Luminous Array of Festivals in Braj), a work reportedly written by Nārāyaṇ himself,

Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ was born in 1531 on the banks of the Godavari, the great river that rises in the western Deccan and flows eastward through the Telugu country before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.<sup>41</sup> A pattern of gradual northward migration is implied. Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ is said to have settled in the region around Mount Govardhan in 1545, apparently joining the ascetics from eastern India who had by then encamped at Rādhākuṇḍ—or, to use the local name, Arīṭh.

The *Vrajabhaktivilāsa* is a remarkable treatise, cataloguing every conceivable forest, grove, or ford in the Braj countryside, connecting each with a deity or character in the life of Krishna, and instructing potential visitors about the mantra to be uttered at each place and the time that would be optimal for offering such an utterance. It is an encyclopedic work—the longest ever composed about the sacred geography of Braj—and it reads, in the words of Alan Entwistle, “not so much as a description of actual circumstances, but as a prospectus for a full reclamation of Braj, making use of any existing objects, however trivial, and inventing the rest.”<sup>42</sup> The *Vrajabhaktivilāsa* takes Mathura as its basic point of origin, yet its special focus is farther west. Brindavan is not especially featured, but there may be a connection with the followers of Chaitanya, as Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ’s several-year stay in Rādhākuṇḍ seems to imply. If so, however, such a fact could not be deduced from the description of Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ that is offered by Nābhādās, who goes to some lengths to depict him as a *smārta*, someone who strives to keep the entire fabric of traditional brahminical learning intact.<sup>43</sup> Nor is a Chaitanyite orientation evident in the *Vrajabhaktivilāsa* itself. Nābhādās positions his *chappay* on Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ after the one on Kamalākar Bhatt, a Mādhvite, and before the one that depicts Rūp and Sanātan. One might interpret this order as indicating a hinge between sects, but I think it is easier to read in terms of caste and perhaps regional affiliation. After all, if we were to believe that Nābhādās understood Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ as being a member of the Chaitanyite fold—a pupil of Kṛṣṇadās Brahmācārī, who was in turn an initiate of Sanātan Gosvāmī, as Gauḍīya tradition asserts—then it would seem odd that Nābhā should devote a *chappay* to Sanātan’s pupil’s pupil before he got to Sanatan himself.

It is easy enough to understand how a work like the *Vrajabhaktivilāsa* might have been composed by a newcomer to Braj rather than a native. Here would have been someone who could still see the forest for the

trees—and indeed, forests become the principal organizing rubric for this massive work, although specific banyans are also featured. Yet although there seems no doubt about Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ's having been an outsider, it is much harder to locate him clearly within any *sampradāy* rubric, certainly not that of the four *sampradāys*, and thereby imagine a sect-based orientation that might have brought him to Braj. Unlike Gopāl Bhaṭṭ and the six *gosvāmīs*, Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj and the early Chaitanyite biographers never propose such a thing. Much about Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ remains mysterious. He wrote in Sanskrit and may well have been a speaker of Telugu and Tamil, but as to the means of his livelihood or the exact motivation for his immigration to Braj, it is at present impossible to say.

Other southerners were also active in Braj in the first half of the sixteenth century. Rūp and Sanātan Gosvāmī, younger and older brothers who had a major impact on the building of Braj, were also southerners in a certain sense, as we saw in Chapter 2. If Nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭ's relation to the Chaitanyite project that began to unfold in Braj in the first half of the sixteenth century is somewhat indistinct, that is hardly so with Rūp and Sanātan, and in part for that reason we are heir to much more specific information about their southern roots. We learn from the writings of Jiv Gosvāmī, nephew to Rūp and Sanātan, that they all belonged to a family that traced its origins to the Deccan. There is an element of confusion in Jiv's genealogical report, since he seems to claim that the earliest ancestor whom he lists, one Sarvajña Jagatguru, himself "ruled as a king in the land of Karnāṭa"—that is, Karnataka—but it seems clear that the man to whom he was actually referring was not the king himself but rather, as the title suggests, his guru. As we learn elsewhere in Jiv's writing, this man's name was Viśveśvara Kavicandra and he served as court poet (again, the *kavi* in his name gives it away) to King Siṃhabhūpāla, who controlled a region in the Nalgonda district of modern Andhra Pradesh, not far south of Hyderabad, in the last two decades of the fourteenth century.<sup>44</sup>

