

Three day National Conference on

# The Bhāgavata-purāṇa History, Philosophy, and Culture

January 6 – 8, 2017

## Book of Abstracts

organised by



Department of Philosophy,  
University of Madras,  
Chennai



C.P.R. Institute of Indological Research  
C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation  
Chennai



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"*vidyayāvindate'mṛtam*"

artho'yambrahmaśūtrāṇām bhāratārthaviniṛṇayah  
gāyatrībhāṣyarūpo'sauvedārthapari'bṛmhitaí  
purāṇānāmsārarūpaśākṣādbhagavatoditāí  
dvādaśaskandasamyuktaśatavicchedasamyutaí  
grantho'śtādaśāsaḥasraśrimadbhāgavatābhidhāí

*Śrīmad-bhāgavata* contains the quintessence of the *Brahmaśūtras*, portrays the meaning of the *Mahābhārata*, forms a commentary on *Gāyatrī-mantra*, proliferates the significance of the Vedas and embodies the principal tenets of all Purāṇas. It is directly spoken by the Lord Himself. It has twelve chapters with many sub-divisions in about eighteen thousand verses.

- A verse from *Garuḍapurāṇa*

## Welcome and Introduction

*Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* is one of the eighteen *Mahāpurāṇas* that abounds in legends about birth, frolics and greatness of the Lord Viṣṇu in his avatāras such as Sri Kṛṣṇa and also about other spiritual personalities of his time. Although spoken of as one of the later *Mahāpurāṇas*, the *Bhāgavata* has occupied the center-stage of Indian spiritual land-scape and has become most widely read Purāṇa that has nearly eclipsed all other Purāṇas, including *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, on which it is largely modeled. It has freely drawn upon the *Mahābhārata* and the *Harivamśa* and main ideal depicted in this treatise is Bhakti, the devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The *Bhāgavata* is presented as a teaching imparted by Ugraśravas, known as Sūta who narrates all that Sage Śuka was instructing to Parīkṣit, the King of Hastināpura, the son of Abhimanyu and grandson of Arjuna of Mahābhārata fame. Being cursed by a sage to die after a week's time, and finding no relief from the jaws of death, Parīkṣit retires to the banks of the river Ganges to prepare for the last day of his life. Śuka-maharshi, among many Gods and sages, visits the King during those days and in reply to King's questions as to what a person should do when he is about to die, the sage relates the *Bhāgavata* as he has heard from his father Vyāsa and prepares the King to happily embrace the death by securing the highest bliss through the thoughts fully absorbed in Lord Viṣṇu.

The central philosophy of the *Bhāgavata* is: the Ultimate reality is personal God, Kṛṣṇa and devotion is the sole means to realize him. Textually, *Śrīmadbhāgavata* has many commentaries and vernacular versions and almost all the Vedāntic schools have adopted this text as imparting the ideals of their respective schools. The notable ones are: *Bhāgavata-candra-candrikā* of Virarāghavācārya (*Viśiṣṭādvaita*); *Padaratnāvali* of Vijayadhvaja Tīrtha (*Dvaita*) *Subodhinī* of Vallabha (*Śuddhādvaita*) *Vaiśnavatoṣṇī* of Jīva Gosvāmi (*Acintya-bhedābheda*) *Siddhāntapradīpa* of Śukadeva (*Bhedābheda* of Nimbārka) and the famous commentary of Śrīdharaśvāmin embodying an *Advaita* interpretation.

Even though the *Bhāgavata* is very popular a text among the Indian masses around the country, rural as well as urban, it has not been adequately dealt with by the modern scholars and researchers and seldom there are any national/international academic events organized to discuss the multifarious implications of this great work. This has prompted us to organize this National conference in collaboration with other sister organisations, like Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, Oxford, The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation and Vishnu Mohan Foundation. I consider it an opportunity and obligation to express my deep gratitude to all those who have helped in materializing the idea of this conference; Dr. Shauna Rishi Das, the Director of OCHS for mobilizing all academic resources and resource persons, to Dr. Nanditha Krishna, President of the C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation for so generously providing much needed logistic support and guidance to maintain the quality of deliberations, Dr. Ravi Gupta and Dr. Kenneth Valpey for working with me for about a year in collecting papers and inviting scholars from the West to participate in the Conference; Swami Srihariprasad for showing great interest and eagerness for the success of the conference as well as hosting a few events. On behalf of all these organizations, I thank the authorities of Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi and Indian Council of Cultural Relations New Delhi for extending financial support to host this conference. My thanks are due to Dr. G. Balaji of CPR Institute of Indological Research, Ms. M. Jyothimani and others from the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras for their active involvement in taking care of organizational requirements.

I deem it a great privilege to welcome all of you, the participants from India and abroad, for your time and interest to be here during the New year 2017 and I hope you will enjoy your stay in Chennai as much as the intellectual deliberation and interaction with fellow participants on a less worked out text of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* that has brought us together in this conference.

I would like to conclude this note with a New Year wish to all of you by quoting a line of a verse from *Nārāyaṇīyam* of Melpattur Narayana Bhattathiri, written as a retold version of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in praise of Sri Kṛṣṇa, the presiding deity of Guruvayur –

*sphītam līlāvatāraiḥ idamihakurutāṁ āyurārogyasaukhyam*

By your manifested sportive avatāras, Oh Kṛṣṇa, bestow long life, good health and happiness, on all of us.

**G. Mishra**  
Professor and Head  
Department of Philosophy  
University of Madras

## **PROGRAMME SCHEDULE**

**Day – 1**  
**6<sup>th</sup> January, 2017**

**Venue: F- 50 Hall (I Floor), University Centenary Building, University of Madras**

*Registration: 9:30 am - 10:00 am*

**Session 1- Inauguration: 10:00 am - 11:30 am**

<i>Invocation (10.00 – 10.05)</i>	:	Tamil Thaai Vaazhthu Vedic and Bhagavata Prayers
<i>Welcome Address (10.05-10.10)</i>	:	<b>Dr. P. David Jawahar</b> <i>The Registrar, University of Madras</i>
<i>Introducing the Theme of the Conference (10:10-10.15)</i>	:	<b>Professor G. Mishra</b> <i>Head, Department of Philosophy, University of Madras</i>
<i>Felicitations (10.15-10.30)</i>	:	<b>Professor Rama Rao Pappu</b> <i>Professor Emeritus, Miami University, Oxford, USA</i>
		<b>Professor Ravi M. Gupta</b> <i>Utah State University, USA</i>
		<b>Dr. Shaunaka Rishi Das</b> <i>Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies</i>
<i>Chief Guest Address</i>	:	<b>Professor Y. Sudershan Rao</b> <i>Chairman, Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), New Delhi</i>
<i>Presidential Address (11.05-11.15) :</i>		<b>Dr. Nanditha Krishna</b> <i>Director, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Institute of Indological Research, Chennai</i>
<i>Vote of Thanks (11.15-11.20)</i>	:	<b>Dr. M. Venkatachalapathy</b> <i>Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Madras</i>

11:20 am - 11:30 am : **Break**

**Session 2 – Keynotes:** 11:30. am - 1:30 pm

**Chair: Professor Y. Sudershan Rao**, Indian Council of Historical Research

11:30 am – 12:15 pm : “Central Philosophy of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa”  
- **Professor N. Veezhinathan**, University of Madras

12:15 pm – 1:00 pm “Who Owns the Bhāgavata?”  
- **Dr. Anand Venkatkrishnan**, University of Oxford

1.00 pm – 1:15pm **Discussion**

1:15 pm - 2:30 pm **Lunch**

**Session 3 - Art History:** 2:30 pm - 4:15 pm

**Chair: C.S. Radhakrishnan**, Pondicherry University

2.30 pm – 3.00 pm “Visions of The Blue God—Composition (and Performance?) in Bhāgavata Purāṇa Illustrations”  
- **Daniel Ehnbom**, University of Virginia

3.00 pm – 3.30 pm “If Remembering Hari Enriches Your Heart’: Scrolling and the Experience of Krishna’s Images in Bengal”  
- **Pika Ghosh**, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

3.30 pm – 4.00 pm “Krishna’s Adventures in Nepal”  
- **Neeraja Poddar**, Philadelphia Museum of Art

4.00 pm - 4.15 pm **Discussion**

4:15 pm - 4:30 pm **Break**

**Session 4 - Narrative:** 4:30 pm - 5:45 pm

**Chair : Diwakar Acharya, Oxford University**

4.30 pm – 5.00 pm      “Invictus and Immortal: Ajita, Amṛta, and the Churning of the Ocean of Milk Narrative in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa”  
-    **Vasudha Narayanan**, University of Florida

5.00 pm – 5.30 pm      “Vishnu as Nara-Nārāyaṇa in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa”  
-    **V. Sandhiyalakshmi**, CPR Institute of Indological Research, Chennai

5.30 pm - 5.45 pm      **Discussion**

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## **Day -2**

**7<sup>th</sup> January, 2017**

**Venue: CPR Institute of Indological Research,  
The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation,  
1 Eldams Road, Alwarpet, Chennai - 600018**

**Session 5 - Transmission and Transformation:** 9:30 am - 11:15 am

**Chair: Marcus Schmucker**, Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia

9.30 am – 10.00 am            “The Dynamics of Sanskritizing and Vernacularizing Practices in the Social Life of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa”  
- **Barbara Holdrege**, University of California, Santa Barbara

10.00 am – 10.30 am            “Bhāgavata Across Boundaries”  
- **John Stratton Hawley**, Barnard College,  
Columbia University

10.30 am – 11.00 am            “Restoring Sight to Blinding Love: The Bhāgavata Purāṇa’s Transformation of the Urvaśī-Purūravas Narrative”  
- **Ravi M. Gupta**, Utah State University

11.00 am -11-15 am            **Discussion**

11:15 am - 11:30 am            **Break**

**Session 6 - Performance:** 11:30 am - 1:15 pm

**Chair: Barbara Holdrege**, University of California Santa Barbara

11.30 am – 12.00 pm            “The Genesis and Growth of the Upayāsa Tradition of the Bhāgavata Purāṇam”  
- **V. Mohan**, CPR Institute of Indological Research

12.00 pm – 12.30 pm            “Seven Days of Nectar: Contemporary Oral Performance of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa”  
- **McComas Taylor**, Australian National University

12.30 pm – 1.00 pm	“Śrīmad Bhāgavatam in the Contemporary World: Reflections from 40 Years of Teaching” - <b>Hanumatpresaka Swami</b> , ISKCON and San Marcos University
1.00 pm -1.15 pm	<b>Discussion</b>
1:15 pm - 2:30 pm	<b>Lunch</b>

**Session 7 - Aesthetics:** 2:30 pm - 4:15 pm

**Chair: G.C. Tripathi**, B.L. Institute of Indology

2.30 pm – 3.00 pm	“The Ubiquity and Scarcity of Premā: A Constructivist Comparative Analysis of Purest Love in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Caitanya Theology” - <b>Graham Schweig</b> , Christopher Newport University
3.00 pm – 3.30 pm	“The Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Bharata's <i>Rasa</i> Aesthetics” - <b>Ithamar Theodor</b> , University of Haifa
3.30 pm – 4.00 pm	“The Number of <i>Bhaktirasa</i> -s: Jīva Gosvāmī's <i>Pṛītisandarbha</i> on <i>Bhāgavatapurāṇa</i> 10.43.17” - <b>Kiyokazu Okita</b> , Kyoto University
4.00pm - 4.15 pm	<b>Discussion</b>
4:15 pm - 4:30 pm	<b>Break</b>

