Courtly and Religious communities as Centres of Literary Activity in Eighteenth-Century India: Ānandghan's Contacts with the princely court of Kishangarh-Rupnagar and with the Maṭh of the Nimbārka Sampradāy in Salemabad

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Some of the most fascinating works of old Hindi poetry originate from the princely states of Rajasthan, which because of its long tradition of patronage was one of the most important regions for literature during the Mughal era. Reconstructing the literary life of specific courts in Rajasthan is, however, a challenging task. In spite of the large amount of academic research on the history and culture of the region, material about the literary life of individual courts is uneven. A lot of research has been done on great court poets like Bihari or Matiram but far from being acquainted with the major authors of all the courts, today we are not even in a position to say which languages were used for literature in a particular court at a certain period. Many centres are famous for patronising Braj, Sanskrit or Urdu poets but were all these languages present in each court? Did they have specific roles or hierarchy? In what measure did literature in one language influence the other?

Hindi high literature of the eighteenth century was chiefly the literature of patronage. Literary activity was, therefore, centred on individuals or institutions that were able to patronise it. The secular centres were mainly the royal and princely courts, while the religious centres were the monasteries[1] of the various sects. It will be interesting to ascertain to what extent political and other interaction between these two types of centre influenced literature. We are going to see in the example of an individual poet that there was a subtle interplay between different languages and also between courts and monasteries. There was, however, a line that could not be transgressed and the finest poet of his time, Ānandghan, who violated this convention, had to pay a high price.

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[1]I am using the word monastery in a broad sense to denote any institution (maṭh, pīṭh, āśram etc.) where ascetics live together.

In my Hindi book *Saneh ko mārag* I argued that Ānandghan had lived in the Nimbārkī monastery in Salemabad and was in all probability in contact with the princely court of Kishangarh-Rupnagar. In this paper I am going to consider the cultural atmosphere of these centres of learning within the Kishangarh state and discuss Ānadghan's relationship with them.

Kishangarh-Rupnagar

The princely state of Kishangarh was founded in 1609 by Maharaja Kiśan Singh Rāṭhor[2] (r. 1609–1615), the younger son of Udai Singh of Jodhpur who had been sent to the Mughal court and made friends with prince Salim, the later Jahangir (r. 1605–1627). His grandson Rūp Singh (r. 1643–1658)[3] founded the town of Rupnagar in 1648 and moved his court there. The golden period of the state was during the reigns of Mān Singh (r. 1658–1706) and his successor, Rāj Singh (r. 1706–1748). Mān Singh's family had also marital bonds with Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707).[4] Both he and his son were frequent visitors to Delhi, which must have left a definite mark on their cultural tastes.

Rāj Singh's son, Sāvant Singh 'Nāgarīdās' was made *yuvarāj* 'prince regent', successor to the throne already in 1725.[5] The state was too small and barren to take part in the many struggles that characterised the eighteenth century. It also had immunity from the payment of tribute to the Mughals and to the Marathas alike.[6] So this peaceful atmosphere allowed Nāgarīdās to be involved more in his aesthetic pursuits than in the affairs of the state. This must be one of the principal reasons why after the death of Rāj Singh, Nāgarīdās's younger brother Bahādur Singh was successful in taking power in Kishangarh. Sāvant Singh did not return to Kishangarh until 1757 when he abdicated in favour of his son, Sardār Singh (r. 1757–1767) and the state was divided: Sardār Singh ruled the north of the country from Rupnagar and Bahādur Singh the south from Kishangarh. The state was united again when Sardār Singh died without offspring. Since the time of Bahādur Singh the capital has become Kishangarh again.

[2]Names that have a long established spelling in English will be spelt according to it (thus Singh instead of Siṃha). The inherent *a* in Hindi words will not be dropped in Braj quotations or in names with a prominent Sanskritic component. Thus the name Nāgrīdās will be written as Nāgarīdās and Parśurām as Paraśurām etc. It may also be retained after clusters of consonants as in Nandadās.

[3]Sharma (1990:83).

[4]According to Celer (1973:9.) Mān Singh gave his daughter, Cārumatī, in marriage to Aurangzeb. Haidar (1995:26) also examines this question that embarrassed later Hindu chroniclers. According to her Cārumatī was not the daughter but the elder sister of Mān Singh and she was married to Mahārāṇā Rāj Singh of Udaipur while a younger sister was married to Aurangzeb's son Prince Mu'azzam.

[5]Khan (1974:6).

[6]Malleson (1875:89).

Contact with the Mughals

The name of Kishangarh has acquired world-fame because of the Kishangarh school of painting. Like most Rajasthani court painting this school combines indigenous elements with the achievements of the Mughal miniature. This combination was facilitated by the contacts of the Kishangarh court with the Mughals in Delhi. These contacts were both political and cultural. The Kishangarh rulers, like the other maharajas, not only visited the imperial capital frequently but also invited artists from Delhi to their courts.

One of the two most famous painters, Bhavānīdās, came to Kishangarh in 1719 straight from the Mughal capital.[7] The other one, Nihal Cand, also had connections with Delhi, since his great-grandfather, a minister under Maharaja Mān Singh (1658–1706)[8], came from there. Some other painters, like Amar Cand, were trained in Delhi.[9] It was, however, not only the painters who were responsible for the spread of the Mughal taste. As has been mentioned members of the ruling family used to visit the Mughal court and their ideas were influenced by its culture. As Navina Haidar wrote:

> In the forty years of his reign, Raj Singh spent a considerable amount of time at Delhi, as did his son, Savant Singh. As with many of the Rajput princes from the early seventeenth century onwards, the time spent in Delhi by Raj Singh and Savant Singh must have had a strong effect on their artistic sensibilities, as they would probably have seen Mughal paintings in the reigns of Farrukh Siyar and Muhammad Shah, both of whom were active patrons. Certain stylistic and thematic developments at the Delhi court were thus reflected at Kishangarh. . . [10]

Apart from the Delhi artists and the regular visits to the Mughal court the use of Persian as one of the languages of diplomacy and administration in Rajasthan also helped to infiltrate Mughal culture into the Kishangarh court. Even some works in Persian were composed at such courts as Jaipur and Jodhpur. For example, in 1728 Maharaja Savāī Jai Singh and his team of astrologers compiled for the Mughal ruler Muhammad Śāh (r. 1719–1748) the *Zīj-i-Jadīd-i-Muhammad Śāhī*, one of the most important astronomical works of their times.[11] The Jodhpur epistolographer Munshi Madhū Rām (died 1732) wrote in 1708 the *Inśā'i Mādhū Rām*, a guide-book for the instruction of young students.[12]

At the same time the presence of Muslim musicians might also have contributed to the complexity of the court culture. A famous miniature of the Kishangarh court[13] from around 1760–66 shows among several courtiers the

[7] Randhawa and Randhawa 1980. (The authors refer to Faiyaz Ali Khan but do not give a precise reference.)
[8] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:14–5).
[9] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:16).
[10] Haidar (1996:56).
[11] Khan (1981:47); Hadi (1995:275).
[12] Khan (1981:59); Hadi (1995:327).
[13] Published in Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:38–9).

Delhi musicians Ustād Yār Muhammad and Ustād Nūr Muhammad together with singers Āmin Khān, Kiśanrām and Pokhrāj. Mīr Muhammad Umār, a dignity from the Ajmer dargāh, is also portrayed. Probably several Muslim religious authorities were present in the state and influenced the development of ideas. Rupnagar, for example, was also the seat of a Sufi saint known as Malang Śāh in the eighteenth century. According to legend the rulers used to ask his advice before military enterprises.[14]

There were courts where Persian poetry was appreciated[15], and Braj authors like Nāgarīdās experimented also with Urdu, or rather Rekhtā '(language) interspersed (with Persian and Arabic words)' [16], as it was called at that time. Themes of Persian poetry like that of the love of Laila and Majnun also appeared both in painting[17] and in poetry.[18] The courts, however, did not follow entirely what was seen in the imperial centre. Rajasthani court culture is a mixture of both Muslim and local Hindu elements. In spite of the works mentioned above it seems that comparatively little genuine Persian literature was produced in the courts of Rajasthan. The dominant literary languages were Braj, Rajasthani and Sanskrit.[19]

Poets at the court

Works on Kishangarh miniatures do not fail to mention that the most important connoisseur patron, Nāgarīdās, was also a renowned poet. In fact, though he tried his hand at painting[20], it is rather poetry that constituted his artistic production. It is also clear that he was not the only poet in Kishangarh-Rupnagar. In fact poetry as well as music and dance played a prominent role in the life of the courts of contemporary Rajasthan.

The high position that poetry enjoyed can be glimpsed from the fact that in many courts poets were heavily rewarded[21] and that poetry was part of the daily routine of the rulers. The 19th century poet Navīn for example put into verse what he received for the composition of his Raṅgataṅga.

रीझ चतुर महराज वर गुन निधि मूरति काम।
दीने अब तिह मौज में साज बाज धन धाम॥ 26॥

[14] Haidar (1995:15) relying on Rose, H.A. 1883. *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes in the Punjab and the North-West Province Based on the census report for the Punjab.* Reprinted in Delhi, 1980.

[15] Khan (1981:43, 58).

[16] Nāgarīdās's Rekhtā is Urdu with some Braj features. His works in Rekhtā are the collection of songs called *Rekhtā* (Gupta 1965 I: 498-512) and the *Iśk-caman* (Gupta 1965 II:48–52) written in *dohās*.

[17] Haidar (1995:137–8)

[18] In the same *Iśk-caman*. See Gupta (1965 II:51). For a translation of couplets 33–35 see Haidar (1995:138).

[19] For a survey of Rajasthani Court literature in these languages in the 18th century see Kathuria (1987:196–215).

[20] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:7, 19) and Haidar (2000:89).

[21] Some documents of payment of land and money to Vṛnd are published in Celer (1973:337–40).