Yet much had happened in the six generations that separated Rūp and Sanātan from Viśveśvara. Their branch of the family had long since settled in Bengal, probably coming by way of Orissa, and within Bengal Rūp and Sanātan had themselves been itinerant. After being educated at Navadvīp, they settled at Rāmakeli, near Gauḍ, and took up service in the court of Husain Shāh, who from Gauḍ ruled an area that extended across most of what we today would call Bengal. Clearly Rūp and Sanātan

preserved the high levels of training that their brahminical past implied, yet by serving a Muslim ruler they effectively become Kāyasths, as certain others openly called them.<sup>45</sup> It was Chaitanya who reinscribed their Brahmin identities upon them by giving them the names Rūp and Sanātan. When he first encountered them, we are told, they were known to him respectively as Dabīr Khās and Sākar Mallik, and these names may actually not have been personal names but the titles by which these men were known at the Shāhī court of Gauḍ. Sākar Mallik is “honored sir” and Dabīr Khās is “private secretary”—that is, to the shah. In Chaitanyite remembrance Sanātan sometimes gets this title, too.<sup>46</sup>

No doubt these roles made Rūp and Sanātan effective interlocutors with counterparts in the Mughal and Suri courts, but their particular standing at Gauḍ, exalted as it was, may also have encouraged them to move elsewhere—to a place where they could reclaim a fuller measure of their Brahminness. Of course, there may have been other motives, as well. They may have wanted to dissociate themselves from a campaign on Puri that Husain Shāh was then considering. But these brothers’ sense of having compromised themselves comes through at several points in their biographies, particularly as counterpoint to their efforts not to lose contact with Karnataka Brahmin families like their own.<sup>47</sup> In the *Bhaktiratnākara* it is said that they resettled a group of Karnataka Brahmins in Bhaṭṭabāṭī, near Gauḍ.<sup>48</sup> This is a later text, written in the eighteenth century, so it is possible that it reflects a sense of implicit apology that is more appropriate to a later time than to the sixteenth century itself. At the turn of the seventeenth century, however—in Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj’s *Caitanyacaritāmṛta*—we meet similar motifs. Kṛṣṇadās tells us at several points that Rūp and Sanātan bewailed their untouchable, outsiders’ status as they came before the presence of Chaitanya, obviously believing that their identities as twice-born Hindus had been compromised by their work among Muslims.<sup>49</sup> He also reports that the brothers refrained from trying to enter the temple of Jagannāth Puri for the same reason. Chaitanya for his part, eagerly welcoming them into the fold, nonetheless insists that they divest themselves of all they possessed at Gauḍ before they can earn the right to settle in Brindavan. We do not know what was in the minds of Rūp and Sanātan in their own words, but it seems clear that by moving to Braj they were able to don the mantle of their Brahminness anew, and did so in an environment where just about everything was being made new at the same time.

### The Gauḍīyas' Bhakti Movement

It would be a great exaggeration to imagine that all—or perhaps even most—of the singer-saints attracted to Brindavan in the course of the sixteenth century came either directly or indirectly from the south, or that they had clear and demonstrable ties to one of the four *sampradāys*. Quite a number undoubtedly hailed from nearby in the north. This is true for the important figures Haridās and Hit Harivaṃś (whose father is also said to have been employed in a Muslim court—this time at Deoband), and no less so for the third of the “Hari trio,” Harirāmvyaś.<sup>50</sup> In Vyās's poems, many of which chronicle the connections he perceived to exist between the musical bhaktas who flourished in his beloved Brindavan, there is no hint of the model of the four *sampradāys*. The one possible exception to this rule is his acknowledgment on more than one occasion of a strong connection between a number of Rāmānandī bhaktas: Nāmdev, Sain, Dhannā, Raidās, Kabīr, and sometimes Jayadev.<sup>51</sup> This might seem to imply a knowledge of the belief that Rāmānand traced his lineage to Rāmānuja and the deep south, but we must not jump to conclusions. It is true that Vyās acknowledges these *nirguṇ* (but for the last!) figures as being a group, but he does so in a way that precisely does not make them into Rāmānandīs. That is where he parted company with his contemporaries Anantadās and Nābhādās.<sup>52</sup> As for the matter of origins more generally, the question of the south does not arise. What we hear instead when appeal is made to the past is a lament over the loss of internal purity—the bhakti that filled Brindavan in the good old days. Such nostalgia has little place in the four-*sampradāy* scheme, though it would have been very much at home in a Sufi *tazkirā*.<sup>53</sup> Given the wider world in which Harirāmvyaś lived, this may not be entirely accidental.