**Session 8 – The Tenth Book:** 4:30 pm - 5:45.pm

**Chair: Graham M. Schweig**

4.30 pm – 5.00 pm	“The Upaniṣads as Gopis: Some reflections on Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary on the Veda Stuti” - <b>Rembert Lutjeharms</b> , Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies
5.00 pm – 5.30 pm	"A Critical Study of the Rāsa Līla (10th Skanda) based on the commentary – Bhairavī Ṭīkā by Bahirā Jātaveda" - <b>Madhavi Narsalay &amp; Vrushali Potnis</b> , University of Mumbai
5.30 pm - 5.45 pm	<b>Discussion</b>

**Cultural Program :** 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm

**Rukmani Kalyanam by Melattur Bhagavata Mela Trust**

## **Day -3**

**8<sup>th</sup> January, 2017**

**Venue : CPR Institute of Indological Research**

**Session 9 – Caitanya’s Bhagavata:** 9:30 am - 11:15 am

**Chair: John Stratton Hawley**, Barnard College, Columbia University

9.30 am – 10.00 am	<p>“<i>Param Brahma Viśvambhara Śabdamūrtimaya: Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s Tradition and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i>”</p> <p>- <b>Shrivatsa Goswami</b>, Sri Chaitanya Prem Sansthan</p>
10.00 am – 10.30 am	<p>“Expanding the Horizon of Bhakti from Within: Meditations on the <i>Śrīkrṣṇabhakti-latā-phala</i>—an Intimate companion to the <i>Bhāgavata-purāṇa</i>”</p> <p>- <b>Godabarisha Mishra</b>, University of Madras</p>
10.30 am – 11.00 am	<p>“Uddhava and the Gopīs: A Svāmīnārāyaṇa Perspective”</p> <p>- <b>Sadhu Bhadresh Das</b>, BAPS Swaminarayan Research Institute</p>
11.00 am - 11.15 am	<b>Discussion</b>

11:15 am - 11:30 am      **Break**

**Session 10 - Commentary:** 11:30 am - 1:15 pm

**Chair: Shrikant Bahulkar**, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute

11.30 am – 12.00 am	<p>“Hermeneutical Principles and Techniques of Commentators on the <i>Bhāgavata-purāṇa</i>”</p> <p>- <b>Noel Sheth S.J.</b>, St. Xavier College</p>
12.00 am – 12.30 am	<p>“The Long and Short of It: Mahā-vākyā from Mīmāṃsā to Jīva Gosvāmin, from the Veda to the Bhāgavata”</p> <p>- <b>Aleksandar Uskokov</b>, University of Chicago</p>

12.30 pm – 1.00 pm “An Enquiry into the Philosophical and Aesthetical Interpretation of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in His *Paramahaṁsapriyā* Commentary to the Benedictory Verses of the Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa”  
- **S. Bhuvaneshwari**, Indian Institute of Technology Madras

1.00 pm -1.15 pm **Discussion**

1:15 pm - 2:30pm **Lunch**

**Session 11 - Textual History:** 2:30 pm - 3:45pm

**Chair: Francis X. Clooney SJ**, Harvard University

2.30 pm – 3.00 pm “The Bhāgavata-purana: Transmission and Documentation (A survey of the texts and commentaries listed in the New Catalogus Catalogorum)”

- **Siniruddha Dash**, K.V. Sharma Research Foundation, Chennai

3.00 pm – 3.30 pm “Formation of the Legends of Viṣṇu's Incarnations in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”

- **Gaya Charan Tripathi**

3.30 pm -3.45 pm **Discussion**

3:45 pm - 4:00 pm **Break**

**Session 12 - Valedictory:** 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

**Chair: Nanditha Krishna**, The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation

Concluding Reflections - **T.S. Rukmani**, Hindu Chair, University of Concordia

- **Francis X. Clooney**, S.J., Harvard University

Planning for the Future - **G. Mishra**, University of Madras

- **Kenneth R. Valpey**, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies

Vote of Thanks - **Shaunaka Rishi Das**, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies

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## **ABSTRACTS**

# 1

## Alexandar Uskokov

### **“The Long and Short of It: *Mahā-vākya* from *Mīmāṃsā* to Jīva Gosvāmin, from the Veda to the *Bhāgavata*”.**

In this presentation I focus on the idea of *mahā-vākya* in the theology of Jīva Gosvāmin (1517-1608), a theology that was built on the foundation of the *Bhāgavata*. I investigate, first, the idea of *mahā-vākya* through its history in *Mīmāṃsā* and Advaita Vedānta, where *mahā-vākya* stood for long and short sentences respectively, and I claim that the Advaita idea was directly and explicitly modelled on the older *Mīmāṃsā* version. I focus, next, on passages from Jīva’s *Six Sandarbhas* to outline his general understanding of *mahā-vākya*. I find that, while his definition is clearly influenced by the original *Mīmāṃsā* understanding, in practice he employs it both in the sense of long and short sentences. Such practice makes it possible for him to claim that: (1) The whole Veda, under which he includes the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* corpus, is one massive *mahā-vākya*; (2) One quarter of a verse from the *Bhāgavata*, *kṛṣṇa tu bhagavān svayam* (1.3.28) is a *mahā-vākya*; (3) The *pranava* Om̄ is a *mahā-vākya*. I finally show that in all of these instances (as well as in the *Mīmāṃsā* and Advaita incarnations) the central characteristic of the idea is finality of meaning (that is, reference). This framework creates a plethora of opportunities for Jīva to use *mahā-vākya* as a theological device in his project of promoting the *Bhāgavata* as the book of paramount importance in the Vedic corpus, and of structuring the content of the *Bhāgavata* in a hierarchy of meaning.

**Anand Venkatkrishnan****“Who Owns the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*? ”**

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is one of the most popular Hindu text-traditions in India. It was explicated, painted, performed, and translated throughout the subcontinent in the second millennium, across several religious and sectarian traditions. Yet the modern scholarly study of the *Bhāgavata*'s reception is largely driven by a few select concerns and communities. In this keynote address, I re-examine some of the historiographical "common-sense" that features in our narratives about the history of religion, philosophy, and aesthetics in the *Bhāgavata*. Through the case study of a neglected commentarial tradition from sixteenth-century Kerala, I open up sources for an alternative reception history of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*.

**“The Dynamics of Sanskritizing and Vernacularizing Practices in the Social Life of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* gives expression to a new type of Kṛṣṇa bhakti that is rooted in the vernacular Tamil devotional traditions of the Ālvārs supported by the popular power matrix. The processes of Sanskritization and vedacization served as a means of promulgating the *Bhāgavata*’s innovative devotional teachings by incorporating them within a Sanskritic framework invested with the pan-Indian canonical authority of a vedacized *Purāṇa*. Through this strategic appropriation of the discursive practices of Sanskritization and vedacization, the exponents of Kṛṣṇa bhakti sought to position their devotional teachings in relation to the Brahmanical elite, while at the same time they developed vernacularizing practices through which they sought to reclaim the *Bhāgavata* for the popular power matrix from which its devotional teachings originally derived. This paper will examine the complex interplay between the countervailing dynamics of Sanskritizing and vernacularizing practices in the social life of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* through which we move from the world of the text to the text-in-the-world.

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* itself makes use of a variety of vedacizing strategies to invest its devotional teachings with the transcendent authority of the Veda, while at the same time it engages in an incipient vernacularizing process by providing a socially inclusive model of scripture that diverges from the Vedic model in significant ways. First, in contrast to the Vedic *Saṃhitās*, which may be recited and heard only by male members of the three twice-born *varṇas*, the *Bhāgavata* asserts that it may be recited and heard by people at all levels of the socio-religious hierarchy, including traditionally excluded “others” such as *śūdras* and women.

Second, the *Bhāgavata* emphasizes not only the power of mantra but the power of sacred narrative as well. In contrast to recitations of the Vedic *Saṃhitās*, which focus almost exclusively on *śabda*, verbatim reproduction of the Vedic sounds, in *Bhāgavata* recitations both *śabda* and *artha*, sound and meaning, are important, for the discursive content of the text is intended to convey important devotional teachings and practices to the general populace. Third, this vernacularizing model of scripture entails a shift in modes of scriptural transmission in which the *Bhāgavata* departs from the Vedic paradigm of exclusively oral transmission by emphasizing the importance of both written and oral modes of transmission.

Although this incipient vernacularizing is aimed at refashioning the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* as a socially inclusive scripture, a major problem still exists: the text is in Sanskrit, the language of the religious elite, which means that the vast majority of the Indian populace who do not know Sanskrit have historically been excluded from direct access to the text itself. However, the explosion of popular Kṛṣṇa bhakti movements in North India from the sixteenth century CE on catalysed the development of vernacularizing practices in the form of oral-performative modes of reception by means of which people at all levels of the socio-religious hierarchy can appropriate, engage, experience, perform, and embody the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, transforming it from a fixed, bounded Sanskrit text into a fluid, open-ended language world that has found expression in a variety of religio-cultural forms. This paper will explore a range of vernacularizing practices, including *Bhāgavata-saptāha* recitations accompanied by *kathā* expositions in the vernacular, ritual veneration of the book as a special kind of *mūrti*, *rāsa-līlā* dramatic performances, and pilgrimage practices through which worshipers track the footprints of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja and recall the *Bhāgavata*'s stories of his playful exploits that have been mapped onto the landscape.

## Bhuvaneshwari, S.

### **“An Enquiry into the Philosophical and Aesthetical Interpretation of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Paramahāṃsapriyā* Commentary to the Benedictory Verses of the *Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*”**

Vyāsācārya in his opening three verses invites the aspirants to rejoice in the ultimate one Truth that is said to be distinctly revealed in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Svāmi Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (henceforth MS) chooses to comment on these three profound verses highlighting the philosophical and aesthetic principles imbedded in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. MS interprets the first verse to show that the ‘Great Sage’ (*mahāmuni*) Vyāsa exhibits the essential ‘one’ content of all the scriptures.

The first verse is arranged by MS in six different syntactical order coupled with grammatical elasticity so as to reveal that Vyāsa in the first benedictory verse reveals (i) the essence of the *Mahāvākyā* as arrived at in Advaita Vedānta, (ii) the essence of *Śārīraka Mīmāṃsā*, (iii) the essence of *Gāyatrī mantra*, (iv) the essence of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, (v) Vāsudeva, as established by Advaitin, as the object of meditation (vi) and the essence of Kṛṣṇabhaktivāda. In the course of his first interpretation, MS brings out the difference between meditation (*upāsanā*) and assimilation (*nididhyāsana*) and demonstrates his pedagogical novelty in revealing the Advaitic concept of falsity. MS puts forth effort, in his fifth interpretation, to discriminate the idea of Vāsudeva as held by the Sāttvata/Pāñcarātra school from that of Advaita Siddhānta. Having established so, MS then shows that the Advaitin’s idea of Vāsudeva is elucidated in the *Bhāgavatam* as the object of meditation.