बसन दिए भूषन दिए दिए मतंग उतंग।
ग्राम दिए निज नाम हित सुनि करि रंगतरंग॥ 27॥[22]

The excellent and intelligent king, who is a treasury of virtues and the (living) form of the God of Love, was pleased
and in his delight gave me materials, riches and abode.
He gave clothes, gave ornaments and gave big elephants.
He gave villages when he heard the Raṅgataraṅga *(written) for his name.*

Similarly, it can be supposed that with small variations daily routine must have been the same in all the courts in the neighbouring Rajput states. The *Pratāp prakās*, a work about Maharaja Pratāp Singh of Jaipur (r. 1778–1803), describes the daily routine of the Prince. Although it has a tendency to idealise, this description shows how important a place arts occupied in the life of the ruler and hence in the court. According to the *Pratāp prakās*,

> The minstrels *(bandījan)* start singing in praise of the family at four *ghaṛī* at night. The king, having heard it, rises in the period shortly before dawn *(brahmāmuhūrta)*. He meditates on his guru and after having a *darśan* of a cow and performing *chāyādān*-ceremony places his foot on the earth. Then he sits on a stool studded with jewels and washes his mouth. The petitioners submit their appeals and the artistes give performance to the devotional songs composed by him in *Vibhāsa* and *Bhairavī* (*rāgiṇī*s). He then attends to his daily morning duties. Arrangements for his bath are made... Having taken his bath, he attends to the *Pancāyatan* worship with Vedic hymns... Then he distributes the regular daily gifts among Brahmins and pandits *(nityadān)*... [He dresses himself] and starts for Śrī Govindadev's temple. Chiefs from different places, his kinsmen, *tāzīm* and *khāscaukī* nobles *(sardārs)*, scholars *(paṇḍits)*, poets *(kabīsvar)* and bards *(bhāṭ* and *cāraṇ)* stand in rows to pay respect and offer blessings to the king who sets out seated in a handcart... *[Then he visits the department of elephants where an elephant fight is arranged and visits the royal stables and retires to his palace where he takes rest, has lunch and then he gives a public audience where]* he attends to state business and petitions submitted by representatives of different states. He then turns to the artists *(guṇījan)*. The scholars have their discussions on the six schools of philosophy, the poets recite their eulogical poems *(kabīsvar jas paṛhaĩ)*, the bards recite the glory of the family *(bhāṭ, cāraṇ birada paṛhaĩ)*, the musicians *(kalāvat)* perform the six *rāga*s and thirty *rāgiṇī*s. [After the public audience he retires again for three hours and then practices archery, takes a bath; changes his dress, plays chess and attends a performance of dance.] The artists *(guṇījan)* come and after salutation they set their instruments... and the dancers *(naṭvã̃)* begin

[22]Quoted in Nagendra (1964:411)

> to show their feats... Thus having pleased the king with their performances they receive heavy rewards. The programme ends about midnight.[23]

This passage may give a picture of the life in the court with different groups of artist such as *bandījan, kabīsvar, bhāṭ, cāraṇ, guṇījan* and *naṭvā̃*. Its idealising tendency, however, does not let it show the complexity of poetry enjoyed at the court. As the editor of the text noted the *Pratāp prakās* does not mention certain important aspects of Pratāp Singh such as he himself being an excellent poet and a pioneer in Rekhtā poetry.[24] From this passage it seems that poetry either served as a vehicle of religious thought or of praise of the family or simply as text for the songs. The same idealising tendency may account for the fact that the text does not seem to give any place to non political secular poetry, namely *rīti*-poetry that was the most popular literature at that time.

One of our main interests in this article is the poetic atmosphere in Kishangarh-Rupnagar. How much of it can be reconstructed? Apart from Nāgarīdās who were the major poets?

Some of the most famous poets of the court belonged to the family of the ruler. This certainly testifies to the deep interest in poetry of the rulers but also suggests that members of the royal family received better recognition and probably more material support for spreading their manuscripts than others. Already Maharaja Rūp Singh has some stray devotional *pad*s to his credit.[25] Haidar claims that Mān Singh wrote *Sampradāy Kalpadrum*, a work on the genealogy of the gurus of the *Puṣṭimārga*.[26] His successor, Rāj Singh is the author of longer works such as *Subāhuvilās* and *Rukmiṇī vivāh caritra* as well as of some stray *pad*s.[27] He married twice and his second wife, Bāṅkāvatī (Brajdāsī) produced a complete Braj translation of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which is today called the *Brajdāsī Bhāgavata*. As late as 1734 Queen Bāṃkāvatī had a daughter who was called Sundar Kuṃvari. Princess Sundar Kuṃvari, author of twelve poetic works on bhakti themes[28], was a poetess whose style, according to Kiśorīlāl Gupta[29], is close to that of Ānandghan and of Nāgarīdās. The overwhelming majority of her poetic output consists in longer poems on bhakti themes, but she also wrote some *muktak*s, independent quatrains, that can be interpreted as expressions of both mundane and divine love. The following *savaiyā*s are

[23] Based on passages from Bahura (1983 [Hindi section]:5–12) and on their translation by Bahura (1983 [English section]:3–7).

[24] Bahura (1983 [English section]:15)

[25] Two songs are quoted in Gupta (1965 I:28-29). Haidar (1995:24) also quoted and translated a *pad*, which she had taken from Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1966:10).

[26] Haidar (1995:12). However, her reference to Gupta (1965 I:30) is incorrect.

[27] Gupta (1965 I:29–30). Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1966:17.) seems to know about more works and gives the list as *Sukh Samīp, Bāhuvilās, Rukmiṇī haran, Rājpaṃcak kathā varṇan* and *Vīrsiṃhasāgar*. He also mentions a manuscript of *Rājsiṃhajī kī vāṇī* in the Sarasvatī Bhaṇḍār of Kishangarh which contains 176 folios (note 3).

[28] For a list of her works see Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1966:17) and Gupta (1965 I:30). Her earliest dated composition was from 1760 and the last work from 1803. Her works have been edited by Brajvallabhaśaraṇ (1983–84).

[29] Gupta (1965 I:30).

cries of an abandoned beloved, which in their passionate description of feelings, instead of the outer signs of the sentiments, as was customary, remind one of Ānandghan's poems.

प्याय महा मदिरा निज माधुरी लोचन लोभिन लायो हवेषो।
चेटक ज्यों सुखस्वाद लुभाय बढ़ाय बिसास हुलास बिसेषो।
लै ललचाय भुराय दुराय सु हाय बिहाय जृगौ अब मेषो।
जान परी निठुरान की बान पै रीझ के आगे न सूझै परेखो॥[30]

You have made me drink the liquor of your sweetness and brought intense longing into my covetous eyes.
Like a miracle with the taste of happiness you aroused my desire and confidence and increased my joy.
You tantalized me, bewildered me and disappeared; alas, even a moment passes like an aeon.
I have learnt the customs of the cruel ones but face to face with delight there is no remorse.[31]

चौंकत ही चित कानन में उररै जब जो कोऊ नाव ले यातें।
आस सौं सास बिसास गहै रहै प्रेम प्रतीत वहै सुध आतें।
दै दै सँतोषन रोषन सों अब सोषन मोष ज्यों की हित घातें।
आहि सहै अस है पै चहै सु कहै कोऊ वाही बिसासी की बातें॥[32]

My ears are affected as soon as my mind startles that somebody has taken his name.[33]
My breath keeps clutching at confidence out of hope when I remember that trust in love.
Again and again you pleased me with contentment and pleasure but now by giving dryness it is as if you have smashed and abandoned your affection.
Either one bears it or not but one wants to talk about that treacherous one.

She also tried her hand at writing in Rekhta. The choice of this style also brings the poem closer to the sentiments of one-sided love as expressed in Persian and Urdu ghazals,

कृष्ण तो पियाले पिये चस्म मतवाले हैफ
कैफ उसी चले मुझ रोम रोम छाइयां।
बस्मौं करि बांधा लट तस्मौ चित खूब ख्याली

[30] Bihārīśaraṇ (1930:600) and Gupta (1965 I:31).
[31] The word *parekho* means 'remorse' in Braj. The 'face to face' phrase suggests a simultaneous action and its original Sanskrit *par-īkṣ* 'examining' meaning cannot be excluded.
[32] Bihārīśaraṇ (1930:599) and Brajvallabhaśaraṇ (1983–84 II:95).
[33] The loose grammar of the poem, as much expressive of an agitated state of mind as of spontaneity of the style, cannot be retained in translation.

गस्मौं मै न जान दिलदारि यों भुराइयां।
वैसी करि ऐसी करी आफित असह परी
हाय रुह चोरी इस ख्यांमित बिताइयां।
कहना रह्या न अब सहना सलाह सब
यारी दा कुपेच मैडे नैनों दी कमाइयां॥[34]

Having drunk your cup, oh Krishna, alas, my eyes became intoxicated;[35] *its exhilaration spread in my each and every pore.*
Having subjugated my mind you have splendidly bound it with the strap of your tresses. In my unconsciousness I did not know that my sweetheart would thus beguile me[36]*.*
By your behaving this way and that way unbearable disaster befell me; Oh, because of this theft of heart I have to live this doomsday.
Nothing remains to say now, I have to forbear the advice of all — It is my eyes that earned this turn of affection for the worse.

Thousands of poems were also written by Nāgarīdās[37] both in Kishangarh and in Vrindaban and his beloved, Banī Ṭhanī, wrote bhakti-poetry under the pen-name 'Rasik Bihārī'. The following song is about Holī, the festival of colours in the month of Phālgun. The reference of the first line to the grove palace evokes the atmosphere of Kishangarh art.

