INDIAN LANGUAGES AND TEXTS THROUGH THE AGES

Essays of Hungarian Indologists in Honour of Prof. Csaba Tőttössy

Edited by Csaba Dezső

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Some people are born great, others acquire greatness, yet others have greatness thrust on them. Similarly my long experience in teaching suggests that some are born teachers, others become teachers by training, yet others have the profession of teaching thrust on them by circumstances. Professor Tököesy obviously falls into the first category. *Pædagogus nascitur non fit*. This was the feeling I got on the very first day I attended his class and each passing day further reinforced this feeling.

He is a challenging and charismatic personality whose influence one can not remain impervious to. He is a personality who invokes intense feelings; one can not remain indifferent towards him.

For Prof. Tököesy life means teaching and teaching means life. His character, his whole has merged with the notion of Syntax—Latin, Ancient Greek or Sanskrit—for generations of his students. We, his students are closely acquainted with his individual “Socratic” method of teaching. He is not a professor who only declaims his theories or ideas which one can accept or reject but—being led by his questions—we discover ourselves the possible solutions of a problem. He teaches not only the subject matter but first of all the way of scholarly thinking. He does his best endeavors to launch students not only on the already discovered paths of the grammatical system, but also accompanies them in the process of exploring new territories together.

He taught us to question the generally excepted truths, as he himself always makes a thorough examination of the subject he deals with. It was his intellectual ability to conceive an entirely
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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

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*I am indebted to Prof. Govind Sharma for his help in interpreting the Braj texts, to Śrījī Mahārāj for his hospitality in Salemabad, as well as to Mr. Peter Diggle for his comments.
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 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, Anandghan, who violated this convention, had to pay a high price.

In my Hindi book *Saneh ko rna: rag* I argued that Anandghan had lived in the Nimbārki 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 Anandghan's relationship with them.

Kishangarh-Rupnagar

The princely state of Kishangarh was founded in 1609 by Maharaja Kiṣan Singh Rāθor (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. 1648–1658) 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). 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 gujaraj 'prince regent', successor to the throne already in 1725. 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. 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.

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 achieve-

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1I am using the word monastery in a broad sense to denote any institution (matha, pātha, āśrama etc.) where ascetics live together.
2Names that have a long established spelling in English will be spelt according to it (thus Singh instead of Simha). The inerente in Hindi words will not be dropped in Braj quotations or in names with a prominent Sanskritic component. Thus the name Nāgarīdās will be written as Nāgarīdās and Pārśurām as Pārśurām etc. It may also be retained after clusters of consonants as in Nandadas.
3SHARMA (1990:83).
4According to CELER (1973:9.) Mān Singh gave his daughter, Cārumati, in marriage to Aurangzeb. HAIDAR (1996:26) also examines this question that embarrassed later Hindu chroniclers. According to her Cārumati was not the daughter but the elder sister of Mān Singh and she was married to Mahārāṇī Rāj Singh of Udaipur while a younger sister was married to Aurangzeb's son Prince Mu'azzam.
6MALLESON (1875:89).
ments 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, Bhavanidas, 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 Mân 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 Savaï Jai Singh and his team of astrologers compiled for the Mughal ruler Muhammad Sâh (r. 1719–1748) the Zîj-i-Jâdîd-i-Muhammad Sâhî, one of the most important astronomical works of their times.11 The Jodhpur epistolographer Munshi Madhû Râm (died 1732) wrote in 1708 the Inšâ‘î Mâdhû Râm, 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 court13 from around 1760-66 shows among several courtiers the Delhi musicians Ustad Yar Muhammad and Ustad Nûr Muhammad together with singers Amin Khân, Khân-rûm and Pokhraj. Mir Muhammad Umar, a dignity from the Ajmer darâgh, 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 Sâh 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 Nâgarîdas experimented also with Urdu, or rather Rekhtâ, ‘(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 painting17 and in poetry.18 The courts, however, did not follow entirely what was seen in the imperial centre. Rajasthan court culture is a mixture of both Muslim and local Hindu elements. In spite of the works mentioned above it seems that comparatively

