Occasional Paper No. 76

TRENDS OF CHANGE IN THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

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I. Introduction

Bengal experienced a great efflorescence of culture between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries. There occurred at this time phenomenal development of the Bengali language, literature and script and of distinctive styles of architecture, sculpture and painting. In course of this cultural growth culture traits of Bengal developed in to what may be called a regional Bengali identity. The process of cultural growth was largely ispired by the Bhakti movement led by Sri Krishna-chaitanya popularly known as Chaitanyadeva (1486-1533) and its successor, the Gauriya Vaishnava sampradaya, i.e., sect. Some trends of change could be noticed, however, within the Bengali regional traditions of bhakti from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Such trends transformed the original character of the Bhakti movement and ultimately shaped the social character of the crystallized Gauriya Vaishnavism.

Initially Vaishnavism was revitalized in Bengal by Sri Chaitanyadeva whose spiritual fervour places him among the greatest protagonists of the Bhakti movement,

such as, Vallabhacharya, Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak and Sankaradeva. However, one can demarkate at least two phases in Chaitanya's spiritual career. At the first phase he was a householder in Nabadwip and exerted considerable influence on the different strata of the people in his native town. In this phase of his preaching Chaitanya gave a broad democratic flavour to the Vaishnava outlook by organizing unceremonial but intensely emotional devotional congregations in a spirit of fraternity. This is one of the principal reasons for the tremendous appeal of bhakti in Bengal. Sanyasa marks the second phase of Chaitanya's life when he lived in Puri in Orisa. During this phase Chaitanya emphasized the discipline of soul through devotion in Radha - like spirit, to his beloved aspect of God, Krishna and developed an inclination for cannonical interpretation of the faith propounded by him. Chaitanya does not appear to have taken any positive step to organize a sect. But what was significant was his attempt to share out responsibilities among his associates. He instructed his principal associates of the Nabadwip base, particularly Nityananda, to concentrate on mass preaching of simple, unceremonial bhakti in Bengal. On the other hand, Chaitanya deputed two associates from the court elite of Bengal, the Karnat Brahmans, Sanatana and Rupa, to develop the canonical literature of bhakti in the heartland of Vaishnavism, at Brindaban near Mathura. Sanatana and were the foremost among the celebrated six Gosvamis of Brindaban. It was the extensive intellectual and spiritual efforts of the Gosvamis in which Gauriya Vaishnavism was systematized.

The growth of the endeavours of the Gosvamis in what is known among the Vaishnavas of Bengal as Brajamandala, as distinct from Gaura-mandala the territorial core of Bengal Vaishnavism, brought the latter in touch with the broader subcontinental forces of Indian spiritual tradition, both of the Ganga plains and Karnataka. Bhakti movement was now more affected by the hierarchical tendencies and social and cultural authoritarianism which are implicit in the medieval

Indian religious tradition. Jiva Gosvami, the youngest among the six Gosvamis of Brindaban, deputed three Bengali disciples to go back and disseminate the new principles of Brajamandala in Bengal. One of these disciples, Narottamadasa, settled in the village of Kheturi (in Rajshahi district), on the Bangladesh bank of the Padma opposite Lalgola and undertook extensive journeys through the region in order to communicate with the leading Mahantas of the Bhakti movement. Then he instituted a mahotsava at Kheturi to which came representatives of the various groups of Vaishnavism, who had been inspired by Chaitanya. Out of this assembly crystallized the form of social and ideological community, sampradaya, which enunciated the seventeenth century principles of Gauriya Vaishnavism.

Sampradaya identity in the Bengali regional form of Bhakti movement, was the social product of the changes described above. Its pristine democratic flavour gave way to relatively narrower and more hierarchical practices, which gave it a sectarian character. Such trends, with their own regionally specific circumstances of origin and development, may be found in the kind of sectarian solidarity which developed in varying degrees in the Sankaradeva orders in Assam or among the Kabir-panthis, the Satnamis or the Sikhs. These forces of change leading to sectarian developments within the Indian religious tradition also indicate the process of social and cultural change in the different regions of India. In the following pages an attempt will be made to focus upon these forces and the changes which they brought about in developing the Bhakti movement of Bengal into the Gauriya Vaishnava sampradaya.

II. Charactaristics of the Regional Bengali Culture

The process of the emergence of Bengali regional idioms in the sphere of organized and systematized cultural activities had began to the eighth century during the regime of the Pala monarchs (eighth century to twelfth century). This is indicated by the Eastern Indian school of scultpure and painting and the developments in the fields of language, literature and script since the eighth century. But these developments represented regional versions of the pan-Indian culture (as it was visualized in the Indian traditions since the second century B.C.) which despite being in a process of decline since the eighth century continued to be the most influential factor in the cultural life of India. The territory through which these developments took place was much larger than the present Bengali-speaking region. Between the eighth century and the twelfth century Bengal formed but a part of the larger Indian culture region which covered the area between south Bihar and Assam and included the north-eastern part of Orisa as well.[1]

By the middle of the fourteenth century the Bengali-speaking territory had come to be roughly demarcated from the neighbouring cultural regions. In this region the influence of the pan-Indian normative culture persisted. Besides, with the advent of the Muslims at the beginning of the thirteenth century, West Asian culture traits began to spread in Bengal. In spite of these influences indigenous Bengali elements had tended to come into prominence in the sphere of organized cultural activities in Bengal. From the fourteenth, and

through the sixteenth, century the indigenous elements emerged as the dominant factor in the cultural life of Bengal, and determined the terms of interaction between indigenous traits and external influences. This is indicated by the modifications of the Ramayana and the Srimad-bhagavat in terms of the regional ideas and idioms in the Bengali translation and adaptations of these texts on the one hand and the literary transformation of the folk tales on the other.[2]

A more convincing evidence of this trend is provided by the regional Bengali architectural style as represented by the chala type of temple which developed since the middle of the fifteenth century. The basic lines of the architectural design of the low, curvilinear chala hut which is associated with peasant culture of Bengal was adopted for designing the exterior of the chala temple. The fragile chala form was rendered into a permanent structure with the help of the advanced technique of arcuation which was introduced in India by the Muslims. But despite the tremendous potentialities of the technique, arcuated constructive principles had been made completely subservient to the unpretentions and simple form of the chala design.

There are indeed many limitations of the regional style of chala architecture charactarized by the distinctive features of the hut architecture. The limitations are both structural and aesthetic. But the regional style of architecture had two important features. First, it was the inherent capacity of the indigenous culture to absorb and assimilate in the process of its growth, elements from high cultural

traditions. The second notable feature is the confidence generated by the growth of the regional culture traits: the symbols and idioms of the regional Bengali culture were indigenous in origin and character.[3]

III. Bhakti Movement of Bengal : Regional Self-confidence Expressed in Simple, Direct Bhakti.

In the context of the growing regional Bengali identity the Bhakti movement launched by Chaitanyadeva exerted tremendous influence on the Bengalis since the early decades of the sixteenth century. Chaitanya preached simple and direct faith of bhakti (devotion). Deep and inseparable absorption in Krishna will lead to prema (love) for him . Every individual irrespective of caste, sex, linage and learning has the inherent capacity for acquiring such unqualified, whole-hearted bhakti to Krishna. The means of arousing the inward emotion of total absorption in Krishna is the simple, unconventional and unritualistic nama-samkirtana, i.e., reciting the name of God. Nama - samkirtana can be done both severally and collectively in a spirit of fraternity and fellowship.[4]

The sense of freedom and fellowship propagated by the Bhakti movement is but a manifestation of the urge for self-assertion generated by the growth of the regional culture. The focus on the unconventional, unritualistic way of simple worship, congregational nama-samkirtana in the Bhakti movement and its emphasis on the inherent capacity of the individual irrespective of caste,

sex and social standing catered to the socio-cultural needs of the common people. Chaitanya and his close associates appear to have been aware of this fact. At the early stage of his religious career in Nabadwip Chaitanya moved round the quarters of the artisans and traders in the town and mixed with them.[5] At Advaita Acharya's behest, Chaitanya promised to devote himself to the task of spreading the message of bhakti among women, Sudras and the illiterate.[6] This was also the avowed objective of Nityananda, who was the most influential and energetic preacher of the Bhakti movement and the main reason for the tremendous success he had achieved in his mission of preaching.[7]

The emphasis on the lower rungs of the society had another important dimension. At the time when Chaitanya launched the Bhakti movement there existed in Bengal several esoteric sects. They included the adherents of Tantic practices, Buddhist, Sakta or Saiva, the Kapalikas, Abadhutas and the Natha yogis. The Tantra-based sects, commonly referred to as Sahajiyas, and the cognate sects like the Kapalikas had grown around the contemplation of the relationship between the male and the female principles in the nature of the Ultimate Reality. Their method consisted in secretive sexo-yogic practices adopted as the means to attain transcendental bliss leading to supreme knowledge. The esoteric sects were widely prevalent in Bengal and commanded large followings. But at the level of the organized upper strata of society regulated by the norms of the canonical marga or sastriya tradition, the sexo-yogic practices of the esoteric sects were hardly recognized as respectable forms of religious

exercise. One reason for this was the extreme esotericism of the sexo-yogic practices. Another reason may be found in the attitude of these sects towards Puranic Brahmanism and Mahayana Buddhism. The esoteric sects straightaway rejected the authority of the established religions and scorned at their ceremonial rites and rituals as well as recondite learning of the canonical texts, i.e., the sastras.

The Bhakti movement led by Chaitanya offered the followers of the secret esoteric sects an opportunity to come out in the open and join the frternity of the Krishna devotees without compromising the fundamental tenets of their religious faith. The basic doctrine of the esoteric sects centres around the concept of duality as expressed by the male and the female principles in the nature of the Absolute; perfect union of the two is the highest truth, the Absolute Reality. The ontological principles of male and female are inherent in the physical state of man and woman. Therefore in order to know the Absolute Truth man and woman should unite together physically, mentally and spiritually and realize their true nature in a state of transcendental bliss. As such, the esoteric sects rejected conventionalism and ceremonialism and scrupulously abhorred high thinking and deep learning. Truth, they affirmed, is a matter of intuition.