कुंज महल में आज रंग होरी हो।
फाग खेल में बना बनी की ह्वै रही गठजोरी हो।
मुदित ह्वै नारि गुलाल उड़ावैं गावैं गारि दुहुँ ओरी हो।
दूलह रसिकबिहारी सुंदर दुलहिनि नवल किसोरी हो॥ [38]

Today it is the merriment of the festival of colours in the grove palace:
In (this) sport of Phalgun the bridegroom and the bride are tying the (marriage) knot.
Delighted, the women throw red powder and sing mocking songs on both sides.
The bridegroom is the beautiful connoisseur Krishna and the bride is the young Radha.

It is important to note that the poets belonging to the royal family wrote overwhelmingly on devotional themes and produced very little overtly secular poetry. Just as in the miniatures of Nihal Cand, the most celebrated of the Kishangarh painters, secular activities and sentiments were rather projected into the divine plays of Radha and Krishna.

[34] Bihārīśaraṇ (1930:598) and Brajvallabhaśaraṇ (1983–84 II:94).
[35] Or 'It is pity, oh Krishna, to have drunk the cup of your intoxicating eyes (since)...'
[36] Or 'would forget me'.
[37] His earliest dated work is his *Manorath majarī* from 1723.
[38] Quoted in Śarmā and Snātak (1974:213).

Comparatively little is known about other poets who lived in the court in the 18th century.[39] The most famous of them was Vṛnd[40] (1643–1723), who before settling in Kishangarh lived in the court of Aurangzeb as a tutor or guardian of the emperor's grandson, prince Azim-uś-Śān. Maharaja Mān Singh seems to have been so much moved by his poetry that he gave him gifts already in Delhi. The poet was finally brought to Kishangarh by Rāj Singh who in return of his support to Bahādur Śāh in the succession war in 1707 was permitted to take Vṛnd to his court.[41] Since that time the poet's family has become attached to the court of Kishangarh. His son, Vallabh, was in the service of Maharaja Rāj Singh and his grandson, Sanehīrām, served Maharaja Bahādur Singh.[42] Vṛnd's most famous work, the *Nīti-satsaī* (1704), is not on bhakti themes but on morals. Just as most court poets of his time he wrote chiefly about secular themes.

Another well-known poet is Haricaraṇdās Tripāṭhī (also known as Hari Kavi)[43] who lived under the patronage of Bahādur Singh. His works are not only independent compositions like *Sabhā-prakās* (1757), *Kavivallabh* and *Rāmāyansār* but also commentaries on the most celebrated works of the rītikāl: on Bihārī's *Satsaī* (1777), on Jasvant Singh's *Bhāṣābhūṣan* and on Kesavdās's *Kavipriyā* (c. 1778).

The case of 'Uncle' Hit Vṛndāvandās illustrates the point that princely courts gave shelter to poets who had strong sectarian affiliation and because of inimical circumstances had to leave their monasteries. Vṛndāvandās was a poet of the Rādhāvallabhī sect, who in 1757, at the time of the massacre in Braj, fled to Farrukhabad[44] and then to Bharatpur to the shelter of Maharaja Sūraj Mal (1757–1763)[45], later he spent the years 1774–78 in Kishangarh in the court of Bahādur Singh.[46]

Apart from Vṛnd and Haricarandās Dickinson and Khandalavala[47] mentioned the names of Hīrālāl[48], Munshi Kanhīrām[49], Pannālāl[50], Vaiṣṇav Vijay-

[39] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:7); see also Gupta (1965:35).

[40] On Vṛnd see Celer (1971) and Celer (1973). He is also quoted by Nāgarīdās in manuscript 'ya' of his *Chūṭak kabitta*. Gupta (1965:7).

[41] Celer (1973:53). See also Haidar (1996:57) relying on *Chiefs and Leading Families in Rajputana*. (1894) Calcutta. Reprinted in Gurgaon (1992:25).

[42] Celer (1973:12) and Dīkṣit (1993:3–5).

[43] Miśra (1972:421). Gauṛ (1964:619). Miśra and Miśra (1913:780–781). Nāgarīdās knew about his poetry, since he is quoted in *Srīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyan-nidhi-prakās* 19.

[44] *Harikalā Belī* 4 quoted in Bangha (1997:236).

[45] *Harikalā Belī* 191 quoted in Bangha (1997:231).

[46] McGregor (1984:162).

[47] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:7).

[48] Hīrālāl Sanādhya is quoted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇ-nidhi-prakās* 17 and 30. He is different from Hīrālāl Kāyastha (son of Hemrāj) who lived a century earlier and wrote his *Rukmiṇīmaṅgal* in 1647.

[49] Quoted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇ-nidhi-prakās* 31.

[50] Probably identical with Kalha Pannā quoted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇ-nidhi-prakās* 29 and 16.

cand[51] and Dāhivā̃ Vijayrām[52] who were present in Nāgarīdās's court although no source was given for this list. With the exception of stray verses by Munshi Kanhīrām[53] found in some manuscripts or quoted by Nāgarīdās elsewhere[54], very little seems to be known about the literary activities of the rest. The best available source about them is a poetic compilation mentioning all these names along with those of Rasik Bihārī (Banī Ṭhanī), Haricaraṇdās, Purohit Brajlāl and Bhaṭṭa Brajnāth. This work is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇ-nidhi-prakās* compiled and partly written by Nāgarīdās in 1742. It contains poems by the above mentioned poets in praise of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Banī Ṭhanī was present in the court at that time. Brajnāth Bhaṭṭa, the teacher, *vidyāguru*, of Bāṅkāvatī, Nāgaridās' step-mother, as well as Haricarandās, who was reported to be in the court of Bahādur Singh in later years, might well have been there in 1742. From their presence we can suppose that the rest were also in the court at that time. This seems to be corroborated by the prose passages between the poems of the *Srīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇ-nidhi-prakās* suggesting that the verses were composed for a religious gathering. These lesser known authors, however, were not professional court poets; otherwise there would have been further literary traces. They were probably employed in the court as priests or scribes as their names suggest.

The literary ideals

The literary atmosphere in the court of Kishangarh partly corresponded to what is seen on the Kishangarh miniatures. The Kishangarh-school of painting infused the achievements of Mughal art into the already popular Krishna-bhakti themes. We can observe a development from the overtly secular approach of earlier art as illustrated in Bhavānīdās's miniatures and Vṛnd's poetry towards an art dressed in religious ideas in Nāgarīdās and Nihal Cand. While Bhavānīdās and Vṛnd came from Delhi, Nāgarīdās and Nihal Cand were born in Kishangarh. In this second phase bhakti gained prominence over overtly secular themes like hunting, court scenes etc.

Two most popular themes of the later phase—the celebration of the feminine ideal and the representation of the love-games of Radha and Krishna in sophisticated royal surroundings—can be abundantly observed also in the poetry.

घूंघट झीनैं दुकूल को झूलैं झुके दृग बंकित कानन छ्वै।
जुग भौंहनि बीच थक्यो मन गौंहन होठन लाल रह्यो रँग च्वै।

[51] Probably identical with Binaicand *(Vaiṣṇavī nām Carandās)* quoted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇ-nidhi-prakās* 18, 32, 33 and 34 as well as in manuscript 'ya' of *Cūṭak kabitta* (Gupta 1965:7).

[52] Quoted in manuscript 'ya' of *Cūṭak kabitta* (Gupta 1965:7) and in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇ-nidhi-prakās* 14, 15 and 28. The *kabitta*s of Vijayrām (!) are also quoted in a manuscript dated from VS1814 (1757AD) [Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur 14437(3)3].

[53] Cf. Miśra and Miśra (1913:1020).

[54] Kanhīrām's song *Kīra uṭhi bolyo ika ...* is quoted in *Pad muktāvalī* 142.

मंद हँसै सुख नागर कौं मुख चौंपन की उपमा तब ह्वै।
तिमिरावली साँवरे दंतनि कैं हित मैंन धरे मनौं दीपक द्वै॥[55]

Her fine veil of dukūla is swinging: she lowers her curved eyes that touch her ears.
My mind, transfixed with her red lips oozing beauty, languished on her eyebrows.
In her gentle smile is Krishna's (and Nāgarīdās's) joy and her face is a simile of desires.
As if the God of Love held two lamps for the thread of darkness of her black teeth.[56]

The description of the divine couple also gives an excellent occasion to celebrate nature.

लहकि लहकि जात लगि कैं पवन लता
महकि महकि उठै मालती सुवास है।
गहकि गहकि गावैं कोकिला तरुन चढ़ी
कुंज छबि पुंज काम सेवत निवास है।
नागरिया स्यामा स्याम सोहैं सुख सैनी पर
देखैं द्रुम रंध्रनि न कोऊ सखी पास है।
दोऊ मन हरैं दोऊ रीझि रीझि अंक भरैं
अंगनि अनंग बाढ़्यौ रंग मैं बिलास है॥[57]

Rising and rising the wind moves the creepers and the scent of the blossoms is wafted again and again.
Exhilarated the cuckoos on the trees sing; in the grove Kāma serves the dwelling-place with a plenitude of beauty.
(Nāgarīdās says how) the dark Krishna and Radha shine with joy on a bed; they watch through the branches of the trees if no companion is around.
The two capture the mind and embrace each other with joy—in their limbs the God of Love has grown and in their pleasure love.

How did these two aspects gain prominence in Kishangarh at that time? There were three types of major forces working behind the increased emphasis on the feminine: religious, literary and personal. The religious force is the rise of Radha, Krishna's beloved, to the status of an independent goddess. She was different from all Hindu goddesses in that for long she had not had a role independent from Krishna. In painting it is not until the eighteenth century that a strong iconographical development of Radha can be seen in India. At

[55]Gupta (1965 II:123).
[56]The image behind this line is that black antimony was applied to the teeth while gold dots decorated the two front teeth.
[57]Gupta (1965 II:93).