In the second verse, MS elucidates the uniqueness of *Bhāgavata dharma* referred to as ‘*paramo dharma*’, by differentiating its approach and methodology of revelation of the nature, object and seeker of Truth as distinct from the *Karmakāṇḍa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, the *Dharmaśāstra-s*, the *Jñānakāṇḍa* and the *Upāsanakāṇḍa*. Though the subject-matter of *Jñānakāṇḍa* viz., non-dual reality alone is the content of the *Bhāgavatam*, MS reveals the uniqueness of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* as that which does not restrict direct access to any class and creed of society. Here, MS points out the reason for referring to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* as “*Paramahāṃsasamhitā*”, thereby justifying the title of his commentary as “*Paramahāṃsapriyā*”. MS reads the third verse in two different ways by employing diverse derivatives induced with poetic embellishments.

MS briefly highlights some vital aspects of aesthetic principles too, resonating the aesthetic structure diligently developed in the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism. In the

sixth interpretation of the first verse, wherein Kṛṣṇa as the object of aesthetic content is discussed, MS validates his aesthetic theory citing Bharata's *Nātyaśāstra*. Further, MS refers to his own work *Bhaktirasāyana* (*asmābhiḥ bhaktirasāyane abhihitah*) on the mode of experience of *bhaktirasa*. In the first interpretation of the third verse, MS defines the quality of *rasikā* and in the second interpretation of the third verse, MS brings out the aesthetic process of the experience of *bhaktirasa*. Thus, in the *Paramahāṁsapriyā*, MS proves the accomplishment of his effort that he had proposed in his commentarial-benediction, to throw light on the confluence of philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*.

**Daniel Ehnbom****“Visions of the Blue God — Composition (and Performance?) in *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* Illustrations”**

In 1970, Robert Skelton suggested that traditional performance played a role in the creation of Akbar period illustrations of the Harivamśa. This paper examines that contention in the context of pre-Akbar period painting (c. 1500-56). In this material there is both overt and covert evidence to support the supposition of a link between textual performance and the conventions of manuscript illustration. The paper looks at a variety of illustrations, concentrating on those of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, and further examines the spread and survival of these visual conventions in painting styles from later periods and from a wide geographical range.

## Gaya Charan Tripathi

### **“Formation of the Legends of Viṣṇu's Incarnations in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

The author of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* appears to be quite well versed in the Vedic lore. He not only uses many words and verb forms of the Vedic language in his text but also skilfully uses a number of mythological references occurring in connection with various deities not only to enrich his narrative stuff with regard to different incarnations of Viṣṇu but also to develop them into independent episodes to be incorporated into the stories pertaining to Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu. The sporadic, and rather vague, references appearing in the Vedas about the first three incarnations of Viṣṇu namely, *Matsya*, *Kūrma* and *Varāha* for example, are basically connected with Prajāpati and not with Viṣṇu in the Vedas, so also a number of episodes in the life story of Kṛṣṇa (release of Cows from the cave of Vala, killing of dragon Aghasura &c.) are originally connected with Indra and not with Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu. Words like *Hari* which denote Indra in the Vedas, become synonym for Viṣṇu. The formation pattern of the bricks as a falcon in the altar of the Vedic sacrifice and the identification of sacrifice with Viṣṇu in the Brahmana texts, give rise to the notion of Viṣṇu having Garuda as his mount. The three strides of Viṣṇu mentioned in the Rg Veda develop later in the beautiful legend of Vāmana and Bāli.

The paper will highlight such, and similar kind of indebtedness of the author of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* to the Vedic texts.

## Godabarisha Mishra

### **“Expanding the Horizon of Bhakti from Within: Meditations on the *Śrīkrṣṇabhakti-latā-phala* — an Intimate companion to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

In celebrating bhakti and recognizing the genuine form of divinity, the contribution made by the texts like the *Bhagavadgītā*, *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* and *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* culminating in the lyrical poems of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his successors cannot be gainsaid. Unlike earlier texts that presented faint glimpses of Bhakti, *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* portrayed the sublime strength of loving devotion as a means to liberation. In the *Gītā*, we find a profound proclamation of Bhakti; the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* presents an ideal meditative mode and in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, we come across a sustained craving for the love of God that transcends subjective-emotive-mind, making us experience the depth of and primordial relationship to the being.

It was Śrī Caitanya who illustrated the greatness of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* to his followers and during his time, the text appealed to the masses by offering multiple means for a holistic life. In the Eastern states of India, the Bhakti tradition spread through the *Bhāgavata* and a large number of texts, independent and commentarial, in Sanskrit as well as in vernacular, were written to popularise the ideal of Kṛṣṇabhakti as a means to spiritual emancipation. One of the famous disciples of Śrī Caitanya, Atibādi Jagannātha Dāsa, an important member of the group of five poets (Pañcasakas) has portrayed the ideal of Bhakti in his *Śrīkrṣṇabhakti-latā-phala*, a compilation based on and aiding to the central concerns of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, portraying the ideal of Bhakti appended by the authority of the earlier writers and texts. The distinct characteristic of this text is that it bridges the historical and thematic gap from Vedic past up to his times and shows how the bhakti, the supreme message of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is still relevant even during our times.

The present paper intends to deal with the text of *Śrīkrṣṇabhakti-latā-phala* as a supplement to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* with innovative hermeneutic tools.

**Graham M. Schweig****“The Ubiquity and Scarcity of *Premā*: A Constructivist Comparative Analysis of Purest Love in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and Caitanya Theology”**

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is indisputably the most important scriptural text for the Caitanya school of Vaiṣṇavism. Indeed, the original leading theologians under Caitanya, namely the Six Goswamis of Vrindavan, established the *Bhāgavata* as the very foundational text on which its original theology was most dependent and from which its original theology was drawn and constructed. Yet, my previous research shows that the *Bhāgavata*’s employment of the word *premā*, and related words derivative from its original verbal root form, can describe the love between divine personages, certainly, and also between humans and the divine, but perhaps more surprisingly even between humans, and between a human and an animal, and between even other beings, suggesting the ubiquity of purest love. On the other hand, the Caitanya School’s adaptation of the word *premā* is reserved only for the very rarely achieved highest state of perfect love for God. This paper asks, whether there is such a disparity between the *Bhāgavata*’s employment of the word and that of the early theologians of the Caitanya school? I will present a constructivist argument that shows that within such a disparity there is a subtle dialectical tension necessary in order to reveal both a most profound theological moment in Kṛṣṇabhakti theology and also something that is true for all love coming from sentient beings as well as human hearts.

## Hanumatpresaka Swami

### **“Śrīmad Bhāgavatam in the Contemporary World: Reflections from 40 Years of Teaching”**

I have been studying and teaching *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in North and South America, Europe and India for over 40 years. This has included programs with Nobel laureates, ISKCON temples, universities, museums and many other entities. I will report on three areas where the message of the *Bhāgavata* has been fruitfully engaged in conversation with educated persons in the industrialized world.

1. Psychology and the *Bhāgavata*: This has been an area of sustained effort for many years, and the result has been on-going discussion with the community of psychologists and scholars who are followers of Dr. Carl Gustav Jung. Jung appreciated Indian mysticism greatly but was also concerned with how to translate such matters into a format comprehensible and useful to science. We just organized an international symposium on “Psychology and the Sacred” in Lima, Peru and are scheduled for other events of this type in 2017 and 2018. To continue this conversation, we are publishing the journal *Solaris*, and also working on a presentation of Kapila’s Sāṃkhya in the *Bhāgavata*, with the aim of cultivating broader understanding of the *Bhāgavata*’s unique form of Sāṃkhya and its application in the contemporary, scientific world.
2. Aesthetics and the *Bhāgavata*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s presentation of the *Bhāgavata* culture as elaborated by our ācarya, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmi, especially through his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is Gandharva Veda—music, dance, and drama leading to ultimate realization of Kṛṣṇa. We have been working on creating a bridge between Rūpa Gosvāmi’s *Bhāgavata*-based aesthetic theory and Western traditions of theatre, including Aristotle, Stanislavsky, and Viola Spolin. We have used Prof. David Haberman’s translation and annotation of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which include the history of *rasa* and theatre from Bharata Muni to Abhinavagupta, Bhoja, and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi.
3. Systematic *Bhāgavata* Study: For several decades, we have developed formal courses for *Bhāgavata* study around the world, using face-to-face and distance education. The diplomas given for these studies include *Bhakti-vaibhava* for cantos 1-6 and *Bhakti-vedānta* for cantos 7-12. I will offer a brief overview of this systematic academic study, along with a specific sample of its results: a student-friendly analysis of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*’s well-formed narrative structure, across all 12 cantos.

## Ithamar Theodor

### “The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and Bharata's *Rasa* Aesthetics”

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* holds a unique position among the *purāṇas*, and is considered by many to be the most important *purāṇa*; as such its influence as a religious book has been phenomenal comparable only to the epics – the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Although there is little doubt in regards to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*'s dominant *Vedāntic* character, its *Vedānta* is expressed in a rather unique style, which associates it closer with *Kāvya* than with the general *purāṇic* genre. As such, it touches the heart of the reader in a way no other literature does. Bhakti is a major feature of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, and it propounds the divinity of Kṛṣṇa in a rather personal manner. The emotional constituent of bhakti is complex and it includes feelings of adoration, love and the dependence of the devotee on his worshipable deity. Devaluing the idea of *mokṣa* in favour of bhakti, suggests a theistic form of *Vedānta*.

This paper touches upon the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*'s subtle, personal and poetical nature by highlighting its special structure combining the *Vedāntic* and poetic *rasa* traditions. It argues that in absorbing Vedic elements, the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* absorbed not only an archaic Sanskrit style and *Upaniṣadic* discourses but another, a second orthodox brahminical tradition, which is the *Rasa*-aesthetic school originating in Bharata. When read as a meeting place of these two great orthodox traditions, the *Vedic-Upaniṣadic* and the Aesthetic, the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*'s structure as a coherent theological treatise comes to light, and it appears to be a theological *magnum opus* taking as its point of departure the *Upaniṣadic mokṣa*, and gradually leading its devoted reader further into the realm of total and personal self-surrender and passionate devotion. As such, it highlights the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*'s unique position as one of India's greatest theological treatises expressing a new literary genre of aesthetic *Vedānta*.

# 11

## **John Stratton Hawley**

### **“*Bhāgavata* across Boundaries”**

If one takes a broad view of the term “translation,” one might trace the phenomenon of translating the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* into Brajbhasha way back to the sixteenth century. By the start of the eighteenth century, however, we are able to see some real tensions develop. On the one hand, the author of the *Bhāgavata Māhātmya* seems to want to put clear constraints on this liberal vernacularizing enterprise. On the other hand, court painters in Udaipur were reading the *Sursagar* as a connected *Bhāgavata*-style narrative in the course of translating it into visual art, thus offering a new sort of complement to the Sanskrit “original” if not in part supplanting it. I will focus on the latter in this illustrated presentation, but I will try not to forget the former.

## Kiyokazu Okita

“The Number of *Bhaktirasa*-s: Jīva Gosvāmī’s *Prītisandarbha* on *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* 10.43.17”

V. Raghavan’s *The Number of Rasas* (1940) demonstrates that, far from being unanimous, theorists of *rasa* developed diverse views on how many *rasa*-s there are. Sheldon Pollock in his recent book *The Rasa Reader* (2016) also argues that while the *rasa* theory developed by Kāśmirian authors such as Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta has dominated the study of Sanskrit aesthetic theory in the West, it is important to recognize that there are theories of *rasa* that are radically different.