The apparent division of the Absolute Reality into saktimat (possessor of power) and sakti (manifestation of power) as symbolized by the duality of Krishna and Radha and the relation of love between the

two constitute the central theme of Chaitany's religious idea. Chaitanya sought to realize the nature of the spontaneous love between Krishna and Radha and the nature of their union at the emotional level through mystic experience. Such an approach may not have been entirely conducive to the religious practices of the esoteric sects but the doctrinal compatibility tended to validate their ideology in a broad-based religious movement in which the different strata of the society participated. Besides, the direct and simple faith of Chaitanya its strong emotional appeal and the unconventional, unritualistic method of worship which promoted a sense of freedom and fellowship attracted the adherents of the esoteric sects to the Bhakti movement. Thus ~~fact~~ Bhakti movement offered the followers of the esoteric sects an opportunity to assert themselves openly. A large number of the Sahajiyas had joined of Bhakti movement and had acquired eminent position it. Narahari Sarkar of Srikhanda[9] and Bansibadana Chatto[10] were prominent Sahajiya associates of Chaitanya. Svarupa Dasodara was one of the closest associates of Caitanya. The Sahajiya Vaishnavas trace the lineage of their gurus from Svarupa[11]. Raya Ramananda, who was a very close associate of Chaitanya in Puri, has been charactarized as Sahaja Vaisnava in the Chaitanya-Chandrodaya by Kavi Karnapura.[12] The participation of the Sahajiyas in the Bhakti movement expanded its social base.

Bengal appears to have come under religious and cultural influence of north India since the time of the Mauryas (fourth century to second century B.C.). Vedic religion, Puranic Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism had

come to Bengal through its north India connections. There had developed in Bengal a few important centres of the different religions. But till the sixteenth century Bengal had looked toward north India for sources and models of religion and culture. Some of the Siddhacharyas exerted considerable influence on the followers of the secret religious cults and had composed songs and poems to explicate the ideas of their sects. But the influence and achievements of the Siddhacharyas did not have any impact on the organized level of religion and culture.

Between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries almost the whole of India was swept by a surge of Bhakti movement. The origin of the concept of bhakti may be traced back to the Upanisads. Subsequently it developed into a versatile cult marked by a kind of liberal heterdoxy which was distinguished by a sense of freedom and fellowship. Especially related to Vaisnavism, bhakti cult emerged as a viable alternative to the orthodox aspect of Puranic Brahmanism and absorbed the tradition of esoteric meditation which prevailed outside the sphere of organized religion. It constituted a powerful parallel trend in the religious life of the Hindu society almost all over India. Thus the concept and the cult of bhakti constituted a common pan-Indian heritage. But the Bhakti movement that developed in the different parts of India, for instance in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bengal, Assam, Bhojpur and Punjab, emphasized different aspects of the cult and were permeated with strong regional charactaristics. In Bengal the movement was launched in Nabadwip under the

leadership of Chaitanyadeva. The movement was inspired by Krishnabhakti i.e. devotion to Krishna who was considered to be the sole object of worship. The devotees cherished unqualified and wholehearted devotion of premabhakti to Krishna. Chaitanya himself longed for union with Krishna. But to the devotees of Bengal Chaitanya was not only the embodiment of intense devotion to Krishna but was Krishna himself. Thus Chaitanya was the supreme object of worship. Even before Chaitanya renounced the worldly life to become a Sanyasi (ascetic) in 1510, the devotees of Nabadwip had come to be convinced of his oneness with Vishnu and Krishna. In Nabadwip Chaitanya was worshipped by his prominent associates as being Vishnu himself, the Supreme Being.[13] This was followed up by the devotees of Chaitanya by the introduction of Chaitanya-kirtana, the hymn for chanting the name of Chaitanya.[14] Apparently the name of Chaitanya was considered to have the same spiritual potential as the names of Hari (Vishnu) and Krishna, which were chanted in nama-samkirtana as the means to attain premabhakti.

The concept of Chaitanya's selfhood as Vishnu has been crystallized and elaborated in the writings of Murari Gupta, Prabodhananda Sarasvati, Svarupa Damodara, Kavi Karnapura and Brindabanadasa all of which are datable between the second and the third quarters of the sixteenth century. Murari refers to Chaitanya as bhagavan svayam, i.e., God himself.[15] Prabodhananda explicitly says that the worship of Chaitanya is more desirable than the worship of Krishna.[16] Karnapura indicates that God appears in the person of Chaitanya.[17] Brindabana-dasa identifies Chaitanya with Krishna and focuses on the

divinity of the Master from the time of his birth.[18] Svarupa Damodara, a close associate of Chaitanya, is known to have composed a theological text called Gauratattva-nirupana in which he propounded the panchatattva doctrine. The doctrine regards Chaitanya and his four principal associates of the Nabadwip circle, namely, Nityananda, Advaita Acharya, Sribasa and Gadadhara Pandita as the manifestations of the five different aspects of the Supreme Reality but focuses on Chaitanya as the Mahaprabhu the, Devine Self and hence the greatest of all.[19] In his Gaura - ganoddesa dipika Kavi Karnapura has described a complete hagiology of the faith and has elaborated the pancatattva doctrine.[20] The poets of the contemporary padas (Bengali lyrics) also regard Chaitanya as Krishna himself as well as both Krishna and Radha in one personality

The concept of Chaitanya (fondly called Gaura or Gauranga for his bright and fair complexion, particularly with reference to his Nabadwip career) being the parama-tattva, i.e., the Supreme Reality inevitably led to the theological position of Gaura-paramyavada which signifies the adoration of Chaitanya as the supreme object of worship[22]. As the logical concomitant of Gaura-paramyavada there developed the iconography of Chaitanya as also Gauramatra. Even during the life time of Chaitanya his image was consecrated and worshipped by his devotees in Bengal. The practice spread after the demise of the Master.[23] Some of the Gaura-paramyavadis replaced the Gopalamantra (the formula for invoking the grace of Gopala i.e., Krishna) by Gaura-mantra in spiritual initiation of disciples and in ritualistic worship.[24]

The Sahajiyas had developed their own versions of Gaura paramyavada. These are known as Rasaraja sadhana and Gaura-nagarabhava. According to the Sahajiyas the Absolute Reality, i.e., Sahaja is the Rasa, the supreme emotion of love, the quintessence in everybody. Sahaja articulates itself in its two aspects, namely, Rasa (the enjoyer) and Rati (the enjoyed) who are conceived by the Sahajiya Vaishnava as Krishna and Radha. The union between the two produces the state of supreme love in Sahaja. As the Absolute Reality Krishna is the Rasaraja. Chaitanya being Krishna himself is also worshipped as Rasaraja. The Rasaraja doctrine was propagated by Bansibadana Chatta of Kulia who may have inherited it from his father Chhakari.[25] But the doctrine has been explicated in a text called Bansi-siksha by Premadasa which was composed long after the time of Bansibadana. In this text Bansibadana has been referred as the enjoyed in relation to Chaitanya.[26]

According to the doctrine of Gaura-nagarabhava and the complimentary doctrine of Nadiya-nagari the devotee considers Gaura as the nagara (enjoyer, lover) and himself as the nagari (enjoyed), a young women overwhelmed by spontaneous and deep attraction for Chaitanya and seeking after him in intense devine of love. The young women of Nabadwip are described as having fallen in love with Chaitanya in the same way as the Gopis of Brindaban did in relation to Krishna. Thus Nabadwip is as holy as Brindabanan where Krishna performed his lila (divine exploits).[27] Gaura-nagarabhava is indicated in the Sri Chaitanya-chandramrta by Prabodhananda Sarasvati.[28] It was elaborated in the padas composed by Basu Ghosh, Madava

Ghosh and Narahari Sarkar of Srikhanda, the founder of the nagarabhava group of devotees[28] and in the Chaitanya-mangala, a biography of the Master composed by Narahari's disciple Lochana.[29]

The emergence and spread of Gaura-paramyadava indicate that the Bhakti movement led by Chaitanya had enhanced the self-confidence generated by the growth of the regional Bengali culture Chaitanya had become the symbol of Bengali self-confidence. It is important to note that Chaitanya and the ideology of the Bhakti movement appealed to both the upper and the lower strata of the society. Chaitanya's associates included scholars, poets, musicians and other highly placed persons belonging to the upper castes. On the other hand, the message of the Bhakti movement exerted tremendous influence on the lower rungs of the society even at the early stage of Chaitanya's religious career in Nabadwip, Nityananda and the other associates of Chaitanya had brought into the movement the people from the lower social strata including the Doms and the Chandalas who constituted the lowest rungs of the caste hierarchy.[29A]

IV Emergence of Brindaban as the Alternative Focus of the Bhakti Movement of Bengal : Systematisation of Faith and Ideological Modifications.

Chaitanya does not appear to have taken any positive step to build up a system or a sect. But there are indications to suggest that he seriously pondered over the future of the Bhakti movement and adopted certain measures to ensure its growth. Several centres

of the Bhakti movement had grown in Bengal. In those centres, preaching was led by Nityananda, Advaita, Gadaharadasa, Narahari Sarkar, Bansibadana and Sivananda Sena who were among the original circle of devotees around Chaitanya in Nabadwip which formed the nucleus of the Bhakti movement. Although Chaitanya had left Bengal after becoming ascetic and had settled down in Puri in Orissa he exerted broad control on his associates and followers preaching in Bengal. It was at his behest that Nityananda had launched extensive preaching among the common people along the banks of the Ganga.[30] On the other hand, Chaitanya took initiative in organizing in Brindaban a centre for intensive intellectual and spiritual exercise related to the Bhakti movement. It is with this intension that Chaitanya diverted some of his brilliant associates to Brindaban. He specifically instructed the two illustrious brothers, Sanatana and Rupa to settle down in Brindaban in order to revive the sacred places associated with the lila (divine exploits) of Krishna and to compose bhakti-sastra, i.e., canonical texts on the various aspects of bhakti.[31] Later they were joined by Gopala Bhatta, RaghunathaBhatta, Raghunathadasa and Jiva, who was a nephew of Sanatana and Rupa. Collectively these six recluses are known as the sharagosvami, the six Gosvamis or teachers of Gauriya Vaishnavism.[32] Sanatana, Rupa and Jiva, who were men of great intellectual and literary capacities, had devoted themselves to the lifelong mission of scholarly and spiritual pursuits. Sanatana wrote on rasa-sastra (canons of devotional sentiments) and Rupa composed texts on theology. Jiva, who was a most prolific, versatile and voluminous author, reinforced the ideas of his uncles by his penetrating metaphysical works. To these

works was added a voluminous compilation by Gopala Bhatta, probably in collaboration with Sanatana, in which the social and religious practices of the Vaishnavas had been codified. Together the four Gosvamis systematized the faith and defined the canons of what later came to be known as the Gauriya Vaishnava sampradaya. Due to this reason the four Gosvamis have been held in highest veneration as the most authoritative teachers of the Gauriya Vaishnava sampradaya.[33]

The faith of the relatively liberal, heterodox Bhakti movement had a very strong appeal to the masses. But the Bhakti movement in Bengal suffered from certain disadvantages and drawbacks. There existed considerable divergences among the prominent associates of Chaitanya even during the life time of the Master. Nityananda was the most dynamic among the Bhakti preachers and hence had a large following. But there were many detractors of Nityananda. For example, Advaits Acharya strongly disapproved of Nityananda's non-conventional personal behaviour and methods of mass preaching.[34] There were others in the Bhakti movement who criticized Nityananda and even refused to tolerate a reference to him.[35] The followers of Advaita constituted a group. They were opposed to both Nityananda and Gadadhara Pandita.[36] The ideas and attitudes of the Gaura-nagaravadis were intensely disliked by the other constituents of the Bhakti movement including the followers of Nityananda.[37] It was the common devotion of all to Chaitanya which held the diverse groups together. After the demise of the Master, the different groups drifted away from each other to establish distinctive identities. Thus there emerged distinct group led by