Kishangarh the Radha image started to be painted not only as Krishna's consort but also as a subject in its own right.[58] Among the bhakti sects, however, it was not the Puṣtimārga, as suggested by some scholars[59] that put Radha in such a high position. Although the Puṣtimārga recognises Radha as Krishna's Śakti, divine energy, and thus entitles her to worship in her own right, Vallabhan devotees rather worship Krishna alone or with Radha in a subordinate position.[60]

The emergence of Radha in Kishangarh cannot be examined without taking into the picture the tenets of the other influential sect within the state, the Nimbārka Sampradāy. Since the 16th century Radha has been awarded a prominent place in this sect as one of the four major elements of its theology, Radha, Krishna, Vrindaban and the *sakhī*s, Radha's female companions. The human being aspires to the position of *sakhī* and delights in witnessing and serving the love-games of the ever newly wed divine couple. The fact that the devotee perceives himself or herself as a companion of Radha rather than as a male companion of Krishna, a *sakhā*, indicates that in this school Radha has become the focus of attention.[61]

In eighteenth-century Braj literature, however, Radha was given a prominent place sometimes inextricably connected to the secular presentation of woman categorised under different behavioural patterns in love. This genre was called *nāyikā-bheda*, 'categories of heroine'. Another popular literary theme was the *nakh-śikh-varṇan*, the description of a heroine from tip to toe.

Experts on the Kishangarh painting do not fail to mention that the most outstanding patron, Nāgarīdās, drew his inspiration not only from religious ideas of the Radha-Krishna theme, but also from his mundane affection to a living woman known as Banī Ṭhanī. Banī Ṭhanī, originally named as Viṣṇupriyā[62], had been purchased as a slave by Rāj Singh in 1727, at the age of 10. She was taken into the employ of Queen Bāṃkāvatī in 1731 where she became an accomplished poet and singer. She also spent some time in Delhi with the queen. Nāgarīdās became enamoured of her probably around 1739 when she returned from Delhi and she became the prince's mistress.[63] In fact it was Banī Ṭhanī and not his wife who accompanied Nāgarīdās into his self-imposed retirement in Braj.[64] Some scholars went so far as to conjecture that she also provided inspiration for the invention of Kishangarh facial formula.[65] Although this hypothesis can be seriously questioned[66] it must be accepted that Nāgarīdās's

[58] About the emergence of the Radha-image in miniature painting see Haidar (forthcoming).
[59] Haidar (1995:106).
[60] Only 3 of the eleven chief Vallabhan deity-images have consorts and even these three have Radha in a subordinate position. Cf. Vaudeville (1982:329 note 26).
[61] About the development of the theology of Radha in the Nimbārka school see Clémentin-Ojha (1990: 327–76).
[62] Khan (1986:9) suggests this name on the basis of *bahī*-documents.
[63] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:8–9); Haidar (1995:128).
[64] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:11–12).
[65] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:9–10); Randhawa and Randhawa (1980:9).
[66] Haidar (1995:126–8) relying on Khan, Faiyaz Ali 1979. 'Kishangarh Painting and Banī Thani' in *Roop Lekha* Vol. XL, pp. 83–88 and on Khan (1986:9).

secular love and the literary ideals current in Kishangarh cannot be detached from each other.

As far as the other thematic peculiarity of the Kishangarh school, the love games of Radha and Krishna, is concerned, Dickinson and Khandalavala wrote in the context of the Kishangarh miniatures:

> Their theme takes life and substance from the most consecrated of all themes, the shining of the feminine ideal recreated in the amours of Radha and Krishna. These, as it were, form a passionate breviary of the customs of lovers in the eternal kingdom of love. Quarrels and sweet reconciliations, momentary desertion followed by abject submission, wounded pride and then unutterable longing. Running through the idyllic themes of the pastorale of a cowherd and his maid, the true devotee identifies himself with Radha only to realise that pride, vanity, waywardness are of no avail to win the love of the almighty. Only an absolute devotion can reveal to the devotee the way of the grace of God. It is true, the feminine element predominates in the paintings; it is an art consecrated to beauty... and yet if one withdraws the mystical element hovering alike over silent forest groves and marble palaces, there is left only the lover and his lass. For the divine bridegroom and his bride have vanished from our ken.[67]

This 'mystical element' or rather the bhakti themes in Kishangarh, however, were more than a pretext for depicting secular themes. In poetry for example an essential part of Nāgarīdās's oeuvre is preoccupied with the individual's search for the divinity. In fact it was during the time of his active patronage that bhakti themes gained prominence in the Kishangarh paintings.[68] It was also at that time that the royal family built a temple in Braj known as Nāgarī Kunj, which is still in the custody of the Nimbārka sect.[69] According to the Nimbārkī scholar Brajvallabhśaraṇ one of the main impulses for the construction of this temple may have been the poetess-queen Bāṃkāvatī.[70] The emergence of bhakti themes in miniatures and in poetry after the more secular approach of the Delhi artists is an interesting feature in the Kishangarh court. Already Navina Haidar noted that within a Rajasthani context, Kishangarh was unusual in developing a full blown bhakti idiom as late as the mid-eighteenth century.[71] Factors like self assertion on a spiritual ground against a weakening Delhi power, the increasing contact with Braj or an energetic pious queen's getting more prominence after the death of the first queen, Caturkuṃvarī in 1719 may account for this development.

Some scholars have tried to show that Nāgarīdās derived the driving force

[67] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:18).
[68] Haidar (1995:101) states that bhakti themes appeared after 1725.
[69] Entwistle (1987:210).
[70] Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1 966:15).
[71] Haidar (1995:56).

of his art and patronage from his affiliation to the Vallabh Sampradāy.[72] The question of the inspiration for his poetry and patronage is, however, far more complex. Nāgarīdās may well have been initiated into the Vallabh Sampradāy because the sect has been associated with the royal court since the time of Rūp Singh (r. 1629–43) till the present day. Rūp Singh symbolically dedicated his state to Śrī Kalyān Rāy, the deity of the Puṣṭimārga at Kishangarh.[73] However the religious interests of a princely state in Rajasthan in the eighteenth century are unlikely to be extended only towards one sect. In neighbouring Jaipur for example there were three protective deities belonging to different sects[74] and other sects like the Puṣtimārga or the Nimbārkīs who did not have an important deity in the capital were not necessarily less influential than the others.[75] Similarly in Kishangarh royal patronage seems to have been extended to the Nimbārkīs after the time of Kiśan Singh.[76]

Nāgarīdās's poetry was not limited to sectarian tenets and he seems to be influenced more by later bhakti poetry that emphasises the love plays of Radha and Krishna than by the Vallabh school. This attitude would also be encouraged by the Nimbārkīs who had their headquarters in the vicinity of Kishangarh, in Salemabad, and where at that time lived one of the most respected religious authorities of Rajasthan, Vṛndāvandev, the guru of Queen Bāṃkāvatī.

Nāgarīdās's liberal religious approach is well illustrated in the *maṅgalācaran* of the *Pad prabodh mālā*:

मेरे येई वेदव्यास।
श्री हरिवंश ऽरु व्यास गदाधर परमानंद नंददास॥
श्री हरिदास बिहारिनिदास बिट्ठल बिपुल सुजान।
रामदास नाभा दामोदर अलि भगवान सखी भगवान॥
चतुर्भुजदास दास मेहा पुनि श्रीभट चतुर बिहारी।
प्रीतम रसिक रसिक वल्लभ अरु ध्रुव रस रीति उचारि॥
तुलसीदास मीराँ माधव अरु उभै नागरीदास।
आसकरन नरसी वृंदावन रुचि माधुरी सुख रास॥
कृष्णदास सूर गोविंद अरु कुंभन छीत स्वामि अनुरक्ता।
श्रुति पुरान मेरैं इनके पद हौं श्रोता ए वक्ता॥
तजि इनके पद अर्थ सुनै को नाना मत बिभचार।
मूल सास्त्र सिध क्यौं हेरैं पद छाड़ि अमृत फल सार॥

[72] Dickinson and Khandalavala (1959:18–19); Gupta (1965:37–57); Randhawa and Randhawa (1980:10); Haidar (1996:12). Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1966) tried to present Nāgarīdās as a follower of the Nimbārka sect but his ideas were refused by Khan (1974:9–16).

[73] Haidar (1995:5–6) based on Khan (1986:35).

[74] Jamvāīmātā, the domestic deity of the royal family, was taken over from the Mīnās, Govindadev belonged to the Gauḍīy sect and Sītārām to the Rāmānandī sect. See Clémentin-Ojha (1999:25–27).

[75] Clémentin-Ojha (1999:76, 86–94).

[76] As claimed by Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1966:9) though he did not quote any source material for this assertion.

रसना श्रवननि मैं इनके पद रहो हिय मैं निर्दूषन।
'नागरिया' इनकी पद रज सो होहु भाल भूषन॥1॥[77]

These are the authors of the Vedas for me:
Śrī Harivaṃśa and (Harirām) Vyās, Gadādhar (Bhaṭṭ), Paramānanda(dās), Nandadās;
Śrī Haridās, Bihārinīdās, the intelligent Biṭṭhal Bipul;
Rāmdās, Nābhā(dās), Dāmodar ('Sevak'), (Ananya) Ali Bhagavān, Sakhī Bhagavān;
Caturbhujdās, Mehā Dās then Srībhaṭṭa (and) the clever Bihārī;
Prītam Rasik, Rasik Vallabh and Dhruv(dās) proclaimed the correct usage of the rasa.
Tulsīdās, Mīrā (Bāī), Mādhav(dās) and both Nāgarīdās;[78]
Āskaran, Narsī (Mehtā), Vṛndāvan(dās?) (and) Mādhurī(dās) are interested in the joy of the rāsa-dance.
Kṛṣṇadās, Sūr(dās), Govinda(svāmī) and Kumbhan(dās), the loving Chītsvāmī
For me their songs are the Vedas and the Purāṇas, I am the listener, they the speaker;
Who will abandon their songs and meaning[79] *and listen to diverse opinions and deviations?*
Why should we look at the root texts or at the feet of (accomplished) siddhas giving up the essence of the fruits of immortality?
Their songs are on my tongue, in my ears and I remain unpolluted in my heart.
Nāgarīdās (says:) the dust of their feet[80] *should be the ornament of my forehead.*