The theory of *bhaktirasa* developed by Bengali Vaiṣṇava authors such as Rūpa Gosvāmī and Jīva Gosvāmī (16th century) is unique in its synthesis of devotional (*bhakti*) and aesthetic theories. According to Bharata’s *Nātyaśāstra* (ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century), which is the first work to systematically analyse *rasa*, there are eight types of *rasa*, namely amorous sentiment (*śṛṅgāra*), comedy (*hāsyā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), fury (*raudra*), heroism (*vīra*), fear (*bhayānaka*), revulsion (*bībhatsā*), and amazement (*atbhuta*). To these eight *rasa*-s Abhinavagupta (9th century) famously adds a ninth *rasa*, tranquillity (*śānta*). Then, in his commentary, the *Bhāvārthabodhinī*, on *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* 10.43.17, Śrīdhara (14th century) further adds a tenth *rasa* of loving devotion (*premabhakti*). In the commentary Śrīdhara writes that ten types of people perceive Kṛṣṇa in ten different ways as Kṛṣṇa enters into Kaṁsa’s battle arena. This leads each of them to have ten different experiences of *rasa*.

Commenting on the same passage from the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, Jīva faces a challenge. On the one hand, Caitanya, the inaugurator of Bengali Vaiṣṇavism, is said to have rebuked those who do not accept Śrīdhara’s commentary, comparing them to prostitutes because of their faithlessness (*Caitanyacaritāmṛta Antyalīlā* 7.115). On the other hand, Jīva’s uncle Rūpa Gosvāmī, in his *Bhaktirasamṛtasindhu*, states that the primary devotional *rasa*-s are only five in number, namely amorous sentiment (*śṛṅgāra*), parental affection (*vātsalya*), camaraderie (*preyas*), veneration (*dāsyā*), and tranquillity (*śānta*). In order to explain why Śrīdhara gives ten *rasa*-s and Rūpa gives only five, Jīva cites from the works of earlier *rasa* theoreticians such as Bhoja’s *Sarasvatīkāṇṭhābharaṇa* (11<sup>th</sup> century) and Viśvanātha’s *Sāhityadarpana* (14th century). In this process Jīva also promotes the view that foundational emotions (*sthāyibhāva*) such as disgust (*jugupsā*) cannot produce aesthetic pleasure. Such a view contradicts with Abhinavagupta’s theory according to which any *rasa* is by

definition aesthetically pleasurable. Jīva's thoughts in this regard seem to reflect those of authors such as Rāmacandra (12<sup>th</sup> century) and Guṇacandra (12th century), two Jain monks who jointly wrote the *Nātyadarpana*.

In this presentation, I provide an examination of Jīva's discussion of devotional *rasa*-s, and suggest that Jīva engages with earlier *rasa* theoreticians such as Bhoja in order to reconcile the seeming difference of opinions between Śrīdhara and Rūpa.

## Madhavi Narsalay and Vrushali Potnis-Damle

### **"A Critical Study of the Rāsa Līla (10th Skanda) based on the commentary - Bhairavī Tīkā by Bahirā Jātaveda"**

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is one of the fundamental texts in the vast aggregation of philosophical contemplation and systems of thought across India. Based on the foundations of *bhakti* as a dominant path to Unity with Divinity, this text emphasises the value of *bhakti* in attaining *mokṣa* by way of establishing a direct relationship with Viṣṇu in the form of Kṛṣṇa. It is highly influenced by the tenets of Kapilamuni's Saṅkhya philosophy though references to Advaita Philosophy are not infrequent. This particular aspect makes an analysis into the underlying thought of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* very interesting as it offers not only its own flavour of unconditional *bhakti* but also presents itself as **a melting pot for the various Indian systems of philosophy**. The text being widely appreciated by common people and scholars alike, attracted exegetical analysis in the form of number of commentaries.

This aspect of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* now brings us to the topic of the present paper - A Critical Study of the *Rāsalīlā* (10th *skanda*) based on the commentary - *Bhairavī Tīkā* by Bahirā Jātaveda. Bahirā Jātaveda, who lived in 13th CE, has written a detailed commentary on the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* which goes by the name *Bhairavī Tīkā*. Written in Marathi, Bahirā Jātaveda (Bahirā, being the Prakritized form of Bhairava) has commented on the tenth and the eleventh *skanda* of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. Of these only the commentary on the tenth *skanda* has been published with limited copies. The present paper is based on this commentary on the tenth *skanda* of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. The *Bhairavī Tīkā* is a voluminous treatise executed in a simple and lucid manner. The commentary offers tremendous scope for study but for the present we shall limit the study of the commentary to the "*Rāsalīlā*" portion. The author himself admits of being highly influenced by Śrīdharaśvāmin, the author of *Bhāvārtha Dīpikā*, a commentary on the tenth *skanda* of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. Śrīdharaśvāmin's approach to the understanding of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is completely Advaitic in nature as is clear from his commentary which tries to bring out the hidden intent of the verses, explaining them from the Advaitic point of view. It is interesting to note that Bahirā Jātaveda also tries to explain the "*Rāsalīlā*" as inlaid with esoteric connotations, with comments like "Their (the *gopīs*) minds took Kṛṣṇa's form" or that they experienced the presence of God in them or the comment that Kṛṣṇa himself is *parabrahma*. Bahirā Jātaveda leans positively to the Advaita philosophy no doubt, but can we venture further to claim that his commentary indicates the beginnings of Śuddhādvaita philosophy.

It is with this background that we wish to explore the commentary of Bahirā Jātaveda – the *Bhairavī Tīkā* and its philosophical leanings. The study will cast light on how vernacular commentaries adopted and adapted to the readings from main stream Philosophy, which percolated philosophical thoughts amongst people with vernacular backgrounds. We hope to study and present a few unique and significant aspects of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* that we think could be substantial in terms of study and investigation.

## McComas Taylor

### **“Seven Days of Nectar: Contemporary Oral Performance of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

Week-long oral performances of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* are becoming ever more numerous, extravagant and popular. These events known as *Bhāgavata-saptāha* are a conspicuous form of contemporary Hindu practice. Pious individuals, families or communities invite a scholar-performer to a private home, temple or large public venue. Over seven days, the speaker recounts narratives from the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* with verses sung or chanted in Sanskrit, while expounding on them in the local vernacular. There are significant external social and economic conditions that have enabled this development, but in this paper, I consider the factors internal to the practice. For it to be growing, I argue that it is experienced as authentic and affective for those who participate. What are the sources of authenticity? These include a deep-seated cultural belief in the potency of oral transmission. For a discourse to be effective it is best transmitted orally from a qualified individual. Hence the personal qualities and lineage of the speaker are also of paramount importance. The speaker’s *sampradāya* and *paramparā* are frequently alluded to, directly and indirectly, during the *saptāha*. The use of Sanskrit verses in the oral performance ties the spoken discourse to the root text and serves to demonstrate the authenticity of the discourse. Intentionally or unintentionally it also enables orators to display their scholarship. Closely tied to the importance of the Sanskrit verses and oral transmission is a second deep-seated belief, that of *śabda-brahman*, the transformative power of sacred sound. Many devotees maintain that simply hearing the sound of Sanskrit can induce states of heightened religious experience. As the only *purāṇa* with a living tradition I argue that understanding contemporary performance of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* suggest ways in which Sanskrit texts functioned in pre-modern Indian societies.

## Mohan V.

### **“The Genesis and Growth of the Upanyāsa Tradition of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* shows the way for self-realisation and mokṣa through Bhakti. It is religiously chanted and lectured upon throughout *Bharata-varṣa*, suiting the tradition and culture of the region. A variety of *sampradāyas*, like *upanyāsa*, *harikatha*, *varakari*, etc., are followed in different parts of India to propagate the contents of the *Bhāgavata*. This paper makes an attempt to see how the *pārāyaṇa* of *Bhāgavata* originated and the *upanyāsa* tradition of South India, with specific reference to Tamilnadu.

*Upanyāsam* is a method of using stories from the epics and *purāṇas* to convey the teachings of the Vedas. *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, being a storehouse of stories, is a popular source for *upanyāsam*, especially for those who follow the Vaiṣṇava tradition, although it is equally popular among Smārthas. In normal prevalence, the *upanyāsa* of *Bhāgavata* is conducted as *Bhāgavata-Saptāha* – a seven-day discourse, to complete the story of *Bhāgavata* in seven days, in a brief manner.

The four Vedas, epics and *purāṇas* are the ultimate texts representing our ancient *Sanātana Dharma* and are guide books for people to lead a peaceful way of life. Each of these scriptures has its own characteristics and individuality. The ultimate aim of these Holy Scriptures is to understand the Supreme Being or *Paramātma* through self-introspection and realisation. Paths may be different (*karma* yoga, *jñāna* yoga or *bhakti* yoga), but the destination is one. A *mumukṣu* has to undergo many rigorous practices to condition one’s mind and body to enter into this realm. The sacred texts guide us to achieve this purpose. Epics and *purāṇas* are common books enabling everyone to achieve *puruṣārtha*. Since they are in poetry form and didactic in nature, they give ample scope for ordinary people to comprehend Vedic tenets easily.

## Neeraja Poddar

### **“Krishna’s Adventures in Nepal”**

My paper will focus on a lavish Nepalese manuscript where splendid architecture, rippling water and rocky landscapes in rainbow colours rotate as the backdrops for Krishna’s adventures. The manuscript recounts the legend of the blue-skinned god from the Latter Half of the Tenth Book of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* in exquisite detail. Each folio is approximately 14½ and 20½ inches—somewhat larger than typical North Indian manuscript sheets—and there may have been over four hundred originally. A thick red border containing one or more hand-written captions in black surrounds each painting and folio numbers are written within the borders in the top left and bottom right corners. This manuscript transposes a favourite tale into a rich, new environment and embodies cross-cultural contact. Both in terms of format as well as subject matter, it is a singular example of its kind from Nepal. Produced during a period of dynastic change and one of a small handful of two-dimensional works dedicated to Krishna, the manuscript is also suggestive of contemporary political and cultural concerns.

Nevertheless, this key manuscript has rarely been researched by scholars and more than a few folios are never examined together. The study of all Himalayan painting, which includes Nepal, largely focuses on works depicting Buddhist deities and texts. The favoured formats for such works are *thangkas*, palm-leaf manuscripts and, to a lesser extent, scrolls. A Hindu subject in the loose-leaf paper format, i.e. the *Bhāgavata*, is invariably excluded from scholarly discussions because it does not fit into the prevalent art historical narrative. Neither is the Nepalese manuscript analysed alongside the illustrated *Bhāgavatas* that proliferated across neighbouring northern India from the sixteenth century onwards. The conventional narrative of Indian painting groups works according to the patronizing court—Mughal or the various Rajput and Pahari ones—arranging them into teleologies of court styles. Paintings that cannot be suitably categorized are largely ignored and research is often restricted to stylistic relationships within each group. A trans-regional approach that might bring Nepalese paintings into conversation with Indian works is almost never adopted.

My own investigation, based on over forty folios from the manuscript dispersed across museums and private collections worldwide, will focus on the manuscript’s style and storytelling strategies. Comparing the manuscript with other examples of Nepalese as well as Indian painting, I will ask: Were the same artists working on cloth scrolls and paper manuscripts? Were the same stories told in India and Nepal? Are

artistic and narrative conventions shared across media and across borders? What can this manuscript tell us about the movement of people and artworks in the region? Alongside shedding light on an extraordinary artwork, such an inquiry will also help build a more complete picture of Nepal's artistic practices and socio-cultural milieu.