Nityananda, Advaita, Narahari Sarkar, Gadadharadasa, Hridaya-Chaitanya and Bansibadana. The relation between the groups was marked by indifference and even animosity.[38]

However, these groups shared certain common features. Basically they were Gaura-paramyavadi. For preaching they relied on the emotional appeal of simple and direct faith in bhakti to Caitanya and on concrete hagiographical stories of Chaitanya's life. As a matter of fact the entire Bhakti movement of Bengal centred around the personality of Chaitanya. The life of the Master and the examples of passionate devotion set by him constituted the most important source of inspiration. Thus the adoration and worship of Chaitanya was the most important factor of the movement. But the movement remained unorganized and even naive. Much was written in Bengal both in Sanskrit and Bengali on the life and exploits of Chaitanya.[39] But with the remarkable exception of Kavi Karnapura[40] there was no significant attempt to systematize the ideology of bhakti in metaphysical implications or by defining the nature of the devotional sentiments following from the doctrine. The associates and followers of Chaitanya in Bengal failed to develop a system which could be the alternative source of inspiration and guidance after his death. This may be one of the reasons why the Bhakti movement had split up into several groups soon after Chaitanya's death in 1533.

The astute and profound scholarship of the Gosvamis, their co-ordinated efforts and the voluminous canonical works covering the different aspects of Bhakti-sastra which the Gosvamis produced presented a sharp contrast to the condition of the Bhakti movement in Bengal.

Apparently there was a sharp break between the Gaura-mandala and the Brajamandala. One reason for the break is, no doubt, the absence of a common focus, of a leader who could exert influence with both the preachers in Bengal and the Gosvamis of Brindaban. Another reason may be found in the attitude of the Gosvamis as revealed by the doctrinal position adopted by them. In this regard the Gosvamis drastically differed from the Bengal preachers, who were predominantly Gaura-paramyavadi.

Before getting into this question it is necessary to say a few words about the background of the Gosvamis and the environment in which they worked. The Gauriya Vaishnava creed was systematized mainly by Sanatana, Rupa, Jiva and Gopala Bhatta. All of them came from orthodox Karnat Brahman families. The family of Sanatana and Rupa had migrated to Bengal a few generations back. But the family retained its exclusive Kannadiga character as distinct from the indigenous Bengali Brahmans.[41] Sanatana, Rupa and their two brothers held high positions in the administration of the Bengal Sultans.[43] Presumably they led the exclusive life of the nobility.

Both Sanatana and Rupa had come in contact with Chaitanya after he had become an ascetic and left Bengal. Unlike the associates of Chaitanya belonging to the Nabadwip circle Sanatana and Rupa did not have the experience of the early phase of the Bhakti movement, when the devotees of the Nabadwip circle discerned in Chaitanya the presence of the Supreme Being. At the Nabadwip stage of his career Chaitanya was, no doubt, inspired by Radha's intense and tormenting love for Krishna and sought to identify himself

with Radha as the means for attaining Krishna.[42] But Chaitanya also declared his selfhood as Vishnu and Krishna. Chaitanya's associates of the Nabadwip circle appreciated his Radha-bhava (attitude of Radha) but were convinced of his identify with the Supreme Being.[44] This was the essential feature of their doctrine and they proceeded to preach bhakti with the conviction that God had appeared in the form or Chaitanya in order to propagate bhakti. Sanatan and Rupa were not acquainted with the process which promoted tremendous self-confidence in the Bhakti movement. Nor did they participate in the emotionally charged mass preaching of bhakti with its focus on the women, Sudra and illiterate people which was initiated by Chaitanya and his early associates in Nabadwip.[45]

This is also true of Jiva, the nephew of Sanatana and Rupa, Gopala Bhatta and Raghunatha Bhatta. After completing his education in Bengal, Jiva decided to devote himself to religious pursuits and went to Brindaban in order to join his uncles.[46] Gopala Bhatta's family lived in Karnatak.[47] Raghunatha Bhatta was a non-Bengali Brahman and a resident of Kasi.[48] They never came to Bengal and had no acquiantance with bhakti preaching in Bengal. Raghunathadasa's father was a high placed official in Saptagram in Bengal. Among the Gosvamis, he was the only Bengali and non-Brahman and had close acquaintance with the Bhakti movement of Bengal.[49]

Jiva and Gopala Bhatta may have just seen Chaitanya at a very early age. Sanatana, Rupa, Raghunathadasa and Raghunatha Bhatta had come in close contact with the Master But all of them had come to know Chaitanya after he had

become an ascetic. With the assumption of samyasa, Chaitanya religious attitude appeared to have undergone a very significant change. He no more emphasized his selfhood as Visnu or Krsna. During the samyasa phase of his life Chaitanya intensely desired union with Krishna as Radha longed for her beloved Krishna.[50] Theoretically Krishna and Radha are one and the same, Radha being the transfiguration of the hladini sakti (the energy of bliss), one of the three essential powers in the nature of God. The power of bliss is manifest in the form of eternal love because God has in his self two aspects, the enjoyer and the enjoyed. Without the reality of the enjoyed he can not even realize his own nature as the enjoyer. Hence Krishna expresses Radha out of his own existence for his self-realisation. The divine Radha has natural, spontaneous and all-pervasive desire for uniting with Krishna for her entire being essentially follows from the very nature of Krishna. Radha's love is the epitome of devotion to the Lord. As such, Chaitanya sought to integrate to his heart the intense and necessary love of Radha for Krishna. Some of the associates of Chaitanya have seen in him the dual incarnation of the enjoyer and the enjoyed : as Krishna in his inner self and Radha in his overt attitude and behaviour.[51] But it was the Radha-bhava-dyuti, Radha's lustre of emotion which was charactaristic of the religious fervour of Chaitanya in the Puri stage of his career.[52] The Gosvamis were acquainted with this state of Chaitanya's mind : his total and unqualified devotion to Krishna. They missed the assertive dynamism of the Master's earlier stage of life which inspired the devotees of the Nabadwip circle and made him the centre of their thought and emotion.

The Gosvamis lived in Brindaban which is situated in the Ganga-Yamuna doab in the Uttar Prades. The Ganga valley has been a stronghold of Brahmanical orthodoxy from ancient times. The growth of the heterodox Bhakti movement between the fourteenth century and the sixteenth centuriey had eroded the influence of Puranic Brahmanism to a certain extent. But by the middle of the sixteenth century the impact of the liberal bhakti ideology had began to subside. The Bhakti movement of the different parts of India had come to be reorganized into distinct sampradayas or sects which had began to compromise their position with the dominant influence of Puranic Brahmanism.[53] The major all-India Vaishnava sects, such as, the Sri, Maddhva and Nimbarka had their headquarters in the Ganga-Yamuna doab. Some of the later Vaishnava sects, the Vallabhachari, and the Ramanandi for instance, who had grown out of the Bhakti movement, had established the main centres of their activities in the Ganga valley in north India. Before the Gosvamis came to Brindaban, Kasi, Prayag, Mathura and Jatipura near Brindaban contained the main centres of several thriving Vaishnava sects. These Vaishnava sects, most of which had developed considerable organisation with sectarian bias had spread across the different cultural regions of India. On the other hand, these sects were closely related to the political and social establishments from which they received the patronage of the central state, the Rajput principalities and the rich landlords and merchants. In Brindaban the Gosvamis were required to carry on the task of building up an alternative system in such a context. The ideas and attitudes of the Gosvamis were likely to be influenced by these circumstances as well.

Thus the associates the followers of Chaitanya in Bengal and the Gosvamis of Brindaban worked in different conditions. Such differences could account for the variations in approach and attitude between Gouramandala and Brajamandala. A clear evidence of the difference may be found in the Gosvamis attitude to Chaitanya. The Gosvamis were, no doubt, inspired by Chaitanya but they rejected Gaura-paramyavada which was the central theme of the faith of the associates and followers of the Master in Bengal. According to the Gosvamis Krishna is the Absolute Reality the source of supreme love; hence he is the upeya and the main object of worship. The theological and metaphysical systems of the Gosvamis have been built up around the central theme of the love between Krishna and the Gopis. The Gosvamis adored Chaitanya as a great guru and the ideal devotee and even implicitly recognized him as the bhagavata i.e. God, but they have never projected him as the Parama-tattva i.e. the Supreme Reality. The Gosvamis looked upon Chaitanya as an upaya, i.e., the means of attaining the desired goal which is access into the land of eternal love wherein resides the Ultimate Reality rather than upeya, i.e., the Ultimate Reality. Hence according to the Gosvamis the worship of Chaitanya is not a valid proposition.[54]

The Bhakti movement of Bengal was launched with the ideal of attaining prema (love) which follows from total absorption in simple and pure bhakti. Such a state of devotion could be achieved through intense personal experience (anubhava) gained by means of samkirtana, reciting and chanting aloud the name, form and attributes of God, particularly his blessed name. Brindabanadasa,

Locanadasa and the poets of the padas indicate that Chaitanya and his followers considered kirtana to be the most important mode of worship which gives rise to prema.[55] Kavi Karnapura says that samkirtana is the sole means of bhakti.[56] According to Jayananda kirtana is the greatest means of spiritual fulfilment.[57] However, according to the Gosvamis samkirtana is a practice of piety in the vaidhi (in accordance with vidhi, i.e., the injunctions of the sastra) variety of sadhana-bhakti (devotion attained by means of special extraneous efforts). Samkirtana is important because it is the most powerful means of effecting a devotional sentiment at the vaidhi stage. But its potentials are limited because at no stage vaidhi sadhana-bhakti involves emotional realisation of the devotee's relation with the desired object, ista.[58] This is possible in the other variety of sadhana-bhakti, namely, raganuga which is modelled after (anuga) raga, i.e., the natural, deep and inseparable absorption in Krshna as manifest in the attachment of the people of Vraja who stand in actual relation to Krishna as parents, friend, lover or servant. Their attachment represent different rasas (devotional sentiments) in accordance with the nature of their relationship with Krishna, such as, vatsalya as parents, sakhya as friends, madhura as lovers and dasya as servants. In the raganuga way the devotee adopts one or the other rasa as a emotional exercise towards spiritual fulfilment. In fact, as Susil Kumar De explains. "The Raganuga Bhakti ..... consists of an emotional sublimation of intimate human sentiments towards krishna, in terms of intimate devotional sentiments displayed by different personal relationships ..... between the deity and his dear ones (parikara) in the eternal sport at Vraja. It is thus an

ecstasy of vicarious enjoyment in the sense that the devotee does not seek to establish a direct personal contact of his own with the deity, but prepares himself for it by imitating and realizing within himself the different aspects of the beatific sports in terms of one or other of the blissful devotional sentiments; and through years of constant practice he ultimately identifies himself with such sentiments".[59]

Raganuga bhakti was widely prevalent among the devotees of the Nabadwip circle but their approach was different. The difference followed from the concept of Chaitanya's identity with Krishna. With the presence of Krishna among them, the devotees stood in actual relation with the Ultimate Reality. In recollection of Krishna's lila (devine sport)in Vraja, Nityananda was considered to be Balarama (sakhya),[60] Gadadhara Pandita (occasionally Gadadharadasa as well) was considered to be Radha[61] (madhura), the Goura-nagaravadis looked upon themselves as nagari, i.e., the Gopis, the milk-maid girls of Vraja who are beloved of Krishna (madhura)[62] and several devotees, such as, Gouridasa, Ramai, Krishnadasa and Parameśvaradasa, adopted the attitude of the Gopalas (cow-herd boys) who accompany Krishna (sakhya and dasya).[63] They adopted the bhava (attitude) of the parikaras of Krishna for defining their personal relation with the deity in terms of natural, deep and inseparable absorption in him. Chaitanya's lila in Nabadwip is in fact nothing but the same lila which Krishna performed in Brindaban.

