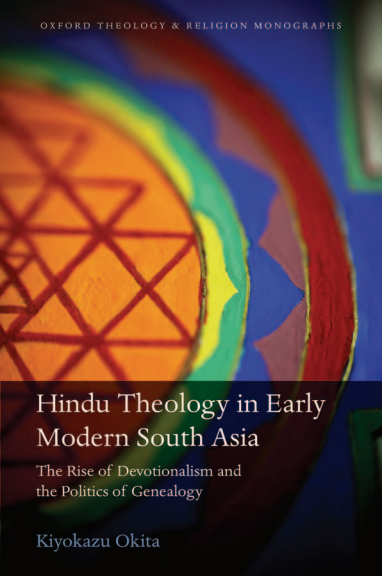


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Hindu Theology in Early Modern South Asia

The Rise of Devotionalism and
the Politics of Genealogy

Kiyokazu Okita

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Hindu Theology in Early Modern South Asia

*The Rise of Devotionalism and
the Politics of Genealogy*

KIYOKAZU OKITA

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List of Abbreviations (The Edition Used)

ABiU	<i>Amṛtabindu Upaniṣad</i> (Madhavananda 1968)
AiU	<i>Aitareya Upaniṣad</i> (Olivelle 1998)
AnuVyā	<i>Anuvyākhyāna</i> of Madhva (1999b)
ĀPra	<i>Ātmaprakāśa</i> of Śrīdhara (1986)
AVe	<i>Atharva Veda</i> (Roth & Whitney 1856)
BhāABO	<i>Bhāvārthabodhinī</i> of Śrīdhara (1983)
BhaGi	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
BhakSa	<i>Bhaktisandarbhā</i> of Jīva (1986)
BhāPu	<i>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i> (Vyāsa 1983)
BhaRaASi	<i>Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu</i> of Rūpa (2003)
BhaSa	<i>Bhagavatsandarbhā</i> of Jīva (1986)
BhāSa	<i>Bhāgavatasandarbhā</i> of Jīva (1986)
BhāSaA	<i>Bhāgavatasandarbhānūvāda</i> (Hindi) of Haridāsa śāstrī (Jīva 1986)
BhāTāNi	<i>Bhāgavatātātparyanirṇaya</i> of Madhva (1980, 1999d)
BraAPu	<i>Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa</i> (Sarma 1983)
BraPu	<i>Brahma Purāṇa</i> (Schreiner & Sönnens 1987)
BraSa	<i>Brahmasaṃhitā</i> (Haridās 1981)
BraSū	<i>Brahmasūtras</i> ¹ (<i>Uttaramīmāṃsāsūtras</i>)
BraSūBhā (Ma)	<i>Brahmasūtrabhāṣya</i> of Madhva (1999a)
BraSūBhā (Śa)	<i>Brahmasūtrabhāṣya</i> of Śaṅkara (1917)
BraTa	<i>Brahmatarka</i> (One of the untraceable works cited by Madhva)
BrĀU	<i>Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad</i> (Olivelle 1998)
BrĀUBhā	<i>Brhadāranyakopaniṣadbhāṣya</i> of Śaṅkara (2000)
BrGauTa	<i>Brhadgautamiyatantra</i>
CaiBhā	<i>Caitanyabhāgavata</i> of Vṛndāvanadāsa Dāsa (1998–2005)
CaiCaA	<i>Caitanyacaritāmṛta</i> of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja (2000)
CaiCaUNā	<i>Caitanyacandodayanāṭaka</i> of Kavi Karṇapūra (1966)
CaŚloBhā	<i>Catuṣślokiabhāgavata</i> (BhāPu 2.9.32–35)
ChāU	<i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i> (Olivelle 1998)
conj.	conjecture
CūU	<i>Cūlikā Upaniṣad</i>
em.	emendation
GaPu	<i>Garuḍa Purāṇa</i> (Bhaṭṭācārya 1964)

¹ In this book, I use the numbering of the *sūtras* in the GoBhā as the standard. See Appendix II for the list of correspondence between the numberings of the *sūtras* in the BraSūBhā (Ma), the BraSūBhā (Śa), the ŚrīBhā, and the GoBhā. However, when I cite passages in Sanskrit from the BraSūBhā (Ma), the BraSūBhā (Śa), and the ŚrīBhā in the footnotes, the *sūtra* numbers relate to each text.