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7RANDHAWA and RANDHAWA 1980. (The authors quote Faiyaz Ali KHAN but do not give a precise reference.)
8DICKINSON and KHANDALAVALA (1959:14-5).
9DICKINSON and KHANDALAVALA (1959:16).
10HAI DAR (1996:56).
13Published in DICKINSON and KHANDALAVALA (1959:38-9).
16Nâgarîdas’s Rekhtâ is Urdu with some Braj features. His works in Rekhtâ are the collection of songs called Rekhtâ (GUPTA 1965 I: 498-512) and the Ik-coman (GUPTA 1965 II:48–52) written in dohâs.
little genuine Persian literature was produced in the courts of Rajasthan. The dominant literary languages were Braj, Rajasthani and Sanskrit.\textsuperscript{19}

Poets at the court

Works on Kishangarh miniatures do not fail to mention that the most important connoisseur patron, Nāgārīdās, was also a renowned poet. In fact, though he tried his hand at painting,\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{21} and that poetry was part of the daily routine of the rulers. The 19th century poet Navin for example put into verse what he received for the composition of his Raṅgatārīga.

\begin{quote}
रीव बूढ़ परहराज वर गुन निधि मुरति काम।
दीने अब लघू मीज में साज बाज भन भाम॥ 26॥

वसन लिए भूपन लिए लिए मतंग उलंग।
याम लिए निज नाम हित सूनि कर रंगतरंग॥ 27॥\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

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 Raṅgatārīga [written] for his name.

\textsuperscript{19}For a survey of Rajasthani court literature in these languages in the 18th century see Kathuria (1987:196–215).
\textsuperscript{20}Dickinson and Khandaivala (1959:7, 19) and Haidar (2000:89).
\textsuperscript{21}Some documents of payment of land and money to Vṛnd are published in Céler (1973:337–40).
\textsuperscript{22}Quoted in Nagendra (1964:411)

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 \textit{Pratāp prakāś}, a work about Maharāja 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 \textit{Pratāp prakāś},

The minstrels (\textit{bandījan}) start singing in praise of the family at four \textit{ghāri} at night. The king, having heard it, rises in the period shortly before dawn (\textit{brahmāmuhiīṛta}). He meditates on his guru and after having a \textit{dārsan} of a cow and performing \textit{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 artists give performance to the devotional songs composed by him in \textit{Vibhāsa} and \textit{Bhairavī (rāgīnī)}. He then attends to his daily morning duties. Arrangements for his bath are made... Having taken his bath, he attends to the \textit{Pancāgat} worship with Vedic hymns... Then he distributes the regular daily gifts among Brahmins and pandits (\textit{nityādān})...[He dresses himself] and starts for Śrī Govindadev’s temple. Chiefs from different places, his kinsmen, \textit{tāzm} and \textit{khaścak} nobles (\textit{sardārs}), scholars (\textit{pandīts}), poets (\textit{kabīsvar}) and bards (\textit{bhāt} and \textit{cīrāṛ} 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 (\textit{gunījan}). The scholars have their discussions on the six schools of philosophy, the poets recite their eulogical poems (\textit{kabīsvar jas pāṛḥat}), the bards recite the glory of the family (\textit{bhāt, cīrāṛ birada pāṛḥat}), the musicians (\textit{kalāv}a) perform the six \textit{rāgas} and thirty
This passage may give a picture of the life in the court with different groups of artists such as bandījan, kabiśvar, bhūt, cāraṇ, guṇiṇjan and nafṭī. 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 Rekha poetry. 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 pads to his credit. Haidar claims that Mān Singh wrote Sampadāy Kalpadrum, a

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23Based on passages from Bahūra (1983 [Hindi section]:5–12) and on their translation by Bahūra (1983 [English section]:3–7).
24Bahūra (1983 [English section]:15)
26Hai,ar (1995:12). However, her reference to Gupta (1965 I:30) is incorrect.
27Gupta (1965 I:29–30). Brajvallabhaśarān (1966:17) seems to know about more works and gives the list as Sukh Samāp, Bāhuśiśa, Rukmiṇi karaṇ, Rāpπç̥i kathā varṇaṇ and Virāvhasāgār. He also mentions a manuscript of Rājajīnāpi kī vāni in the Sarvavāt Bhaṇḍar of Kishanagar which contains 176 folios (note 3).
28For a list of her works see Brajvallabhaśarān (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 Brajvallabhaśarān (1983–84).
29Gupta (1965 I:30).
30Bhārīśarān (1930:600) and Gupta (1965 I:31).
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.