Moreover, it can help us understand aspects of the translation and diffusion of a narrative (the Tenth Book) that is arguably the single most important one in early modern North India.

### Noel Sheth, S.J.

#### **“Hermeneutical Principles and Techniques of Commentators on the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

The commentators on the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* have different perspectives and approaches: some are more realistic, others more symbolic, giving psychological insights and mystical interpretations and suggesting a *dhvani* or *vyañjana* significance that brings out the deeper spiritual meaning of an episode; some emphasize the erotic, while others tone down the erotic aspects; the same passage is interpreted as a praise or as a criticism, etc. Sometimes they indulge in polemics.

They apply certain hermeneutical principles. For example, even within the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, an individual contextual statement (*prakaraṇa*) or indication (*liṅga*) has less force than a universal statement; a later statement cancels a previous statement.

They make use of exegetical arguments, quoting or referring to other passages in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* to shed light on a passage they are commenting on. Sometimes, however, they quote from other less important scriptures in order to reinterpret a *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* passage which is not in accord with their school’s worldview.

They resort to various techniques, such as distinguishing between what is *laukika* and from that which is *alaukika*; changing the meaning of the text by deriving a negative prefix (short *a*) or even a long *ā* from the preceding word which ends in a long *ā*; construing the words differently; proposing fanciful etymologies as is done in various religious traditions; cleverly analysing or breaking up a word or a compound into smaller components, giving each component a rather rare meaning and justifying this meaning by quoting different lexica and referring to grammatical works; supplying extra words, occasionally stating that these additional words are implied by the word “and” (*ca*) in the text; referring to *nyāyas* (maxims); giving alternative meanings of the use of a grammatical case (*vibhakti*); narrating a story from a previous life, and showing a connection with the present one.

One cannot but marvel at the ingenious hermeneutical skills which some commentators display by arriving at a meaning that is completely different from the meaning that strikes one at first sight. At times it may appear to some that the commentators read later doctrines into the text or give interpretations that are

far-fetched even to Vaiṣṇavites of another *sampradāya*. We should not, however, be too quick to blame the commentators for twisting the meaning of the passages. Modern hermeneutics tells us that a text has a fuller meaning and can contain meaning even beyond what the original author intended. Indeed, the same text can mean different things to different people. There are no plain facts, but always facts with interpretation and this is true both in the religious as well as secular sphere: the interpretation of the same historical facts by a Britisher or an Indian is not the same and someone who is a terrorist for some is a martyr for others.

## Pika Ghosh

### **“If Remembering Hari Enriches Your Heart’: Scrolling and the Experience of Kṛṣṇa’s Images in Bengal”**

*Patas*, the narrative hand-scrolls painted by the painter-minstrels (*patua*) communities of Bengal, accompanied by song, offer insights into the performance of Kṛṣṇa’s life-story as it is localized in the adaption and elaboration of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, which continues to be revered in other performative practices. To do so, I will focus on a nineteenth-century scroll in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The narrative episodes are visualized within framed registers to accompany verses of songs in performance. In performances today, as a song unfolds, the *patua* unwinds to the appropriate scene, skilfully unrolling and displaying the *pata* register by register, with the help of the bamboo handles at either end. These multi-media experiences, and the complexities of engagement with scrolls as objects, therefore constitute an equally significant dimension of the regional modifications of the *Bhāgavata*.

A significant part of the enticement of the unrolling of the scroll lies in the anticipatory pleasure of engaging in a sequential unfolding of images and narratives known already from multiple iterations. Scrolls can be prosthetic extensions. Performers skilfully manipulate temporality and image sequences so that each object can tell many versions of a tale. The variations are thus potentially infinite, and there is no reason to doubt that these performers assessed their audiences and picked their tales and scrolls accordingly, as they do today, thus spontaneously customizing a performance with an eye surely toward remuneration, which usually consisted of voluntary contributions, as with most street-side musicians.

The origins of the practice are less than clear, primarily due to its essentially ephemeral nature. The songs, as sung today, and also lyrics collected from the early twentieth century, typically consist of rhymed couplets, one or more corresponding to each register of the *pata*. However, distinctive continuities as well as radical departures are discernible in the practice, as is typical of oral performative genres. From what we can recover of nineteenth-century practice, itinerant painter-minstrels travelled from village to village with their sacks full of scrolls. They were sometimes commissioned to perform at festivities, but often engaged crowds in relatively impromptu performances in public spaces. Textual accounts and oral reminiscences also indicate performances in the courtyards of elite residences as part of festival celebrations.

I want to probe the nature of engagement with familiar episodes of Kṛṣṇa's life in this vertical format. Attention to medium as visual vehicle urges us to take into account the quality of presence that an image acquires in particular material incarnations, occupying distinctive sites and shaping cultural domains at specific historical junctures. It allows us to analyse how the physical and material properties of the medium shape perception, as well as bodily engagements, even as an image is inescapably inseparable from its particular material incarnation. It also alerts us to the ambiguities inhering in the ever-changing entanglements between the various media through which distinctive regional images assume visible form.

## Ravi M. Gupta

### **“Restoring Sight to Blinding Love: The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*’s Transformation of the Urvaśī-Purūravas Narrative”**

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* possesses qualities that make it unique among the *Purāṇas* — a tightly woven narrative structure, systematic philosophical reflection, elegant poetic expression, and difficult vocabulary. Even when this Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa retells an old story, rarely does the text settle for familiar modes of storytelling. The famous love-story of Urvaśī and Purūravas is no exception.

The attention given to the Urvaśī-Purūravas narrative in the *Bhāgavata* is surprising, given that the story has no obvious Vaiṣṇava elements. Purūravas is mentioned in five chapters of the *Bhāgavata* and the story is told twice. The first account, in Book Nine, follows closely the versions of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*: Purūravas performs a fire ritual that ultimately reunites him with his beloved in the celestial realm. But there is more in the *Bhāgavata*; Purūravas returns in Book Eleven to sing a heart-rending soliloquy, the *Aila-gīta*. This is not a song of love but of renunciation, and the story ends with a surprising twist: Purūravas finally departs Urvaśī’s world, which was so hard-won, in favour of achieving everlasting liberation.

This paper will focus on the *Aila-gīta*, arguing that this innovation simultaneously reinforces and undermines the main Urvaśī-Purūravas narrative. The *Bhāgavata* is deeply unsettled by the “happily ever after” ending of earlier accounts, and it resolves that dissonance, I argue, by recasting the story into one of its favourite modes — a “second-chance” story, akin to the narratives of Ajāmila, Bharata, and others. The *Bhāgavata* is thus able to use the narrative in service of its overarching theme, devotion to Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu. This radical transformation gave Purūravas’ story new life and meaning in the Vaiṣṇava traditions that flourished in the medieval Indian religious landscape.

## Rembert Lutjeharms

### **“The Upaniṣads as Gopis: Some reflections on Sanātana Gosvami's commentary on the Veda-stuti”**

Commentators on the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* have often treated chapter 10.87, in which the personified Vedas awaken the sleeping Lord with beautiful prayers – the so-called *Veda-stuti* or *Śruti-stuti* – as an almost independent section, a distinct text within a text. As prayers of the personified Śrutis, these verses are rich in Vedānta theology and have long been the focus of intense Vedāntic debates, as commentators attempt to expound their specific theology through their reading of these verses. Sanātana Gosvāmī, a direct disciple of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and former minister at the court of Husain Shah, the Sultan of Bengal, is the author of the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣanī*, a lengthy commentary on the *Bhāgavata*'s tenth book that is possibly the oldest Gaudīya commentary on the *Bhāgavata*. Sanātana's reading of the *Bhāgavata* is particularly marked by his constant interest in the polysemic nature of the text. Repeatedly he offers alternative interpretations. This is particularly evident in his commentary on the *Veda-stuti*. Here he radically departs from earlier commentators in reading this section not just as a Vedāntic meditation on God, but also as the expression of love to Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the gopīs of Vṛndāvana, a reading he claims to have been taught by Caitanya himself. This paper will briefly explore the way Sanātana interprets these verses to arrive at this dual reading, and also reflect on the implications of this for his theology more generally and his views on the *Bhāgavata* and Vedānta more specifically.

## Renate Sohnen-Thieme

### **“Author, Authorities, and Authorisation in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

In this paper I propose to explore, in some detail, the diachronic structure of multiple layers of interlocution, concentrating on the role of the author(s) and transmitters, of partial and supreme authorities, and the question of final authorisation or legitimisation, as exemplified in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, a text which presents a unique structure of various layers of different partial authorisation. Some of it reflects the dialogue frames found in the *Mahābhārata*, with which it is also, in an intricate manner, diachronically interlinked. Attention will also be given to the question of whether and how dialogue partners influence a particular discourse and why they may have been selected for it. Whereas in the case of the *Mahābhārata* one may be confronted with the problem of its historical development, such questions do not apply to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, since it is generally accepted to have been composed as a whole at one time, and quite likely by one author. It thus offers a fairly reliable insight in the strategies of creating a (devotionally orientated) Mahāpurāṇa.

## Sadhu Bhadreshdas

### **“Uddhava and the Gopīs: A Svāminārāyaṇa Perspective”**

The *Śrīmadbhāgavata*’s central theme is *āśraya*, the coming to the shelter of the Supreme Being. This theme is represented in the scripture through incidents related to the *avatāras* and their devotees. Among these, Uddhava and the Gopīs are uniquely highlighted. This paper analyses Uddhava’s and the Gopīs’ relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa from the perspective of Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa, the founder of the Svāminārāyaṇa Darśana.

Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa’s discourses, compiled in the Vacanāmrta, abundantly refer the *Bhāgavata*, its narratives (*ākhyānas*) and its defining concepts. Within these expositions he repeatedly remembers Uddhava and the Gopīs as exemplars of *āśraya*. In context of his analysis, he reveals a nuanced view of *āśraya* through a perspective of devotional inclination.

Uddhava’s *āśraya*, Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa explains, was characterized by the inclination for a deep understanding of Paramātman’s greatness. Although the Yādavas incessantly lived with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they saw him as no different from themselves and lacked an understanding of his greatness. Uddhava, however, unlike the Yādavas truly recognized Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Accordingly, his description of Kṛṣṇa’s human traits in the 3<sup>rd</sup> canto includes devotional sentiments and descriptions.

The Gopīs’ *āśraya*, however, was characterized by extreme love. Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa explains that their love for Kṛṣṇa was so great that when their families tried to keep them away from Kṛṣṇa, some of them even shed their corporal bodies and went to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in spirit.

Uddhava and the Gopīs thus held *āśraya* of different types – Uddhava’s focused on knowledge, whereas the Gopīs’ on love. Despite the differences between them, Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa explains that they experienced equal spiritual fruits. The devotion of both was complemented by such characteristics as humility, detachment from the pleasures of the senses, and a steadfast understanding of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s divinity. Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa’s analysis of both Uddhava and the Gopīs clarifies the application of the *Bhāgavata*’s central theme of *āśraya*. By using such analyses to explain the nuances of this theme, he guides his devotees to recognize their own inclinations and use them to further establish it in their lives. Such guidance, he explains, helps one progress on the spiritual path and leads towards ultimate fulfilment and spiritual realization.