GauGaUDi	<i>Gauragaṇoddeśadīpikā</i> (Kavi 2004)
GiBhū	<i>Gītābhūṣaṇa</i> of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa (1956)
GoBhāA (B)	A Bengali translation of the GoBhā (Baladeva 1968)
GoBhāA (H)	<i>Govindabhāṣyānūvāda</i> (Hindi) of Kṛṣṇa Dāsa (Baladeva 1953)
GoTāU	<i>Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad</i> (Sastri 1979a)
GoBhā	<i>Govindabhāṣya</i> of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa (1953 [M], 1968 [K])
HaBhaVi	<i>Haribhaktivilāsa</i> of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa (1986)
JaiSū	<i>Jaiminīsūtras (Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtras)</i>
KaiU	<i>Kaivalya Upaniṣad</i> (Madhavananda 1968)
KaU	<i>Kaṭha Upaniṣad</i> (Olivelle 1998)
KāVṛ	<i>Kāśikāvṛtti</i> of Jayāditya and Vāmana (Sharma 1969–1985)
KeU	<i>Kena Upaniṣad</i> (Olivelle 1998)
KraSa	<i>Kramasandarbhā</i> of Jīva (1965)
KṛSa	<i>Kṛṣṇasandarbhā</i> of Jīva (1986)
KūPu	<i>Kūrma Purāṇa</i> (1983)
LaBhāA	<i>Laghubhāgavatāmṛta</i> of Rūpa (2007)
LiPu	<i>Līṅga Purāṇa</i> (1857)
MaBhā	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
MaBhāTāNi	<i>Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya</i> of Madhva (1999c)
MāPu	<i>Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa</i> (1901)
MaSmṛ	<i>Manusmṛti</i> (Olivelle 2009)
MuU	<i>Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad</i> (Olivelle 1998)
NāPaRā	<i>Nāradapañcarātra</i> (Vijñānānanda 1997)
NāPu	<i>Nārada Purāṇa</i> (1984)
NyāMa	<i>Nyāyamañjalī</i> of Bhaṭṭa Jayantha (1982–1984)
om.	omission
PaADhaSa	<i>Padārthadharmasaṅgraha</i> of Praśastapāda (1984)
PaPu	<i>Padma Purāṇa</i> (1984)
PaRaVa	<i>Padaratnāvalī</i> of Vijayadhva (1965)
PaSa	<i>Paramātmasandarbhā</i> of Jīva (1986)
PraRaVa	<i>Prameyaratnāvalī</i> of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa (2003)
PraU	<i>Praśna Upaniṣad</i> (Olivelle 1998)
PrīSa	<i>Prītisandarbhā</i> of Jīva (1986)
ṚVe	<i>Ṛg Veda</i> (Aufrecht 1877)
SāDA	<i>Sārārthadarśinī</i> of Viśvanātha (1965)
ŚaBhā	<i>Śabarabhāṣya</i> of Śabara (1977)
SāKā	<i>Sāṅkhyakārikā</i> of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa (1970)
SaSa	<i>Sarvasaṃvādinī</i> of Jīva (1966)
SāSū	<i>Sāṅkhyasūtras</i> of Kapila (Sinha 1915)
ŚiPu	<i>Śiva Purāṇa</i> (1895–1896)
SiRa	<i>Siddhāntaratna</i> of Baladeva (1966)
SkaPu	<i>Skanda Purāṇa</i> (1986–1989)
ŚrīBhā	<i>Śrībhāṣya</i> of Rāmānuja (1967)
SūṬi	<i>Sūktmā Ṭikā</i> of Baladeva (Baladeva 1968)
SuU	<i>Subāla Upaniṣad</i>
ŚveU	<i>Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad</i> (Olivelle 1998)

TaiĀ	<i>Taittirīya Āraṇyaka</i> (Mahādevaśāstrī & Rangācārya 1985)
TaiBrā	<i>Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa</i> (Mahādevaśāstrī 1908–1921)
TaiU	<i>Taittirīya Upaniṣad</i> (Olivelle 1998)
TaPra	<i>Tattvaparakāśikā</i> by Jayatīrtha (1997–2002)
TaSa	<i>Tattvasandarbha</i> by Jīva (1986)
TaSaṅ	<i>Tattvasaṅkhyāna</i> of Madhva (2005a)
UNiMa	<i>Ujjvalanīlamanī</i> of Rūpa (1985)
VaiSū	<i>Vaiśeṣikasūtras</i> of Kaṇāda (1961)
VaPu	<i>Varāha Purāṇa</i> (Gupta 1981)
VeSā	<i>Vedāntasāra</i> of Sadānanda (1911)
VeSyā	<i>Vedāntasyamantaka</i> of Rādhādāmodhara (1972)
ViPu	<i>Viṣṇupurāṇa</i> (Vyāsa 1986)
ViSaNa	<i>Viṣṇusahasranāma</i>
ViTaVi	<i>Viṣṇutattvavinirṇaya</i> of Madhva (1991)

A Note on Transliteration and Translation

For the spelling of individual names used throughout this book, I follow Monika Horstmann (2009: x):

Die Umschrift folgt bei Sanskrit-Begriffen den üblichen Regeln. Bei Namen von Personen, die selbst auf Sanskrit schrieben oder der vorwiegend sanskritisch sich gebenden Kultur zuzuordnen sind, wurde ebenfalls die Sanskrit-Umschrift benutzt. Bengalische Eigennamen erscheinen in sanskritischer Transkription, weil die bengalistische Fachliteratur dies überwiegend so hält. Personennamen wurden im Übrigen nach dem Zeugnis von Dokumenten der Zeit verwendet. Daher wurden die Namen der Kachvāhā-Herrscher nicht sanskritisiert.

Therefore, Jaisingh II, for example, is spelled as such, instead of Jayasimha II. In terms of transliteration of Sanskrit texts, please see the section on methodology.

As for translation, the content of a square bracket [abc] indicates what I supply and the content of a curly bracket {abc} indicates the Sanskrit words the commentators are referring to. When an author cites only a part of a text, and when I translate the rest of the text which is referred to by the author but not cited, my translation is put into parentheses (abc).

Introduction

The first half of the eighteenth century was a volatile period in North India. As the reign of the Mughal empire declined, various local powers, such as the Marathas, increased their independence and competed against each other for their sovereignty. The Kachvāhās, led by Sawai Jaisingh II (1688–1743), was one of these regional powers, which successfully gained regional dominance over the Mughals and certain Hindu rulers.

Jaisingh II founded the city of Jaipur and made it one of the richest cities in North India. His remarkable success was based on his innovative strategies such as family alliances with the Mughals and other Rājput clans, tax policies, and discourse which emphasized the moral aspect of his rule. This included both the performance of ancient Vedic sacrifices and an interventionist approach toward the domestic life of his subjects. Through these, Jaisingh II successfully presented himself as *dharmarāja*, and thereby justified his rule.