My ears are affected as soon as my mind startles that somebody has taken his name.

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:

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31 The word parekho means 'remorse' in Braj. The 'face to face' phrase suggests a simultaneous action and its original Sanskrit par-mil 'examining' meaning cannot be excluded.

32 Bihariśarān (1930:599) and Brajvallabhaśarān (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.

34 Bihariśarān (1930:598) and Brajvallabhaśarān (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 mañjari from 1723.
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.

Comparatively little is known about other poets who lived in the court in the 18th century. The most famous of them was Vṛnd⁴⁰ (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-us-Sān. 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 Sāh 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, Sanχihrām, served Maharaja Bahādur Singh. Vṛnd’s most famous work, the Nīti-satsai (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 Haricaranḍas Tripāthi (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), Kannāvallabh and Rāmāyansār but also commentaries on the most celebrated works of the rātikāl: on Birāhi’s Satsai (1777), on Jaiśvant Singh’s Bhagabhūsan and on Kesadvās’s Kaviśrīpya (c. 1778).

The case of ‘Uncle’ Hit Vṛndavandās 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. Vṛndavandās was a poet of the Rādhavallabh sect, who in 1757, at the time of the massacre in Braj, fled to Farrukhabad⁴⁴ 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 Haricaranḍas Dickinson and Khandalavala⁴⁷ mentioned the names of Hīrālāl,⁴⁸ Munshi Kanhīrām,⁴⁹ Pannālāl,⁵⁰ Vaiśnav Vaijycand⁵¹ and Dāhīvā Vaijarām⁵² who were present in Nāgārīdās’s court although no source was given for this list. With the exception of stray verses by Munshi Kanhīrām⁵³

⁴⁸Hīrālāl Sanāthya is quoted in Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇa-nidhi-prakāśa 17 and 30. He is different from Hīrālāl Kāyastha (son of Hemrāj) who lived a century earlier and wrote his Ruknīmarītagal in 1647.
⁴⁹Quoted in Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇa-nidhi-prakāśa 31.
⁵⁰Quoted in Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇa-nidhi-prakāśa 29 and 16.⁵¹Probably identical with Binaicand (Vaiśnav νάμ Carandās) quoted in Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇa-nidhi-prakāśa 18, 32, 33 and 34 as well as in manuscript ‘ya’ of Cīlak kabitta (Gupta 1965:7).
⁵²Quoted in manuscript ‘ya’ of Chījāk kabitta (Gupta 1965:7) and in Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyaṇa-nidhi-prakāśa 14, 15 and 28. The kabittas of Vaijarām (?) are also quoted in a manuscript dated from VS 1814 (1757 AD) [Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur 14437(3)]
⁵³cf. Mīsra and Mīsra (1913:1020).
found in some manuscripts or quoted by Nāgarīdās elsewhere, 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 (Bānī Thānī), Haricarandas, Purohit Brajil, and Bhaṭṭa Brajnāth. This work is the Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyan-nidhi-prakās composed and partly written by Nāgarīdās in 1742. It contains poems by the above mentioned poets in praise of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Bānī Thānī was present in the court at that time. Brajnāth Bhaṭṭa, the teacher, vidyāgur, of Nāgarīdās’ step-mother, as well as Haricarandas, 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 Śrīmad-Bhāgavat-parāyan-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 Vrṇḍ’s poetry towards an art dressed in religious ideas in Nāgarīdās and Nihal Cand. While Bhavānīdās and Vrṇḍ 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.

Her fine veil of dukula 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.

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

55GUPTA (1965 II:123).
56The image behind this line is that black antimony was applied to the
teeth while gold dots decorated the two front teeth.
57GUPTA (1965 II:93).
Exhilarated the cuckoos on the trees sing; in the grove
Kama serves the dwelling-place with a plenitude of beauty.