Vyās's nostalgia relates in interesting ways to the sense of time that comes to the fore in early records of the community that coalesced around Chaitanya, but the two are by no means the same. Among the Chaitanyites there is also a marked conviction that bhakti achieved a pure form of expression in an era not long past, yet the nature of that past could hardly be anticipated on the basis of Vyās's loyal, almost tender poems of memory. For the Gauḍīya community something much more earthshaking was involved. To have been with Chaitanya was to participate in something utterly incomparable, a process of continuing revelation, the pinnacle of

fulfillment, the sort of thing that Christian theologians, reflecting the Gospels' accounts of Jesus, sometimes like to call *kairos*.<sup>54</sup> The Gauḍīyas' sense of how this kairotic moment could be recovered in the present was also plotted out in ways that make it stand apart from anything we meet in Harirāmvyaś. In Chaitanyite memoirs the delicate pallor of nostalgia gives way before a vibrant drama of enactment.

Viśvambhar Miśra—Chaitanya's birth name—must have been an extraordinary person. Historians living in the early twentieth century had no hesitation in calling the excitement he generated among his followers a movement in the broadest sense, and well within a century of his death in 1533 his life had generated a corpus of written memory all but unrivaled in its time: eight biographies were already complete when Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj composed his crowning *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* sometime between 1590 and 1615.<sup>55</sup> The only possible competitors for this biographical crown would be monarchs such as Babur and Akbar, and let us remember that they had a very different range of resources at their command.

Who was Chaitanya? It is a measure of his charisma that we do not quite know. To some it seems that his "conversion" to the intimate worship of Krishna was propelled by his deep remorse at having, as a young man, to perform postmortem rites for his father at Gayā. Or was it instead the force of meeting at this major place of pilgrimage an ascetic called Īśvara Purī, who is said to have taught him the practice of *saṁkīrtan*—publicly reciting the names of God with a group of companions in a crescendo of singing and dance? In any case, he returned to his natal Navadvīp a changed man, took *saṁnyāsa* from an ascetic named Keśav Bhārati at the age of twenty-four, and was given upon initiation the new name Krishna Chaitanya (Consciousness of Krishna).<sup>56</sup>

Then he began to wander. The story goes that Chaitanya was willing to set limits on his travels for the sake of his widowed mother, who had also lost her older son to the life of an ascetic: he agreed to be based in Purī, where she could see him in the course of making the annual *rath yātrā* pilgrimage from Bengal. But he also used Purī as a base to travel farther. One major journey took him to the south, and another brought him to Braj, probably in about 1514. No one doubts the impact he had—directly or indirectly—on the "invention" of Braj and Brindavan toward the beginning of the sixteenth century, but the belief that his being there caused the true location of various episodes in Krishna's life to reveal

themselves for the first time was a theme that became a major part of the Gauḍīya biographical tradition only somewhat later on.

Murārī Gupta's *Kṛṣṇacaitanyacaritāmṛta*, our earliest biography—familiarily called *Kaḍacā*, his “notebook”—was probably written at Navadvīp in 1531. It describes the course of Chaitanya's pilgrimage in Braj as if he had largely traced out the story of Krishna's life there, rather than following any known pilgrimage route. If indeed Murārī wrote in Bengal, it is not hard to imagine why he would have used this divine prototype as a way to make sense of what Chaitanya did once he got to the sacred land. He has Chaitanya begin and end his journey in Mathura, just as Krishna had done. Charmingly, he also allows the Master to engage a local Brahmin to be his guide, as any ordinary pilgrim might do.<sup>57</sup>

By the time we get to Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj's *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* the account has expanded, deepened, and altered. Since Kṛṣṇadās wrote from Rādhākuṇḍ, it also makes sense that its geographical trajectory has changed. Here Chaitanya's route follows the typical pilgrims' map much more straightforwardly, even if he retains the guide that earlier accounts had assigned him. In the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta*, Rādhākuṇḍ is the only site Chaitanya manages to locate in physical space thanks to his intuition about where the *lilas* of Krishna and Radha specifically occurred (later accounts expand the list) but Brindavan also gets a boost. Brindavan—the specific locale, that is, undoubtedly the place where Rūp, Sanātan, and all the other *gosvāmīs* were to settle—displaces Mathura as the climax of Chaitanya's journey. It is the last stop he makes in his circumambulation of Braj as a whole (Brindavan in the larger, more generic sense). Thus the religious focus of the new Braj—the Mughal/Kachvaha Brindavan, so to speak—edges out its more venerable competitor in what was to become, for Gauḍīyas, the canonical account.