Through his interventionist approach to his subjects' life, Jaisingh II controlled not only domestic issues but also religious matters, which were traditionally considered to be the realm of the Brāhmaṇas, the priestly class in society. In domestic matters, he punished thieves and criminals, and forced people to adhere strictly to the rules of the social division (*varṇa*). In the same manner, he regulated religious practitioners engaged in illicit activities, and demanded that various religious groups clarify their lineage, and thereby prove their authenticity. Numerous religious groups which flourished in Jaipur tried to conform with the king's demand in order to maintain his royal support.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas were one group competing for the king's favor. Their belief system, however, had three grave issues: (1) lack of clear *sampradāya* affiliation; (2) lack of an independent commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*; (3) the simultaneous worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who, according to the Gauḍīyas, were not married. By focusing on the works of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a Gauḍīya theologian in the eighteenth century, the current work contributes to the following four interrelated topics: (1) genealogical studies; (2) the study of early modern South Asia; (3) Purāṇic studies; and (4) the study of Vedānta as theology.

0.1. GENEALOGICAL STUDIES

Genealogy is a narrative through which one constructs one's past. When I introduce myself as an Oxford graduate rather than a graduate from a Japanese college, there is a certain underlying motivation. Thus, presenting one's genealogy is a way to manipulate the present and future by reconstructing one's significant past. That this manipulation of the past can yield concrete and sometimes disastrous effects is obvious when, for example, we think of the history of imperial Japan. Emperor Hirohito was believed to have been the living God because it was taught that he was the direct descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu. The idea of uninterrupted succession (万世一系) from the goddess to the emperor was emphasized to portray the emperor's divine authority and thereby to justify Japanese military imperialism in Asia. Now we know, however, that the idea of the uninterrupted succession of the Japanese imperial family was dogma put forward by Shinto nationalists rather than a historical fact.

This 'politics of genealogy' was not at all a unique phenomenon in the Far East. One observes similar examples in the royal histories of South Asia. It was common practice for the kings to claim their descent from divine or charismatic figures in order that their subjects might accept their own extraordinary status. Thus, the Buddhist dynasties in the Himalayan and Sinhalese regions claimed their royal descents from the Buddha and the Śākya clan (Deeg 2011). The Mughals claimed their descent from illustrious figures such as Chingīś Khān and Timūr, and in this way they emphasized their Central Asian origin (Lefèvre 2011). The Kachvāḥas, a Rājput clan in North India and one of the key players in the current study, claimed their descent from Rāma, the righteous divine king of the *Rāmāyana*.

The creation of genealogical representation is by no means a passive description of the past. Rather, it is a conscious reconstruction of the significant past with the intention to enhance and legitimize one's authority, be it religious or political, in the contemporary social context. When a genealogist includes certain kings in the dynastic genealogy or removes others from it, he is implicitly communicating a certain message by emphasizing or de-emphasizing a part of the dynastic history. Thus, the theme of genealogy is an important element in understanding history since 'it must be acknowledged that there could be various reasons for presenting a certain ancestry in a particular way, in addition to the possible reason that that is how the ancestry actually was' (Brodbeck & Hegarty 2011: 10).

The topic of genealogy in South Asia, however, has received relatively little attention in recent years. To fill this gap, a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council entitled 'The History of Genealogy, the Genealogy of History: Family and the Narrative Construction of the Significant Past in Early South Asia' (The Cardiff Genealogy Project) was conducted at Cardiff University in Wales from 2008 to 2011. The project focused on Vyāsa's

Mahābhārata, Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, and Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* to explore the role of genealogical narratives in early South Asia (Brodbeck & Hegarty 2011: 13–14). While the Cardiff Genealogy Project focused on the late- and the post-Vedic periods, the current study looks at the early modern period in South Asia. Focusing on the concept of religious tradition or *sampradāya*, I argue that the genealogical narratives also played a significant role in the identity formation of religious adherents in early modern South Asia.

For example, the Daśanāmīs, the Śaiva group of renunciants, belong to four *maṭhas* located in Dvārakā, Jyōśimāṭh, Puri, and Śringerī. The pontiffs of the four institutions are called Śaṅkarācāryas, and they claim that their religious lineages can be traced back to Ādi-Śaṅkara. However, Matthew Clark's research on the Daśanāmīs shows that there is little evidence that these *maṭhas* were formed before the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries (Clark 2006: 1–2). In the case of Vaiṣṇava traditions, the idea that there exist four normative *sampradāyas* headed by four divine figures, namely, Śrī, Rudra, Brahmā, and Sanaka, seems to have gained currency only in the sixteenth century. It appears, then, that the phenomenon of creating one's identity in terms of religious genealogy began in the early modern era.

The religious groups in early modern South Asia actively engaged in the politics of genealogy because the claim for their divine origin was inextricably connected to the salvific efficacy of the group. The greater dispensation of mercy one can claim, the higher the probability of attracting supporters of various kinds. As differing religious groups competed for access to three important but limited resources, namely, devotees and disciples, pilgrimage routes and pilgrimage centers, and political patronage (Burghart 1978: 126), it was crucial for their survival that they engage in the politics of genealogy, and thereby claim that their group possessed the highest possible soteriological value. Thus, 'every genealogy is a record of a strategy in which the sect has reinterpreted its past in order to compete more effectively for the three limited resources which are necessary for its survival in the present' (Burghart 1978: 127). By examining the Gauḍīya theology, genealogy, and historical background, this study demonstrates that the Gauḍīyas were active participants in the politics of genealogy.