[Nagaridas 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 per-
sonal. 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 inde-
pendent from Krishna. In painting it is not until the eighteenth
century that a strong iconographical development of Radha can
be seen in India. At Kishangarh the Radha image started to be
painted not only as Krishna's consort but also as a subject in
its own right. Among the bhakti sects, however, it was not the
Puṣṭimārga, as suggested by some scholars that put Radha in
such a high position. Although the Puṣṭimārga 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.

The emergence of Radha in Kishangarh cannot be examined
without taking into the picture the tenets of the other influen-
tial 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 sakhis, 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 di-
vine couple. The fact that the devotee perceives himself or herself
as a companion of Radha rather than as a male companion of
Krishna, a sakhī, indicates that in this school Radha has become
the focus of attention.

In eighteenth-century Braj literature, however, Radha was giv-
en a prominent place sometimes inextricably connected to the
secular presentation of woman categorised under different beha-
vioural patterns in love. This genre was called nāyikā-bhedā, ‘cat-
egories of heroine'. Another popular literary theme was the nakh-
īsikh-varūṇa, the description of a heroine from tip to toe.

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

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 bañī-documents.
64 Dickinson and Khandalawala (1959:11-12).
65 Dickinson and Khandalawala (1959:9-10); Randhawa and Rand-
hawa (1980:9).
Painting and Bānī Thānī' in Roop Lekha Vol. XL, pp. 83-88 and on Khan
(1986:9).
son 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."

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 Nāgārīdās'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. It was also at that time that the royal family built a temple in Braj known as Nāgārī Kunj, which is still in the custody of the Nimbārka sect. According to the Nimbārki scholar Brajvallabhśarāṇ one of the main impulses for the construction of this temple may have been the poetess-queen Bāṃkāvātī. 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 Rajasthan context, Kishangarh was unusual in developing a full blown bhakti idiom as late as the mid-eighteenth century. 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, Caturkunjavari in 1719 may account for this development.

Some scholars have tried to show that Nāgārīdās derived the driving force of his art and patronage from his affiliation to the Vallabha Sampradāya. The question of the inspiration for his poetry and patronage is, however, far more complex. Nāgārīdās may well have been initiated into the Vallabha Sampradāya 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 Puṣṭīmārga at Kishangarh. 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 and other sects like the Puṣṭīmārga or the Nimbārki who did not have an important deity in the capital were not necessarily less influential than the others. Similarly in Kishangarh royal patronage seems to have been extended to the Nimbārki after the time of Kīṣān Singh.

Nāgārīdās's poetry was not limited to sectarian tenets and he

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70Brajvallabhśarāṇ (1966:15).
74Jamvāmātā, the domestic deity of the royal family, was taken over from the Mińsk, Govindadev belonged to the Gauḍy sect and Sitārama to the Rāmānanda sect. See Clémentin-Ojha (1999:25–27).
76As claimed by Brajvallabhśarāṇ (1966:9) though he did not quote any source material for this assertion.
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 Nimbar- 

Kīśoṛī, 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 Bāṃkāvātī.

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

मेरे ये वेदव्यासः
श्री हरिवर्ष दश व्यास गदाधर परमानंद नंदवासः
श्री हरिदास विखारिनिवास विनुल विपुल सुपारसः
रामदास नामा दामोदर अलि भगवान सक्री भगवानः
चतुर्भुजदास दास मेहा युनि श्रीमहत चतुर विवाहीः
श्रीतम रसिक रसिक वल्लभ अहू धूप रस रीति उवाहीः
तुलसीदास मीराँ माधव अरु उथे नागरीदासः
आसकरण नरसी दुर्दशन रचि मायूरी सुप रासः
कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः
कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः
कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः
कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः
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कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः
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कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः
कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः
कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः
कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः
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कृष्णदास सूर गोविन्द अहू कुमण छीत त्वामि अनुरक्तः

courtly and religious...

Caturbhujdās, Mehā Dās then Śrībhāṣṭa [and] the clever Bihārī;
Pṛītām Rasik, Rasik Vallabh and Dhruv[da]s proclaimed the correct usage of the rasa.