The idea of direct personal relationship with the Ultimate Reality persisted in the Gauramandala even after Chaitanya's departure to Puri. Gradually the idea was elaborated. The associates of Chaitanya and even their disciples came to be considered as the incarnations of the ganas (dear associates) of Krishna. A complete scheme of the reincarnation of the ganas of Krishna in the Nabadwip lila has been systematized in the elaborate hagiological text Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika composed by Kavi Karnapura in 1575.[64]

Vaidhi-bhakti is an important component of the Gosvami system. They emphasized vaidhi-bhakti for the benefit of those who remain at the primary stage of religious life. The large compendium called Haribhakti-vilasa lays down the rules of formal religious practices in the rites and rituals of vaidhi-bhakti and of virtuous conduct of the Vaishnava householder. In dealing with these subjects the Haribhakti-vilasa accepts the efficacy of caste system, recognizes the superiority and prerogatives of the Brahman in religious and social matters.[65] The text deprecates the Sudra, forbids acceptance of gift from a Sudra and even suggests that one should expiate if he comes across the sight of a Chandala.[66] The Haribhakti-vilasa considers that diksha i.e., spiritual initiation is absolutely necessary for beginning a spiritual career. The text lays down certain rules in this regard. A Brahman guru is always desirable and should be sought after by people belonging to all varnas. A Brahman guru is entitled to impart diksha to lower varnas. The Haribhakti-vilasa permits a Sudra to act as guru. But it strictly enjoins that under no circumstance can a man of higher varna be initiated by a

guru belonging to a lower varna. However a Sudra guru can only initiate men of his own caste.[67] Thus the Haribhakti-vilasa negates the senses of freedom and faternity propagated by the Bhakti movement and upheld by Chaitanya and his associates in Bengal.

Apparently the Gosvamis had moved away from the ideology and the methods which were developed in the early stage of the Bhakti movement in Bengal and were continued in the preaching in the Gauramandala. The Gosvamis didnot assimilate to the system built up by them the symbols and idioms of self-confidence and self-assertion generated by the growth of the regional Bengali culture. It is believed that the system built up by the Gosvamis was based on the teachings which Chaitanya imparted to Sanatana and Rupa. Chaitanya-charitamrita by Krishnadasa Kaviraja is the only source where one has an account of Chaitanya's teachings to these illustrious brothers.[68] Krishnadasa lived in Brindaban and was closely acquainted with the Gosvamis.[69] He received first hand information on this subject from the Gosvamis themselves. But Krishnadasa's account appears to be heavily influenced by his intimate knowledge of the texts composed by the Gosvamis.[70] It is therefore difficult to ascertain the exact context of Chaitanya's own teachings. But there are certain indications by which a broad idea can be formed in this regard. Radha-bhava was the dominant attitude of Chaitanya in the Puri stage of his life, when the Gosvamis came in touch with him.[71] Basically Radha-bhava is devotion in the raganuga way. As a matter of fact Chaitanya's devotional attitude had been permeated with raganuga in relation to madhura-rasa (devotion as the erotic sentiment), i.e., the divine love play between Krishna and the Gopis

(particularly Radha) from the Nabadwip days. In view of the above facts it may not be unreasonable to suggest that the worship of Krishna as the Parama-tattva (Ultimate Reality) was the central focus of Chaitanya's teachings to Sanatana and Rupa and that he had instructed them to concentrate on raganuga-bhakti modelled after the attachment of the Gopis who stand in madhura relation to Krishna.

The teachings of Chaitanya might have induced the Gosvamis to focus on Krishna worship and to emphasize the devotional sentiment of the Gopis as the model and the source of the raganuga way. But the Gosvamis' situation in Brindaban as well may have influenced the ideas and methods propounded by them. The Bhakti movement of Bengal and the influence of Chaitanya were essentially regional phenomena. The symbols and idioms of the regional Bhakti movement could have no appeal in the other cultural regions of India. In the context of the religious and cultural environment of north India and the broader dimensions with which the existing Vaishnava sects rooted in the Ganga valley operated, the Gosvamis might have found it necessary to outgrow the characteristics of the regional Bengali culture. This may have induced the Gosvamis to endow the system of theology, metaphysics and devotional sentiments contemptated by them with a wider appeal so that the system might cut across the boundaries of regional cultural identity. It is only in this way that the Gosvamis could present their system as a viable alternative to the existing systems of the Bhakti cult. A broad-based system could be built up only with Krishna as the central focus on the supreme deity of the faith. Chaitanya could not fulfil their requirements.

The theological implications of Krishna as the Ultimate Reality was established long before the Gosvamis began their work. The ganas or parikaras of Krishna are the embodiments of his svarupa sakti (the power which he passesses by virtue of his ultimate nature). As jiva human beings are the manifestations of his tatastha sakti (the power through which all beings are created, accidental power). The sadhaka (meditator) being a jiva can not aspire to attain the position of parikaras of Krsna. Apparently the Gosvamis had accepted this established theological position. As such the raganuga bhakti as interpreted by the Gosvamis has a much lesser spiritual significance from the point of view of the common devotees than the manner in which it was understood by the devotees of Gauramandala. The devotees of the Nabadwipa circle had taken Chaitanya's identity with Krishna as established by personal experience (anubhava). They were inspired by a tremendous self-confidence owing to their intimate relation with Krishna appearing in the form of Chaitanya. From the standpoint of the Nabadwip devotees raganuga consisted in reenactment of the roles which they had played earlier in the Brindaban-lila.

V Interaction Between the Tradition of Bhakti Movement in Bengal and the Gosvami System : Emergence of Syncretic Faith

After the death of Sanatana and Rupa which occurred between 1556 and 1558[72], Jiva Goswamis came to be recognized as the greatest authority of the Gosvami system. Sometime between 1566 and the early years of the 1570s Jiva entrusted three promising Bengali students, namely, Srinivasa Acharya, Narottamadasa and Syamananda Pala, with

the mission of propagating the Gosvami system in Bengal.[73] Srinivasa, Narottama and Syamananda had come to Brindaban for studying the Vaishnava sastras and to receive spiritual training under the guidance of the stalwarts of Brindaban. During their sojourn in Brindaban all of them had come to be thoroughly conversant with the Gosvamis' creed and developed close intellectual and spiritual acquaintance with the leading personalities of Brindaban including Jiva.[74]

Srinivasa, Narottama and Syamananda brought to Bengal the creed systematized by the Gosvamis of Brindaban. But the tenets, doctrines and dogmas and the method of worship of the new system apparently varied strongly with the trends that characterized the tradition of the Bhakti movement in Bengali. As indicated above, the Bhakti movement in Bengal had split into various groups after the demise of Chaitanya in 1533. But the followers of the Bhakti movement strongly adhered to Gaura-paramyavada. The tradition of unconventional congregational worship and the ideas of freedom, fellowship and fraternity were firmly entrenched in them. It is in this context that Srinivasa, Narottamadasa and Syamananda Pala arrived in Bengal with the task of propagating the creed developed in Brindaban.

Among the three missionaries sent by Jiva, Syamananda Pala concentrated on the border areas between Bengal, Bihar and Orisa.[75] Srinivas preached in Mallabhum in southwest Bengal and in a few other places and taught bhakti-sastra. He also visited a few centres of the Bhakti movement and met the leading Vaishnavas for

the purpose of interaction and mutual understanding.[76] But the actual task of reorganizing the Vaishnava movement between the Gosvamis' system and the tradition of the Bhakti movement was taken up by Narottamadasa.

Narottama settled down in the village of Kheturi (Rajshahi district, Bangladesh). Then he set himself to the task of combining the different Vaisnava groups into a co-ordinated course of action. Narottama toured extensively in Bengal and went to Puri in order to visit the important centres of the Bhakti movement and meet the leaders of the different groups.[77] After the tour, Narottama organized a mahotsava (literally great festival) for celebrating the installation of six sets of images at Kheturi. It is not clearly known when the festival occurred. But it appears to have taken place sometime between 1576 and 1582.[78] On Narottama's invitation most of the leading Vaishnavas (Mahantas) representing the various shades of opinion including the adherents of the Gosvami system and the Sahajiyas attended the festival along with their disciples. The Mahantas included Jahnava Devi, Nityananda's widow and the leader of his followers; Achyutananda, son of Advaita; Raghunandan, the leader of the Gaura-nagararadi group; Sri Caitanyadasa who represented the Rasaraja group; Hridaya-chaitanya of Kalna, Jadunandana, disciple of Gadadharadasa; and the adherents of the Gosvami system represented by Srinivasa Acharya, Syamananda, Rasikamurari, and Ramachandra Kaviraja.[79] Thus Vaishnavas belonging to different groups assembled on occasion of the Kheturi mahotsava. It marked the earliest occasion for organizing the adherents of the Gosvami system and the different groups of the Gaura-paramyavadis including

the highly esoteric Sahajiyas. This effort was made under the aeges of the systematized and canonical system propounded in the voluminous texts composed by the Gosvamis of Brindaban and reinforced by the spiritual authority of the Vaishnava luminaries of Brindaban.