0.2. EARLY MODERN SOUTH ASIA

Baladeva lived in early modern North India.¹ In the colonial discourse, South Asia in the late medieval to the early modern period is sometimes described as 'the dark age' in comparison to the vibrant 'renaissance' of the nineteenth

¹ He was born sometime in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and died in 1793.

century.² A typical view of early modern South Asia as a ‘dark age’ can be found in *Modern Religious Movements in India* by J. N. Farquhar:

When the [nineteenth] century dawned, Hindus were in a pitifully backward condition. Their subjugation by the Muhammadans about 1200 A.D. had been a very serious trampling under foot; and, while reasonable rule of the Mughals had given them a breathing-space, the terrific convulsions of the eighteenth century had more than undone all that had been recovered. Learning had almost ceased; ordinary education scarcely existed; spiritual religion was to be met only in the quietest places; and a coarse idolatry with cruel and immoral rites held all the great centers of population. (1915: 3)

For Farquhar, a Protestant missionary, Christianity and Western rational thinking were to replace the dead Hindu religio-intellectual culture of the pre-colonial India that had been adorned by superstition, immorality, and idolatry.

Hindus did not necessarily embrace this Christianizing/Westernizing program. Nonetheless, many of the *Bhadralokas*, the Western-educated Hindus influential in nineteenth-century India, also agreed that the medieval Hindu religiosity must be reformed. The most famous example in this regard is the nineteenth-century Bengal Renaissance Movement. David Kopf argues that the spirit of this reform movement was to replace the degraded Purāṇic tradition of the dark Middle Ages with the pristine Vedic/Upaniṣadic tradition of the golden Classical Age (1969: 280–289). This mentality of rejecting the immediate past (the Middle Ages) by the authority of the remote past (the Classical Ages) was parallel to the European Renaissance of the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. To what extent this parallel is viable is another question. The point is that not only Christian Westerners but also many influential Hindus in the nineteenth century perceived that the religious culture of early modern India had almost disappeared, and must be reformed and revived.

A recent research project, ‘Sanskrit Knowledge Systems on the Eve of Colonialism’ run by Sheldon Pollock, Christopher Minkowski, and other leading Sanskrit scholars, however, reveals that early modern South Asia from 1550 to 1750 was one of the most productive periods in the intellectual history of India.³ Pollock writes:

² Clothey (2006: 135–160) uses the term ‘late medieval’ to denote the period roughly corresponding to 1200 CE–1700 CE. Flood (1996: 21) uses the term ‘medieval’ to denote 500 CE–1500 CE. Kulke and Rothermund (2004: 109–195) use the term ‘early medieval’ to denote 600 CE–1200 CE, ‘late medieval’ 1200 CE–1700 CE. In this book I use the term ‘medieval’ to denote the period roughly stretching 500 CE–1500 CE, ‘early medieval’ 500 CE–1200 CE, ‘late medieval’ 1200 CE–1500 CE, ‘early modern’ 1500–1700 CE.

³ For more information on the project, see <<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/sanskrit/index.html>>

These two centuries [i.e. 1550 AD–1750 AD] witnessed a flowering of intellectual life characterized by, among other features, an increase in the production of texts across disciplines, the rise of a new (or newly reinvigorated) interdisciplinarity, and the introduction of important new discursive practices and conceptual categories. This dynamism lasted until the consolidation of colonial power [...]. (2002: 431)

This flourishing of Sanskrit culture in early modern South Asia, however, has been neglected in the scholarly works so far. In this regard, Pollock writes, ‘This new vitality is everywhere evident, but it has hardly been recognized in the scholarship, let alone explained’ (2002: 435).

This project, however, covers only eight disciplines as its areas of research. These are *vyākaraṇa*, *mīmāṃsā*, *nyāya*, *dharmasāstra*, *alaṅkāraśāstra*, *āyurveda*, *jyotiṣa*, and *prayoga*. Thus, this project excludes Vedānta as a scope of study. In this regard I argue that the Sanskrit literatures in the area of Vedāntic discourse should also be seen as a part of this flourishing cultural productivity of the early modern period. For example, Pollock points out that the early modern South Asian authors may be characterized as ‘innovative traditionalists’, meaning that they were interested in drawing on the authority of the authors of the remote past when discussing the topics of the recent past. This characteristic is shared with Baladeva, in his attempt to draw on the authority of Mādhva Vedānta (a remote past) in order to establish the authority of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Vedānta (a recent past). Thus, through my research on Gauḍīya authors, I hope to contribute to the study of early modern South Asian literature in the area of Vedānta.

In this context, whether the history of South Asia from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century should be termed ‘late medieval’ or ‘early modern’ is problematic. In fact, through recent scholarship there has been a great shift in our understanding of eighteenth-century India (cf. Alavi 2002; Marshall 2003), which has led scholars to question the very adequacy of dividing ‘medieval’ from ‘modern’. For example, David Washbrook (2006: 212) writes, ‘Recent revisionist interpretations of Indian economic history have gone a long way towards breaking down the distinctiveness of the colonial relationship, and re-situating India in a “continuous” context of global history stretching from the late medieval period to today.’ In her study of the history of Jaipur in the eighteenth century, Fatima Imam also states:

There is no doubt that these scholars have successfully dismantled the myth that the eighteenth century was a period of chaos and confusion through their work about Mughal successor states. The thrust of their argument is that British colonialism did not precipitate a fundamental change in Indian history; rather colonialism was the continuation of the transition process started by the regional rulers during the eighteenth century. (Imam 2008: 25)

Nonetheless, since the current research is in dialogue with the project led by Pollock, who terms this period ‘early modern’ (cf. Pollock 2002, 2004, 2011), I adopt his terminological usage.