By common consent it was on his way back east to Bengal from Braj—at Prayag—that Chaitanya encountered Rūp and Sanātan and urged them to go to the place from which he had just come. They were not the only ones Chaitanya deputized to travel on his behalf: he sends Nityānand from Puri to Gauḍ, for example, and as we have seen, he dispatches Gopāl Bhaṭṭ to Brindavan from Srirangam. These acts among many others discourage us from supposing that Chaitanya's susceptibility to experiences of out-of-body transport meant that he lived the life of a hermit. To the contrary, he was often surrounded by admirers, including quite a number

who were rich and influential and who proved to be of great use in advancing the Master's plans. The force of his personality was evidently conditioned and amplified by his participation in the rhythms of some of the great cosmopolitan centers of his day: religious cities such as Gayā, Prayag (later also to be called Allahabad), Banaras, and Puri; the renowned scholarly community active in his own birthplace, Navadvīp; and southern destinations such as Rajamandri and Srirangam. Similarly, one of the greatest challenges in thinking about who he was is to understand the remarkable interplay between his own determined silence as a writer—he has left us only eight Sanskrit *ślokas*—and the prolix world of biography, poetry, and theology that grew up through his direct inspiration or with him as its subject.<sup>58</sup> It is as if the tradition itself became his amanuensis.

Both Chaitanya's silences and his strategies are worth our attention. As to the former, no account of Chaitanya was ever written that did not lay emphasis on experiences that catapulted him from the realm of speech and daily concourse into another world altogether. The incursion (*āveśa*) of Krishna into his life, often in response to some unpredictable cue, could instantly transform the world of boundaries, distinctions, and grammar into a place that was more like a sea than dry land. "Sometimes Chaitanya would weep, bathed in a river of tears, while streams of mucus would run from both nostrils," Murārī Gupta tells us.<sup>59</sup> In the same passage Chaitanya confuses day and night, falls prostrate when he hears the names of Krishna sung, and chokes with emotion when he sings them himself. He trembles and shakes; his hair stands on end; he is all gooseflesh. The conventions of poetry lead us to expect such experiences when a woman—or even a man—is in love, but from all we can tell these aesthetic protocols had an impact not only on the writing of Chaitanya's life but on living it. His life *was* aesthetics. Its primary ritual form, the *nagar saṁkīrtan* to which we have already referred, involved the breaking of boundaries between the inner and the outer, the more private and the more public. As a type of processional practice that joined singing, drumming, and dancing, it affected not only those who performed but those who observed, drawing them into the streets and into the waves and ebbings of ecstasy that made Chaitanya famous—or in some eyes, infamous.

All this may seem utterly free-flow, and indeed that sense of being released from standard rituals, standard social behavior, and the standard dispositions of the body itself served as a core element of the Chaitanya

tradition, yet as we have already hinted, such experiences were not without their textual templates. Some of the most important of these cluster in the eleventh book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and describe the behavior of the perfect bhakta: "Without the hair of the body bristling, without the heart melting, without being inarticulate due to tears of bliss—without bhakti how can consciousness be purified? He whose speech is stammering, whose heart melts, who weeps repeatedly and sometimes laughs, who unabashedly sings and dances—such a person, united by bhakti with me [Krishna], purifies the world."<sup>60</sup>

We get occasional suggestions that Chaitanya was responding to a physical condition that we today might class as epilepsy. In one vignette Kṛṣṇadās offers precisely this diagnosis, placing it in the mouth of Chaitanya himself.<sup>61</sup> Given the context, one might be tempted to explain it away as a subterfuge, something the Master said to save his traveling companions from being attacked by a group of Paṭhāns, but the text clearly says that Chaitanya had fallen down insensate and that he foamed at the mouth. Vṛndāvandās, similarly, writing at almost the same time as Murārī Gupta, calls Chaitanya's condition a disease of the wind (*vāyu*) and details its classic symptoms: rolling on the ground, slapping the arms about, striking any object in the way, emitting a loud yell.<sup>62</sup> But before we leap to a purely physiological explanation we should remember that this extreme behavior—however much it concerned Chaitanya's friends, however much it sapped his own energies, however much it seems to correspond to well-known if not yet well-understood forms of neural dysfunction—also corresponded to what had been set out as scripture, particularly in that great moment when the literature of Advaita expanded to accommodate the life of musical and devotional ecstasy. In Sanskrit, at least, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* was the great result of that revolution, and the ecstasies of Chaitanya were its seal.<sup>63</sup>

Yet this seal had to be resealed—sealed in a textual way. In one respect the remarkably swift production of new literary compositions on the part of Chaitanya's followers echoed the exuberance of the Master's personal style, but in another way these intricate treatises and long narrative poems formed a vivid contrast to Chaitanya's own disinclination to reduce his experience to writing. Seen in this second way, their biographical prolixity and theological sophistication almost seem ways to keep the genie of charisma in the bottle: they *were* that bottle. Chaitanya's charisma was

contagious, always in danger of reemerging, but here were statements of divine etiquette that would enable the community to survive and thrive when it did. When the two geographical loci of this remarkable Gauḍīya creativity—Braj and Bengal—threatened to move so far apart that the movement was in danger of splintering, a further measure was required: a single text that could hold the whole together—and by that token reshape it as an ongoing unity, dynamic yet stable.