In the presence of this vast congregation of the various groups of the Vaishnavas and with the approval of the assembled Mahantas Narottama installed six sets of images, five of which represented the divine couple Krishna and Radha in their different aspects. The rest, i.e., the sixth one was Gauranga-Vishnupriya representing Chaitanya and his wife.[80] All the images were consecrated according to the rules laid down by the Gosvami texts.[81]

The installation of the Gauranga-Vishnupriya image along with the images of Radha-Krishna according to the rituals prescribed by the Gosvamis indicate a most interesting aspect of the attitude and efforts of Narottama. The devotees belonging to the Nabadwip circle who formed the core of the Bhakti movement in Gauramandala came under the influence of Chaitanya at the pre-samnyasa stage of his life and were devoted to the handsome youngman that he was. Apparently it is due to this reason that the early Bengali padas on Caitanya composed by the poets of the Gauramandala refer to his beautiful young appearance and to the names of Gauranga, Gora or Gaurakisora which are associated with it.[82] The images of Chaitanya which were conceived by the Gauramandala devotees represent Gaura dressed as a respectable and charming youngman. The Gosvamis, who had seen Chaitanya in his samnyasa life only, invariably refer to his yativesa (asetic's appearance)

while adoring the Master in their texts. Naturally the Gosvami texts do not recognize the existence of Vishnupriya. By installing Gauranga-Vishnupriya image in Kheturi Narottama demonstrated the acceptance by the adherents of the Gosvami system of Gaura-paramyavada, in other words Chaitanya's selfhood as Krishna who is the Parama-tattva according to the view of the Gosvamis. The appearance of Vishnupriya by the side of Chaitanya reinforces the identification. Vishnupriya is conceived as the consort of Chaitanya in the same way as Radha is the hladini-sakti (energy of bliss) of Krishna. Pairing of Vishnupriya with Chaitanya may have been a concession to the Sahajiyas as well. The Sahajiyas had already began to focus on the sakti, i.e., the Female Principle in Chaitanya.

Two types of kirtana songs are prevalent among the Vaishnavas of Bengal. These are nama-samkirtana and lila or rasa-kirtana. Vaishnava kirtana might have originated in the earlier tradition of the Buddhist Sahajiya and Nathapanthi charya songs as well as in the panchali or vijaya songs narrating the exploits of different gods and goddesses.[83] A preliminary form of kirtana might have been prevalent in Bengal before the advent of Chaitanya. But Chaitanya appears to have evolved a distinctive and perhaps an improved form of nama-samkirtarna, i.e., reciting and chanting the name of God and gave it a special significance as the principal means of worship with tremendous spiritual potentialities.[84] Lila-kirtana, is a long narrative song dealing with the exploits (lila) of God. A narrative is composed of lyrics written by the Vaishnava poets on a particular episode

arranged sequentially and woven into a systematic course of development explicating certain ideas. Narottama is credited to have organized the structure of lila-kirtana in accordance with the defination and interpretation of the different rasas (devotional sentiments) given by the Gosvamis. Indeed lila-kirtana had become a most powerful medium of spreading the ideas of the Gosvamis among the common people.

In the Kheturi mahotsava Narottama introduced the lila-kirtana designed by him. Rupa Gosvami has classified kirtana into three types, namely, nama-kirtana guna-kirtana and lila-kirtana all of which are songs on Krishna or about him.[85] But in the Kheturi festival Narottama began the proceedings with the preface of Gaura-candrika, i.e., songs in adoration of Gaurachandra.[86] The Goura-candrika songs consisted of padas pertaining to Gaura-paramyarada composed by the poets of Gouramandala. The practice of prefacing Krishna-lila by Gaura-candrika represent the idea of identifying Chaitanya with Krishna but with a particular emphasis on Krishna worship. Narottama appears to have projected the same idea by installing a Gauranga-Vishnupriya image along with five Radha-Krishna images. Apparently Narottama sought to reconcile the Gosvami system with the tradition prevalent in Bengal. He accepted Chaitanya as being equal to Krishna, but with an indication that Krishna is more equal and hence is the main object of worship. This is inevitable because Narottama did not intend to deviate from the Gosvamis whose theological and metaphysical speculations and devotional sentiments had been built up entirely on the basic doctrine of Krishna being the Parama-tattva.

The festival of Kheturi offered the Vaishnavas of Bengal the opportunity to know closely the Gosvami system with modifications as envisaged by its adjustments to the tradition of Bhakti movement of Bengal with particular reference to Gaura-paramyavada. The modified system provided the Vaishnavas of Bengal with what they lacked hitherto, namely, a systematic formulation of their faith in the body of concrete sastriya discourse. The Kheturi congregation might have been conceived as a common platform for the different groups of the Bhakti movement to meet each other for interaction and mutual understanding under the influence of the Gosvami system..

Apart from Goura-paramyavada Narottama had adapted to the Gosvami system certain other major features of the Bhakti movement of Bengal which expanded the popular base of his mission. As indicated above, Chaitanya had emphasized the immense potential of samkirtana as the means of acquiring prema (devotion ripened into love for God), the highest state of spiritual experience. But the Gosvamis considered it to be merely religious practice with limited significance. Notwithstanding the views of the Gosvamis Narottama affirmed the immense spiritual potentialities of nama-kirtana. According to Narottama one can transcend all worldly limitations by means of nama-kirtana. Following Chaitanya, Narottama firmly declared that even the lowliest is entitled to perform nama-kirtana on his own right. It can be performed at any time and at any place without any spiritual guidance or ritual.[87] This may be construed as negation of the injunctions of the Haribhakti-vilasa which prescribes vaidhi-bhakti for the common laity and considered spiritual initiation by guru indispensable.

The Haribhakti-vilasa has upheld the validity of caste hierarchy in religious matters. But in pursuance of the tradition of the Bhakti movement in Bengal Narottama disregarded caste restrictions in his preaching mission. In the Kheturi festival, the Chandalas, one of the lowliest castes of Bengal, were received with great consideration.[88] Narottama was a Kayastha, a Sudra caste of Bengal. In spite of the specific injunction of the Haribhakti-vilasa prohibiting a lower caste guru from imparting

initiation to an upper caste person Narottama had initiated several Brahman disciples.[89] Syamananda, who was born in a lower Sudra caste, had also initiated higher caste devotees including Brahmans.[90] Considerable commotion was generated by Narottama initiating Brahmans. In the context of the tension a conference was held at Kheturi in which many Brahman scholars were present. In this conference, which endorsed Narottama's right to initiate Brahmans, Srinivasa and Birachandra, the son of Nityananda, who succeeded Jahnava as the head of the followers of Nityananda, anounced that a person who had attained devotion to Krishna, was greater than a Brahman.[91] This position closely resembles the views of Chaitanya.[92]

Another important aspect of the efforts of Narottama and his colleagues is their enthusiastic promotion of manjari sadhana, a highly esoteric mode of mediation. Manjari sadhana follows from the elaboration of the raganuga mediation as conceived by the Gosvamis. Krishna unites with Radha, who is the transfiguration of his own hladini sakti (energy of bliss) as a matter of natural process. In their lila (divine sport) the divine couple is assisted and protected by a group of young girls, the sakhis. They originate in Krishna being the embodiments of his svarupa sakti (the power he possess by virtue of his ultimate nature). Due to this reason the sakhis have in them the motive force of raga (spontaneous, deep and inseparable absorption in Krishna) and are nitya-siddha, (emancipated by virtue of their existence). Thus the sakhis stand in intimate relation to Krishna.According to the complete scheme of Gauriya Vaishnava hagiology Radha and Krishna are attended by another group of young maids called manjari. Like the sakhis, the manjaris are manifestations of Krishna's svarupa sakti. As such the manjaris'devotion to Krishna is ragatmika (essentially flowing from raga) and they are nitya-siddha. But the manjaris rank below the sakhis and are subservient to them. In this capacity the manjaris serve Radha and Krishna in their lila and enjoy the right to remain with Krishna. But they are not Krishna's parama-presta (most dear ones) to which position the sakhis belong.

Raganuga bhakti has two aspects, namely, bahya (overt) and antara (internal). The antara aspect which involves emotional sublimation of human sentiments, is considered to be more efficacious. In practising antara raganuga bhakti the meditator adopts in his mind a sakhi or a manjari as the ideal of his siddha deha (emancipated being) and endeavours to imitate her characteristics in respect of appearance, attitude and function by means of mental exercise so that he can prepare himself for serving Krishna. However, it is better to take resort to a manjari rather than a sakhi. Jiva (phenomenal being) is the manifestation of the tatastha sakti (accidental power) of Krishna and hence is actually incapable of adopting the bhava (attitude) of those who are dear to Krishna. In view of the limitations of jiva the position of manjari is more conducive for his sadhana. The meditator may even seek to serve the manjari.[93]

All these ideas follow from the Gosvamis' interpretation of raganuga bhakti according to which man can not attain ragatmika bhakti but can prepare himself for access to the land of eternal love by following the devotional sentiments of the parikaras of Krishna. However, in their canonical texts the Gosvamis do not refer to manjari sadhana as a mode of raganuga meditation. Yet there are reasons to believe that manjari sadhana originated with the Gosvamis, particularly Rupa and Raghunathadasa. In their devotional compositions, namely, stavamala by Rupa and stavavali by Raghunathadasa they have indicated passionate desire to serve Krishna and Radha in various manners. The services they intend to perform include menial services for the divine couple even during their union. These do not fit with the position of the sakhi whose duty is to advise Radha and Krishna on the means by which they could meet each other and to protect them from troubles and hazards. As the later sources indicate, menial services are performed by the manjaris only.[94] The Gosvamis may also have practised manjari sadhana. In fact, Kavi Karnapura and Narottamadasa explicitly state that the Gosvamis had acquired success in manjari sadhana.[95]

The concept of manjari sadhana was developed into a complete system of mediation by Narottamadasa, Srinivasa Acharya and their close associates and disciples, such as, Ramachandra Kaviraja. They defined the hierarchy between the sakhis and the manjaris with respect to their position vis-a-vis Radha and Krishna and distinguished between the types of services that the sakhis and the manjaris are supposed to perform. The manjaris serve Radha and Krishna in different manners. Their functions include preparing bed for the divine couple, massaging their feet and fanning them when they are engaged in love-making and to make arrangements for their comfort after union. The sakhis' functions are also related to the love of Krishna and Radha. But as indicated by their position of parama-presta, the sakhis do not remain on the spot when Krishna and Radha enjoy themselves. The inferior position to which the manjaris are entitled require them to attend upon the divine couple even during their union.[96]

The manaris hold the position of menial in the service of Radha and Krishna. But spiritually the position of the manjaris has deep significance. They remain in close relationship with the union of the two aspects in the nature of the Absolute Reality, namely, the enjoyer (the male par excellence) and his female principle, the enjoyed and observe the source of the supreme love which the union creates but never desires to be enjoyed. Through intense emotional identification with the attitude of the manjari the meditator tries to transcend purusha-bhimana, the pride as a male, or more broadly human instincts. Thus manjari sadhana is a systematic exercise for transforming a highly erotic symbolism into an acute spiritual process towards an understanding of the nature of the Absolute Reality.