This list gives an idea of which devotee-poets' works Nāgarīdās was acquainted with. He recognised devotees with different sectarian affiliation to be his masters. There are bhaktas from among the *Aṣṭachāp*, 'the eight seals', of Vallabhācārya's Puṣṭimārga (Paramānandadās, Nandadās, Caturbhujdās[81], Kṛṣṇadās, Sūrdās, Govindasvāmī, Kumbhandās, and Chītsvāmī). Apart from them Āskaran 'Kachvāhā' Maharaja Kiśan Singh's uncle[82] and the Gujarati Narsī Mehṭā were also considered to be Puṣṭimārgīs. There are devotees from Caitanya's Gauḍīy Sampradāy (Gadādhar Bhaṭṭa and Mādhavdās 'Jagannāthī'), the Haridāsī Sampradāy (Svāmī Haridās, Bihārinīdās, Biṭṭhal Bipul, Srībhaṭṭ

[77] Gupta (1965 I:1).
[78] Gupta (1965 I:14) argues that one of the two Nāgarīdās is identical with Nāgardev, a religious leader in Svāmī Haridās's lineage, and the second with 'Nehī' Nāgarīdās, a follower of Hit Harivaṃśa. This may also be a reference to two brothers who were the pupils of Bihārinīdās: Nāgarīdās and Sarasdās (d. 1626). Cf. McGregor (1984:93).
[79] There is a double meaning here with the words *pad* 'foot, song', *artha* 'meaning, aim' and with *padārtha* 'gem'.
[80] There is a conventional pun here with the double meaning of *pad* 'foot' and 'song'
[81] Apart from the Caturbhujdās of the *Aṣṭachāp* there is also a famous *Rādhāvallabhī* poet of this name: Caturbhujdās 'Murlīdhar'. It is not clear which of them Nāgarīdās refers to.
[82] Entwistle (1987:210 note 417).

and Nāgarīdās), the Rādhāvallabhī Sampradāy of Hit Harivaṃśa (Harivaṃśa, Harirām Vyās, Dāmodar 'Sevak', Rasikdās (?), 'Nehī' Nāgarīdās (?) and Dhruvdās). Some poets without sectarian affiliation (Mīrā Bāī) are also mentioned as well as non Krishna bhaktas (Nābhādās and Tulsīdās).

Salemabad

Many of the Rajasthan states had influential deities and hence influential religious centres within their precincts. Nāthdvārā in the Mewar state for example is the home of the principal Puṣṭimārgī deity, Srīnāthjī and Jaipur gave shelter to Govindadev of the Gauḍīy sect. The principal religious centre within the Kishangarh state was the monastery of Salemabad, the centre of the Nimbārka Sampradāy in Rajasthan and the seat of its leader, Srījī Mahārāj. In the past centuries the Nimbārka Sampradāy has been considered to be one of the four orthodox Vaishnava schools *(catuḥsampradāya)*. The sect states that it was started by Nimbārkācārya, who in his *Vedāntaparijātasaurabha* advocated the *bhedābheda* 'difference and nondifference' theory about the relationship between the individual soul and the absolute. Today, however, it is not the writings of Nimbārka but Harivyāsdev's *Mahāvānī* that Nimbārkīs hold in highest esteem. The *Mahāvānī* depicts the love games of Radha and Krishna and in its approach is clearly influenced by the concepts of Svāmī Haridās and Hit Harivaṃśa. Nimbārkī tradition puts the text back to the 16th century.

The seat at Salemabad was established in the 17th century by Paraśurāmdev one of Harivyāsdev's twelve disciples. The *mahant*, superior, of the seat is the spiritual leader of a community of ascetics and laics. Since the establishment of the Salemabad seat many of its superiors had literary activities. The most famous of them was the same Paraśurāmdev, whose Hindi *Paraśurāmsāgar* is close to *nirgun* poetry proclaiming the 'attributeless' God to be immanent in every being and emphasising the power of his name.

> परसा दरपन नैन को उभय मिलाप अनूप।
> जो देखे निज रूप को सो देखे हरि रूप॥ 53॥
> ज्यों दर्पन पावक पड़े परसत ही रवि धूप।
> परसुराम हरि नाम ते प्रगटे हरि निज रूप॥ 54॥[83]
>
> *The meeting of the mirror and the eye is extraordinary.*
> *The one who sees his own form sees also the form of God.*
> *As fire falls into the mirror when the sunshine touches it.*
> *By the name of Hari, Paraśurām, God's own form becomes manifest.*

In the eighteenth century the ascetic branch of the Haridāsī Sampradāy became associated with the Nimbārkīs. This event took place due to Savāī Jai Singh's regulatory endeavours in the field of religion. Jai Singh, Maharaja of Jaipur (r. 1699–1743), made an effort to ensure that only those sects get

[83] Bihārīśaraṇ (1930:78).

royal recognition that can trace back their origin to one of the classical Hindu sects. The ascetic branch of the Haridāsī Sampradāy took refuge in the older, prestigious Nimbārka sect. The Haridāsīs in turn enlivened it with their popular approach to the love-games of the divine couple Radha and Krishna. Ācārya Vṛndāvandev's *Gītāmṛt Gaṅgā* is an excellent expression of devotion towards the divine couple.

आज सुख लूटत लाल विहारी बैठे चित्र विचित्र अटारी।
ज्यौं ज्यौं पिय निरखत मुख त्यौं त्यौं हंसि हंसि उर लपटति पियारी।
चुंबन दै पुनि लै लज्जित ह्वै छिन ह्वै जाति नियारी।
वृंदावन प्रभु तब अंकन भरि रीझि प्रकासत कामकला री॥ 7, 19॥[84]

Today the dear Krishna riots in pleasure sitting in an ornamented upper room.
As her lover is watching her face the beloved one smilingly takes him into her embrace.
She gives and then takes kisses and ashamed[85] *she separates herself for a moment.*
Then Vrindaban's Lord embraces her rejoicingly—displays his art of love.

The Nimbārka sect was not confined to Salemabad. During Ānandghan's time, it had shrines in places like Mathura, Vrindaban, Jaipur and Rupnagar served by members of the sect. In Vrindaban for example it had a small temple at Baṃsī Baṭ[86], the Banyan tree on the bank of the Yamuna under which Krishna is said to have played his flute. The seat in Rupnagar[87] was the place of religious discussions between Nimbārkīs and Vallabhans[88] and Vṛndāvandev also stayed in the town for some time.[89]

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the sect had excellent contacts with the court of Jaipur. The town had a high number of *Nimbārkī*s and even Vṛndāvandev the *mahant* of Salemabad (1697–1740) used to spend a part of the year there. It was at his times that serious royal patronage was given to his sect since documentation about it in the royal archives date back as early as 1719. The centre in Salemabad received the revenues of some villages within the Jaipur state. Patronage was not extended because of an important *Nimbārkī* temple in Jaipur but because of the superior's good contacts with the palace and especially with the women's quarters.[90] Today only one *Nimbārkī* temple is known within the palace precincts, the *Srījī kī moṛī*, which was established in

[84] *Śrīsarveśvar* (1952–53:45).
[85] An alternative translation is 'giving a kiss she is ashamed to take it back and she separates herself for a moment'.
[86] Entwistle (1987:414).
[87] This must be the 'Gopāl Dvārā' mentioned by Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1966:10).
[88] Haidar (1996:15) (based on personal communication of Faiyaz Ali Khan).
[89] Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1966:14).
[90] Clémentin-Ojha (1999:86). About Jaipur's contact with Nimbarkīs in the early nineteenth century see also Clémentin-Ojha (forthcoming).

1791 by the mother of Maharaja Savāī Pratāp Singh (1778–1803) for an image known as *Gopījanavallabh*. However there may have been *Nimbārkī* sites in the town already at the time of Vṛndāvandevācārya. Those years, according to Brajvallabhśaraṇ, a Benares paṇḍit, Jayrāmdās Śeṣ, and ācārya Brajānand were in charge of these sites.[91] The *mahant* was surrounded by several servants and had his horses, elephants and arms since he also controlled some groups of ascetic warriors *(nāgas)*. When he was staying in Jaipur he conducted a lavish life with great feasts. The grandest of them was in the early nineteenth century when 90 000 people were fed by the regent Bhaṭṭiyānī in a feast organised for her guru, Nimbārkaśaraṇ, for a *guru-pūrṇimā* festival.[92]

In the early eighteenth century the prestige that the leader of the sect enjoyed was partly due to Vṛndāvandevācārya's contacts with the princely courts. A Sanskrit poem in his praise is attributed to Maharaja Savāī Jai Singh.[93] Queen Bāṃkāvatī 'Brajdāsī' and princess Sundar Kuṃvarī of Kishangarh were among his disciples. Nāgarīdās must also have been in close contact with the ācārya residing within the territory of his state.

At the same time the rulers of the states wanted to have a voice not only in the tenets of the sect but also in its decisions about filling up posts in the hierarchy. On Vṛndāvandevācārya's death for example Savāī Jai Singh and some other maharajas filled the post of ācārya with Jayrāmdās Śeṣ. However, after Jai Singh's death three years later, Śeṣ was removed and a new ācārya, Govindadev, was declared by the ascetics.