## Sandhiyalakshmi V.

### **“Vishnu as Nara-Nārāyaṇa in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

The twins Nara-Nārāyaṇa are the fourth incarnation of Viṣṇu according to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. Viṣṇu appeared in the dual form of the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa and practised penance at the *Gandhamadana* mountain for the protection of *dharma*. Nara-Nārāyaṇa were worshipped by Nārada and the sages in the sacred Badrīkāśrama till the end of the *kalpa*.

This study traces the evolution of Nara- Nārāyaṇa sculptures from the Gupta period till the ninth century. The study of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is analysed with a focus on sculpture. Very few sculptures representing the Nara-Nārāyaṇa aspect of Viṣṇu are found. A 5<sup>th</sup> century sculpture of Nara-Nārāyaṇa from Bhitargoan (now in the Los Angeles Museum) and on the eastern wall of Deogarh belong to the Gupta period. A large beautiful limestone sculpture of Nara- Nārāyaṇa is seen in the shrine of Sundaravardar temple at Uttiramerur, belonging to the age of the Pallava king Dantivarman.

Nara-Nārāyaṇa are a partial incarnation of Viṣṇu only in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. Their appearance as early as the Gupta period in Deogarh, where they are given much prominence, suggests that the origin of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* was in North India.

## Shrivatsa Goswami

### ***“Param Brahma Viśvambhara Śabdamūrtimaya: Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s Tradition and the Bhāgavata-purāṇa”***

The paper will explore the place of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* in the tradition of Viśvambhara (another name of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu). Some of the salient points discussed are the following:

Philosophically Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his tradition falls under the Vedāntic fold of thought systems. The orthodox Pūrvā-Mīmāṃsā confines its śruti-śāstra to core Vedic literature. Traditionally Uttara-Mīmāṃsā, i.e., Vedānta has based its discourse upon the Prasthānatrayī namely, *Upaniṣads*, *Brahmasūtra* and *Gītā*. This shows some liberality by including *Gītā*, which is part of *Mahābhārata*, as the ground source. The idea behind was that *Purāṇa* and *Itihāsa* strengthen our understanding of the Vedas. In that spirit, the Post-Śankara Vedāntīs started “flirting” with the *Purāṇas* and gradually the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* found some place of respect as a Vedānta-śāstra.

Śrī Caitanya went full length. With due respect to the Vedic śāstras, he further evolved the concept of the *Prasthānatrayī* by going with the idea that the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is the essence of all the *Upaniṣads* and a natural commentary upon the *Brahmasūtras*. Therefore, the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* as the fifth Veda is a total śāstra serving as the faultless means of valid knowledge. Śrī Caitanya dares to include and transcend the tradition of *Prasthānatrayī* in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. Therefore, the followers of Śrī Caitanya, presented their viewpoints by giving elaborate commentaries upon *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, rather than *Prasthānatrayī*. The main philosophic treatise of this Vedāntic school is an analytic study of *Bhāgavata* and thus appropriately named *Bhāgavata Sandarbha*.

Religiously the doctrine and practice of Bhakti is fully based upon the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. A large body of sectarian literature expands upon *Bhāgavata*. Ritual reading of *Bhāgavata* is a practice of highest merit.

The works on aesthetics, or the elaborate *rasa-śāstra* produced by Śrī Caitanya’s school thrives upon the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. Poetry, dramas, *campūs*, *smṛti-nibandha*, ritual texts and many other works were all grounded in *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*.

Culturally the tradition of Śrī Caitanya had contributed profusely through visual and performing arts, like paintings, *sāñjhīs*, *phūl-bunglows*, *Pālākīrtana*, *Rāsalīlā* etc. They all draw upon the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. The sculpture and architecture as well manifest the best in *Bhāgavata*.

One may safely conclude that *Bhāgavata* incarnated as Śrī Caitanya. He studied and taught *Bhāgavata*, he practiced and preached *Bhāgavata*. It is in fact a word-image of Śrī Caitanya, the Absolute Reality.

## Siniruddha Dash

**“The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*: Transmission and Documentation (A survey of the texts and commentaries listed in the New Catalogus Catalogorum)”**

The *Bhāgavata* is one of the most popular texts that has permeated the religio-philosophical landscape of the whole Indian sub-continent. It is an epitome of devotion (bhakti), narrated in a unique style and diction. As an acclaimed devotional text which has diverse interpretation in different commentaries by scholars across the manifold Hindu philosophical traditions, *Bhāgavata* has been coming down in manuscript (written) and oral transmissions. This has led to the creation of vast commentaries which have been preserved in different manuscript collections and very recently, we have listed all available sources and manuscripts in the New Catalogues Catalogorum (NCC).

Besides listing the available sources of text and commentary, the New Catalogus Catalogorum (NCC) is an effort to make a proper documentation that would shed fresh lights into the less known textual and commentatorial problems besides the difficulties that are encountered while documenting the *Bhāgavata* entry in NCC.

The paper would deal with the transmission of manuscripts and documentation of the texts as available in the New catalogues Catalogorum.

## Vasudha Narayanan

### **“Invictus and Immortal: Ajita, Amṛta, and the Churning of the Ocean of Milk narrative in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

One of the longest versions of the narrative of the churning of the ocean of milk, one that is flush with details, is seen in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. And, outside of Book X, it is also one of the most sustained narratives in this *Purāṇa*. In this paper, I will explore this story and look at two general areas. The first is to see if there is any unique feature to this story in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and then follow this up by asking if we can identify that special feature in sculpture. Here, we will pay close attention to the special manifestation of Viṣṇu as Ajita. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* speaks about Viṣṇu’s anthropomorphic manifestation (in addition to becoming Kūrma) to help both the *asuras* and the *devas* churn the ocean of milk, but goes one step further and calls Vishnu’s manifestation here Ajita, that is, Invictus, the unconquerable one. “Ajita” does not appear in any other *Purāṇa* either before or after the *Bhāgavata* and this paper will briefly look at the importance of this name in this context. Further, one sculpture which depicts a specific description in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* will be identified. We can then ask the question if the king who commissioned that temple and the designers of the sculpture were aware following the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*.

The second area is to very briefly look at what the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and the designers of the sculptures may have in mind in terms of target audiences for this story. A question associated with these lines of inquiry would be: since sculptures in the context of temples can be dated, would we get any clues about possible dating, at least of this section of the *Purāṇa*? Our discussions here will help us get to know a bit more about the possible royal patronage and connections with at least one part of this large *Purāṇa*, as well as with mutual co-opting of common narratives by competing sectarian groups near Kanchipuram.

### **“Central Philosophy of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*”**

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is one of the eighteen *Mahāpurāṇas* that abounds in legends on Lord Viṣṇu in his incarnation as Sri Kṛṣṇa and the great persons of his time like Śuka and others. In becoming famous and earning popularity, this *purāṇa* – which is spoken to be historically the latest – has become the most important and eclipsed all other *purāṇas* including the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*. It is modelled on the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and it has freely drawn upon the epic *Mahābhārata* and *Harivamśa*.

The *Bhāgavata* is spoken to the Riṣis at the Naimisāraṇya by Ugraśrava, otherwise known as Suta, the son of Lomaharṣaṇa. Suta repeats what was narrated by Śuka, the son of Vyāsa to the emperor Parīkṣit, the son of Abhimanyu and the grandson of Arjuna. Having cursed by a hermit by which the emperor was to face death due to a venomous snake bite by the expiration of seven days (after the curse), the king asked the sage Śuka about the concepts of as well as the happening at the time of death. Śuka, then, narrates the *Bhāgavata* as he has learned from his father Vyāsa saying that nothing secures the final happiness so certainly even at the time of death like the thoughts of Lord Viṣṇu.

Śrīdharaśvāmin, in his commentary, has brought out the essence of the *Bhāgavata* by pointing out how the text has included highest form of Bhakti toward the Lord Kṛṣṇa and portrayed that such an analysis with loving devotion as the supreme puruṣārtha is necessary as well as essential to the philosophy of Advaita. This is being testified in the *Bhāgavata* with the love for as well as thirsts of the self for the grace of the Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the all comprehensive philosophy of Advaita.

## **ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS**

### **1. Alexandar Uskokov, University of Chicago**

Alexandar Uskokov is a Ph.D Research scholar in the University of Chicago, Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations. He has MA in South Asian Languages and Civilizations. His research interests are mainly related to the Indian Intellectual History and Philosophical Theology, with emphasis on Vedānta — Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Gauḍīya Vaishnavism. He is working as a teaching assistant in Sanskrit in the University of Chicago since 2012. He has written a book named, *The Ontology of Bhagavad-Gita* and published many research articles related to Indian Philosophy.

### **2. Anand Venkatkrishnan, Balliol College, Oxford, UK**

Anand Venkatkrishnan is Asoke Kumar Sarkar Junior Research Fellow at Balliol College, Oxford. He received his Ph.D. in South Asian Religions from Columbia University (2015). His book in progress, *Love in the Time of Scholarship*, is an intellectual history of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* in early modern India. He examines the relationship of bhakti, religion as lived affect, with philosophy as exegetical practice, and demonstrates how vernacular ways of knowing pushed through the glass ceiling of Sanskrit intellectuality. He is toying with the idea of calling the book *Provincializing Brahminism*.

### **3. Balaji G., CPR Institute of Indological Research, Chennai**

G. Balaji is an Assistant Professor at C.P.R. Institute of Indological Research, Chennai. He has obtained his Doctorate in Ancient History and Archaeology from the University of Madras. His Ph. D thesis is on “Narasimha Incarnation of Vishnu in Art, Iconography and Literature”. He has published his Research Project entitled “Arts and Crafts of Nilgiri Tribes”, an ethno archaeological study of the indigenous people of Nilgiri hills. He was also trained to conserve and preserve archival materials by the experts of Government Museum, Chennai and Saraswathi Mahal Library, Thanjavur.

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Barbara Holdrege is a Professor in the Department of Religious Studies in the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is a comparative historian of religions specialising in south Asian and Jewish traditions. Her research and teaching experience focus on historical and textual studies of Hindu and Jewish traditions. She has authored the following books viz., *Bhakti and Embodiment: Fashioning Divine Bodies and Devotional Bodies in Kṛṣṇabhakti, Refiguring the Body; Embodiment in South Asian Religions, Veda and Torah: Transcending the Textuality of Scripture and Ritual and Power*. She has also authored many research papers.

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S. Bhuvaneshwari has been studying Advaita Vedanta from Swami Paramarthananda Sarasvati (Chennai) since 1994. She has a Masters in Indian Philosophy and Sanskrit. Her doctoral dissertation is a focused study of the ‘pedagogical concern’ in the Sanskrit *Vicarasagara*. She is presently a post-doctoral fellow at the IIT-M and is working on the title ‘Some principles of Purvamimamsa in Advaita Vedanta’. She has served as ‘Research officer’ at the Adyar Library and Research Centre, Chennai and has been instrumental in bringing to light two unpublished manuscripts on Advaita Vedanta. She has been teaching Philosophy

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## **6. Daniel Ehnbom, University of Virginia**

Daniel Ehnbom is an Associate Professor in South Asian art at the University of Virginia since 1992, and has served as the Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies since 1997. He received both his M.A. and Ph.D. in art history from the University of Chicago. He has done extensive field research in India. He has published several articles in South Asian Archaeology, as well as entries on South Asian art for the Grove Dictionary of Art (1996), for which he was South Asia Editor for Painting and Sculpture. His research interests include devotional sculptures and painting illustrating the Krishna theme, and votive plaques produced in Mathura, ca. 1st-2nd centuries A.D. Current Research: Devotional sculptures and painting illustrating the Krishna theme; Votive plaques produced in Mathura, ca. 1st-2nd centuries A.D.