Soon after it was introduced in Bengal manjari sadhana became widely prevalent among the different sections of the Vaisnavas in Bengal. Numerous padas datable to the seventeenth century testify to its popularity. It offered a complete system of meditation in the raganuga way related to madhura rasa which seems to have been the dominant devotional sentiment in Bengal. Manjari sadhana was also compatible with the raganuga way of the dasya rasa, (devotional sentiment of servitude). Indeed manjari sadhana

combined with madhura a strong sense of dasya. But the more important thing about manjari sadhana is that it proved to be instrumental in integrating the Sahajiyas to the main trend of Bengal's Vaishnava movement which was organized by Narottama and his colleagues.

Apparently the ideology of the Sahajiyas was totally incompatible with the ideology of manjari sadhana. According to the raganuga doctrine as interpreted by the Gosvamis, phenomenal beings can not even attain position of the divine associates of Krishna; their sadhana consists in following the devotion of Krishna's associates. On the contrary, the Sahajiyas conceive every man and woman to be intrinsically divine in nature because they represent the male and the female principles of the Absolute Reality. By means of sexo-yogic sadhana every man and woman can discern their pure nature as divine self. The union of the divine male and female generates supreme bliss which is the highest state of spiritual experience because it is in this state that one can realize the ultimate nature of the Absolute Reality. As Sasibhushan Dasgupta has pointed out, the Sahajiyas had undergone a process of change both ideologically and methodologically under the influence of Vaishnavism. The transformation was possible because the Buddhist Sahajiyas had modified the original Mahayana doctrine of Ultimate Reality into a positive state of Vacity and perfect enlightenment which is Sahaja.[97] The Vaishnava concept of the Ultimate Reality is also a "positive state, though of a supra-mental nature, of eternal flow of devine love".[98] The Vaisnavas concived the Ultimate Reality as supreme love which is manifest in the relation between its two aspects, namely, the enjoyer (Krishna) and the enjoyed (Radha). Drawing upon the Vaishnava ideas the Sahajiyas interpreted the final positive state arising out of the union of the male and female principles called Rasa and Rati in the Sahajiya parlance, as the state of supreme love. Transformation of ideology led to change of methodology. There was in the Sahajiya Buddhist cult a tendency towards psychological development rather than emphasis on psycho-physiological yogic practices which constitute a major characteristic of the esoteric sects. The Buddhist Sahajiyas practised yogic control of sex

emotions in order to raise the mind to a state at which man transcends all temporal relations and attains supreme bliss in absolute Sahaja. Under the influence of Vaisnavism the Sahajiyas concentrated more on psychological development towards transcendental spiritual experience.[99]

Manjari sadhana offered the Sahajiyas further opportunities for realizing supreme love through psychological exercise. Pure love arises only when man and woman can realize their true divine self by removing the worldly principles of nescience and grossness through continual and stringent mental discipline. Originally the Sahajiyas believed that physical union of man and woman is a potential means of attaining Sahaja. But the aim of the Vaishnava Sahajiyas, at least theoretically, is to eliminate even at the initial stage, both from the body and the mind all animal instincts so as to be fit for practising true love. In the Sahajiya Vaishnava writings "This strictness has ... been frequently emphasised by the condition that a man must do completely away with his nature as a man and transform his nature to that of a woman before he takes the vow of love".[100] In this respect the Sahajiyas conform the Gosvami concept that jiva (phenomenal being) being the manifestation of the tatastha sakti (accidental power) of Krishna is, after all, prakrti (female) and Krishna is the only male and hence the sole object of love. It is precisely at this point that the Sahajiyas come closest to manjari sadhana despite their doctrinal divergences with the Gosvami system. This is suggested because manjari sadhana is also a systematic exercise through intense mental discipline to stimulate in man the attitude of prakriti and to shake off pursa-bhimana (the pride as being male) as an essential condition for identifying himself with the devotional sentiments of the manjaris.

The Sahajiyas, at least a large section of them, had accepted the ideology of manjari sadhana. The Sahajiya Vaishnava mode of worship has been systematized by Mukundadasa in the Siddhanta-chandrodaya. Mukunda was the disciple of Krishnadasa Kaviraja, the author of the Sri Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita,[101] who according to Narottama and the Radha-Krishna

yogapitha diagram, had achieved success in manjari sadhana.[102] Several Vaishnava padas (lyrics) partaining to Sahajiya doctrine have been quoted in the Siddhanta-chandrodaya by way of illustration and explanation. Some of these padas indicate the transformation of the Sahajiya mode of meditation in terms of manjari sadhana.[103] A more clear evidence of the adoption of manjari sadhana by the Sahajiyas may be found in some of the padas by Chhota Vidyapati contained in the Sahajiya Vaishnava text called Rasasara. Chhota Vidyapati unambiguously says that the meditator should try to place himself in the environment of Brindaban and follow the Gopis; an attempt to realize sahaja in his own person will inevitably take him to the worst of hells.[104] In another pada the poet says that Krishna is the only male, he contains in him the essence of man. The worldly male should conceive himself as prakriti (female) and seek the grace of Krishna.[105]

Baghnapara was an important centre of Sahajiya Rasaraja sadhana led by the descendants of Bansibadana. But the Gosvamis of Baghnapara practised manjari sadhana by adopting Anangamanjari as the siddha deha. Even the later Sahajiya sects, such as the Sahebdhani, which emerged in the eighteenth century outside the sphere of the Gauriya Vaishnava system, adopted the raganuga way and the symbolism of manjari sadhana as a means to transcend animal instincts.[106]

VI Epilogue

Narottama and his colleagues reconciled the Gosvami system with the tradition of the Bhakti movement in Bengal, particularly Gouraparamyavada, which was one of the most important symbols of the regional Bengali culture and identity. The reconciliation was the crucial factor in the third and the final phase of the Bhakti movement in Bengal. It provided the different groups of the Bhakti movement with a theoretical and canonical base of the ideology of bhakti. On the other hand, it linked them with the main stream of Puranic Brahmanism and Vaishnavism and their pan-Indian dimensions. Besides the syncretic approach of Narottama and his colleagues offered the Sahajiyas the opportunity to integrate themselves with the main trend of the Bhakti movement. The Sahajiya sects as noted

above, had a very large following among the common people, particularly in the lower strata of the society. Integration of the Sahajiyas consolidated the broad social base of the Bhakti movement. The syncretic approach of Narottama and his colleagues essentially based on the Gosvami system provided the Vaishnavas in Bengal with a standard version of the faith and practices which was acceptable to all. The Vaishnavas belonging to the different groups did not merge to constitute a central organisation in the form of a church or a central authority as in the case of the Sri or the Ramanandi or the Vallabhachari sampradaya, for instance. But the common acceptance by the different Vaisnava groups of the modified version of the Gosvami system created a sense of community among the Vaishnavas of Bengal who came to be known as Gauriya sampradaya after the name by which the followers of Chaitanya were distinguished from the other Vaishnava sects in the context of the Ganga valley and Orisa. Nishtha (firm faith and deep attachment) to the canons and rituals of the faith as propounded by the Gosvami system gave rise to the naishthika category which represented the standard form of Vaishnavism in Bengal. Within this flourished the rasika (seekers of Krishna as Rasa) Vaishnavas, mostly Sahajiya. They retained some of their original esoteric practices but at the same time functioned as the channel through which the influence of Gauriya Vaishnavism spread on such esoteric sects as the Baul, Kartabhaja and Sahebdhani.

The syncretic approach of the final phase of the Bhakti movement sought to rehabilitate Chaitanya as the supreme deity of the faith. But the effort was confined mostly to juxtapose both Krishna and Chaitanya as the Paramatattva without trying to explain the Chaitanya phenomenon in terms of a canonical system. In the absence of a canonical interpretation of the Gaura-paramyvada the doctrine remained as an adjunct to the central focus of Krishna. There was no attempt to systematize Chaitanya worship in terms of theology and philosophy. As such, Chaitanya's position as the source of supreme love continued to be ambiguous and more a matter of personal faith and experience than the central feature in a system of belief. Even Narottamadasa, who was a passionate devotee of Chaitanya tended to accept the Gosvami's view on Chaitanya (upaya rather than upeya) in his

theological and doctrinal writings. In his Nama-cintamani Narottama firmly declares that Krishna is the only object of worship, the Absolute Reality and there is nothing which is comparable to him.[107] In the Ragamala Narottama actually refers to Chaitanya as a manjari.[108]

Jiva died in 1592. After his death, the intellectual and spiritual leadership of Brindaban rapidly declined. During the seventeenth century there developed in Bengal several centres of Vaisnava learning and literature, such as, Bisnupur, Sri Khanda, Jajigram , Baghnapara, Santipur, Budhui, Bharampur and Gopiballabhpur which emerged as the sources of authoritative interpretation of Gauriya Vaishnavism. Apparently in the final phase of the development of the Bhakti movement the focus had shifted back to Bengal. But scholarly and lterary pursuits in these centres were mostly confined to interpretation and translation into Bengali of the Gosvami texts. Even the critics of the Gosvamis like Visvanatha Chakravarti did not try to develop an alternative to the Gosvami system. The doctrine of Gaura-paramyavada continued. Padas extolling the divinity of Chaitanya were composed in the eighteenth century or even later. But even before the middle of the seventeenth century Gaura-paramyavada ceased to be a major source of inspiration. Gauriya Vaishnavism in Bengal came to be charactarized by Krishna worship and confined to the framework of the Gosvami system. In this context Chaitanya came to be regarded as an avatara (incarnation) of Krishna who was born in Nabadwip with the specific purpose of propagating bhakti. As such Chaitanya is an object of adoration in the path of devotion to Krishna who only is the Supreme Being. From the early decades of the seventeenth century till the end of the nineteenth century a large number of Vaishnava temples were built in Bengal. Built in the regional Bengali style these temples represent the continuity of a symbol of regional Bengali cultural identity in a stagnant architectural form.[109] The major bulk of these temples are dedicated to the worship of Krishna or Vishnu. Only a few of these temples were built for the worship of Chaitanya.

REFERENCES

1. For discussion on the emergence of regional Bengali culture, see Niharranjan Ray, Bangalir Itihas : Adi parva (in Bengali), (Calcutta, 1949), p.723-56, 792-98, 829-66.

2. Dineschandra Sen, Bangabhasa O Sahitya (in Bengali), 4th edition, (Calcutta, 1920), p.121-22, 158-60; Sukumar Sen, Bangla Sahiteyer Itihas, (in Bengali), Vol.I, Part 1, 3rd edn. (Calcutta 1959), 137-38, 175-76.

3. Hitesranjan Sanyal, "Temple-Building in Bengal from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century : A study in Social Response to Technological Innovation", in Barun De (ed.), Perspectives in Social Sciences, (Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1977), p.120-68.

