

Notes on Texts, Transliterations, and Dates

THIS BOOK IS BASED ON THE WORKS OF SĀVANT SINGH OF Kishangarh, alias Nāgarīdās. There are three major editions of his work available, with in-depth introductions in Hindi on his life and literary accomplishments. The first edition is still the one that is used the most, the “Vulgate,” published by the prestigious Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā of Benares and edited by Kiśorīlāl Gupta in two volumes in 1965. All references to Nāgarīdās’s work in this book are to this edition, unless otherwise specified. A very solid and scholarly edition, it has many helpful notes, glosses, and other apparatus at the end. Nevertheless, it was challenged right away, the very next year: in 1966, a second edition was published, this one with a Nimbārkan sectarian agenda, by the scholar Vrajvallabh Śaraṇ from Vrindavan’s Śrī Sarveśvar Press. Then again, this Nimbārkan challenge was met by the royal court of Kishangarh with a defense of its Vallabhan sectarian agenda. Kishangarhi scholar and courtier Dr. Faiyāz Alī Khān, who had written an impressive PhD dissertation on Sāvant Singh in 1962, summarized his main findings and brought out a new edition, which was published by New Delhi’s Kendriya Hindī Nideśālay in 1974. This work, too, is very scholarly and well annotated. The latter two editions are more difficult to obtain, but they can be consulted in some US libraries. All three editions made use of a yet older one, a microfilm of which is preserved in the New York Public Library. This late nineteenth-century edition was prepared by Pandit Śrīdharātmaja Kisanlāl Gauḍ under the title *Nāgara-samuccayaḥ*. It was published in 1898 under the auspices of the then Kishangarh king, Śārdul Singh, on the initiative of his younger brother Javān Singh. It was printed by Shrīdhar Shivalālji of the Jñānsāgar (Dnyansagar) Press in Bombay. This lithograph edition looks like a facsimile of a manuscript dated 1883 (1940 VS), preserved in the royal library in Kishangarh, on which it was based.

Hardly any of Nāgaridās's works have been translated. The fragments that I quote here draw on my own scholarly edition and translation of the texts. The fully annotated translation and text based on a comparison of the aforementioned editions with the manuscripts that I collated will be available separately. For polishing of the English translations, I consulted with Susan Miller, an expert on Thai literature, living in Anacortes, Washington.

At the outset, a clarification of the terms used throughout is in order. I use the term *God* often as a shorthand to refer to the god-images worshipped by the poet and different sectarian groups, because they regarded these images to be manifestations of God himself. They are called *svarūpas*, or "true forms" of God, and are considered able to speak and act, and they thus have a certain agency. In that respect, it is justified to talk about "gods on the move" and similar expressions. I use "sect" to translate *Sampradāya*, because of the lack of a better, shorthand English alternative. It should be understood not in the Occidental sense of "secessionist movement" but in the Indian context as a "succession of preceptors embedded within a larger tradition."

My transliteration policy follows the standard method for transliterating Devanagari (in accordance with the influential *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary* [OHED]). All text quoted from Old Hindi has the neutral vowel at the end (inherent *-a*) because, although this vowel is often not pronounced in modern Hindi, it is in Old Hindi and is also counted in prosody. All Indian terms are given with diacritics and italicized, except for words commonly accepted in English (pandit, yogi, ashram, etc.); terms widely accepted in secondary literature on the topic, such as caste and occupation names (Brahmin, Rajput, Raja); and terms of Mughal office (vazir, subedar, Mir Bakhshi, jagir, subah). Similarly, names of gods are given with diacritics, with the exception of frequently occurring names, where for ease of readability I write *Krishna* instead of *Kṛṣṇa*, *Vishnu* for *Viṣṇu*, *Vrishabhānu* for *Vṛṣabhānu*, and so forth. I have opted to transliterate all technical terms and names of images (*mūrtis*), gods, mythical characters, and sects with inherent neutral vowels, to avoid the potential problem of having a single term romanized differently in Sanskrit and Hindi contexts. However, for the names of "Hindi" poets, groups of poets, and their works, I follow the generally accepted model of R. S. McGregor's standard encyclopedic work (published in 1984), where they are transliterated without the neutral vowel, in contrast to their Old Indo-Aryan and Middle Indo-Aryan counterparts. As a consequence, there is unavoidably some inconsistency, when, for instance, I use *pada* to refer to a song, but in titles the silent final vowel is dropped in accordance with McGregor's system, hence *Pad-prasaṅg-mālā*.

Similarly, I use *bhakta* but also *Bhakt-māl*. I spell place-names without diacritics because of the wide currency of anglicized names such as Benares, Allahabad, Delhi, and Lucknow. However, rivers, especially when seen in the text as goddesses, such as Gaṅgā, have full diacritics.

All dates are CE (Common Era), except where otherwise indicated. Conversion of dates from the Hindu calendar in *Vikram Saṃvat* (VS) to CE has been done by the admittedly imprecise method of subtracting the number 57 from the VS date. In the list of references, the same procedure has been followed, except when the CE date is provided in the source itself. The VS date has been included in parentheses in the bibliography, but not in the reference citations in the notes.

Conforming with Indian manuscript-writing practice, I end by begging the forgiveness of the critics whose sharp eyes undoubtedly will detect many infelicities in this work and by expressing my hope that the joys of discovery of Nāgarīdās's works may outweigh such flaws. *Jay Śrī Krishna*.