0.3. PURĀṆIC STUDIES

Apart from portraying the pre-colonial India as the dark Middle Ages, the Renaissance mentality in nineteenth-century India denigrated the Purāṇic tradition. This was partly due to the view of Hinduism presented by the British Orientalists. Influenced by the Enlightenment and the Romantic view of India, they esteemed Vedic/Upaniṣadic Hinduism as the pure form of religion. At the same time, they rejected popular Purāṇic tradition as a corruption of the pristine Vedic/Upaniṣadic past (Halbfass 1988: 197).

Among the British Orientalists, Max Müller particularly set the tone. For him, the true essence of India was to be found in the *R̥g Veda*, the Upaniṣads, and the Vedāntic texts. He saw Vedic India as the origin of religion, with concepts superior to those of the Greeks, Romans, and Jews. At the same time, according to Müller, later development of the Purāṇic tradition was ‘intellectually bankrupt, a kind of rubbish’ (Neufeldt 1989: 34) that overlaid the great Vedic India. Other prominent Orientalists shared a similar view. H. T. Colebrooke believed that the true Hinduism in the Vedas pointed to the unity of the deities, and any polytheistic tendency found in it should be considered as a later corruption. H. H. Wilson thought that the original Vedic Hinduism was superseded by idolatry, the apex of which is the *Purāṇas*. Wilson saw the *Purāṇas* as ‘contradictory and as assigning reality to that which was meant to be essentially metaphorical and mystical’ (Neufeldt 1989: 35). Monier Monier-Williams made a threefold distinction of India’s religious development, namely the Vedic period, the Upaniṣadic period, and the Purāṇic period, and saw the Upaniṣads as the core of Brahmanism, containing a level of philosophy that was comparable to Christianity. Again, he saw the Purāṇic traditions such as Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, and Śāktism as degradations of Upaniṣadic Brahmanism.

Though not as explicit, the perception of the Purāṇic tradition as something lower than the Vedic tradition persisted in Western academia during the twentieth century. For example, while holding his position as the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford, R. C. Zaehner wrote:

The Epics and the *Purāṇas* are the great store-houses of devotional Hinduism, and they mark the end of the ‘classical’ period in which Sanskrit remained the language of holy writ. Official Hinduism, with the *Veda* as its sacred book and sole source of infallible wisdom, had become increasingly identified with the caste

system, itself originated and buttressed by the highest caste, the Brāhmanas, and it was only the three 'twice-born' classes that had access to this saving wisdom. The lowest class, the Śūdras, were forbidden all access to the Veda, as were also women and, of course, outcastes. It was, then, largely to satisfy the needs of these religiously disenfranchised persons that purely devotional religion developed in the *Smṛti* literature, for this, since it did not share the absolute sanctity of the Veda, was open to all and, together with it, the message of God's love for all men irrespective of caste differences. (1962: 12)

His descriptions, such as 'the message of God's love for all men', sound positive. Still, the origin of the Purāṇic tradition is connected to the downfall of 'official' Hinduism with the 'sacred' Vedas, the downfall which happened as a result of the caste system controlled by the Brāhmaṇas. What is implicit in Zaehner's description is the persistence of the nineteenth-century view which contrasts the pristine Vedic past against the degraded Purāṇic present. In this regard Klaus Klostermaier observes: 'Western scholarship has for a long time played down the importance of *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* [...]' (2007: 59).

Fortunately, the nineteenth-century Orientalist view of the Purāṇic tradition is finally in decline in twenty-first century Western scholarship. Velcheru Narayana Rao writes: 'The complementarity of the Vedas and the Purāṇas is crucial for an understanding of the text culture of Brāhmaṇic Hinduism [...]' (2004: 98). He also corrects the view that the *Purāṇas* were meant only for 'the religiously disenfranchised':

It is generally stated that the Purāṇas are meant for the benefit of women and Śūdras who are not eligible to receive instruction from the Vedas. However, the popularity of the Purāṇas suggests that these texts were read/listened to by all Hindus, including the highest caste Brāhmanas. (2004: 103)

In fact, in the early modern period, the *Purāṇas* ceased to be a mere supplement to the Vedas. Rather, their authority superseded that of the Vedas. Discussing the works of Nīlakaṇṭha in the seventeenth century, Christopher Minkowski states: 'In the historically changed context, it is the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which had grown so influential in Nīlakaṇṭha's era, that can bolster the Vedas, and not the other way around' (2005: 431).

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas played a significant role in this reversal of hierarchy. In this context, Ravi Gupta describes the contribution of Jīva, a founding father of Gauḍīya theology:

Jīva Gosvāmī is a pace-setter and early protagonist of this *Śruti-Smṛti* reversal process. By establishing the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as the scripture par excellence in the *Tattva-sandarbhā*, and using the *Purāṇa* as the sole basis of his entire system, Jīva effectively subordinates all scriptural knowledge to the *Bhāgavata*. (2007: 116)

This book demonstrates how this reversal of hierarchy happened between the *Purāṇas* and Vedānta. The third chapter of the book demonstrates how Jīva

constructs his theology based on the BhāPu and the ViPu. Then, in the fourth chapter, it will be shown how Baladeva constructed his Vedānta based on Jīva's Purāṇic theology. Therefore, in the case of Baladeva's GoBhā, it is the *Purāṇas* which are explained by the Vedas, and not the other way around. Through an examination of Gauḍīya theologies of Jīva and Baladeva, I wish to suggest that a unique feature of Vedānta in this period is the reversal of hierarchy between the *Śrutis* and the *Smṛtis*.