If we can postulate that secular aspects of poetry written by religious personalities in monasteries are due to interaction with centres of secular literature then we can state that the interaction with the princely courts did not leave Vṛndāvandev's poetry untouched since it also has secular traits. Although all the poems of the *Gītāmṛt Gaṅgā* are classified under one or another *līlā*, 'divine game' of Radha or Krishna, if they are examined independently from this context, they will show an affinity to the refined mundane love poetry of the time:

> तो मुख चन्द किधौं अरविंद ये मो दृग धोखैं परे ही रहैं री।
> देखन को अति आतुर हैं सु इन्हैं ऊ चकोर कै भौर कहैं री।
> ये सब प्रेम मनौं इन हीं बस मोहू लियें फोरैं गैल गहैं री।
> वृंदावन प्रभु रोके रहैं नहीं धाय परैं जब तोहिं लहैं री॥4, 40॥[94]
>
> *Is your face moon or lotus my eyes remain uncertain;*
> *They are very eager to see it so shall they also be [called] partridge or black bee?*
> *As though all my love were in their hands; they roam bedazzled taking their ways;*

[91] Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1943:2) and Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1966:18). Unfortunately no source for this information is mentioned.

[92] Clémentin-Ojha (1999:88).

[93] Published in *Śrīsarveśvar* (1952–53:ca).

[94] *Śrīsarveśvar* (1952–53:23).

Vrindaban's Lord, they cannot be restrained; they start to run as soon as they catch you.

This complex approach, however was given up by later *ācārya*s who again wrote poetry clearly about bhakti themes.[95]

Ānandghan

Ānanadghan's poetry in princely courts

Even though it is after all the literary outcome that decides a poet's place in the imaginary 'literary hierarchy' of an era, there are many instances when factors outside literature—fashion, patronage, politics etc.—influence reputation. The history of Ānandghan's standing is a striking example of this since his early fame in literature seems to have faded away when his name was denigrated. This was so much so that the traces of his sectarian and court affiliation were lost in oblivion or maybe consciously erased. Ānandghan was one of the finest Hindi poets of the eighteenth century but until recently he has not been counted among the celebrated authors of Indian literature. There are even Hindi literary histories with his name missing.[96]

In Ānandghan's case one encounters a strange situation. While on the one hand disrepute was attached to his name, on the other hand his poetry was enjoyed both in courts and religious centres. Ānandghan wrote two types of poetry. In the later part of his life when he was an ascetic he produced bhakti poetry abundantly. The high number of manuscripts of song-collections that include his poems shows that his religious songs were popular in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries. It is, however, clear that Ānandghan was even more celebrated for his quatrains with a secular tinge although it seems that they were often presented as bhakti poetry. His quatrains enjoyed popularity, and the best poets in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries were deeply influenced by his quatrains. It was his quatrains that were popular in princely courts and several rulers were well acquainted with them.

Maharaja Madho Singh (1750–1767) of Jaipur, for example, is said to have praised his songs when he met the poet in the temple of Govindadev in 1757.[97] Nāgarīdās included some of Ānandghan's devotional poems into his *Pad-muktāvalī*. There are Ānandghan-manuscripts written in Bharatpur for Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1777–1805) and in Jaipur for Maharaja Savāī Pratāp Singh 'Brajnidhi' (1778–1803).[98]

[95] For specimens of the poetry of the later *mahant*s see the relevant chapters in Bihārīśaraṇ 1930. Govindśaraṇdev's poetry is also published in Brajvallabhśaraṇ 1970.

[96] E.g. Keay, F. E. *History of Hindi Literature*.

[97] Śyāmsundardās (1937:173) based on the letter of Jaylāl.

[98] For a description of the Bharatpur manuscript see Śukla (1950:269–79). At the end of manuscript 3469 in the Pothikhana of Jaipur the following couplet is found:

bānī ānandaghana daī nṛpa pratāpa ke hātha—
pāũ brajanidhi darasa nita bhajana sunāũ sātha——

Indeed, Prince Javān Singh 'Brajrāj' of Udaipur was so much moved by Ānandghan's quatrains that he asked his court poet, Dayānidhi to write a cycle of eight poems, an *aṣṭaka*, based on a phrase from Ānandghan.

सुघर शिरोमनि श्री कुंवर जवान सिंघ
एक दिन बिरह कबित्त मो सों सुनि सुनि।
आय कब आनंद को घन बरसायहो या
कबित्त पै अष्टक बनै यों कहि पुनि पुनि॥[99]

One day, having heard from me (several) poems on separation, the crest-jewel of the accomplished ones, Prince Javān Singh
Insisted that a cycle of eight poems should be composed on the quatrain 'when will you come and rain down from the cloud of bliss?'

Prince Javān Singh was referring to the following quatrain by Ānandghan:

प्रीतम सुजान मेरे हित के निधान कहौ
कैसैं रहैं प्रान जौ अनखि अरसायहौ।
तुम तौ उदार दीन हीन आनि पर्‌यौ द्वार
सुनिये पुकार याहि कौ लौं तरसायहौ।
चातक है रावरौ अनोखे मोह आवरौ
सुजान रूप बावरौ बदन दरसायहौ।
बिरह नसाय दया हिय मैं बसाय आय
हाय कब आनँद कौ घन बरसायहौ॥[100]

Tell me, my dear Sujān, treasury of my affection, how can my life remain if you tarry angrily?
You are generous (and) this destitute wretch came to your door. Listen to his call; how long are you going to torment him?
He is your pied cuckoo enclosed in unique passion, mad for the beauty of the Intelligent One; show him your face.
Destroying his separation, taking compassion into your heart, oh, when will you come and rain down from the cloud of bliss?

The popularity of Ānandghan's quatrains in princely courts shows that he was able to write poetry that was enjoyed at court. Although the possibility of some secular poetry reaching the monasteries cannot be denied, it is more probable that Ānandghan was well acquainted with court atmosphere and therefore he was able to produce literature that was enjoyed in princely courts. From this point of view the question of his association to a court needs special attention. The available legends suggest that a movement from a court to an ashram

I gave Anandghan's Vāṇī to king Pratāp's hands;
I have the sight of the 'Treasure of Braj' and sing bhajans with him forever.

[99] Bansal and Bansal (forthcoming:10). The *aṣṭaka* is on pp. 123–127.
[100] *Sujānhit* 24. Published in Miśra (1952:9–10).

has been associated with his figure. An investigation into Ānandghan's contacts with monasteries and courts can also shed light on the interaction between these two centres of patronage.

The legend and the search for the historical figure

Ānandghan died in the year of the battle of Plassey, in 1757. His century is a more convenient era for research in Hindi literature than the previous ones from which we tend to have only legends about poets. In our case Ānandghan's silence about his own life is somewhat counterbalanced by having three manuscripts from his lifetime and some contemporary references to him. Although scholars like Viśvanāth Prasād Miśra and Manoharlāl Gauṛ made efforts to trace the historical figure, they were not able to offer a view detached from nineteenth century legends connecting the poet with the Mughal court in Delhi. The only scholar who mentioned Ānandghan's connection with Salemabad and Kishangarh was Brajvallabhśaraṇ Vedāntācārya from Salemabad.[101]

Today, however, it is not Brajvallabhśaran's idea that prevails. Ānandghan's quatrains are included in Hindi high school textbooks and usually his legend is taught along with them. Most people familiar with Hindi literature find Ānandghan's story set in the Mughal court very useful for understanding his poetry. According to this legend the poet was the chief scribe, Mir Munshi, of Muhammad Śāh of Delhi. He was so much in love with a courtesan whom he called Sujān that he made a vow that he would sing only to her and to no one else. When his enemies at court learnt about this, they plotted against him and told the emperor, who was known as *Raṅgīle* 'pleasure-loving', about Ānandghan's skill in singing. He was then summoned but declined to sing. Then the conspirators suggested ordering the courtesan to ask the Mir Munshi to do so. Then the scribe sang, but he turned towards his beloved and not the emperor. Although the song delighted everyone, the sultan was infuriated by the munshi's disrespect and ordered him to quit the court. When the poet asked Sujān to accompany him, she refused. Nevertheless, Ānandghan did not cease writing poems to his beloved, and until his death he used to address Sujān in them. In his exile he went to Vrindaban, became an ascetic of the Nimbārka Sampradāy, and the word *sujān* in his works came to mean Krishna himself or Radha and Krishna jointly. According to the legend quoted by Rāmcandra Śukla, he wrote his last quatrain to Sujān when he was mortally wounded.[102]

बहुत दिनान की अवधि आस पास परे
खरे अरबरनि भरे हैं उठि जान कौ।
कहि कहि आवन सँदेसो मनभावन कौ
गहि गहि राखति ही दै दै सनमान कौ।
झूठी बतियानि की पतियानि तें उदास ह्वै कै

[101] Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1956:287) and Brajvallabhśaraṇ (1966:13).
[102] Śukla (1942:366).

अब न घिरत घन आनँद निदान कौ।
अधर लगे हैं आनि करिकै पयान प्रान
चाहत चलन ये सँदेसो लै सुजान कौ॥[103]

Fallen into the noose of hoping for an end to many days (of waiting), he is now full of real haste to get up and go.
I kept giving the message that the 'one who delights the heart' is coming and I kept catching at him holding him back with respectful attendance.
But now, disillusioned from trusting in the lying words, in the end he cannot be kept back from the Cloud of Bliss.
Setting out, my life has reached the (door) of my lips; he wants to go and take the message of Sujān.

Ānandghan's story described by Rāmcandra Śukla, as it is, is a mixture of legendary and real elements. This 'last' poem for example is already found in a manuscript from 1727.[104] The legend, however, refers to the poet-bhakta as someone who died in Braj. This fact is attested by 'Uncle' Vṛndāvandās who in his poem *Harikalābelī* deplored Ānandghan's death in the massacre of Braj in 1757.[105] At the end of the poem *Murlikā-mod*, Ānandghan seems to have given the date and place of composition as VS 1798 (1741 AD) Vrindaban.[106] Therefore it can be said that Ānandghan spent his last years in Braj.

One of his works called *Paramahaṃs Vaṃśāvalī* describes the lineage of his gurus in the Nimbārka Sampradāy. From the praise poured on Vṛndāvandev-ācārya, it can be inferred that he took initiation from him. A further sign of Ānandghan's affiliation to the Nimbarkīs is that the most complete manuscript of his works is preserved in the Nimbārka Sampradāy.[107]

Although Viśvanāth Prasād Miśra argued that the poet took initiation in Vrindaban and Vṛndāvandev may have visited Vrindaban several times, there is no reason to exclude the possibility that Ānandghan took his initiation from him elsewhere, most probably in Salemabad, and lived his early religious life outside Vrindaban.

