

Ritual, Recollection, and Relish: Multidimensionality in the Religious Literature of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism

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1 Introduction: Texts and Religion

The close relationship between religions and their texts, written and oral,¹ is already a well known phenomenon. It is perhaps so well known that we take it for granted nowadays. I began to wonder about the complexities of that relationship between text and religious tradition as the result of working closely with a text from the Caitanya tradition, a form of the worship of Viṣṇu, that was "reinvented" and "reinvigorated" in the 16th century by the saint/reformer Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya (1486-1533 C.E.) of Bengal. The religious tradition that he inspired drew on previously existing texts and in turn produced a rich array of its own. The previously existing texts that are fundamental to the Caitanya movement are the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (7th cent. C.E.), the *Gīta-govinda* (13th cent. C.E.), and numerous vernacular texts like the Bengali songs of Caṇḍīdāsa (14th cent. C.E.) and the Maithili songs of Vidyāpati (15th cent.). The texts that the tradition created were numerous and of many varieties, ranging from commentaries on and imitations of those older works to the invention of new songs, poetry and

¹In traditional India, all texts were essentially oral. All texts were meant to be memorized and recited. Such is also the case with the text under discussion here.

dramas. The text I have been working on is thought to be one of the earliest, perhaps *the* earliest, of the texts produced by the Caitanya tradition. It is the primordial, seed-like nature of the text that interests me.

The text is the *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava*, "Hymn of the Divine Sports of Kṛṣṇa," written in Sanskrit sometime around 1517 or 1518 C.E. by one of Caitanya's learned followers, Sanātana Gosvāmin. It is the first work Sanātana wrote after his "conversion" to Caitanya's form of Vaiṣṇavism and his arrival in 1517 in Vraja where he had been sent by Śrī Caitanya.² It not only was the first text produced by the Caitanya tradition³ and by Sanātana as a follower of Caitanya, it was also a transitional text for Sanātana, bridging the gap between his former life as the chief minister of the ruler of Bengal, the Nawab Husein Shah (ruler from 1493 to 1519 C.E.), and his new life as an eleemosynary in the wild and at that time quite dangerous forests of the Vraja region. Perhaps this accounts to some degree for the multi-dimensional nature of the text. Nothing existed before it that was specifically Caitanyite, so there were no strong pre-existing models to follow, except for the *Bhāgavata*, and Sanātana also had certain personal needs, religious, philosophical, and emotional, in adjusting to his new life and strange new environment. This setting might seem to set this text off from other more commonly encountered religious texts in India, in which biographical connections are either fiercely veiled or thoroughly obliterated; but texts, religious texts in particular, always arise out of some such deep need. Given the difficulty of writing and "publishing" such texts in the past, those needs must first become overwhelming before such a challenging task is undertaken. Thus, Sanātana's text is not so very different from other religious texts and its multidimensionality is also not so unusual.

In addition to their multidimensional nature, religious texts are also regularly found to "incarnate" themselves in the religious traditions to which they belong. That is to say, religious texts tend to become "lived" texts, texts that are brought to life in the lives of their readers and receivers. Followers attempt, with greater and lesser success, to become living, breathing, embodiments of the texts of their traditions. In a recent essay in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, the well-known scholar of religion, Gavin Flood, had this to say about this fascinating char-

²I say conversion in quotations marks because it seems that Sanātana and his family were already fundamentally Vaiṣṇava in their beliefs and practices.

³The next in line was probably the *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta* by Murāri Gupta, the earliest hagiography of Caitanya, part of which was composed in 1520.

acteristic:

The text pervades religious practices, and the appropriation and internalization of the text is fundamental to religions. Indeed, we might say that within scriptural traditions, religion can be understood as a form of reading or mode of textual reception (Davies and Flood forthcoming). This mode of reception is distinctive of a genre of textual material, and we might claim that religions are forms of human belief and practice that occur when people in communities inhabit their texts in a particular way. Fundamental to the forms of life we call religions is a text that is set aside by a community as having special status in coming from a transcendent source and in providing a blueprint for how people should live their lives (it provides prohibitions, injunctions, and stories to live by). The sacred text has a "voice" from the past that is complex in its formation — perhaps being the totality of authorial voices that have composed it — and enlivened by the present communities who set the text aside, breathe life into it through their reading or reception, and enact it. [While the voices of many sacred texts are now silent for the communities are no more, the voices of the texts in the major traditions are still resonant in those communities of transmission, and these voices make demands upon their readers, demands of repetition and liturgical performance. They also make demands upon the wider world and claims to a voice within contemporary political discourse.]⁴

This understanding of religion as a "form of reading or mode of textual reception" highlights the intimate connection between a religious tradition or community and its texts. One might further claim that religious cultivation or practice is a form of progressive "textualization" and that those who are thought to have achieved success in religious cultivation, the accomplished ones (*siddhas*) or saints, are the ones most completely "textualized." Whatever their lived realities were, however, those thought to be saints are represented in their hagiographies as embodiments of their religious tradition's sacred texts, speaking, seeing, walking, and in general acting in ways that are in complete accord with those texts. They thus also achieve immortality by becoming themselves embodied in their own texts which become part of the living tradition. This manner of reading or

⁴Flood, "Reflections on Tradition and Inquiry in the Study of Religions," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 74, no. 1 (March 2006), p. 53.

receiving religious texts coupled with their multidimensionality make up the deep skeletal structures of religious traditions.

2 Multidimensionality of Religious Texts

What strikes one most powerfully about Sanātana's text is how many levels it seems to operate on. It was composed to be part of a ritualistic humbling of its original author-reciter and thus it operated on a ritual level. The text is punctuated by the ritual action of prostration that communicates a meaning to its reader-reciter above and beyond the meanings of the words and sentences out of which it is composed. It was also meant to spark in the mind a process of recollection or remembering directed at the divine sport or deeds of the tradition's main deity, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd boy of Vraja. This focus on recollection or remembering will become a major element in the practices of Caitanya tradition in the succeeding generations. In addition, the text is meant to invoke a certain powerful emotional experience or response in the reader-performer, a response that gradually evolves and intensifies as the reader's sense of intimacy or connection with the values of the tradition becomes stronger (*sahṛdayatva*). This experience is called *bhakti-rasa* or sacred rapture. Since it is the most striking religious experience in its tradition's corale of this-worldly experiences it became a central feature of the later Caitanya tradition and one of the major purposes of literary, musical and artistic creativity. These levels of the text I call its "dimensions" and they appear to be related to each other such that a variation in one produces alterations in the others. There are others besides these, but these are the ones I consider the most important.⁵