Tulsīdās, Mīrā [Bāī], Mādhav[dās] and both Nāgarīdās; 78
Āskaran, Narsi [Mehta], Vṛndāvan[dās?] [and] Mādhurī-dās are interested in the joy of the rāsā-dance.

Kṛṣṇadās, Śūr[dās], Govinda[svāmī] and Kumbhan[dās], the loving Chītśvāmī
For me their songs are the Vedas and the Purāṇas, I am the listener, they the speaker;

Who will abandon their songs and meaning79 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 feet80 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 Aṣṭačāp, 'the eight seals', of Vallabhācārya's Puṣṭimārga (Paramānanda[dās], Nandadās, Caturbhujdās,81 Kṛṣṇadās, Śūrdās, Nāgarīdās is identical with Nāgardev, a religious leader in Śvāmī Haridas's lineage, and the second with 'NehT' Nāgarīdās, a follower of Hit Harivaṃsa. This may also be a reference to two brothers who were the pupils of Bihārinidās: Nāgarīdās and Sarasdās (d. 1626). Cf. MCGREGOR (1984:93).

78There is a conventional pun here with the double meaning of pad 'foot' and 'song'.
80 There is a double meaning here with the words pad 'foot, song', artha 'meaning, aim' and with padiirtha 'gem'.
81 Apart from the Caturbhujdās of the Aṣṭačāp there is also a famous

77Gupta (1965 1:1).
Govindasvāmī, Kumbhandās, and Chūtsvāmī). Apart from them Āskaraṇ ‘Kachvāhā’ Maharaja Kiśān Singh’s uncle and the Gujari Nārsī Mēhṭā were also considered to be Puṣṭimārgīs. There are devotees from Caitanya’s Gauḍīy Sampradāy (Gadādhara Bhaṭṭa and Madhavādī ‘Jagannāth’), the Haridāsī Sampradāy (Śvāmī Haridās, Bihārīndās, Bīḍṭhāl Bīpūl, Śrībhāṭṭ and Nāgārīdās), the Rādhāvallabhi Sampradāy of Hit Harivaṃśa (Harivaṃśa, Harirām Vyas, Dāmodār ‘Sevak’, Rasikdās (?), ‘Nehū’ Nāgārīdās (?) 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, Śrīnāthji 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, Śrījī Mahārāj. In the past centuries the Nimbārka Sampradāy has been considered to be one of the four orthodox Vaishnava schools (cauḥsampradāyā). The sect states that it was started by Nimbārkā-ārya, who in his Vedāntaparījatasaurabhā advocated the bheda-heda ‘difference-and-nondifference’ theory about the relationship between the individual soul and the absolute. Today, however, is not the writings of Nimbārka but Harivyāśdev’s Mahāvānī that Nimbārkhīs hold in highest esteem. The Mahāvānī depicts the love-games of Radha and Krishna and in its approach is clearly fluently by the concepts of Śvāmī Haridās and Hit Harivaṃśa. Nimbārki tradition puts the text back to the 10th century.

The seat at Salemabad was established in the 17th century by rāṣṭrāmdev one of Harivyāśdev’s twelve disciples. The mahānt, pīrīvar, 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 nityan poetry proclaiming the ‘attributeless’ God to be immanent in every being and emphasising the power of his name.

परस्पर दर्पण नैन को उभय मिलाक अनुष्ठान।
जो देखे निज रूप को लो देखे हरि रूप॥ 53॥

जयो दर्पण पावक पड़े परस्पर हृद भूप।
परसुराम हरि नाम ते प्रणाटे हरि निज रूप॥ 54॥

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 Nimbārkhīs. This event took place due to Savāj 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 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. Acārya Vṛndāvandeva’s Gītāmṛt Gaṇgā is an excellent expression of devotion towards the divine couple.