Two out of the three manuscripts dated from Ānandghan's lifetime were written near Salemabad, in Rupnagar, the then capital of the Kishangarh State. Ānandghan's earliest dated manuscript is from here and was written by the circle of a certain Svetāmbar Hemrāj. The two other manuscripts largely rely on this one. The peculiarity of this manuscript is that it tries to get rid of the suspicious word Sujān, the alleged name of the poet's beloved, and tries to substitute it with names that show either a clear bhakti context like Radha or Krishna, or

[103] *Sujānhit* 54. Published in Miśra (1952:18–19).
[104] Pothikhana, Jaipur, *Khāsmohar Collection* Ms Nr. 2437 (4) poem Nr. 40.
[105] About the *Harikalā Belī* and Anandghan's death see Bangha (1997:231–41).
[106] It is only given like that in Miśra's edition. In Śukla (1950:269-279) these line are reported to follow the colophon and thus not being part of the poem.
[107] Miśra (1952 *'Prastut granthāvalī'*:3), (1952 *'Vānmukh'*:72). At the time of the edition the manuscript was in the Śrījī kī baṛī kuñj, the Nimbārkī centre in Vrindaban, today it is in Salemabad.

with names that have a secular connotation like *su priya* 'that/good beloved' etc. These changes seem to be the result of an awkward effort to protect the poet's name.[108] The quatrains lose their soul, their multiple layers of meaning, by these changes. It becomes difficult to explain these changes, if one argues that it is not the poet's fame that was involved somehow in them. We can, therefore, state with almost certainty that Ānandghan was personally known in Rupnagar and probably lived in that area.

There are some indications that Ānandghan and Nāgarīdās were closely acquainted with each other. A picture shows Ānandghan and Nāgarīdās together with Brajānand sitting in front of Vṛndāvandev. There is mention of this picture already at the end of the nineteenth century. At that time the picture was kept in the royal archives of Kishangarh as attested by the court poet Jaylāl, who was an advocate of Nāgarīdās's contact with the Vallabh Sampradāy. After the death of Vṛndāvandev there would have been no need to forge a similar picture in the Kishangarh court showing Nāgarīdās's contact with the Nimbārkīs. The Vallabhan affiliation of the royal family seemed to be more prominent. Therefore there is not any reason to question the originality of this picture. The court poet Jaylāl told of Nāgarīdās's journey to Kishangarh in 1757 together with Ānandghan. According to Jaylāl, Ānandghan did not go as far as Kishangarh but returned from Jaipur and consequently was killed in the massacre of Braj.[109]

Ānandghan's quatrains

Ānandghan's poetic oeuvre can be divided into two main groups. The first is relatively simple religious poetry, namely some one thousand songs (*pad*s) and thirty-odd long poems in praise of Radha, Krishna or Braj. These poems fit well into the flow of devotional poetry that had been written in North India since the 16th century. The other group is his quatrains (*kabitta*s), the overwhelming majority of which is not overtly devotional. Here devotional quatrains alternate with poems that are secular or that can be read in either way. It was Ānandghan's *kabitta*s that earned him fame and they also seem to be instrumental in his bad reputation. The poet was condemned because one reading of his poetry was that he was using the name of his mundane beloved, the Muslim dancer Sujān, to denote the divinity. Other Hindu poets like Nāgarīdās were cautious not to identify the beloved overtly with God. In his *Iśk-caman*, another example of Rekhtā poetry, where he speaks about love with Islamic imagery and vocabulary, Nāgarīdās's interpretation is different from that of the Sufi mystics since he considers lover, God and the beloved to be three different entities while in sufism *Khudā*, God, and *mahbūb*, the beloved, are the same.[110]

आसिक पीर हमेस दिल लगैं चस्म के तीर।

[108] Bangha (1999:49–58).

[109] Śyāmsundardās (1937:173) based on the letter of Jaylāl.

[110] Cf. Khan (1974:24).

किया खुदा महबूब कौं सदा सखत बेपीर॥ 15॥[111]

The lover's heart is always tormented struck by the arrow of the glance;
(But) God made the beloved to be continuously hard and unfeeling.

The larger part of Ānandghan's quatrains can be read as relating also to secular love, as was done by the scribe who tried to change the word for the beloved, *sujān* into expressions like *ju syāma* to make sure that it is not read as mundane. However, when the quatrain was too overtly mundane, then *sujān* was changed into *su pyārī* and the like to make sure that this 'secular' poem does not have any religious reference. It never happened in Hindi literature before Ānandghan that the human beloved was identified with the absolute as Ānandghan's double usage of the word *sujān* suggests. This twofold reading of the poems was peculiar rather to Persian and then to Urdu. I quote a quatrain to illustrate this:

झलकै अति सुंदर आनन गौर छके दृग राजत काननि छ्वै।
हँसि बोलनि मैं छबि फूलनि की बरषा उर ऊपर जाति है ह्वै।
लट लोल कपोल कलोल करै कल कंठ बनी जलजावली द्वै।
अँग अंग तरंग उठै दुति की परिहै मनौ रूप अबै धर च्वै॥ प्रकीर्णक 2॥

Her very charming fair face shines (and) her ear-touching intoxicated eyes are bright;
In her smiling speech flowers of grace are showered on her breast;
On her temple a fickle lock of hair is gambolling, (as does) the well-made double pearl-necklace on her beautiful neck;
A wave of lustre emerges from her every limb; it seems as if beauty (itself) is now pouring down on the earth.

In quatrains like this the description could be either that of Radha or of Ānandghan's mundane beloved.

Today critics link Ānandghan's approach to the Sufi theory that his excessive mundane love led to love divine. They also try to show that his *kabitta*s draw on Persian poetry in their preference for idiomatic usage and for strong contrast *(virodh)*.[112] Moreover, love brought to such an extreme that someone dies with the name of the beloved who has long abandoned him, is rather Persian than Indian. Indian aesthetic theories do not even know about completely unrequited love. Scholars take refuge in the Sufi ideology to demonstrate the deepest bhakti in Ānandghan and draw a parallel between him and Raskhān who also reached Vaishnava bhakti through his mundane love.

However, if we forget about the nineteenth-century legend quoted above it is more difficult to interpret his poetry. It seems that his contemporary critics

[111] Gupta (1965 II:49).

[112] For discussion of possible Persian influence on Ānandghan see Miśra's *'Paricay'* in Gauṛ (1958:6–16) as well as Gauṛ (1958 153–4, 159–60).

took just the opposite of the modern view: it is degrading to the divine to be called by the name of a human being let alone that of a Muslim courtesan.

It is however not so easy to detect direct Persian influence in Ānandghan. Many of the features that one is tempted to consider alien to traditional Hindu literature, are in fact present in Sanskrit. As is the case with drinking alcohol:

दृग छाकत हैं छबि ताकत ही मृगनैनी जबै मधुपान छकै।
घन आनँद भीजि हँसै सु लसै झुकि झूमति घूमति चौंकि चकै।
पल खोलि ढकै लगि जात जकै न सम्हारि सकै बलकै 'रु बकै।
अलबेलि सुजान के कौतुक पै अति रीझि इकौसी ह्वै लाज थकै॥ 100॥

The eyes become drunk looking at the beauty when the gazelle-eyed one is drunk with alcohol.
Soaked in a 'cloud of bliss' she laughs, shines, bending she staggers and feels dizzy, (then) becomes startled and alert.
She opens and closes her eyelids, dozes off and wakes up, she can't restrain herself, babbles and talks nonsense.
Utmostly delighted by the wonder of the beautiful Sujān, the shame left alone loses its strength.

Scenes of drunkenness, if not common, were not alien to Sanskrit literature. It is enough to think of the drunken women in the beginning of Harṣa's *Ratnāvalī*. Or to quote another example from the *Pānagoṣṭhīpaddhati* chapter of the *Sūktimuktāvalī*:

पिपि प्रिय सस स्वयं मुमु मुखासवं देहि मे
तत त्यज दुदु द्रुतं भभज भाजनं काञ्चनम्।
इति स्खलितजल्पितं मदवशात्कुरङ्गीदृशः
प्रगे हसितहेतवे सहचरीभिरध्यायत॥[113]

'De-de-dear, give me the nectar of your lips yourself;
le-le-leave quickly the golden vessel'
This talk of the gazelle-eyed one stammering from the force of alcohol was repeated by her companions in the morning to laugh at.

Whatever may be the origin of such ideas, it is difficult to interpret similar poems in a bhakti context. The secularisation of religious themes as observed in Vṛndāvandev and Nāgarīdās prepared the ground for Ānandghan's poetry, and probably it was also responsible for the change in Hindi Poetry in which it became more open to absorb Persian influences. One aspect of Ānandghan's secular *kabitta*s can certainly derive from that of his guru, Vṛndāvandevācārya, who already wrote poetry that taken out of its bhakti context can be interpreted as mundane. Ānandghan went further: he not only wrote ambivalent quatrains

[113] *Pānagoṣṭhīpaddhati* 3. Published in Vyas (1991:266). I am indebted to Dr Harunaga Isaacson for drawing my attention to this poem.

but in many of them the mundane aspect overshadowed every Vaishnava aspiration.

According to the legend and to an early source Ānandghan belonged to the kāyastha (scribe) cast and therefore was probably well acquainted with Persian, the language of administration. It is not unlikely that directly or indirectly his poetry was influenced by the ideals of Persian or Urdu ghazals. It can be supposed that to be receptive to such ideals was not learnt in a Hindu religious community but rather in a royal or princely court, where both Hindu and Muslim ideas were more naturally mixed in the culture. The popularity of Ānandghan's *kabitta*s in princely courts also indicates that he was acquainted with the taste cultivated there. We do not possess enough evidence to tell whether he lived originally in Delhi as legend says or whether he was connected to a court later, when he was already an ascetic.