Anyone who has much experience of any of the major world religious traditions will recognize the various dimensions pointed out above as features common to many of the texts of those traditions. Rituals of reenactment are generally accompanied by the recitation of the appropriate scriptural texts and passages and are often punctuated by rituals of humbling such as kneeling or bowing or the striking of oneself. The Catholic mass re-enacts the last supper of Jesus and symbolically, through the offering of bread and wine, his death and resurrection. This is the central narrative of divinity in that tradition and its reenactment in ritual makes it

⁵The didactic or theological level, for instance, and the solicitous level. Both are also found in Sanātana's text.

present once again before the eyes and minds of the participants, causing them to remember the salvific event and their relationship to it. So, too, those who remember the event and understand their intimate connection to it will experience powerful emotional responses much like the *bhakti-rasa* of the Caitanya tradition. Again there is a relationship between these different dimensions of the religious texts such that changes in one affects the others. Many have noted the similarities between ritual and language, each with its own grammars and each capable of communicating powerful meanings through signs and symbols. The Caitanyite text of Sanātana gives a particularly clear example of how the meanings of ritual and text reinforce each other.

3 The Author

Sanātana was born in a village called Vākalā Candradvīpa in what is now Bangla Desh. He came from a highly respected family of Karṇātaka *brāhmaṇas* who moved from Karnatak through various intermediary places in Orissa to Bengal in the 14th and 15th centuries. His earliest ancestor was named Sarvajña and belonged to the Bhāradvāja lineage (*gotra*).⁶ That ancestor has not been identified yet with any known figure in the history of Karnatak. As a boy Sanātana had a dream in which he saw a *brāhmaṇa* who gave him a copy of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The next day he met the *brāhmaṇa* he had seen in his dream and indeed was given a copy of the *Purāṇa*. From that time forth he became an ardent student of the holy book and a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, the deity described therein.

Sanātana was well educated, studying with some of the leading scholars of his time: Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma (Neo-logician and Vedāntin), Viṣṇudāsa Bhaṭṭācārya (Vāsudeva's brother), Vidyābhūṣaṇa (?), Paramānanda Bhaṭṭācārya (possibly the author of a major commentary on the *Kāvya-prakāśa*, *The Light on Poetry*), Rāmabhadra (?), and Vāṇīvilāsa (?). His education also included studying Arabic and Persian which became useful to him in his later career as a minister of the king of Gauḍa's government. Though none of the major texts mention it, as a high caste *brāhmaṇa* who followed brāhmanical codes of conduct he was probably married and had children. As an adult, he was employed as a chief minister/personal secre-

⁶Citation from Jīva Gosvāmin.

tary of the Nawab Husein Shah who was then the ruler of Bengal, with his capitol in the ancient city of Gauḍa, an occupation that probably caused Sanātana and his brothers to lose their caste standing.

The following story is told about how Sanātana and his brother Rūpa came to be ministers in the government of Husein Shah:

At the order of the Shah a royal architect named Piru Shah built a him beautiful palace by the side of his moted fort. When everything was complete except for the roof, Husein Shah came to see the work and in astonishment said: "Piru, this palace is beautifully constructed. It is way beyond my expectations." Piru replied that he could build palaces even more beautiful than that one. Hearing this the Shah became furious and ordered his body guard to throw Piru off the highest point of the palace. The fall killed him. Another day the Shah came back to the palace and, climbing on top, saw that the roof had not been completed. Thinking its completion extremely vital he told a soldier who was standing near him named Hiṅgā: "Quickly go to Moragrāma Mādhāipura." Before he could tell him why he was sending him there the Shah's religious teacher (*mūrshīd*) arrived and called to him and the Shah and the *mūrshīd* became involved in discussion. Meanwhile, Hiṅgā took off for Mādhāipura without knowing the purpose for going there.

In the course of their discussion, the Shah asked the *murshid*: "Hajrat! Tell me how long you think I will be King of Bengal." In response, the teacher who was the saint Fakir Sāhanyāmatullā Āli, said: "Dear Husein. As long as Sanātana and Rūpa remain as your ministers, you will remain in power. Later, after they meet with Caitanyadeva, lose interest in the worldly affairs, and go somewhere else, the kingship will decline. They will make you prosper and in time they will be the cause of your downfall." The Shah, hearing the words of the *murshid*, was curious to know who Rūpa and Sanātana were. He then remembered that he had sent Hiṅgā to Mādhāipura without telling him why.

Meanwhile, Hiṅgā had gone to Mādhāipura and was wandering around here and there. Sanātana was sitting in his house discussing scripture with Rūpa when he noticed that there was a government employee wandering here and there in the street. At Sanātana's request Rūpa learned the reason he was wandering about there and then again at Sanātana's request Rūpa asked him, "Where was the

King of Gauḍa when he instructed you to come here?" The soldier replied "After viewing the upper part of the palace he came down and ordered me to come here." Rūpa asked: "Is there still some work to be done on the palace?" The soldier replied that everything is done except for the roof. Then Rūpa said: "I understand. You should take from here some builders." The king seeing Hiṅgā return with builders thought there certainly must be some secret to his doing this. After inquiring he learned that the soldier had acted on the advice of two brothers from Mādhāipura. The king was amazed at the two brothers' ability of apperception and began to think intently on what the murshid had said about Rūpa and Sanātana. Later, after the king sent a constable named Keśava Chatri to bring the two brothers back in a palanquin and he met them, he was extremely impressed with them and chose Sanātana to be his minister and Rūpa his vice-minister. He gave them the titles Dabir Khas and Sākar Mallik. They established a home near Gauḍa and called it Sākar Mallikpura. Over time it became known as Sākaramā. Sanātana's house was called the Boḍo Bāḍī (Big House) and the pond he had dug was called Sanātana-sāgara (Sanātana's Sea). Rūpa's house was called Girddhābāḍī and his pond was called Rūpa-sāgara (Rūpa's Sea).⁷

This story has the quality of a folktale based on the well-known master builder motif and thus may not have any historical basis. Whatever the truth, it seems that the Shah, who had been in the employ of some of the previous kings of Bengal, sought to avoid the mistakes of his predecessors by employing in his government a higher percentage of more reliable and less aggressive Hindus than the African eunuchs and Muslim immigrants like himself who had precipitated the toppling of several of the previous regimes.