0.4. HINDU THEOLOGY

There is an emerging field of study called Hindu theology. While many works on South Asian intellectual thoughts call Vedānta 'philosophy',⁴ some contemporary authors argue that theology, rather than philosophy, is a more appropriate category.⁵ I agree with the general ethos of this argument, and I view the current study on Vedānta within the category of Hindu theology. The term theology, however, comes with a rich history which has various shades of meaning. Moreover, by the last century the discipline came to contain many branches, such as systematic theology, historical theology, biblical theology, moral theology, philosophical theology, practical theology, and mystical theology (Ford 2005: 65).

Since there are varying definitions of theology, in this section I clarify the use of the term in this book. I classify various definitions of theology into three, namely, theology as God-talk, theology as scriptural exegesis, and theology as insider discourse. I define the object of my study, that is, Vedānta, as Hindu theology within these three meanings. At the same time, my own approach to the study of Hindu theology will be phenomenological. That is, I consciously refrain from making my own judgment concerning the truth claim of the subject of my study.

Theology as God-talk

Perhaps the most obvious meaning of theology is defined by the object of inquiry, that is, god(s) or God. Theology is a study (*-logia*) about god (*theos*). Historically speaking, the discipline of theology was developed primarily in the Christian context: 'The Greek word *theologia* meant an account of the gods,

⁴ Cf. Agrawal 2001, Hamilton 2001, Hiriyantha 2005, Potter 1998. See Edelmann (2013: 430) for more references.

⁵ Clooney (2003: 448) gives a historical background as to why philosophy, rather than theology, became the favored category to describe schools of thought in South Asia.

and it was taken over by the early Christian church to refer to the biblical account of God's relationship to humanity' (Ford 2005: 63). Theistic Vedānta propounded by thinkers such as Rāmānuja, Madhva, Jīva, and Baladeva seems to fit in this category well since one of the main topics of their inquiry is Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, whom they understand to be the ultimate reality, the creator and the controller of the universe.

John Carman's use of the term theology in his work *The Theology of Rāmānuja: An Essay in Interreligious Understanding*, seems to exemplify the meaning of the term in this sense. While he does not give his definition of the term, it is clear from his writing that what he understands as theology is intellectual and systematic deliberation about God. He says that the focus of his work is on 'Rāmānuja's conception of God' (Carman 1974: 11). Concerning the use of the term 'God' in the Hindu context, he writes: 'There seems to me no doubt that the English term that brings Christians the closest to what Rāmānuja had in mind is the single word God' (Carman 1974: 10–11).

Sanskrit terms such as *bhagavān* (the glorious one), *paremeśvara* (the supreme Lord), and *parabrahman* (supreme Brahman) are used in the context of theistic Vedānta to designate the highest personal being called Viṣṇu. These designations correspond well with the term God used in the Christian context. Of course, we should be aware of the crucial differences between the Christian conceptions of God and those of theistic Vedānta. One of the notable differences is that some of the Vaiṣṇava thinkers such as Rāmānuja, Jīva, and Baladeva argue that Viṣṇu is not only the controller of the universe but also its material basis. The idea of God as the material foundation of the universe is rather alien to Christianity. Nevertheless, given the understanding of Viṣṇu in Vaiṣṇava Vedānta, it seems reasonable to apply the term theology in this context. An important implication to be aware of in this regard is that Hindu theology, in the first sense of the term, probably does not include Advaita Vedānta. Since the school does not accept any personhood in its conception of the ultimate reality the tradition can be regarded as atheistic.⁶

Theology as Scriptural Exegesis

Theology in the second sense of the term refers to the science of scriptural exegesis. Theology in this sense is fundamentally rooted in the revealed scriptures such as the Bible. Thomas Aquinas, for example, understood

⁶ However, we should not forget that atheistic arguments against theism became the primary object of refutation for the theistic Vedānta. In this sense, as the opponents of theistic Vedānta, atheistic traditions such as Advaita Vedānta, Buddhism, and Jainism contributed to its development. For an example of study of Buddhist arguments against theism in classical India, see Patil 2009.

theology as ‘the rational elucidation of revealed truth’ (Ward 1994: 1). For him, theology ‘begins from Divine revelation, which is to be found in the Holy Scriptures’ (Ward 1994: 3). One of the distinctive characteristics of Christian theology, therefore, is its commitment to the text which the tradition considers to be divinely revealed. Theology in this sense is different from philosophy which, in a modern sense of the term, requires no commitment to any *a priori* principle.

When theology is defined in the first sense of the term, that is, when we understand it as a systematic deliberation about God, Hindu theology can, besides Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta, include schools of thought such as Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, and Yoga (Dasti 2012: 32–34). What sets Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta apart from schools such as Nyāya, however, is that they are rooted in scriptural exegesis.⁷ Therefore, it seems reasonable to see Vedānta as theology in the second sense of the term. In the case of Vedānta, its goal is to articulate a coherent system of thought based on the core revealed texts called the *Prasthānatrayī*, which refers to the Upaniṣads, the *Brahmasūtras*, and the *Bhagavadgītā*.

Vedānta’s commitment to the revealed scriptures is observable in BraSū 1.1.3 *śāstrayonitvāt*. As we see later, many Vedāntists interpret this *sūtra* to mean ‘Brahman is the one whose source {*yoni*} of understanding is the scriptures {*śāstra*}.’ Based on this *sūtra*, authors such as Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja argue that the revealed scriptures such as the Upaniṣads are the only means of knowing the ultimate reality. Thus, when it comes to Brahman, Vedānta says that other means of knowledge such as perception and inference do not constitute the final epistemological authority.