4. These salient features of the ideology and methodology of the Bhakti movement are indicated by the biographies of Chaitanya and a number of padas (lyrics) on Chaitanya composed by contemporary poets. Specific passages in the biographies and the relevant padas have been referred to below (see infra notes 55, 56, 57). For longer narratives relating to this subject, see Chaitanya-bhagavat (in Bengali) by Brindabanadasa (henceforth CB), Upendranath Mukhopadhyay (ed.), reprint of the 4th Basumati Sahitya Mandir edn., (Calcutta, n.d.), II. 1,2,4,5,10,12,14,17,18,19; III, 5; Chaitanya-mangala (in Bengali) by Lochanadasa, Bhagabandas Kavya - Vyakarna - tirtha (ed.), (Nabadwip, Bengali Era (henceforth BE) 1388 = A.D. 1981), II, 1,2,3,5,6,8,9,10. Chaitanya-mangala (in Bengali) by Jayananda, Bimanbehari Majumdar and Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay (ed.), Asiatic Society edn., (Calcutta, 1971), III.4,22.

5. CB, I.8. p.57-58, II. 23. p.225; Chaitanya-mangala by Jayananda, II. 30. 4-16.

6. CB, II. 6. p.131, II. 10. p.156, III. 3. p.286. III. 5. p.303.

7. CB, III. 5,6,7; Chaitanya-mangala by Jayananda, IX, 158-163.

8. For detailed introduction to the esoteric sects, see Shashibushan Dasgupta, Obscure Religious Cults, 3rd edn., reprint, (Calcutta,1976), p.3-34, 51-109; 191-205; Ray, op.cit., p.635-98.

9. Narahari's Sahajiya inclination is clear from the padas composed by him. In his padas Narahari frequently uses the Sahajiya concepts of rasa, rasika, svarupa, sahaja-svarupa, aropa and the Buddhist Sahajiya concepts of sukha and vajra. These padas are included in the Krishna-padamrita-sindhu, p.134-35 and Manindramohan Basu (compiled and annotated), Sahajiya Sahitya (in Bengali), (Calcutta, 1932), p.61-2, 65, 74, 90. Two specimens of Narahari's Sahajiya padas are given below : (1) Sukhera sagare/Syamera piriti/Jojite paraha jabe/Jagatera sukh/Ekatra karile/Eta sukh pabe tabe/Dharama karama/Barai bishama/

Anek jatane haya/Sahaja piriti/Karaha jubati/Paibe Gokula Raya (Krishna-padamrta-sindhu, p.135). (2) Sahjera katha suna lo sai/ Sahaj piriti bhajan kai/Nijadeha diye bhajite pare/Sahaj manusha kahiba tare (Basu, op.cit., p.74). These padas envisage the doctrine of Gaura-nagara and the complimentary doctrine of Nadiya-nagari propounded by Narahari. Narahari's disciple Locanadasa was held by the Sahajiyas as an authoritative poet of their sect. A pada composed by Lochana has been quoted in the famous Sahajiya text Vivarata-vilasa (in Bengali) for illustrating the significance of Sahajiya worship with reference to rupa and rasa. (Vivarta-vilasa by Akinchanadasa, Bidyaratna Jantra edn. (Calcutta, B.E. 1311 = A.D. 1904-5), III. p.48.)

10. Bansibadana propagated the Sahajiya Rasaraja sadhana which he inherited from his father Chhakari Chatta (see Sukumar Sen, Bangla Sahiteyer Itihas, (in Bengali), Vol.I, part 2, 3rd edn., (Calcutta, 1975), p.65, 400-1. For details of the Rasaraja doctrine, see infra note 26.

11. Vivarta-vilasa, I. p.2. See also Bimanbehari Majumdar, Chaitanya-chariter Upadan (in Bengali), 2nd edn., (Calcutta, 1959), p.536. For Svarupa's Sahajiya connections, see S. Sen, (1975), op.cit. p.43.

12. Chaitanya-chandrodaya-natakam (in Sanskrit) by Kavi Karnapura, Jibananda Vidyasagara (ed.), Sarswati Jantra edn. (Calcutta, 1885), VII.2.

13. Sri Sri Krishna-chaitanya-charitamritam (in Sanskrit) by Murari Gupta (usually known as Murari Gupta's Karcha, henceforth Karcha), 3rd Nalini Press edn., (Calcutta, 445 Gouravda = A.D. 1931-32), II. 2. 8-10, II. 4.4, II. 5. 14, II. 9. 18-23, II. 12. 12-17; CB, II. 6. p.129-30, II. 9. p.146-47; Chaitanya-charitamrita, (in Sanskrit) by Kavi Karnapura (usually referred to as Mahakavya, henceforth Mahakavya) Radharaman Jantra edn., (Baharampur,), VI. 26, VII. 32-35; pada by Govinda Ghosh in Goura - pada - tarangini, Jagadbandhu Bhadra (compiled), Mrinalkanti Ghosh (ed.), 2nd Bangiya Sahitya Parisat edn., (Calcutta, B.E. 1341 = A.D. 1934-35), p.150.

14. Karcha, II, 10. 16-20; CB, III. 10. p.331-7.

15. Karcha, I. 12.-19.

16. Chaitanya-chandamrita (in Sanskrit) by Prabodhananda Sarasvati, Anandimohan Gosvami (ed.), Gauriya Vaishnava Sammilani edn., (Calcutta, B.E. 1360 = A.D. 1953-54), sloka, 58.

17. Chaitanya-chandrodaya, I. 7. 28; Mahakavya, I.8. 17.

18. In the opening section of mangala-charana and lilasutra-varnana of the Chaitanya-bhagavat Brindabanadasa explicitly calls Chaitanya Mahesvara (Supreme Being), Narayana (Visnu) and Bhagavan (God). This sets the tone of the entire text which explicates Chaitanya's identity with the Absolute Reality. Similarly in the opening verse of Chaitanya-mangala (in Bengali) Lochanadasa describes Chaitanya as being purna-batirnah (full incarnation of the God) and describes the life of the Master in this light.

19. Susil Kumar De, The Early History of the Vaishnva Faith and Movement in Bengal, 2nd edn., (Calcutta, 1961), p.124, 230-31.

20. Gaura - ganoddesa - dipika (in Sanskrit) by Kavi Karnapura, 5th Radharaman Jantra edn. (Baharampur, Mursidabad, B.E. 1929 = A.D. 1912-13), sloka 10-11.

21. See, for example, Sri Sri Pada - kalpataru (henceforth PK), Satis Chandra Ray (ed.), (Calcutta, B.E. 1304 = 1897-98), padas by Narahari Sarkar (pada nos. 307, 316, 408, 421, 1746, 1902, 2259), Sibananda Sena (nos. 2127, 2355), Paramananda Sena (no.2120). Also padas by Basu Ghosh in Basu Ghosher Padavali (in Bengali), Malabika Chaki (ed.), Bangiya Sahitya Parisat edn., (Calcutta, B.E. 1368 = 1961), pada nos. 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 27, 28, 35, 38, 44, 56, 63.

22. The doctrine was propagated in the Bengali and Sanskrit works by the associates and followers of Chaitanya but it was formulated in the Sanskrit works of Murari Gupta, Prabodhananda Sarasvati and Paramananda Sena, who is more well-known as Kavi Karnapura. These works have been referred to above. See also Majumdar, op. cit., 112, 175-79; De, op. cit., 229.

23. Karcha, IV. 14. 12-4; Narottama - vilasa (in Bengali) by Narahari Chakravarti, Kamalasan Jantra edn., (Calcutta, B.E. 1262 = A.D. 1855-56), III. p.45, 51, V. p. 76, 80. Sixteenth century and seventeenth century Chaitanya images are still found in Kulia, Guptipara, Kalna, Nabadwip, Katwa and Srikhanda.

24. Majumdar, op. cit., p.112, 435.

25. Sukumar Sen, (1975), op. cit., p.401.

26. See supra note 10. Bansi - siksha was composed in 1716-17. Divided into four ullasas (chapters) the text gives a detailed discourse on the Rasaraja doctrine and Bansibandan's position as the enjoyed through ullasa I, II and III and the half of the fourth. See Premadasa, Bansi-siksha, Nemaichand Goswami (ed.), Swastik Mudranalay edn., (Calcutta, n.d.).

27. For Gaura - nagara and Nadiya - nagari doctrines, see De, op. cit., 65-6; introduction to Chaitanya-mangala by Lochanadasa op. cit., p. IV-V.

28. Chaitanya-chandramrita, sloka 132.

29. See, for example, in PK padas by Narahari Sarkar (no.103), Gobinda Ghosh (no.1597); padas in Basu Ghoser Padavali, no.34, 70, 74, 75, 76, 78-106; pada by Jadunandan Chakravarti in Bhakti - ratnakara (in Bengali, henceforth BR) by Narahari Chakravarti, Nandalal Vidyasagar (ed.), Gaudiya Mission edn. (Calcutta, 1960), XII. 2819-2823, 2851-2857. Lochanadasa composed the Chaitanya - mangala with the specific intention of vindicating the nagara - bhava doctrine.

30. C B, III. 5. p.303-14, III. 6.314-17; Chaitanya - mangala by Jayananda, III.7.

31. Chaitanya - charitamrita (in Bengali) by Krsnadasa Kaviraja, Nityananda Goswami (ed.), 3rd Sulabh Library edn., (Calcutta, Caitanyavda 441 = A.D. 1927), II. 23. p.261.

32. For biographical details of the six Brindaban Gosvamis, see Nareschandra Jana, Brindabaner Chhay Gosvami (in Bengali), (Calcutta, 1970).

33. For comprehensive introduction to the works of the Gosvamis, see De, op. cit., chapter IV, V, VI.

34. C B, II. 13. p.169, II. 24. p.230.

35. C B, II. 3. p. 119, III. 7. p.317-18, III.8. p.323, 325.

36. C B, II. 24. p. 228, 230-31.

37. Brindabanadasa, who was an ardent follower of Nityananda, has condemed Gaura - nagaravada (CB. I. 10. p.78). Narahari was one of the closest associates of Chaitanya. But Brindabanadas does not refer to Narahari and Murari and Karnapura practically ignores his role. Possibly this is due to their aversion to the Gaura - nagara doctrine.

38. The split in the Bhakti movement and the consequent flux is indicated by the Chaitanya-chandramrita (sloka 38). For details, see Niradbehari Nath, Narottamadasa O Tanhar Rachanavali (in Bengali), (Calcutta, 1975), Alocana, p.123-131.