Sometime between 1510 and 1515 C.E. Sanātana wrote several letters to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who was then living in the temple town of Purī in the neighboring kingdom of Orissa, asking the saint to "save" him and his brothers. When Caitanya stopped at the town of Rāmakeli in 1515 on his way to visit the pilgrimage site of Vṛndāvana in North India, Sanātana and his two younger brothers, Rūpa and Vallabha, secretly met with him, and were deeply impressed with Caitanya. They soon made plans to leave their posts and their homes to follow the saint. Sanātana was imprisoned by the Nawab for not appearing, on plea of illness, in court to perform his

⁷Haridāsa Dāsa, ed., *Śrī-śrī-kṛṣṇa-līlā-stavaḥ*, "Avataraṇikā," i-iii.

official duties, but he managed to bribe his guard and gain his freedom. He traveled incognito to the Hindu holy town of Vārāṇasī where he met and stayed with Caitanya, who was on his way back from Vṛndāvana, for two months, receiving encouragement and guidance from him. Caitanya then sent him on to Vṛndāvana to write books and “rediscover” the sacred places in which Kṛṣṇa performed his divine deeds. Except for a one year stay in Purī, where he regularly associated with Caitanya, Sanātana spent the rest of his life in Vṛndāvana, writing, reading the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, identifying the sacred sites of Kṛṣṇa’s deeds there, and establishing a temple of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Caitanya encouraged Sanātana and his brother Rūpa, who were the central pillars of the Vṛndāvana circle of his followers and who were learned and cultured men before they met him, to create a body of writings in Sanskrit. Those writings were to become the textual foundation of the Caitanya tradition’s rich theological and devotional literature. The text discussed here was probably the first of that flood of writings. As such it can be regarded as an early exploration of some of the directions later more fully developed in the body of the writings produced by that extraordinary fellowship. The Vṛndāvana circle included Sanātana’s younger brother Rūpa, an excellent poet and a connoisseur of *rasa*, his nephew Jīva, an outstanding theologian and philosopher, a South Indian convert by the name of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, who helped develop the ritual dimensions of the tradition, a Bengali Vaiśya named Raghunātha Dāsa, who wrote emotionally charged hymns and poetry about Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya, and, finally, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, who didn’t leave any writings, but who was said to have been an excellent reciter and expounder of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. It appears that not one but two of Sanātana’s works were among the first written in Sanskrit by the followers of Caitanya.

4 The Text

Apart from a commentary on Kālidāsa’s *Megha-dūta*, which may or may not be his, Sanātana wrote five works according to his nephew Jīva Gosvāmin:⁸ the *Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava* (Hymn of the Divine Sports of Kṛṣṇa), the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (Pleasures of Devotion to Hari), which is a work on ritual, the

⁸In concluding portion of Jīva’s *Laghu-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, an abridgment of Sanātana’s *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*.

Bṛhad-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī (the Great Pleaser of the Devotees of Viṣṇu),⁹ which is an detailed commentary on the Tenth Book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and his masterpiece, the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (The Great Ambrosia of Devotion to the Lord),¹⁰ a narrative work written on the model of a Purāṇa in which he illustrates the core teachings of the scriptures on *bhakti*. Sanātana also wrote commentaries on the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* and on the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*.

The *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is a large work in two parts that are almost like two separate works. The first of those parts, called "Determination of the Mercy of the Lord" (*Bhagavat-kṛpā-nirdhāra*), appears to have been written while Caitanya was still alive, because in the third stanza Sanātana uses the Sanskrit pronoun *eṣaḥ* (this one) to describe Caitanya. In his own commentary on that stanza he also says that the word *eṣaḥ* was used to indicate that the author personally met Śrī Caitanya and that he was still alive at the time of the writing of that work. This means that it was written sometime before 1533 C.E. There is no reason to believe that both parts of the the work were written at the same time, however, as there seems to be very little real connection between them. The second part, called "Sketch of the Greatness of Goloka" (*Goloka-māhātmya-nirūpaṇa*), may have been written after Śrī Caitanya's death. The *Bṛhad-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* is dated by Sanātana's nephew, Jīva to 1554 C.E. in the final portion of his *Laghu-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*.¹¹ This would make it Sanātana's last work, as he is thought to have died shortly thereafter, perhaps in 1555. Apart from these works, there are a few stray verses and short hymns that appear to be the work of Sanātana. A couple of Sanātana's verses are found in Rūpa's collection of Vaiṣṇava verses called the *Padyāvalī* (233-234) identified as those of "Prabhupāda,"

अथाग्रजकृतेष्वग्यं श्रीलभागवतामृतम्
हरिभक्तिविलासश्च तट्टीका दिक्प्रदर्शनी ।
लीलास्तवष्टिप्पनी च सेयं वैष्णवतोषणी

या संक्षिप्ता मया क्षुद्रजीवेनापि तदाज्ञया ॥ "Now, among those written previously by my predecessor (Sanātana) are the *Bhāgavatāmṛta*, the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, its commentary, the *Dik-pradarśinī*, the *Līlāstava* and this one, the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, which is abridged by me, a tiny living being (*kṣudra-jīva*) by his request."

⁹The adjective 'great' in the title is to distinguish this work from the shorter work of his nephew.

¹⁰'Great' is again used to distinguish it from another shorter work by his younger brother, Rūpa, called the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (The Brief Ambrosia of Devotion to the Lord).

¹¹Jānā, pp. 78-9.

the term of respect that Rūpa usually reserved for his elder brother. Another verse is given in Rūpa's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.3.35) also as that of "Prabhupāda." There are, in addition, twelve Sanskrit poems identified as the works of Sanātana Gosvāmin in Rādhāmohana Ṭākura's collection of Vaiṣṇava songs, the *Śrīpadāmṛtasamudra*, which was compiled in the second half of the 18th century (3-5, 147, 167, 187, 640-42, 652-3, and 664).