For example, in his commentary on this *sūtra*, Baladeva cites a verse attributed to the KūPu: “Without any contradiction of an earlier [sentence] and a later one, what would be the desired meaning here?” Reasoning such as this is [called] logic {*tarka*}. However, groundless logic {*śuṣkatarka*} should be abandoned.⁸ According to this verse, the use of reasoning is justified when it is employed to make sense of the scriptures. However, free exercise of reasoning without any scriptural reference is, at least in the context of knowing Brahman, something to be rejected. The kind of reasoning referred to by the term *tarka* in the verse corresponds to what Francis Clooney calls ‘theological reasoning’: ‘Reasoning carried forward without regard for authoritative religious sources needs to be distinguished from reasoning marked by attention to

⁷ For this reason Dasti (2012) calls Vedānta revealed theology in contrast to Nyāyā, which he calls rational theology.

⁸ GoBhā 1.1.3: *pūrvāparāvirodhena ko 'rtho 'trābhimato bhavet / ityādyam ūhanam tarkaḥ śuṣkatarkaṃ tu varjayet // ityādiśruteḥ /*

scripture and other religious authorities; the latter is theological reasoning' (2003: 449).⁹

When we understand Vedānta as theology according to the second meaning, one of the significant implications is that Advaita Vedānta can be now included in Hindu theology, as Clooney argues: 'Advaita is at its core an exegetical system, and therefore is heir to the ritual exegesis of the older Mimamsa school [...] it is closer to "theology" than "philosophy", and closer to "scriptural theology" than "philosophical theology"' (1993: 14–15). Since Advaita Vedānta is a school committed to the understanding of the *Prasthānatrayī* texts, it is theological 'even if an outstanding feature of theology, its focus on the "study of God", is absent' (Clooney 1993: 26).¹⁰

Theology as Insider Discourse

The third sense of theology I shall discuss is based on Saint Anselm's principle 'faith seeking understanding'. In this sense of the term, theology is defined primarily by the nature of the agent who studies theology, that is, a theologian: '[T]heology is an inquiry carried on by believers who allow their belief to remain an explicit and influential factor in their research, analysis and writing' (Clooney 1993: 4). I believe it is relatively unproblematic to say that Vedāntists such as Baladeva were theologians. As I shall demonstrate, Baladeva was a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava who wrote his works in order to defend his tradition. Therefore, the object of my research is Hindu theology in the sense that those Vedāntists studied here were insiders writing for their respective traditions.

Clooney, for example, suggests the establishment of Hindu theology in the third sense of the term: 'When Hindu reasoning is studied by Hindus and others who are genuinely interested in learning religiously from Hindu thought, the recognition of "Hindu theology" seems a timely step [...]' (Clooney 2003: 449). Hindu theology in this context is done by contemporary scholars who identify themselves as Hindu theologians. This type of scholarship is seen, for example, in *Meditation Revolution: A History and Theology of*

⁹ The term *tarka*, however, can be used to refer to philosophical reasoning. Following Vasudeva Shastri Abhyankar, Clooney (2003: 457–460) calls *manana* theological reasoning, *tarka* philosophical.

¹⁰ Clooney (2003: 452) suggests seven topics which can be seen as theological: 'a) the nature of a sufficient world cause, world maker; b) whether God is one or many; c) divine embodiment; d) the problem of evil; e) the nature and time of liberation; f) the appeal to revelation; g) "ignorance" as a theological category'.

the Siddha Yoga Lineage. In this edited volume authors such as Paul E. Muller-Ortega (1997) discuss the tradition of Siddha Yoga as insiders. An example in the context of Buddhist Studies is *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars* edited by John Makransky and Roger Jackson (2000). In this work, the authors are contemporary Buddhist scholars who also identify themselves as Buddhists.

As Jonathan Edelmann points out, there is also a need for Hindu theologians for the Hindu communities. As the number of the Hindu diaspora increases, there is an increasing need for theologians trained in the tradition, who can articulate and represent the tradition to the wider audience: 'Hinduism frequently lacks this go-to source—although it is needed—because there is no recognized and defined category called the Hindu theologian' (Edelmann 2013: 435).

While I recognize the need for and the validity of Hindu theologians for both academic and communal reasons, this book does not take a theological approach for the following two reasons. The first reason is simply that I was not trained as a theologian, nor was I trained by Hindu theologians. I have been trained in the discipline of religious studies or history of religions, which takes a phenomenological approach to the study of religious traditions. I trained at various academic institutions in the West, and most of my teachers were not believing Hindus.

The second and perhaps more substantial reason is connected to the question of *adhikāra*, or qualification. In various Hindu traditions, a study of certain subjects is not open to everyone. According to the laws of Manu, for example, only the Brāhmaṇas are allowed to teach the Vedas.¹¹ If we accept Manu's authority, then certainly I am not eligible to write authoritatively on the Vedas, nor on Vedānta that is based on the Vedas. Vedāntists also insist upon students' qualification. Śaṅkara, for example, says anyone who wishes to study Vedānta should have the following four qualities: (1) distinguishing what is eternal and what is transient; (2) being indifferent to enjoying the result of work in this world and the next; (3) accomplished at practicing calmness and sense-control; (4) the state of being desirous of liberation.¹² While I may possess some of these qualities in some ways, I certainly do not claim to fulfill all of them. A more troubling question: Even if I did possess these qualities in a satisfactory manner, who is going to certify my qualification in the study of Vedānta? Based on the above-mentioned two reasons I do not approach the study of Hindu theology from a theological perspective. That is, I do not engage in what Edelmann calls second-order theology (2013:

¹¹ MaSmṛ 1.88: *adhyāpanam adhyayanam yajanam yājānam tathā / dānam pratigrahaṃ caiva brāhmaṇānām akalpayat //*

¹² BraSūBhā (Śa) 1.1.1: *nityānityavastuvivekaḥ, ihāmutrārthabhogavirāgaḥ, śamadamādisādhanaśaṃpat, mumukṣutvaṃ ca /*

457–458). Rather, I approach it from the perspective of history of South Asian intellectual thought.