83 Bhārīśaraṇ (1930:78).
The Nimbārka sect was not confined to Salemabad. During Anandghan’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 Banṣi Bāt, the Banyan tree on the bank of the Yamuna under which Krishna is said to have played his flute. The seat in Rupnagar was the place of religious discussions between Nimbārka and Vallabhāns and Vrndavandev also stayed in the town for some time. 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 Nimbārka and even Vrndavandev the mahānt 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 Nimbārka temple in Jaipur but because of the superior’s good contacts with the palace and especially with the women’s quarters. Today only one Nimbārka temple is known within the palace precincts, the Srījī ki morī, which was established in 1791 by the mother of Maharaja Savaī Pratāp Singh (1778–1803) for an image known as Gopijanavallabh. However there may have been Nimbārka sites in the town already at the time of Vrndavandevacārya. Those years, according to Brajvallabhsaraṇ, a Benares paṇḍit, Jayrāmāś Śeṣ, and ācārya Brajānand were in charge of these sites. The mahānt 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 Bhāṭṭiyānī in a feast organised for her guru, Nimbārkasaraṇ, for a guru-pūrṇimā festival.

In the early eighteenth century the prestige that the leader of the sect enjoyed was partly due to Vrndavandevacārya’s contacts with the princely courts. A Sanskrit poem in his praise is attributed to Maharaja Savaī Jai Singh. Queen Bāmkāvati ‘Brajādāsi’ and princess Sundar Kuṃvari of Kishangarh were among his disciples. Nāgaridās 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 Vrndavandevacārya’s death for example Savai Jai Singh and some other maharajas filled the post of ācārya with Jayrāmāś Śeṣ. However, after Jai Singh’s death three years later, Śeṣ was removed and a new ācārya, Govindadev, was declared by the ascetics.

84Srīsarveśvar (1952–53:45).
85An alternative translation is ‘giving a kiss she is ashamed to take it back and she separates herself for a moment’.
87This must be the ‘Gopāl Dvārā’ mentioned by Brajvallabhsaraṇ (1966:16).
89BRAJVALLABHSARAṇ (1966:14).
91BRAJVALLABHSARAṇ (1943:2) and BRAJVALLABHSARAṇ (1966:18). Unfortunately no source for this information is mentioned.
93Published in Srīsarveśvar (1952–53:ca).
This complex approach, however, was given up by later acaryas who again wrote poetry clearly about bhakti themes.95

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

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Anandghan

Anandghan’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 Anandghan’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. Anandghan 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 Anandghan’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. Anandghan 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 Anandghan 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 Nāgaridās included some of Anandghan’s devotional poems into his Pad-muktāvalī. There are Anandaghan manuscripts written in Bharatpur for Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1777–

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95 For specimens of the poetry of the later mahants see the relevant chapters in Bhaiṛisaraṇ 1930. Govindśarāṇ Devācārya’s poetry is also published in Brajvallabhsaraṇ 1970.

96 E.g. KEAY, F. E. History of Hindi Literature.

The legend and the search for the historical figure

ánandghan 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 ánandghan’s silence about his own life is somewhat counterbalanced by having three manuscripts from

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

bâni ánandghanâ dai nspa prâtipa ke hátha|
pâi brâjanidhi darasa nita bhajana sunâi sâthal

I gave Anandghan’s Vâşi to king Pratâp’s hands;
I have the sight of the ‘Treasure of Braj’ and sing bhajans with him forever.

99 Bansal and Bansal (forthcoming:10). The âṣṭaka is on pp. 123–127.

100 Sujân hit 24. Published in Miśra (1952:9–10).
his lifetime and some contemporary references to him. Although scholars like Visvanath Prasad Misra and Manoharlal Gaur 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 Anandghan’s connection with Salemabad and Kishangarh was Brajvallabhśarāṇ Vedāntācārya from Salemabad.¹⁰¹

Today, however, it is not Brajvallabhśarāṇ’s idea that prevails. Anandghan’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 Anandghan’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 Šāh 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 Rarigile ‘pleasure-loving’, about Anandghan’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, Anandghan 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 Vṛndāban, became an ascetic of the Nimbārka Sampradāya, 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

गाहि गाहि राष्टिहों देवे सन्मान कहो।
बूढ़ी वतःवानी की पतियानी ते उदास हों के।
अच्छ न पिरत घर आनुष्ठ निदान की।
अर्थ तंते हैं आनि करिके पयान प्राण।
बाह्य चलन दे सदियों ले सुजान की॥ 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.