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Francis X. Clooney, S.J., is Parkman Professor of Divinity at Harvard University. His primary areas of scholarship are theological commentarial writings in the Sanskrit and Tamil Traditions of Hindu India, and the developing field of comparative theology. He was the first president of the International Society for Hindu-Christian Studies and from 1998-2004, was coordinator for interreligious dialogue for the Jesuits of the United States. Professor Clooney is the author of numerous articles and books, including *Hindu God, Christian God (2001)*, *Divine Mother, Blessed Mother (2005)*, *Jesuit Post-modern: Scholarship, Vocation, and Identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2006)*, *Beyond Compare: St. Francis and Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God (2008)*, and *The Truth, the Way, the Life: Christian Commentary on the Holy Mantras of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Hindus (2008)*.

## **8. Gaya Charan Tripathi, BL Oriental Institute, New Delhi**

Professor Gaya Charan Tripathi is Professor and Head of the Research and Publication wing of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Delhi. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Agra in 1962 on Vedic Deities and their subsequent development in the Epics and the Puranas supported by a Fellowship of the Ministry of Education. He is a Fellow of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for Higher Studies in Germany. He has a Dr. Phil. from the University of Freiburg/Br (1966) in History of Religions, Comparative Indo-European Philology, and Latin. He has taught at the Universities of Aligarh, Udaipur, Freiburg, Tuebingen, Heidelberg, Berlin, Leipzig, and British Columbia (Vancouver). He is Chief Indologist and Field Director of the Orissa Research Project (1970–5) of the German Research Council (DFG), and has been Principal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute, Allahabad, for over twenty years. He has contributed around ninety papers in English, German, Sanskrit, and Hindi to various Indian and International Journals on Religion, Philosophy, History, Literature, and Vedic/Puranic studies and has published 22 books on subjects mostly pertaining to religions and literature of India.

## **9. Godabarisha Mishra, University of Madras**

Godabarisha Mishra is the Chairman of the School of Philosophy and Religious Thought at the University of Madras. Formerly worked as an Editor at the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Mylapore, Chennai, he also served as the Member Secretary of Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi. His publications include *Anubutiprakasa of Vidyaranya* (1992) and *Sivajnanabodha-samgraha-bhasya of Sivagrayogin* (co-editor) 1993, *Vedanta Without Maya (A Debate on Saptavidha-anupapatti)* (2015) and many research articles.

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Graham M. Schweig is Professor of Religion and former inaugural Director of the Asian Studies program at Christopher Newport University. He is a regularly invited lecturer at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D C., and was Lecturer at Duke University and later Visiting Associate Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Virginia. He earned his doctorate in Comparative Religion from Harvard University and has contributed articles to numerous journals and books in the field. His books are, *Dance of Divine Love: India's Classic Sacred Love Story: The Rasa Lila of Krishna*, *Bhagavad Gita: The Beloved Lord's Secret Love Song* and *A Living Theology of Krishna Bhakti: Essential Teachings of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda*, by Tamal Krishna Goswami (edited with an introduction and conclusion).

## **11. Hanumatpresaka Swami, ISKON**

Hanumatpresaka Swami (Huber Hutchin Robinson) graduated first place in Psychology from the University of California in 1970 with minor studies in Biology and Electrical Engineering. Went to North Western University with full fellowship for doctoral studies but with impetus from his advisor, Donald Campbell, President of the American Psychological Association, he headed East and eventually took diksa from Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami in the Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition. Since then he has worked extensively in the area of Sastric studies within ISKCON and with university and other academic and cultural institutions outside of ISKCON. He is currently Visiting Professor in World Classical Literature with Ricardo Palma University in Lima, Peru, and General Secretary for NIOS (North American Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies). NIOS's most recent effort has been a successful symposium on *Psychology and the Sacred*, July 2016, with the National Library of Peru.

## **12. Ithamar Theodor, Zefat College, Safed, Israel**

Ithamar Theodor is Associate Professor of Hindu Studies at Zefat College, Safed, Israel, and is concurrently lecturer in Hindu-Jewish Studies at The University of Haifa. He is a graduate of the Theology Faculty, University of Oxford, a Life Member of Clare Hall, University of Cambridge, and was Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (2010-2015). His publications include *Exploring the Bhagavad Gita: Philosophy, Structure and Meaning* (2010), a Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2011, *Brahman and Dao, Comparative Studies in Indian and Chinese Philosophy and Religion* (Co edited with Zhihua Yao), *The Philosophy and Theology of the Bhagavad Gita* (Portuguese, co-edited with Ricardo Sousa Silvestre) and *The Fifth Veda in Hinduism; Philosophy, Poetry and Devotion in the Bhagavata Purana* (2016). He is currently working on a volume titled *Dharma and Halacha; Comparative Hindu-Jewish Studies* (Co Edited with Yudit Greenberg).

## **13. John Stratton Hawley, Barnard College, Colombia University**

John Stratton Hawley—more informally, Jack—is Claire Tow Professor of Religion at Barnard College, Columbia University. He has written or edited some twenty books on Hinduism, India's bhakti traditions, and the comparative study of religion. India-specific titles include *A Storm of Songs: India and the Idea of the Bhakti Movement* (Harvard, 2015), *Sur's Ocean* (Harvard, 2015), *Songs of the Saints of India* (2004), and *Three Bhakti* (2005). Edited volumes tend to range more widely, e.g., *Fundamentalism and Gender* (1994) and *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination* (with Kimberley Patton, 2005). Jack Hawley has directed Columbia University's South Asia Institute. He has received multiple awards from NEH, the Smithsonian, and the AIIS; has been a Guggenheim Fellow; and was recently elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. This year he is in India working on a Fulbright-Nehru project called 'The New Brindavan.'

## **14. Kenneth R. Valpey, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, Oxford, UK**

Kenneth Valpey completed his DPhil (PhD) at the University of Oxford in 2003 with a study of Vaishnava temple liturgical practices and theology (published by Routledge in 2006 as *Attending Kṛṣṇa's Image: Caitanya Vaiṣṇava Mūrti-sevā As Devotional Truth*). As a research fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, he co-directs the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Research Project. In this capacity, he and Prof. Ravi M. Gupta have edited a volume of articles and translated a volume of selections from the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, both volumes published by Columbia University Press (2013; 2016 respectively). Drawing on classical Indic sources, he has written and lectured on nonviolence and environmentalism, and more recently, as a fellow of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics, on the application of yoga principles and practices to thought on animal-human relationships and animal protection.

## **15. Kiyokazu Okita, Kyoto University, Japan**

Kiyokazu Okita is currently an assistant professor at the Hakubi Center for Advanced Research, Kyoto University, as well as at the Department of Indological Studies, Kyoto University. He is also a research fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, University of Oxford where he leads together with Dr. Rembert Lutjeharms an international collaborative research project *The Gosvāmī Era: The Founding of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in Early Modern South Asia*. He obtained his D.Phil. from the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford in 2011. His doctoral thesis examines Vaiṣṇava Vedānta in Early Modern North India. Based on his thesis, he published a monograph titled *Hindu Theology in Early Modern South Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2014). In his current project titled *God as Paramour: Ethic and Aesthetic of Emotion in Early Modern South Asia*, Kiyokazu examines the development of the *bhakti-rasa* theory in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition.

## **16. Madhavi Narsalay, University of Mumbai**

Madhavi R. Narsalay is an Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Sanskrit, University of Mumbai. She specializes in Veda and Religious Studies and has post graduate teaching experience for almost 20 years. She has presented papers in national and international conferences and seminars. She has more than 25 research publications in journals and seminar proceedings. She has edited two books and has authored one book. She has been the co-ordinator of Centre for Multidisciplinary Research in Language and Literature and Centre for Digital Preservation of Palm Leaf Manuscripts of the UGC under the University with Potential for Excellence Scheme.

## **17. Marcus Schmucker, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna**

Marcus Schmucker works at the Institute for Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. His research interests focus on the traditions of Advaita Vedānta and of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, here especially on Vedāntadeśika. He edited recently: *Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa: Changing forms and the becoming of a deity in Indian religious traditions*. [Studies in Hinduism V]. Vienna forthcoming 2017. Another field of his research centers on the inter-religious dialogue and inter-cultural comparison. He edited together with Gerhard Oberhammer, *Zur Relationalität des Subjektes im Kontext der Religionshermeneutik*. Wien 2011. And together with Fabian Heubel, *Dimensionen der Selbstkultivierung in Süd- und Ostasien*. Freiburg 2013.

## **18. McComas Taylor, Australian National University**

McComas Taylor is a teacher and researcher in Sanskrit at the Australian National University in Canberra. His research is located at the intersection of contemporary critical theory and Sanskrit narrative literature. The primary research questions have revolved around the issues of power and knowledge: how does discourse shape knowledge, and how does knowledge then feed back into discourse? In practical terms, he is interested in what makes Sanskrit texts powerful and authoritative. What enables them to shape the societies in which they circulate? His books are, *The Fall of the Indigo Jackal* (SUNY 2007), and *Seven Days of Nectar* (OUP 2016). Currently he is looking at questions of historical consciousness in the Sanskritic episteme which is a close reading of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.

## **19. V. Mohan, C.P.R. Institute of Indological Research, Chennai**

V. Mohan has obtained his Doctorate in Sanskrit from the University of Madras. He is also a post graduate in English, Tamil and Education. He has been teaching Sanskrit at the junior college level for more than three decades. He has attended and presented many papers in various seminars and conferences. He has published his Ph.D. thesis entitled ‘*Abdullah Carita*’ by Lakshmi pati, a chronicle and analytical study on Mughal history in 2015. He has co-authored the second volume of ‘*Upanishada Sindanaigal*’, a lucid explanation of the Upanishads in Tamil along with Sri. K. S. Chandrasekar Guruji and currently is involved in the writing of its third volume. Hailing from a traditional and orthodox family, Dr. Mohan has a great inclination towards spiritual pursuits. He is also interested in giving spiritual discourses on various topics including Bhagavata Puranam. Presently, he is the Head, Department of Classical Languages in the C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar Institute of Indological Research, Chennai.

## **20. Nanditha Krishna, The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, Chennai**

Nanditha Krishna obtained her Ph.D. in Ancient Indian Culture from Bombay University, where she was also a Heras scholar. She has been a Professor and a Research Guide at the CPR Institute of Indological Research, affiliated to the University of Madras, and is the President of the C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation. Her areas of specialization include Indian Iconography and Environmental History. She is the author of several books, including *Sacred Plants of India*, *Sacred Animals of India*, *Book of Demons*, *Book of Vishnu* (Penguin), *Balaji-Venkateshwara*, *Ganesha* (Vakils) and the *Art and Iconography of Vishnu Narayana* (Taraporevala), among others.

## **21. Neeraja Poddar, Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA**

Neeraja Poddar is working in the Philadelphia Museum of Art at USA. Neeraja Poddar’s research focuses broadly on South Asian illustrated manuscripts; she is particularly interested in the materiality of books, the relationships between text and image and the transmission and circulation of narratives. She also studies the painting traditions of Nepal with a particular emphasis on Vaishnava imagery in various formats. At the Philadelphia Museum of Art, she has curated a number of exhibitions drawn from the collection and most recently, co-curated the reinstallation of the South Asian galleries.