In conclusion, I understand Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Vedānta, the object of my current study, to be theological in all the three senses of the term discussed. It is (1) a discussion about God or Kṛṣṇa, (2) a tradition of scriptural exegesis, and (3) written by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theologians such as Jīva and Baladeva. At the same time, my own approach to the object of study is phenomenological rather than theological in the sense that I am not concerned about making any judgment on the truth claims made by those Vedāntists.

0.5. INTRODUCING BALADEVA: A THEOLOGIAN ON TRIAL

No historical data on Baladeva's youth is available. According to Adrian P. Burton, the earliest historical record we know of Baladeva is dated 1741, and he died in 1793. In this section, Baladeva's life is briefly sketched over three phases: (I) his birth in Orissa to his meeting with Viśvanātha Cakravartī in Vṛndāvana; (II) his contributions in the Jaipur dispute; (III) his life as the leader of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Due to the lack of a historical account, the first two phases of Baladeva's life will be presented based on hagiographical accounts.

(I) *From Orissa to Vṛndāvana*

Baladeva was probably born around 1700 AD at a village near Remuṇā in the Baleśvara district of Orissa.¹³ He was said to have been born to a Vaiśya family. However, as we shall see below, there is a possibility that he came from a Brāhmaṇa family. He is said to have left his home at an early age, and studied grammar, rhetoric, and logic with the scholars living on the bank of the Cilkāhrada. After finishing preliminary studies, Baladeva traveled to Mysore, Kārṇāṭaka, and joined the followers of Madhva. There, he studied the Vedānta systems of Śaṅkara and Madhva, even taking *sannyāsa* from the Mādhva tradition.¹⁴ After mastering Mādhva Vedānta and taking *sannyāsa*, he visited holy places, defeating local scholars with his knowledge of Vedānta.

After traveling for some time, Baladeva settled down at a Mādhva monastery in Puri. There, while engaging in discussions with the local scholars

¹³ Burton says that since Baladeva died in 1793 AD, most probably he could not have been born before 1700 AD (2000: 83). Elkman also suggests the same date (1986: 25).

¹⁴ However, Dāsa says that Baladeva joined a Mādhva monastery at Puri (n.d.: 45).

Baladeva met a Kānyakubja Brāhmaṇa named Rādhādāmodara Dāsa,¹⁵ the leader of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in that area. Baladeva was so impressed with Jīva's *Ṣaṭsandarbhas* he learnt from Rādhādāmodara that he eventually converted to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, accepting Rādhādāmodara as his guru. Since Baladeva was already initiated into the Mādhva tradition, his initiation by Rādhādāmodara was done informally. In this regard it may be said Baladeva maintained his formal affiliation with the Mādhva tradition, though he became theologically affiliated with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

After some time Baladeva left for Navadvīpa, to visit the birthplace of Caitanya. There it was suggested he go to Vṛndāvana to study with Viśvanātha Cakravartī, the leader of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas at that time. Following the suggestion, he went to Vṛndāvana and studied the BhāPu with Viśvanātha. He also studied other devotional literature (*rasaśāstras*) with another scholar called Pītāmbara Dāsa. Thus he quickly became acquainted with various aspects of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

(II) The Jaipur Dispute

Traditional accounts hold that a religious dispute occurred in Jaipur some time after Baladeva's arrival in Vṛndāvana. As we will examine in greater detail later, it is important to understand the nature of the dispute since it is said that Baladeva wrote his GoBhā in the context of this.

To put it briefly, the king of Jaipur, Jaisingh II (1688–1743) came from the Kachvāhā family, which maintained a long-standing relationship with the Gauḍīyas. While he wished to support the Gauḍīyas, the following three points seemed particularly problematic to the king, who wanted to promote the harmony between various Vaiṣṇava sects as well as his image as *dharmarāja* 'the righteous king': (i) Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was not connected to any of the four legitimate Vaiṣṇava traditions (Rāmānuja, Madhva, Viṣṇu Svāmī, and Nimbārka); (ii) the Gauḍīyas did not have an independent commentary on the BraSū which could justify their own beliefs and practices; (iii) the Gauḍīyas worshipped Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa together, despite the fact that she is another's wife (*parakīyā*). In order to maintain king's support, the Gauḍīyas were obliged to satisfy him on these points. As a result, the Gauḍīyas in Vṛndāvana sent Baladeva to Jaipur to deal with the issue.

After Baladeva's arrival, a religious assembly was held by the king, in which Baladeva had to defend the Gauḍīya tradition. First he was questioned over

¹⁵ The lineage of Rādhādāmodara is as follows: Nityānanda—Gauridāsa Paṇḍita—Hṛdaya Caitanya—Śyāmānanda—Rasikānanda Murāri—Nayanānanda Deva Gosvāmī—Rādhādāmodara Dāsa (Dāsa n.d.: 43, Elkman 1986: 48).