Anandghan’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 deposed Anandghan’s death in the massacre of Braj in 1757.¹⁰⁵ At the end of the poem Murlikīmod, Anandghan seems to have given the date and place of composition as VS 1798 (1741 AD) Vṛndāban.¹⁰⁶ Therefore it can be said that Anandghan spent his last years in Braj.

One of his works called Paramahams Vamsāvalī describes the lineage of his gurus in the Nimbārka Sampradāya. From the praise poured on Vṛndāvandevācārya, it can be inferred that he took

¹⁰³ Sujānhit 54. Published in Misra (1952:19–19).
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 Misra’s edition. In Śukla (1950:269–279) these line are reported to follow the colophon and thus not being part of the poem.

¹⁰¹ Brajvallabhśarāṇ (1956:287) and Brajvallabhśarāṇ (1966:13).
¹⁰² Śukla (1942:366).
initiation from him. A further sign of Anandghan's affiliation to the Nimbarkas is that the most complete manuscript of his works is preserved in the Nimbarka Sampradāy.107

Although Viśvanāth Prasāda Mīra 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 Anandghan 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 Anandghan's lifetime were written near Salemabad, in Rupnagar, the then capital of the Kishangarh State. Anandghan's earliest dated manuscript is from here and was written by the circle of a certain Svetāmbar Hemraj. 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 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 Anandghan was personally known in Rupnagar and probably lived in that area.

There are some indications that Anandghan and Nāgarīdās were closely acquainted with each other. A picture shows Anandghan 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 Vallabha 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 Nimbārkas. The Vallabha 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 Anandghan. According to Jaylāl, Anandghan did not go as far as Kishangarh but returned from Jaipur and consequently was killed in the massacre of Brāj.109

**Anandghan’s quatrains**

Anandghan's poetic oeuvre can be divided into two main groups. The first is relatively simple religious poetry, namely some one thousand songs (pads) and thirty-odd long poems in praise of Radha, Krishna or Brāj. 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 (kabittas), 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 Anandghan’s kabittas 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 Isk-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 हमें दिल लगी चम्मे के तीर।
किया सुदा महबुब की तदा तस्बत बेगीर॥ १५॥

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107Mīra (1952 ‘Prastut granthāvali’:3), (1952 ‘Vānmukh’:72). At the time of the edition the manuscript was in the Śrīji ki baṣī kunj, the Nimbārkā centre in Vrindaban, today it is in Salemabad.


111GUPTA (1965 II:49).
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 Anandghan’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, sujian into expressions like ju sjāma to make sure that it is not read as mundane. However, when the quatrain was too overtly mundane, then sujian 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 Anandghan that the human beloved was identified with the absolute as Anandghan’s double usage of the word sujian suggests. This twofold reading of the poems was peculiar rather to Persian and then to Urdu. I quote a quatrain to illustrate this:

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 Anandghan’s mundane beloved.

Today critics link Anandghan’s approach to the Sufi theory that his excessive mundane love led to love divine. They also try to show that his kabittas draw on Persian poetry in their preference for idiomatic usage and for strong contrast (virodh). 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 Anandghan 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 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 Anandghan. 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:

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, bend-

\[^{112}\text{For discussion of possible Persian influence on Anandghan see Miśra’s ‘Parīcay’ in Gaur (1958:6–16) as well as Gaur (1958 153-4, 159–60).}\]
ing 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.
Utmost 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 Pānagoṣṭhipaddhāti chapter of the Śūktimuktāvalī:

\[
\text{पिपिप्रियसस्त्यस्त्यमुधुमुखासंधे}
\text{तत्त्वाज्ञुएक्षुरभाजनकाश्वरम्}
\]

\[
\text{इतिसवलितज्ञितंमदवशाकुरवीर्यिष्यः}
\]

\[
\text{प्रये हस्तिक्षेत्रसहचरिभिध्यायत} \mid 13
\]

'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 Vṛṇḍāvande 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 \textit{ kabittas} can certainly derive from that of his guru, Vṛṇḍāvandevačārya, 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 but in many of them the mundane aspect overshadowed every Vaishnava aspiration.

113 \textit{Pānagoṣṭhipaddhāti} 3. Published in \textit{VYAS} (1991:266). I am indebted to Dr Harunaga Isaacson for drawing my attention to this poem.