Sanātana Gosvāmin's *Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava* is by far the shortest of his works. It consists of 432 stanzas, mostly of the type called *śloka* or *anuṣṭubh*. The *śloka* has thirty-two syllables divided into four equal quarters of eight syllables each and is relatively easy to compose. The rules for where long and short syllables can be placed in the *śloka* are fairly brief. The rules for the *śloka* require that the fifth syllable of each quarter be short, the sixth long, and the seventh alternately long and short. This is the most common form of stanza in Sanskrit prosody. There are less than a dozen stanzas in the work in longer meters and those usually occur at particularly poignant junctures in the text, such as when the most important forms of Kṛṣṇa are described, for instance (as in 28 and 30-32, which describe the Man-lion descent (Nṛsiṃha), the Rāma descent and Kṛṣṇa's descent in his own form). The *Stava* then with 432 stanzas is shorter than the *Bhagavad-gītā* which has nearly 700 stanzas. Sanātana's major verse composition, the *Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, is about six times as long as the *Stava*. His other works were commentaries and thus were written in prose. The *Stava*'s relative brevity makes it easier to memorize and also easier to recite on a daily basis.

Sanātana's *Stava* is a rather unusual text. It is essentially a series of names for Kṛṣṇa based on Kṛṣṇa's birth and early deeds as narrated in the first forty-five chapters of the Tenth Book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Almost every name is in the vocative case, though occasionally the dative and rarely the accusative cases are used. The vocative case, of course, is the form a word takes in Sanskrit when it is used as a call or to address someone. Thus, most of the names of Kṛṣṇa out of which Sanātana composed his book consist of calls to Kṛṣṇa. Those portions are often joined with some form of the plea or request such as "please protect me (*pāhi mām*), please save me (*ava mām*)." The whole text, then, is in the form of a series of calls to Kṛṣṇa and requests for his protection. When he uses the dative, which indicates an indirect object or the one to whom something is given or offered, Sanātana intends us to understand that he is offering respect by means of prostration or homage to Kṛṣṇa. The accusative case has a similar

meaning when joined with certain verbs, such as \sqrt{vand} (to pay homage to) or \sqrt{stu} (to praise), etc. Sanātana’s text thus needs, and indeed has, very few verbs in it. The text is primarily a performative text, its recital or reading aloud is meant to be a ritual performance that combines glorification or (*saṁkīrtana*), calling out to, offering respect or homage to, asking for protection from, and, at the same time, recollection of the deeds of Kṛṣṇa. It thus operates on a number of levels or dimensions and superimposes a number of religious practices on top of one another. The performative nature of this text comes not only from its being recited aloud but also by its being punctuated one hundred and eight times¹² with a pause in which the reciter is expected to offer a prostration to Kṛṣṇa in some way, that is, in one of the traditional forms of prostration, ranging from a folding of hands and bowing of the head to stretching oneself out full length on the ground. The text facilitates and embodies religious practice or *sādhana* which is meant to help the members of the tradition cultivate a sense of humility before Kṛṣṇa, a feeling of dependence on and trust in him, and a strong attraction for his loving nature as disclosed in his names which describe his relationships with those who surrounded him and depended on him in Vraja.

5 Its Dimensions

From the description of Sanātana’s *Hymn* given above, one can begin to discern some of dimensions of the text. Here only three will be discussed at any length: the ritual, the recollective, and the relishable. Being deeply interdependent, these dimensions impact each other in ways that will become more evident as we proceed.

5.1 Ritual

The innate ritual dimension of Sanātana’s *Hymn* is one of its most unusual features. Other religious texts are often found to be part of ritual performances, but they are usually incorporated into ritual at later times. That is, a religious text may be composed for some other purpose besides ritual performance and then at a later time be incorporated into or modified for

¹²One hundred and eight is a sacred number in the Hindu tradition.

use in ritual. In the case of Sanātana’s text, it seems clear that it was meant to be a part of a ritual performance from the very beginning. Here is what Sanātana says about his intention at the beginning of the work:

श्रीकृष्णस्य कथासूत्रं यथाभागवतक्रमं ।
लिख्यते ऽष्टोत्तरशतप्रणामानन्दसिद्धये ॥ १ ॥

A brief summary [*sūtra*] of the story of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the sequential order of the *Bhāgavata* is here inscribed to accomplish the joy of one hundred and eight prostrations.¹³ (1)

In this first verse of the text, it almost appears as if the text’s brief description of the story of Kṛṣṇa is meant merely to provide an opportunity for the performance of one hundred and eight prostrations. It is not clear whether the original manuscripts of the work were marked one hundred and eight times at the places in which its reciters were meant to prostrate, but the printed editions of the work are. To give a sense of how this prostration business works, I give the next few verses of the work:

ब्रह्मब्रह्मन्नमामि त्वामात्मन्नन्दीश्वरेश्वर ।
नानावतारकृत् कृष्ण मधुरानन्दपूरद ॥ २ ॥ (नमः १)
जय कृष्ण परब्रह्मज्ञगत्तत्त्व जगन्मय ।
अद्वैत सच्चिदानन्द स्वप्रकाशाखिलाश्रय ॥ ३ ॥
निर्विकारापरिच्छिन्न निर्विशेष निरञ्जन ।
अव्यक्त सत्य सन्मात्र परम ज्योतिरक्षर ॥ ४ ॥ (नमः २)

¹³The modern commentator says that there are four types of prostration: salutation (*abhivādana*), eight-limbed (*aṣṭāṅga*), five-limbed (*pañcāṅga*), and joining the hands to the head. Salutation involves rising, introducing oneself by name, and touching the saluted person’s feet. The eight-limbed variety involves bowing down with one’s feet, hands, knees, chest, head, speech, eyes, and mind. The five-limbed form involves bowing down with one’s arms, knees, head, speech, and mind.

परमात्मन्वासुदेव प्रधानपुरुषेश्वर ।
सर्वज्ञानक्रियाशक्तिदात्रे तुभ्यं नमो नमः ॥ ५ ॥
हृत्पद्मकर्णिकावास गोपाल पुरुषोत्तम ।
नारायण हृषीकेश नमोऽन्तर्यामिनेऽस्तु ते ॥ ६ ॥ (नमः ३)

O Brahman of Brahman, I bow to you,
O Self, Lord of the Lord of Nandī,
Performer of numerous descents, Kṛṣṇa,
Giver of loads of sweetness and joy. (2)

[Obeisance unto you! - 1]

Victory to Kṛṣṇa, Highest Brahman,
Principle of the Universe, Substance of the Universe,
Without a Second, Existence-Consciousness-Joy,
Self-manifesting, Shelter of All. (3)

O Unchanging, Unlimited,
Without Distinction, Unblemished,
Unmanifest, Truth, By Nature Existent,
Highest, Light, Undiminishing. (4)

[Obeisance to you! - 2]