39. There were fifty-eight poets among the associates of Chaitanya all of whom have composed Bengali padas or Sanskrit stotras on the Master. More prominent among these poets are Narahari Sarkar, Basu Ghosh, Ramananda Basu, Sivananda Sena and Prabodhananda Sarasvati. Several biographical works both in Sanskrit and Bengali were produced by the associates of Caitanya or their disciples. They include the following. Sanskrit : (a) Sri Krishna-chaitanya-caritamrtam by Murari Gupta, (b) Chaitanya-charitamrita (Mahakavya) by Kavi Karnapura, (c) Chaitanya-chandrodaya-natakam by Kavi Karnapura. Bengali : (a) Chaitanya-bhagavat by Brindabanadasa, (b) Gauranga-vijaya by Churamanidasa, (c) Chaitanya-mangala by Lochanadasa, (d) Chaitanya-mangala by Jayananda

40. Paramananda Sena, Kavi Karnapura is a junior contemporary of Chaitanya and the son of Sivananda Sena. Karnapur was a man of considerable literary and scholarly talents and a versatile author. He has written extensively on the life and teachings of Chaitanya and on the faith of the Bhakti movement. These include the mahakavya and the nataka referred to above, Alamkara-koustubha (on devotional sentiments), Goura-ganoddesa-dipika (hagiology), Ananda-Vrndavana-champu (interpretation of Krishnalila) and a commentary on the Srimad-bhagavat. Karnapura sought to systematize the faith within a theoretical framework. The only other attempt towards theoretical discourse is the Sri-Krishna-bhajanamrita a theological text by Narahari Sarkar. Karnapura's works do not appear to have received suffient organisational support from the adherents of the Bhakti movement and were completely overshadowed by the works of the Brindaban Gosvamis which provided the canons of the Bengal Vaishnavism.

41. For the ancestry of Sanatana and Rupa, see the family history given by Jiva Gosvami at the end of his Laghu-Vaishnava-toshini. According to the Bhakti-ratnakara Sanatana and Rupa had set up a colony of Bhatta (Karnat) Brahmans near Ramkeli in the vicinity of the city of Gaur where they lived while serving under the Sultan. Their social and religious interactions were confined to these Brahman families (BR, I. 592-595).

42. See in P K padas by Murari Gupta (no.749), Narahari Sarkar (nos.103, 307, 316, 408, 421, 853, 1746, 1902) padas by Basu Ghoshin Basu Ghosher Padavali nos. 42, 45, 46, 57; Chaitanya-mangala by Locanadasa, II. 13. 637-39, Appendix, pada no. 8, 9.

43. Karcha, II. 4.4, 5.14, III. 2.9, 19-23, CB, II. 3. p.115, II. 6. p. 129-30, II. 9. p.146-47, II. 19. p.198, II. 20. p.204; pada by Basu Ghosh in PK, no. 936, 1368; pada by Govinda Ghosh in Gaurapada-tarangini, p. 160; padas by Basu Ghosh in Basu Ghoser Padavali, nos. 16-18, 23, 24, 27, 28, 35, 38, 44, 56, 63.

44. See supra notes 42 and 15, 16, 17, 18, 21.

45. CB, II. 6. p.131, II. 10. p. 156, III. 4. p. 286, III. 5. p.303.

46. Jana, op. cit., p.150.

47. Karcha, III. 15. 14-16.

48. Karcha, IV. . 15-17.

49. CC, III. 6. p. 325-35.

50. See in PK padas by Narahari Sarkar (nos. 799, 820, 832, 840, 1643); padas by Basu Ghosh in Basu Ghoser Padavali, no. 127, 143. For elaborate description of Chaitanya's Radha-bhava in Puri, see CC, III. 14, 15, 18, 19.

51. Chaitanya-chandramrita, sloka 13, 109; pada by Narahari Sarkar in PK, no.2259; padas by Basu Chos. in Basu Ghoser Padavali, no.1, 13; CC. I. 8. p.137. Raghunathadasa Gosvami also believed in this theory (see De, op. cit., 425).

52. As indicated above, Chaitanya demonstrated Radha-bhava before he became a sanyasi. But according to Krishnadasa Kaviraja Radha-bhava in the Master sharply accentuated after his long discourse with Ray Ramananda who convinced Chaitanya of his identity with Radha (CC, I.8).

53. For a short introduction to the Vaishnava sects, see D.C. Sircar, "Vaishnavism" in R.C. Majumdar (ed.), The History and Culture of the Indian People : The Struggle for Empire, 2nd edn., (Bombay, 1966), p.435-442; R.C. Majumdar, "Religion" in R.C. Majumdar (ed.), The History and Culture of the Indian People : The Delhi Sultanate, 2nd edn., (Bombay, 1967), p.557-572.

54. De, op. cit., p. 421-447.

55. CB, II. 1. p. 95, II. 12. p. 165, II. 18. p. 189, 191-94, III. V. p. 304-5, 307; Chaitanya-mangala by Lochanadasa, II. 434-441, 448-463; padas by Jadunandana Chakravarti, BR., XII, 3054-3062, 3077-3082; pada by Ramananda Basu BR, XII, 3426-3429.

56. Chaitanya-chandrodaya, I. 30.

57. Chaitanya-mangala by Jayananda, III. 22. 2-6.

58. De, op. cit., p. 174-77, 369-77.

59. Ibid, p. 178.

60. CB. I. 1. p. 1-5, I. 12. p. 92. II. 13. p. 227; pada by Basu Ghosh in Basu Ghoser Padavali, no. 54; Chaitanya-mangla by Lochanadasa, II. 4. 205-212.

61. See in PK pada by Narahari Sarkar (no. 2122), pada by Paramananda Gupta (no. 2120); pada by Jadunandana Chakravarti in BR. XII. 2803-2807, 3054-3062.

62. Vide supra note 29.

63. CB. II. 5. p. 125, II. 10. p. 16, II. 17. p. 188, III. 5. p.303, III. 6. p. 316; padas by Basu Ghosh in Basu Ghoser Padavali no. 45,63.

64. Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika, sloka 30. f.f.

65. This is the general socio-religious attitude of the text. For specific references, see summary of the text in De, op. cit., p. 411-520.

66. Haribhakti-vilasa by Gopala Bhatta, Puridas Mahasay (ed.), Sacinath Ray Caturdharin edn., (Aloya, Mymensingh, 1946), XI. 746, 762-65.

67. Haribhakti-vilasa, I. 47-52.

68. CC, II. 19. p. 221-26, II. 20. p. 229-262.

69. CC, I. 1. p. 2.

70. De, op. cit., 93-4, 100, 427; B. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 382-84.

71. Chaitanya occasionally demonstrated Radha-bhava in Nabadwip (see supra note 42). This indicates his inclination to the raganuga way in terms of madhura rasa from the early stage of his religious career.

72. Jana, op. cit., p. 64-5, 88-9.

73. Prema-vilasa (in Bengali) by Nityanandasa, 2nd Radharaman Jantra edn. (Baharampur, Mursidabad, B.E. 1318 = A.D. 1911-12), XII. p.143-60; NV, III. p. 40-1. For date, see Nath op. cit. p. 16; Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay, Chaitanyadeva (in Bengali), (Calcutta, 1984), p.90.

74. Prema-vilasa, XII, p.134-43; NV, II, p. 38-9.

75. NV, III, p. 41; Sri Sri Syamananda Prakasa (in Bengali), by Krishna-charanadasa Gopala-Govindananda Deva-Gosvami (ed.), Syamanandi Gadi edn., (Gopiballabhpur, Medinipur, B.E. 1384 = A.D. 1957-8), IV. 145-49, V, VI, VII, VIII, XI, XII, XV, XVI.

76. BR, VII. 204-226, 259-293, VIII.506-637, IX. 260-387, 495-575, X, 89-187, 292-329; NV, IX. p. 188.

77. NV, III. p. 49-55, IV. p. 59-73, V. p. 74-83.

78. Nath, op. cit., p. 15-16.

79. NV. VI. p. 97, 100, 104, 105, 106, 109, 135, 136, 178.

80. NV. VII. p. 115.

81. NV. VII. p. 114-15.

82. For example, see pada no. 67 to 77 in Basu Ghosher Padavali.

83. Swami Prajnanananda, Padavali Kirtaner Itihas, Vol. I, (Calcutta, 1970), p. 34-5, 119.

84. This has been clearly explicated by Jayananda in his Chaitanya-mangala, III. 22. 2-6. See also CC I. 1. p. 5, I. 3. p. 13, I. 7. p. 38-41.

85. B. Majumdar, op. cit., 564.

86. NV. VII, p. 118-21; Prema-vilasa specifically says that in the Kheturi festival songs on Chaitanya were followed by songs on Krishna (XIX. p. 318).

87. Nama-chintamani by Narottamadasa in Nath, op. cit., p. 527-28, 531.

88. NV, VIII. p. 137.

89. NV, VI. p. 90, IX. p. 189-90, X. 193-4, 197-204, 213-14.

90. For Syamananda's caste, see BR,I. 351-54. Syamananda's principal disciple Rasikananda was Brahman.

91. Nath, op. cit., p. 144.

92. CC, II. 8. p. 131.

93. Nath, op. cit., 94-5; Prema-vilasa, VI. p. 65-6.

94. Nath, op. cit., p. 95-117.

95. Gaura-ganaddesa-dipika, sloka 180-207; Nath, op. cit., p. 95.

96. Ibid, p. 102-17; Ragamala by Narottamadasa in ibid, p. 633-43.

97. Dasgupta, op. cit., p. 113-134.

98. Ibid, p. 121.

99. Ibid, p. 120-22.

100. Ibid, p. 140.

101. Sukumar Sen, "SriKhander Sampraday O Chandidas" (in Bengali), in Bichitra Sahitya, (Calcutta, 1956), p. 129.

102. Nath, op. cit., p. 110-111; Ragamala by Narottamadasa in ibid, p.639.

103. See, for example, the pada by Ray-Sekhara in the Siddanta-chandrodaya (p. 157-58) as quoted in Sukumar Sen, (1956), op. cit., p.122.

104. Jemati nritya (nitya)/Sahaja sunian/Samanya dehete jage/Na jane maram/Kare acharan/Kebal rourabe maje/..... . Brajabhavalaian/ Gopianugata sar/Nijadehe jeba/Ghatay sahaj/Acharite kare as/Bhane Vidyapati/Koti janma tar/Rourabete habe bas. Quoted in Sukumar Sen, "Srikhander Sampraday O Chandidas " in Vaishnaviya Nibandha, (Calcutta, 1970), p. 217-18.

105. Ibid, p. 218.

106. Sudhir Chakravarti, "Maner Manuser Gabhir Nirjan Pathe" (in Bengali), Ekshan, Saradiya, B.E. 1391 = A.D. 1984, p. 19; Sudhir Chakravarti Sahebdhani Sampradaya O Tader Gan (in Bengali), (Calcutta, 1985), p. 95.

107. Nama-chintamani, in Nath, op. cit., p. 527.

108. Ragamala, ibid, p. 639.

109. Sanyal, op. cit., p. 148-55.

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