According to the legend and to an early source Ānandghan belonged to the \textit{kīyastha} (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 \textit{ kabittas} 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 \textit{ bahis} (records of payments, commissions, dates and places of work) in Kishangarh,\footnote{Personal communication of Faiyaz Ali Khan} where the name of poets like \textit{Vṛṇḍ} is several times present.\footnote{For payments to \textit{Vṛṇḍ} see \textit{CELER} (1973:337-340).} 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 Vṛṇḍāvande since the ascetics of one of the most influential monastery in Rajastha 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 \textit{bhavyuḥ chanda} (mocking verses),\footnote{First published in \textit{Miśra} (1952 'Vāṃṣukha' :66-67).} which according to Gaur, were probably composed before 1755
AD 117 but with all probability in circles that knew Ānandghan well.  

The kāyastha Ānandghan was a great rogue. Although he came to the district of Braj, his bad reputation remains. [This is] his description:

उपर्याय वज्राय डोम डाडी सम गाये काहु
तुर्के रिसाये तब पार छडी नाम है।
हुरकनी हुरकनी सुजान को सेव क है
तज राम नाम बाकी पूजे काम धाम है।

...

He beats the tambourine, sings like a Dōm or a Dhārī, pleases a Muslim and then gets false fame;  
He is the servant of the prostitute Muslim Sujān; he leaves the name of Rām and worships118 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 vaiśayan ki vārtā distances himself from Raskhān's Muslim background by mocking at it.120

117GAUR (1958:7-8). Unfortunately Gaur did not give any justification for this date. The poems were taken from a book called Jās kābītā. In a personal communication in 1996 he said that Jās kābītā was in the Yajñik-collection of the Nāgariprācārī Śabhā in Benares; however I was not able to find it there. Bhavānīsūtakar Yajñik was a priest at the Gokulnātha temple in Gokul, which suggests that the manuscript came from Braj.
118The word pājā is an obscene pun with a secondary meaning of ‘the fills’.
119For a more detailed discussion of these mocking verses see BANGHA (1999:44-46, 115) and BANGHA (2000:529-531).

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 Nimbārki acaryas121 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 उफान।
बुढ़त मेहत चूल छद बंद बकवाद पंद ते सुरखी।122

My tongue is entangled in Gopāl’s virtues; [and] disentangled from the various bonds of false poems [and] traps of twaddle.

Research done by Heidi Pauwels shows that Nāgaridās also wrote about his mundane beloved in a religious context.123 As has been mentioned, Nāgaridās was more cautious in his approach to themes associated with Muslims than Ānandghan. Moreover, Ānandghan lacked the royal power to ward off similar attacks.

We have noted above that some of Sundar Kumvari’s quatrain bear close resemblance to those of Ānandghan. It is interesting to observe that three of them (including one quoted above, pīyaṭa 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 Brājvallabhaśāra’s edition although they are present in the Nimbārka mādhūri.124 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 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 Hemraj. One of them was Brajnāth, who with all probability is identical with the Sanskrit poet Brajnāth Bhatṭa a courtier and friend of Savai Jai Singh of Jaipur (r. 1697-1743).125 In his Sanskrit Padyataramgini,126 Brajnāth Bhatṭa praises both Savai Jai Singh and Savai Madho Singh (r. 1750-1767) but not Savai Īsvāri Singh (r. 1743-1750). During the reign of Īsvāri Singh Brajnāth lived in Rupnagar in the Kishangarh state of his disciple, the poetess-queen Bāmkāvatī who mentioned him as her vidyāguru at the end of her Braj translation of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.127 It was in Rupnagar in 1748 that he composed his Braj work on aesthetics, the Sāhitya-sār.128 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:

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 nehi mahā brajbhāṣā-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:

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 Bāmkāvatī and Prince Sāvunt Singh. At the same time secular poetry was not alien to the Nimbārki 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 Nimbārkis 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 Anandghan’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 Anandghan’s twofold approach as a Muslim idea. To protect Anandghan’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 Anandghan’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 Anandghan’s quatrains through his eyes being moved by the love expressed in them both in its divine and mundane aspects.

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