It is clear that Ānandghan was not a court poet in Kishangarh since his name is missing from the Persian or Rajasthani *bahī*s (records of payments, commissions, dates and places of work) in Kishangarh[114], where the name of poets like Vṛnd is several times present.[115] No poem of Ānandghan praises any mundane patron as was usual for court poets. If this acquaintance with court poetry does not originate from an initial life in a royal or princely court then it can be said that it was of a type similar to that of Vṛndāvandev since the ascetics of one of the most influential monastery in Rajasthan had to keep the connection with the courts. While Ānandghan's connection with Salemabad seems to be very probable, the type of his relationship with Kishangarh-Rupnagar needs further investigation.

The debate about Ānandghan's poetry

Ānandghan's approach to Sujān as both human and divine infuriated some religious circles. We can glimpse the views of the opponents in the lines of certain *bhaṛauā chand* (mocking verses)[116], which according to Gauṛ, were probably composed before 1755 AD[117] but with all probability in circles that knew Ānandghan well.

> कायथ आनंदघन महा हरामजादा हो। सु ब्रज की कटा मैं आयौ परंतु अपजस वकौ थिर है। ताकौ बर्नन।
>
> *The kāyastha Ānandghan was a great rogue. Although he came to the district of Braj, his bad reputation remains. (This is) his description:*

[114] Personal communication of Faiyaz Ali Khan in March 1997.

[115] For payments to Vṛnd see Celer (1973:337–340).

[116] First published in Miśra (1952 *'Vāṃmukh'* :66–67).

[117] Gauṛ (1958:7–8). Unfortunately Gauṛ did not give any justification for this date. The poems were taken from a book called *Jas kabitta*. In a personal communication in 1996 he said that *Jas kabitta* was in the *Yājñik*-collection of the Nāgarīpracāriṇī Sabhā in Benares; however I was not able to find it there. Bhavānīśaṅkar Yājñik was a priest at the Gokulnāth temple in Gokul, which suggests that the manuscript came from Braj.

डफरी बजावै डौम डाढ़ी सम गावै काहू
तुरकैं रिझावै तब पाव झूठौ नाम है।
हुरकिनी तुरकिनी सुजान को सेवक है
तजि राम नाम वाकौं पूजै काम धाम है।
... ॥ 3॥

He beats the tambourine, sings like a Ḍom or a Ḍhāṛhī, pleases a Muslim and then gets false fame;
He is the servant of the prostitute Muslim Sujān; he leaves the name of Rām and worships[118] *her abode of desire.*

Such verses mock not only Ānandghan's physical contact with Muslims but also suggest literary interaction.[119] In other words the person and his poetry were considered alien to orthodox Vaishnavism. It should be mentioned that this example of inter-communal distrust is not an isolated case in Vaishnava context. The author of Raskhān's *vārtā* in the *Do so bāvan vaiṣṇavan kī vārtā* distances himself from Raskhān's Muslim background by mocking at it.[120]

The blame on Ānandghan was so strong that not even his beautiful composition, the *Kṛpākand*, 'The Root of Grace', on divine grace as opposed to the rituals as advocated by the earlier Nimbārkī ācāryas[121] redeemed him. Eventually he had to give up not only writing complex poetry but had to abandon the quatrain form since it was so closely associated with Sujān, the dancer. He began to write simple bhakti poetry in a conventional style.

रसना गुपाल के गुन उरझी।
बहुत भँति छल छंद बंद बकवाद फंद तें सुरझी॥[122]

My tongue is entangled in Gopāl's virtues;
(and) disentangled from the various bonds of false poems (and) traps of twaddle.

We have noted above that some of Sundar Kumvarī's quatrain bear close resemblance to those of Ānandghan. It is interesting to observe that three of them (including one quoted above, *pyāya mahā*, and two others with the word 'sujān' in them) that seem to be the closest to Ānandghan are missing from the manuscript that served as the basis of Brajvallabhaśaraṇ's edition although they are present in the *Nimbārka mādhurī*.[123] Considering the amount of change Ānandghan's anthologies underwent because of the ambiguous usage of Sujān, it may not be a coincidence in this case either.

Probably it was also his bad reputation that made him decide to take up a new home in Vrindaban. His quatrains continued to be both blamed and

[118]The word *pūjai* is an obscene pun with a secondary meaning of 'he fills'.
[119]For a more detailed discussion of these mocking verses see Bangha (1999:44–46, 115).
[120]Snell (1989:29–37).
[121]Cf. dohā 30 of the *Siddhānta Sukh* in the *Yugal Śatak* referred to in Clémentin-Ojha (1990:371)
[122]*Padāvalī* 687. Miśra (1952:493–4)
[123]Nrs. 23-25 in Bihārīśaraṇ (1930:600)

popular. Nevertheless, there were people who wanted to reach 'the original Ānandghan' and get rid of the changes that were introduced by scribes like Svetāmbar Hemrāj. One of them was Brajnāth, who with all probability is identical with the Sanskrit poet Brajnāth Bhaṭṭa a courtier and friend of Savāī Jai Singh (r. 1697-1743) of Jaipur.[124] In his Sanskrit *Padyataraṃginī*[125], Brajnāth Bhaṭṭa praises both Savāī Jai Singh and Savāī Madho Singh (r. 1750-1767) but not Savāī Īśvarī Singh (r. 1743-1750). During the reign of Īśvarī Singh Brajnāth lived in Rupnagar in the Kishangarh state of his disciple, the poetess-queen Bāṃkāvatī who mentioned him as her *vidyāguru* at the end of her Braj translation of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.[126] It was in Rupnagar in 1748 that he composed his Braj work on aesthetics, the *Sāhitya-sār*.[127] Brajnāth also prepared a new collection of Ānandghan's quatrains that did not show Ānandghan as a religious poet but as a 'great lover (who is) skilled in Brajbhāṣā'. He even discarded most of Ānandghan's openly religious quatrains and inserted eight poems at the beginning and the end of his collection explaining that Ānandghan was misunderstood:

स्वाद महा खर दाखनि चाखत ज्यौं जन नैननि रोष बढ़ावै।
ज्यौं तरुनी तन रूप निहारत षंद बढ़ै हिय सोच उपावै।
चित्र बिचित्र के भेद सराहत ज्यौं दृगमंद न काहू सुहावै।
त्यौं घन आनँद बानि बखानत मूढ़ सुजाननि आनि सतावै॥

As it angers the eyes of the people when an ass relishes the great taste of the grape,
As it perturbs the heart when a eunuch, staring at the beauty of a girl's body, approaches her,
As it pleases no one when the short-sighted praise the secrets of a wonderful painting,
So it disturbs the intelligent ones when the stupid expound Ānandghan's words.

According to Brajnāth, Ānandghan should be read as a *nehī mahā brajabhāṣā-prabina*, 'a great lover (who is) skilled in Brajbhāṣā' and this should be done 'with a cautious mind'. The blame attached to Ānandghan was so strong that expounding his poems cost Brajnāth his prestige:

मैं अति कष्ट सों लीने कबित्त ये लाज बड़ाई सुभाय कों खोय कै।
सो दुख मेरो न जानै कोऊ लै बखानै लिखाइयै मोहू कों गोय कै।
कैसी करौं अब जाहुँ कितै बिताए हैं रैनि दिना सब भोय कै।
प्रेम की चोट लगी जिन आँखिन सोई लहै कहा पंडित होय कै॥ 8॥

[124] Bangha (1999:121–8).
[125] Śāstrī 1996.
[126] Śarmā (1996:1266).
[127] A manuscript of this unpublished work can be found at the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute in Jodhpur (Nr 2264).

I have taken these kabittas with a lot of trouble losing my honour, prestige (and) character.
Nobody knows my suffering; 'Take' they say '(and) write them down secretly for me, too'.
What shall I do, where shall I go now? I have spent my days and nights immersed (in it).
What is the use of being a scholar for one whose eyes have been wounded by love?

The censure of Ānandghan may be the reason why neither Salemabad nor Rupnagar claimed the poet with pride in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and his connection with the Rajasthan state was lost in oblivion.

Conclusion

As has been seen both the court of Kishangarh-Rupnagar and the monastery at Salemabad were home to both secular and religious poetry to a varying extent. Although Kishangarh-Rupnagar court culture was open to Mughal and Muslim influences there was a movement from a secular approach towards a more religious one at the time of Queen Bāṃkāvatī and Prince Sāvant Singh. At the same time secular poetry was not alien to the Nimbārkī monastery at Salemabad either. In the first half of the eighteenth century the Nimbārka sect was influential not only in courts like Jaipur but through a pious queen also in Rupnagar. It should be the Nimbārkīs rather than the Vallabha sect that influenced the development of a feminine ideal in the court through their increased emphasis on the divine figure of Radha.

The culture of Rupnagar and Salemabad were dynamic cultures experimenting with novel approaches and generating literary debates. The best example of these debates is the one about Ānandghan's quatrains. The most outstanding quatrains of this poet are found at the meeting point of the cultures of the courtly and of the religious communities and can be read as expressing love both for a worldly beloved and for the divinity. The overt identification of the mundane beloved with the divinity was, however, too much for certain religious circles and they rejected Ānanadghan's twofold approach as a Muslim idea. To protect Ānandghan's fame Hemrāj of Rupnagar and his circle mutilated the text of his poems in order to reject the doublefold interpretation. The scholar Brajnāth, who in all probability is identical with Brajnāth Bhaṭṭ of Jaipur, tried to rescue Ānandghan's quatrains on the basis of their literary merit. Although he 'lost his honour' in the process, his approach prevailed and till the present day people read Ānandghan's quatrains through his eyes being moved by the love expressed in them both in its divine and mundane aspects.

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