Supreme self, Son of Vasudeva,
Lord of nature and person,
Giver of all knowledge, activity, and power,
to you repeated obeisance! (5)

Dweller in the whorl of the heart-lotus,
Cowherd, Highest person,
Abode of beings, Lord of senses,
obeisance unto you, Indweller! (6)

[Obeisance to you - 3]

परमेश्वर लक्ष्मीश सच्चिदानन्दविग्रह ।
सर्वसल्लक्षणोपेत नित्यनूतनयौवन ॥ ७ ॥
सर्वाङ्गसुन्दर स्निग्धघनश्यामाब्जलोचन ।
पीताम्बर सदा स्मेरमुखपद्म नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ ८ ॥
परमाश्चर्यसौन्दर्य माधुर्यजितभूषण ।
सदा कृपास्निग्धदृष्टे जय भूषणभूषण ॥ ९ ॥
कन्दर्पकोटिलावण्य सूर्यकोटि महाद्योते ।
कोटीन्दुजगदानन्दिच्छ्रीमद्वैकुण्ठनायक ॥ १० ॥
शङ्खपद्मगदाचक्रविलसच्छ्रीचतुर्भुज ।
शेषादिपार्षदोपास्य श्रीमद्गरुडवाहन ॥ ११ ॥
स्वानुरूपपरीवार सर्वसद्गुणसेवित ।
भगवन्हृद्वचोऽतीत महामहिमपूरित ॥ १२ ॥
दीननाथैकशरणा हीनार्थाधिकसाधक ।
समस्तदुर्गतित्रातर्वाञ्छातीतफलप्रद ॥ १३ ॥ (नमः ४)

Highest lord, Lord of Lakṣmī,
Shape of being, consciousness, and joy,
Possessor of all good traits,
Ever-renewed youth, (7)

Beautiful in every limb,
Dark like shining rain clouds,
Lotus-eyed, Yellow clothed,
Ever smiling lotus-face,
obeisance to you! (8)

Most astonishing beauty,
Ornament-defeating sweetness,
Ever compassion-softened gaze,
victory to you! Ornament of ornaments. (9)

Beauty of millions of gods of love,
Effulgence of millions of suns,
World-soother like millions of moons,
Blessed ruler of Vaikuṅṭha, (10)

Four armed holding
conch, lotus, mace, and discus,
Worshipped by your companions headed by Śeṣa,
Transported by Blessed Garuḍa, (11)

Your companions so similar to you,
Endowed with all good qualities,
O Lord, beyond mind and speech,
Filled with the great majesty, (12)

Lord of the dispossessed, Sole shelter,
Provider of more than wealth to the poor,
Deliverer from all misfortunes,
Bestower of results beyond desire, (13)

[Obeisance to you! - 4]

The pauses for prostration seem to punctuate the text at important junctures: at the end of an introduction or a topic or an account of a divine deed. Their function is to instill humility in the reciter. This is particularly interesting when one reflects on the kind of transition Sanātana was going through, from from chief minister to homeless religious mendicant, at the time he wrote the work. The work appears to have been devised as a method of training himself, as a way of overcoming his arrogance as a man of power, by a programmed humbling of himself before a power he perceived as greater than any he had wielded or come into contact with before. This cultivation of humility eventually became a dominating aspiration of members of the Caitanya tradition and was something that was

no doubt rooted in traits recognized in the character of Caitanya himself. Caitanya naturally played the role of model for the members of the tradition. He was regarded as the living embodiment of the truths of scripture. What scripture and the study of scripture can only approach indirectly and theoretically, Caitanya lived and breathed in the eyes of his followers. The task of his early followers, and of Sanātana foremost among them, was to reveal Caitanya in the light of the received scriptural expressions of *bhakti*. Sanātana had mastered the scriptural understanding of *bhakti*, but only in Caitanya did he find those words capable of coming to life. The first lesson was the cultivation of humility, the dismantling of egotism and arrogance. This was addressed by the ritual dimension of his first Caitanyite work.

The role of religion in decentering the self was noticed by (David) Tracy and others long ago. The cultivation of humility falls into this category of religious operation. Sometimes the decentering takes on unusual and surprising forms. Confucianism, for instance, decenters the self through progressively broadening and expanding its scope, causing one's narrow sense of self to expand to include one's family, then one's community, then one's country, then the whole human world and finally the whole world. In Sanātana's text, we find the way in which Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas sought to decenter the self in their tradition. The cultivation of humility was meant to prepare the ground for the higher experience of divinity encountered in the other dimensions of the text by removing the main obstacle to unbroken and favorable recollection and the relish of sacred rapture (*bhakti-rasa*). Egotistic self-absorption and self-aggrandisement close one off from the possibility of recognizing and appreciating the value of the other.

5.2 Recollection

The dimension of recollection relates to the narrative presentation of the text. After the introductory passages, Sanātana begins to tell the story of Kṛṣṇa as it is given in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. It is the recounting of this story and its recollection through repetition of the text that constitutes the text's recollective dimension. Recollection or remembering in this context means calling to mind the various events in the story of Kṛṣṇa's life. The text covers Kṛṣṇa's life in Vraja upto the time he went to Mathurā and put an end to the selfish life of the cruel usurper Kaṁsa. It is essentially the story of the unburdening of the earth and the unburdening of the aspirant

of his or her selfish impulses. Within this story of salvation there are incredible moments of intimacy with Kṛṣṇa, which the tradition refers to as "sweetness." These parts of the story of Kṛṣṇa's earthly or manifest career are much more poignant and fascinating to the followers of Caitanya. One cannot help but wonder what this story must have meant to Sanātana on a more personal level. One wonders how much of a parallel he noticed between his own life and the events of the Kṛṣṇa legend. How much of Kāṃsa did he see in his former master, the Shah? How much of Kṛṣṇa did he see in Caitanya?

To illustrate this dimension of the *Stava* I cite here the portion covering the third chapter of the Tenth Skandha of the *Bhāgavata* which describes Kṛṣṇa's birth.