The text in question was the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj, as Tony Stewart has brilliantly shown in his book *The Final Word*. Only after the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* had been produced, it seems, did the theologian Jīv Gosvāmī, working in Braj, send out an expedition in which the major works of the Brindavan intelligentsia were made available to Gauḍīya communities living in Bengal. Stewart retells the story of how the Malla king Vīr Haṃvīr, intending to steal these precious documents, stopped the bullock carts on which they were loaded and brought them to his capital. But the result was that the scholars who were shepherding these texts through the jungles of Bengal ended up converting the king to their cause, and he ended up playing a major role in consolidating the transregional Gauḍīya community. Vīr Haṃvīr's initiation involved not only donning of a necklace of *tulsī* beads and receiving the requisite mantra but the touch of the great Gauḍīya books themselves. The city he ruled was also reborn. Renamed Vishnupur, it experienced a great efflorescence in the course of the seventeenth century.<sup>64</sup>

This tale, which may be only roughly historical, gives an institutional plot to what was textually achieved by the writing of the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* itself—a consummate act of summary and grammaticization whereby not only the many biographies that had preceded it but the great theological tradition associated with the names of Rūp, Sanātan, and Jīv were drawn together in a single work. Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj accomplished this feat by liberally quoting passages from the theological works to which he was heir—the works of his teachers—and also by sometimes inserting their contents verbatim into the mouth of Chaitanya himself. Thus he ascribed to their ultimate source the authoritative words Chaitanya was said to have commissioned: the writings of the Brindavan gosvāmīs. At the same time, in this work of hybrid Sanskrit and Bengali, Kṛṣṇadās joined the two major voices or registers of the Chaitanyite movement so that they would seem to constitute a single euphonious chorus. That still left out Brajbhasha,

the third medium in which Gauḍīya works were written, but with Mānsingh in control of the victorious Mughal forces in Bengal and the moment ripe for a Braj-Bengal reconciliation, this was enough.

In another way, though, the absence of Brajbhasha from this particular moment of textual consolidation points to something significant, whether we think of it in its documentary mode—the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* itself—or by means of its institutional analogue, as symbolized by the direct line between Jīva Gosvāmī's Sanskrit atelier and the Bengalis who were intended to enjoy its fruits when the bullock carts reached their destination. When we first laid eyes on the built Brindavan, we seemed to see the Bengalis in charge: Rūpa Gosvāmī and his legateses at the temple of Govindadev, Sanātan and his at Madanmohan, Jīva consolidating the two. But we also saw that by the end of the sixteenth century these men and the institutions they built were apparently regarded by the Mughal state as standing for a good bit more than the Gauḍīya or Bengali element alone. Yes, there was some sort of unpleasant confrontation between Vallabhites and Bengalis for control of the temple atop Mount Govardhan, but it was certainly possible for Abu'l Fazl to elicit a legal description of who belonged at the highest echelons of the Braj region, religiously speaking, that would treat the entire group as a whole. The poems of Harirāmvyās testify to a similar sense that what had happened in Brindavan was beyond the province of any single sectarian formation. From his point of view some of the deepest meanings were to be found at points of common connection—the friendships that were formed, or the way poets thrived by listening to one another's songs—though he did not shrink from the task of suggesting the existence of such groups as clearly did exist.<sup>65</sup> From Vyās's vantage point it seems that all this happened in the common language, Brajbhasha, or as it might have been called in his own time, simply *bhāṣā*—or at least he never draws attention to linguistic differences.

Conflicts were going to rage about how to assign the proper sectarian identity to Haridās or Harirāmvyās or even Harivaṁś, and eventually, at least, there was also the issue about how a certain *sampradāy* present in Braj should be aligned with the great four-*sampradāy* paradigm—or not. These are difficult matters. Even in the case of those who aligned themselves with Chaitanya, a group so richly documented, we may rightly ask just when the sectarian label Gauḍīya came to be applied. When Gopāl Bhaṭṭ writes his *Haribhaktivilāsa*, he speaks as if he were participating in