## **22. Noel Sheth, S.J., St. Xavier's College, Mumbai**

Noel Sheth, S.J. is Professor of Indian and Asian Religions in the Department of Interreligious Studies at St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Mumbai, and is adviser to its Heras Research Institute. Earlier he was Professor of Indian Philosophies and Religions for more than 35 years at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune, where he was the President or Principal for several years. He holds a doctorate in Sanskrit from Harvard University. His publications are on the exegesis of Sanskrit and Pali texts, on Indian-Asian religions and on comparative theology and philosophy. He has received many awards, is a member of various international learned societies and administrative bodies, and on the Board of Editors of some international journals. He is an Adviser to the Jesuit General for interreligious dialogue with Hinduism and a Member of the international Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations for the world-wide Society of Jesus.

## **23. Pika Ghosh, University of North Carolina**

Pika Gosh teaches courses on South Asian art, architecture, and culture, and the research focuses on material culture in eastern India from the seventeenth century to the present. Pika Gosh's book *Temple to Love: Architecture and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Bengal* identifies the emergence of a new architectural formation in the religious and political environment of the seventeenth century. The author is interested in ethnographic approaches and how current practices, such as ritual and oral lore can help inform us about the pre-modern period and, currently working on the terra cotta ornamentation on Bengal temples and the role of visual imagery in a predominantly oral culture.

## **24. Radhakrishnan, C.S., Pondicherry University**

C.S Radhakrishnan is a professor in the Department of Sanskrit at the University of Pondicherry. He has 29 years of teaching experience. His area of specialisation is Kāvyaśāstra, Manuscriptology & Indology and Viśiṣṭādvaita. Thanks to his contribution in the area of education he is honoured with the award 'Sanskrit Ratna'.

## **25. Rama Rao Pappu, Miami University, Oxford, USA**

Professor Rama Rao Pappu worked as the Professor of Philosophy at the Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, USA. He is a very well-known for singularly organising International Congress of Vedanta consecutively for more than 30 years having International Participation. His large number of publications include *Indian Philosophy Past and Future* (SouthAsia Books (1982)), *Perspectives on Vedanta: Essays in Honour of Professor P.T. Raju* (Brill, 1988).

## **26. Ravi M. Gupta, Utah State University, USA**

Ravi M. Gupta holds the Charles Redd Chair of Religious Studies and serves as Director of the Religious Studies Program at Utah State University. He is the author or editor of four books, including an abridged translation of the Bhagavata Purana (with Kenneth Valpey), published this year by Columbia University Press. Ravi completed his doctorate in Hindu Studies at Oxford University and subsequently taught at the University of Florida, Centre College, and the College of William and Mary. He has received three teaching awards, a National Endowment for the Humanities summer fellowship, and two research fellowships at Oxford. He is a Permanent Research Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies and past president of the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies.

## **27. Rembert Lutjeharms, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, Oxford, UK**

Rembert Lutjeharms is from Brussels, Belgium. Rembert is the Librarian and a member of the Academic Planning Committee and organizer of lectures and seminars at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, UK. He was awarded his BA and MA in Oriental Studies from the University of Ghent, Belgium, and successfully completed his D.Phil. in Theology at the University of Oxford in 2010, focusing on the theology of the sixteenth-century Caitanya Vaishvana poet and literary critic Kavikarnapura. His research interests are Sanskrit poetry and poetics, early Caitanya Vaisnava history, and Sanskrit hermeneutics. Rembert has been teaching for our Hindu Studies Certificate Course since 2004 and is also an editor of the Journal of Hindu Studies, published by Oxford University Press.

## **28. Renate Sohnen-Thieme, SOAS, University of London**

Renate Sohnen-Thieme is a research assistant in the Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia at School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. She is a member of Centre of Jaina Studies, Centre of Buddhist Studies, Centre of South Asian Studies, London Middle East Institute and Centre for Iranian Studies.

## **29. Rukmani T.S. Concordia University, Canada**

Dr. T.S. Rukmani was educated in her home country, India, earning all four of her post-secondary degrees at the University of Delhi. Beginning with a B.A. in English, Mathematics, Economics, and Sanskrit, Dr. Rukmani decided to concentrate on Sanskrit for the remainder of her studies, receiving her M.A., Ph.D., and D.Litt. in this subject. She joined the Concordia research community in 1996. Indian philosophy is Dr. Rukmani's primary area of research, in particular the Advaita Vedanta, Samkya, and Yoga philosophies. She is well-published in these areas.

## **30. Sadhu Bhadreshdas, BAPS, Ahmedabad**

Bhadreshdas Swami is a Sanskrit scholar and an ordained monk of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS). In 2007 he completed a five-volume classical Sanskrit commentary on the Prasthanatrayi, titled the *Swaminarayan Bhashyam*. After receiving a PhD in Sanskrit from Karnakata University in 2005, Bhadreshdas Swami was awarded a D.Litt. in 2010 and the Mahamahopadhyaya honorific by Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University in Nagpur. The University of Mysore also awarded him the "Professor G.M. Memorial Award" and the "Darshankesari award" in 2013 for his work on Swaminarayan Vedanta. He currently serves as the head scholar ("Pradhānācārya") of the Yagnapurush Sanskrit Pathshala in Sarangpur, Gujarat.

## **31. V.Sandhiyalakshmi, CPR Institute of Indological Research, Chennai**

Sandhiyalakshmi is Assistant Professor at C.P.R. Institute of Indological Research, Chennai. She did her Ph. D. in "Iconography of Karttikeya" which was also published by the Institute. She has published papers in refereed journals and presented a paper on the 'Iconography of Purusha' at the National Conference on the Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains held in Chennai in January 2016. Earlier, she completed her M.A. and M.Phil, from the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Madras, Chennai, where she completed her M.Phil on the "Tirumukudal Temple". Her interests are in the interaction of art and religion and its portrayal in iconography.

## **32. Shaunaka Rishi Das, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, Oxford, UK**

Shaunaka Rishi Das is the director of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS). He is a Hindu cleric, a lecturer, a broadcaster and Hindu Chaplin to the Oxford University. His academic interests include education, comparative theology and communication. He is a member of The Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, convened in 2013 by the Woolf Institute, Cambridge. In 2013 the Indian government appointed him to sit on the International Advisory Council of the Auroville Foundation.

## **33. Shrikant Bahulkar, The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune**

Professor S. S. Bahulkar has been teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Sanskrit for more than 30 years, during which time he has been engaged in a wide variety of research projects. Both his research and teaching focus on Vedic Studies, Buddhist Studies, Ayurveda; and Classical Sanskrit Literature. For his Ph. D., he worked on the *Bhaiṣajya* Chapter of the *Kauśika-sūtra* of the Atharvaveda and published his thesis under the title *Medical Ritual in the Atharvaveda Tradition*. He continued his research in that field and worked on the exegetical literature of the Atharvaveda. He has guided fourteen students for their M. Phil. and Ph. D. Degrees. He was instrumental in recording as many as six Veda Śākhās in India, for a research project funded by the Danish Government. He worked in the Deccan College, Pune (1979-81), the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune (1981-1993; 1995-2006; 2009) and the Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath (1993-95; 2006-2009; 2010-2012).

## **34. Shrivatsa Goswami, Sri Caitanya Prema Samsthana, Vrindavan**

Shrivatsa Goswami is the director of Sri Chaitanya Prema Samsthana. He has toured extensively to participate in conferences on philosophy and religion and lecture in major universities around the world. The University presses of Princeton, Berkeley and others have published his writings. Goswami is Founder-Director of Sri Caitanya Prema Samsthana, which had been an academic home to scholars from around the world, especially in the fields related to bhakti. He is also the Director of Vraja Prakalpa, a multi-disciplinary, multi-scholar ongoing research project. Nine volumes on various facets of Vraja culture are already published.

## **35. Siniruddha Dash, K.V. Sharma Research Foundation, Chennai**

Siniruddha Dash was Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras. Formerly worked as the sub-editor of Mega Sanskrit Dictionary Project, Deccan College, Pune, now he is the Honorary Director of Professor K.V. Sarma Research Foundation, Chennai. Under his stewardship, twenty five volumes of New Catalogous Catalogorum were brought out at the University of Madras.

## **36. Sudershan Rao Y., Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi**

Sudershan Rao Y., was the Chairperson of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) from July 2014 until his resignation on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Prior to this appointment he served as a professor of history at Kakatiya University in Telangana. He was previously Head of the Department, Chairman of Board of Studies and Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences at Kakatiya University in Telangana. Rao was formerly a member of the ICHR (2000-2002) and a National Fellow of the University Grants Commission (1992-1994). He has published over forty research papers in national and international journals and contributed to the Andhra

Pradesh History Congress. Rao specializes in ancient Indian culture, with an emphasis on the history of Hinduism and the social and religious history of South and South East Asia.

### **37. Vasudha Narayanan, University of Florida**

Vasudha Narayanan is Distinguished Professor, Department of Religion, and Director, Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHITRA) at the University of Florida. She is the author or editor of seven books and also the associate editor of the six-volume *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. She has written numerous articles, chapters in books, and encyclopedia entries. She is currently working on Hindu temples and traditions in Cambodia. Her books include: *Hinduism* (New York: Oxford University Press), *The Vernacular Veda: Revelation, Recitation, and Ritual* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), *The Tamil Veda: Pillan's Interpretation of the Tiruvaymoli* (With John B. Carman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press), *The Way and the Goal: Expressions of Devotion in the Early Śrīvaisnava Tradition* (Washington: American University-Institute for Vaisnava Studies, and Cambridge: Harvard University, Center for the Study of World Religions).

### **38. Veezhinathan N., University of Madras, Chennai**

N. Veezhinathan is a very well-known authority in Advaita Vedanta, Nyaya and Purvamimamsa. He worked as the Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras and the Director of New Catalogous Catalogorum. He has authored and edited many books including Samksepasarirakam of Sarvajnatman, Sankaravijaya of Anandanandagiri, Siddhantalesa samgraha of Appayya Diksita. At present he teaches higher texts of Vedanta and Nyaya besides editing the Voice of Sankara.

### **39. Venkatachalachapathy M., University of Madras**

M. Venkatachalachapathy is a senior faculty member in the department of Philosophy, University of Madras, with the uninterrupted seventeen years services in the Post-Graduate and Research. He has published more than twenty articles & twelve Books. He has specialized in Indian Philosophy, Political Philosophy and Yoga studies. He has taken efforts to introduce new subjects and courses in the department. He has organized Ten National seminars and Two International seminars. Besides the above, now he is the co-ordinator of UGC – NET coaching classes of the University of Madras.

### **40. Vrushali Potnis-Damle, Mumbai**

Vrushali Potnis Damle is a practising Chartered Accountant by qualification, but her interest and passion in linguistics and philosophy led her to pursue and excel in her Masters, M. Phil and now Ph.D Programs in Sanskrit at the University of Mumbai. She holds a Gold Medal in her specialisation – Vedanta. In addition to this, she has completed her Diplomas in Cyber Laws, Comparative Mythology and Manuscriptology; and is currently pursuing a Certificate Course in Bhakti Literature. She presently is a Faculty and the Course Coordinator for the Diploma and Advanced Diploma Courses in Mysticism, at the Department of Sanskrit, University of Mumbai. She has research papers to her credit both published and under publication including a presentation at the World Sanskrit Conference 2015 held at Bangkok, Thailand. In the past, she has also been Faculty at the Rustomjee Business School.

## **NOTES**

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