भाद्रकृष्णाष्टमीजात प्राजापत्यर्क्षसम्भवः ।
महीमङ्गलविस्तारिन् साधुचित्तप्रसादक ॥ ४७ ॥
महर्षिमानसोल्लास सन्तोषितसुरव्रज ।
निशीथसमयोद्भूत वसुदेवप्रियात्मज ॥ ४८ ॥
देवकीगर्भसद्रत्न बलभद्रप्रियानुज ।
गदाग्रज प्रसीदाशु सुभद्रापूर्वजाऽव माम् ॥ ४९ ॥
आश्चर्यवाल मां पाहि दिव्यरूपप्रदर्शक ।
कारागारान्धकारघ्न सुतिकागृहभूषण ॥ ५० ॥ (नमः १३)
वसुदेवस्तुतं साक्षाददृश्यात्मप्रदर्शकं ।
सत्प्रविष्टाप्रवृष्टं त्वां वन्दे कारणाकारणम् ॥ ५१ ॥
सिद्धाकर्तृत्वकर्तृत्वं जगत्क्षेमकरोदयं ।
दैत्यमुक्तिदकारुण्यं स्वजनप्रेमवर्धनं ॥ ५२ ॥
देवकीनयनानन्द जय भीतप्रसूस्तुत ।
निर्गुणाध्यात्मदीपातिलयकारककालसृक् ॥ ५३ ॥

स्वपादाश्रितमृत्युघ्न मांसदृग्दृष्ट्ययोग्य हे ।
 लोकोपहासभीताम्बावृतदिव्याङ्गसंवृते ॥ ५४ ॥ (नमः १४)
 पितृप्राग्जन्मकथक स्वदत्तवरयन्त्रित ।
 महाराधनसन्तोष त्रिजन्मात्मजतागत ॥ ५५ ॥
 महानन्दप्रसूतात लीलामानुषबालक ।
 नराकृति परब्रह्मन् प्रकृष्टाकार सुन्दर ॥ ५६ ॥
 जनकोपायनिर्देष्टर्यशोदाजातमाय हे ।
 शायितद्वाःस्थपौरादेर्मोहितागाररक्षक ॥ ५७ ॥
 स्वशक्त्युद्घाटिताशेषकवाट पितृवाहक ।
 शेषोरगफणाच्छत्र यमुनादत्त सत्पथ ॥ ५८ ॥
 ब्रजमूर्तमहाभाग्य यशोदातल्पशायित ।
 निद्रामोहितनन्दादि यशोदाऽविदितेहित ॥ ५९ ॥ (नमः
 १५)

Born on the dark-eighth of Bhādra,¹⁴
 Your appearance in constellation Rohiṇī,
 Expander of the Earth's auspiciousness,
 Gladdener of the minds of the holy. (47)

Joy of great sages' hearts,
 Satisfier of the gods,
 Born in the dead of night,
 Vasudeva's dear son, (48)

Priceless jewel of Devakī's womb,
 Dear younger brother of Balabhadra,
 Elder brother of Gada, be easily pleased!

¹⁴The lunar month falling in August-September.

Subhadrā's older brother, favor me. (49)

Wondrous infant, protect me,
Revealer of your divine form,
Destroyer of prison's darkness,
Ornament of the birth chamber. (50)

[Obeisance to you - 13]

Praised by Vasudeva,
Direct revealer of the invisible self,
Present yet not present in the world,
I adore you, cause of [all] causes! (51)

Celebrated as non-doer and doer,
Arisen to bring benefit to the world,
Compassion that gives liberation to demons,
Increaser of the love of your own folk. (52)

Joy of Devakī's eyes, Victory!
Praised by your frightened mother,
Without [material] quality, Light of the intellect,
Causer of the great dissolution,
Creator of time, (53)

Killer of death for those sheltered at your feet,
Unseeable by the sight of eyes of flesh,
Remover of your divine form
at the request of your mother
frightened by the ridicule of the people. (54)

[Obeisance to you - 14]

Describer of your parents previous birth.
Bound by the boons you give,
Satisfied by their great worship,
Becoming their son for three births, (55)

Great the joy of your mother and father,
For sport a human infant,
Supreme Brahman in human form,
O Excellent in form, Beautiful, (56)

Instructor of the way to your father,
Your *māyā* born to Yaśodā,
Putter to sleep of watchman and citizen,
Enchanter of prison guard, (57)

Limitless doors opened by your power,
Carried by your father,
Your umbrella the hood of Śeṣa,
Good path given by the Yamunā, (58)

Embodiment of the great fortune of Vraja,
Laid down on the bed of Yaśodā,
Nanda and the rest by sleep overwhelmed,
The deed unknown to Yaśodā. (59)

[Obeisance to you - 15]

Here we have the story of the birth of Kṛṣṇa told by means of names addressed to Kṛṣṇa. Some of the names are standard names of Kṛṣṇa, but most are created by Sanātana specifically for this text. A typical example is "one who is born on the eight day of the dark half of [the month of] Bhādra (August-September)" (*bhādrakṛṣṇāṣṭamījāta*). Thus is the day of Kṛṣṇa's birth indicated. In his name "joy of great sages' hearts" (*maharṣimānasollāsa*) one is informed of the great sages' anticipation of and joy at his appearance in the world. And so the story is told through the medium of a series of names addressed to Kṛṣṇa and punctuated by prostrations and requests for protection and help. Some of the names are philosophical and some embody a form, quality or deed. "Present yet not present in the world" (*satpraviṣṭāpraviṣṭa*) and "cause of [all] causes" (*kāraṇakāraṇa*) are examples of philosophical names. "Instructor of the way to your father" (*janakopāyanirdeṣṭr*) and "your *māyā* born to Yaśodā" (*yaśodājātamāya*) are names embodying deeds: the instructing of Vasudeva to carry him to the village of Nanda and switch him with the baby girl, his own illusory

power, just born to Yaśodā. The facility with which Sanskrit can be formed into complex compound words makes these names rather fluid and subject to several possible alternative interpretations. The use of causative formations also allows Sanātana to add a level of theological commentary to the straight narrative which posits the operation of Kṛṣṇa's will behind the events described.

When Sanātana calls to Kṛṣṇa with the names "destroyer of prison's darkness," "enchanter of prison guards," "opener of limitless doors by your power," and so forth, one has to wonder if he also has in mind his own prison experience at the hands of his former employer, Husein Shah. Thus his recollection of the divine deeds may be regarded also as a means for Sanātana to discover the blessings of his desired deity in his own life. The function of recollection is to refocus one's attention away from one's ordinary, mundane history as separate from the divine reality and on to the divine narrative of godly presence in, through, and beyond the world. Thus, he is also called "present yet not present in the world." This process of "remembering" or recollection is really the Caitanite form of *dhyāna* or meditation. The goal of the process is to remember constantly and never forget the divine names, qualities, forms and deeds. In the process one's own names, qualities, forms and deeds are forgotten or as with Sanātana become viewed on the backdrop of Kṛṣṇa's universal narrative. Thus in the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said:

स्मर्तव्यः सततं विष्णुर्विस्मर्तव्यो न जातुचित् ।
सर्वे विधिनिषेधाः स्युरेतयोरेव किङ्कराः ॥

Viṣṇu is to be remembered always and never forgotten. All injunctions and prohibitions are the servants of these two.

As with meditation, as one's mind becomes focused on the divine sport and one's remembering begins to flow like an unbroken stream of oil, one approaches the Caitanyite form of *samādhi*, deep concentration or trance. This trance corresponds to *bhakti-rasa* or sacred rapture.

5.3 Relish

The followers of Caitanya recognize five main forms of *bhakti-rasa*: the peaceful, the serving, the friendly, the parental, and the amorous. These

are all forms of *kr̥ṣṇa-rati* or love for Kṛṣṇa. Though all are considered equal they are thought to increase in flavor or “relish” in the order given. Thus, the least flavorful or the least relishable is the peaceful and the most flavorful is the amorous. All of the five types are found in Sanātana’s narrative, but the last three are given the most attention. This, of course, follows the tendencies of the *Bhāgavata* which is Sanātana’s blueprint. In the case of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism, the friendly and the amorous are met with more often and are prized above the others. The parental is rarely found in the Caitanya tradition, but is common in other Vaiṣṇava traditions closely related to it.¹⁵ The serving and the peaceful *rasas* are considered the domain of the more ancient forms of Vaiṣṇavism.

The two previously described dimensions of the text have prepared the reader-reciter for the experience of *bhakti-rasa* or the tasting of astonishment in the text. The prostrations have humbled the reciter and weakened the grip of the mundane ego; the practice of recollection has provided a deep familiarity with and involvement in the story. If the reciter is able to focus his or her attention on the story, the unbroken remembering mentioned before develops which is the object of an unbroken consciousness or awareness that causes the reciter’s ordinary fragmented consciousness to be emptied and swept aside. The reciter is then flooded with a powerful emotional response to Kṛṣṇa’s presence in the narrative. Outward signs of this experience, like tears, trembling, horripilation, and stuttering, then manifest in a person who has reached the stage of tasting the text. Fainting is not uncommon. These signs or symptoms are called the *sāttvika-bhāvas*. This ecstatic loss of ordinary consciousness is evoked through the text in people who have been made sensitive to the story by their prior engagement with it and the experience is regarded as clear evidence of their advancement on the path and of the validity of the path itself.

Here is a section of Sanātana’s work that evokes the parental form of sacred rapture. It follows the account of Chapter Eight of the Tenth Book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

गर्गवाक्चातुरीहृष्टनन्दनीतरहःस्तलं ।

प्रशस्तनामकरणं गर्गसूचितवैभवम् ॥ ८५ ॥

साधुरक्षाकरं दुष्टमारकं भक्तवत्सलं ।

¹⁵The tradition of Vallabha, for instance.

महानारायणं वन्दे नन्दानन्दविवर्द्धनं ॥ ८६ ॥ (नमः २२)
जय रिङ्गुलीलाद्य जानुचंक्रमणोत्सुक ।
घृष्टजानुकरद्वन्द्व मौग्ध्यलीलामनोहर ॥ ८७ ॥
किङ्किनीनादसंहृष्ट व्रजकर्दमविभ्रम ।
व्यालम्बिचूलिकारत्नग्रीवाव्याघ्रनखोज्ज्वल ॥ ८८ ॥
पङ्कानुलेपरुचिर मांसलोरुकटीतट ।
स्वमुखप्रतिबिम्बार्थिन् प्रतिबिम्बानुकारक ॥ ८९ ॥
अव्यक्तवल्गुवागवृत्ते स्मितलक्ष्यरदोद्गम ।
धात्रीकरसमालम्बिन् प्रस्खलच्चित्रचंक्रम ॥ ९० ॥ (नमः २३)
जयाङ्गनागणप्रेक्ष्यबाल्यलीलानुकारक ।
आविष्कृताल्पसामर्थ्यं पादवित्तेपसुन्दर ॥ ९१ ॥
वत्सपुच्छसमाकृष्ट वत्सपुच्छविकर्षण ।
विस्मारितान्यव्यापारगोपगोपीप्रमोदन ॥ ९२ ॥
गृहकृत्यसमासक्तमातृवैयग्यकारक ।
ब्रह्मादिकाम्यलालित्य जगदाश्चर्यशैश्व ॥ ९३ ॥ (नमः २४)
प्रसीद बालगोपाल गोपीगणमुदावह ।
अनुरूपवयस्यत्त चारुकौमारचापल ॥ ९४ ॥
अकालवत्सनिमोक्तर्व्रजव्याक्रोशसुस्मित ।
नवनीतमहाचोर वानराहारदायक ॥ ९५ ॥
पीठोलूखलसोपान क्षीरभाण्डविधेदक ।
शिक्यभाण्डसमाकर्षिन् ध्वान्तागारप्रवेशकृत् ॥ ९६ ॥
स्वाङ्गरत्नप्रदीपाद्य गोपीधार्यातिवादक ।

गोपीव्रातोक्तिभीभ्राम्यन्नेत्र मातृप्रहर्षण ॥ ९७ ॥ (नमः २५)
 भक्तोपालम्भनानन्द वाञ्छाभक्षितमृत्तिक ।
 रामादिप्रोक्तमृद्वार्त्त हितैष्यम्बातिभर्त्सित ॥ ९८ ॥
 कृतकत्रासलोलाक्ष मित्रान्तर्गूढविग्रह ।
 बलादिवचनाक्षेप्तर्जननीप्रत्ययावह ॥ ९९ ॥
 व्यात्तस्वल्पाननाब्जान्तर्मातृदर्शितविश्व हे ।
 यशोदाविदितैश्वर्यं जय स्वाच्छन्द्यमोहन ॥ १०० ॥
 सवित्रीस्नेहसंस्लिष्ट यशोदास्नेहवर्धन ।
 स्वभक्तब्रह्मसन्दत्तधराद्रोणावरार्थकृत् ॥ १०१ ॥ (नमः २६)

Secreted away by Nanda
 thrilled by Garga's wise words,
 Your name-giving rite the best,
 Your greatness by Garga guessed. (85)

Protector of the good,
 Destroyer of the bad,
 Kind to your devotee,
 Great Nārāyaṇa,
 You I praise, Increaser of Nanda's joy! (86)

[Obeisance to you - 22]

Victory to you! Filled with crawling's fun!
 Eager to move on your knees,
 Scratched on both hand and knee,
 Charming all with your innocent play. (87)

Thrilled by sounds of tinkling ornaments,
 Playing in the mud of Vraja,
 Aglow with jewels atop your long hair,
 tiger claws strung 'round your neck. (88)

Beautiful mud-smeared body,
Fat little thighs and hiney,
Grabbing at your face's reflection,
Imitator of reflections. (89)

Sweet and indistinct in speech,
In your smile the beginnings of teeth,
Relying completely on your mother's hand,
Your movements stumbling and wobbly. (90)

[Obeisance to you - 23]

Glory to you! Imitator of childhood play
for the eyes of the ladies,
Manifestor of small abilities,
Beautiful the clumsy tossing of your feet, (91)

Pulled along by tail of calf,
Pulling back on tail of calf,
Giver of the greatest pleasure
to the cowherds and their wives
who you make forget their chores. (92)

Distractor of your mother
trying to do her household work,
Your charm desired by Brahmā and the rest,
Your child-play amazing to the world. (93)

[Obeisance to you - 24]

Be pleased with me, Boy Gopāla!
Thriller of the cowherd girls,
Joined with friends just like you,
Displayer of boyish, restlessness charm. (94)

Freer of calves at the wrong time,¹⁶

¹⁶Kṛṣṇa frees the calves before the cows are milked.

Laugher at angry cries of Vraja's folk,
Master thief of fresh butter,
Giver of treats to the monkeys. (95)

Mounter of bench and mortar stairs,¹⁷
Breaker of pots filled with milk,
Extractor from hanging pots,
Enterer of darkened houses, (96)

Your lamps the jewels on your body,
Denier of misbehavior before the cowherd women,
Eyes wandering about out of fear
of the testimony of the cowherd women,
Giver of joy to your mother. (97)

[Obeisance to you - 25]

Enjoyer of the devotees' scolding,
Eater of mud by desire,
News of the mud
told by Rāma and the rest,
Scolded by your mother
worried for your welfare. (98)

Your eyes moving back and forth with fictitious fear,
Your form concealed among your friends,
Denier of the claims of Baladeva and the rest,
Reassurer of your mother, (99)

O Revealer of the universe to your mother
inside your small, wide open lotus-mouth,
Your might realized by your mom,
Victory to you! Wilful bewilderer! (100)

Embraced affectionately by your mother,
Increaser of Yaśodā's affection,

¹⁷He climbs on top of benches and mortars to reach hanging pots of milk and butter.

Granter of the object of a boon
given by your devotee Brahmā
to Dharā and Droṇa. (101)

[Obeisance to you - 26]

This passage, through its use of descriptive elements technically known as *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, and *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*, evokes sacred rapture in those who think of themselves as related to Kṛṣṇa in a relationship of parental affection. But even others made sensitive to the narrative can often respond to the passages as the parentals do. This is what is meant by "relishing the text." Such a relishing can be done over and over again without one's growing tired of it. It is like enjoying one's favorite food over and over again, except that instead of growing tired of it, the experience becomes more enjoyable each time. So the members of the tradition reassure us. This aspect of engagement with the text has been borrowed from the earlier traditions of Sanskrit aesthetics called *rasa-śāstra* or the study of aesthetic pleasure going all the way back to Bharata's *Nāṭya-śāstra* (4th to 5th cents. C.E.). How the Caitanya tradition has related itself to that earlier tradition and adapted it to its own needs is a complex question and cannot be discussed in this paper. Briefly stated, though, the characters have been limited to Kṛṣṇa and his close companions and the story to the deeds of Kṛṣṇa and his companions and lovers. The story of Kṛṣṇa, however, is infinitely expandable and pliable. Moments can be stretched into days and weeks. New deeds can be discovered in those flexible moments. The power of religious feeling has augmented and transformed the aesthetic experience into a powerful form of religious experience that can be "reproduced" by succeeding generations of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas. As the experiencer or *bhakta* becomes more experienced or sensitive even the original dependence on texts disappears. The whole world becomes a text.

6 Conclusion

The multidimensional nature of Sanātana's text reveals some aspects of the complexity of the relationship between a religious tradition and its texts. In Sanātana's case, he wrote his text as a way of training himself for his new life in the wilds of Vraja. There is every indication that he himself recited and prostrated himself along with the text during the early years of

his residence in Vraja. The text was probably also adopted by other members of the tradition who came to Vraja in the early days. How widely the text was spread is hard to tell. One can still find members of the tradition in modern Vraja performing rituals like the one embodied in Sanātana's text. Some of the *bābājīs*, or monk-renunciants, for instance, will periodically undertake vows to circumambulate holy places like Rādhākunḍa or Govardhana by prostrating themselves many hundreds of times at one place and reciting verse from various influential religious texts with each prostration.

At some point, Sanātana's text was superseded by other texts also aimed at recollection and relishing. Sanātana's younger brother Rūpa Gosvāmin, a superb poet, wrote numerous works developing the tradition's understanding and adaptation of *rasa*. Other works were written that captured the way the later tradition wanted to relish its divine narrative, that is, with greater emphasis on the friendly and amorous forms of sacred rapture. Sanātana himself later encouraged and helped organize and compose early versions of the Caitanya tradition's main text on ritual, the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. As a result at some point Sanātana's little ground-breaking text was forgotten and for a period of perhaps a century it was considered lost. All that was known about it was its name which appeared in the early lists of the works of the Gosvāmins. We have the text today only due to the fortunate discovery of a manuscript of the work in the private library of one of the traditional Gosvāmin families of West Bengal. Though it was superseded, the directions in which Sanātana's text pointed were followed and more fully developed by the later Caitanya tradition.

Homo religiosus is a text-inspired and text-bounded being. Those who are considered successful in a religious tradition are the ones who most fully embody or bring to life the accepted texts of the tradition. Bringing to life a religious text means making it move beyond its purely textual being. It ultimately means internalizing it and remaking the world in accordance with the text, turning world into text. Perhaps this is what the great Confucius meant when of him it was reported:

The Master said, "At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning.

"At thirty, I stood firm.

"At forty, I had no doubts.

"At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven.

“At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth.

“At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.”