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# Visions of Kingship in the Twilight of Mughal Rule

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This contribution will be dealing with roughly the first half of the eighteenth century. Though I will be focusing on the discourse conducted at the royal court of Āmer/Jaipur in Rajsthan,<sup>1</sup> I hope to show how this discourse was to assume wider than purely regional dimensions. Several of the issues that were raised in the period under review are related to themes treated for a more ancient period magisterially by Professor Gonda, particularly concepts of kingship, the Veda, and bhakti, the devotional strand within Hindu religion. As a student of the early modern and modern period of India, I feel indebted to Professor Gonda, and by examining related issues for the late pre-colonial period, I wish to acquit the debt that I owe to him as much as the debt that I owe the J. Gonda Foundation for the honour of inviting me to deliver this talk.

Though I will be concerned with ancient themes of Indian culture as they were debated in a much later period, I do not wish to address the presence of those themes in the late pre-colonial period in the fashion of a dichotomy of continuity vs. re-invention of tradition. The phenomena involved are too complex to be merely juxtaposed in this way, for they form also part of *longue durée* processes. Rather am I interested in particular conditions that brought forth a programme – and similar programmes elsewhere – in which the ancient concepts of good governance, that is, in Indic terms, dharmic rule as embodied by the king, were found useful in confronting contemporary problems. I am concerned with a case where *dharmā* was harnessed to the idea that the homogenisation of religion—in our case, Vaiṣṇava religion—would be indispensable for upholding that good order, at once mundane and cosmic. Finally, though somewhat tangentially, I will briefly address the question how paradigms of the period under review relate to phenomena which gained prominence in the colonial period and thereafter.

<sup>1</sup> Jaipur was officially founded in 1927, but Āmer was replaced as royal residence by Jaipur gradually in the period from the second decade of the eighteenth century and retained many of its ritual functions well into the modern period.



*Savāi Jaisingh c. 1740. Painter: Sābibrām. City Palace Museum, Jaipur*

The state to be considered is that of the Kachavāhā dynasty of eastern Rajasthan in the period of Savāi Jaisingh in the first half of the eighteenth century (r. 1700-1743).<sup>2</sup>

The programme mentioned was conceived and engineered by Jaisingh and a host of Brahman counsellors. Because what they tried to achieve was based on mainly scholastic reasoning as it would be applied in the debates at the royal court, that period saw the production of innumerable treatises and a frantic exchange of statements and epistles attempting to rally Brahman specialists around certain doctrinal positions. The overwhelming majority of these texts, commis-

<sup>2</sup> In the following I will usually speak of “Jaisingh”, who is not to be confounded with Mirzā Rājā Jaisingh (r. 1621-1667).

sioned by the king and used as instruments of power,<sup>3</sup> remain unstudied which is largely why Jaisingh, though rightly portrayed as an exceptional personality, has been wrongly portrayed as a ruler who conceived his projects in isolation from surrounding discourses.

In its broad outlines, the tableau which we behold in early-eighteenth-century Rajasthan converges with what meets the eye elsewhere. As has been pointed out by historians,<sup>4</sup> the regional powers became increasingly Brahmanised in the process of articulating their growing independence from the Mughal empire, which was losing its hold over those regional powers. Notwithstanding this, these powers continued to pay loyalty to their suzerain emperor, a loyalty often in tension with their own objectives as regional rulers, but also indispensable for the achievement of those objectives. The process of Brahmanisation was especially prominent in Maharashtra, where Śivājī had appointed Brahmans to legitimise him as warrior-king, that is, as Kshatriya, by crafting for him the appropriate rituals of royal consecration. There, the Brahmanisation was eventually to lead to the take-over of the administrative machinery of the state by Brahmans.

The case of Rajasthan differs in that the Kshatriya status of its various rulers had been validated many generations ago. Also, Brahmans did not range supreme in the administration of the state. The functional elite, the military bureaucracy, consisted mainly of Jains and Kāyasths, notwithstanding a good number of Brahmans. The Rajput nobility, that is, the Kshatriyas, prominent as the king's kin and in military function, were largely kept away from running the administrative machinery of the state, for they were potential claimants to regnal power. The particular Brahmanisation, however, that set in in Maharashtra as elsewhere, made also an impact on Rajasthan, for Maharashtra served as a prestigious model and the service of Brahman families was accordingly avidly sought as an avenue to heightened self-assertion. It would be correct to argue that Brahmans had always been complementary to regnal power. However, in the period examined here, Brahmanisation was also part of a confrontational strategy directed

<sup>3</sup> For the function especially of Sanskrit texts in the vernacular period and a rigorous challenge to take stock of literature within its cultural and historical frame, see Pollock 2001 and 2003.

<sup>4</sup> S. Bayly 2001 [1999].

outward and against another political power and remained also a strategy of competition among regional states.

## 2. EARLY-EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RAJASTHAN AS A FRONTIER ZONE

In the early period of his reign, Jaisingh found himself in a precarious situation. During the second phase of Emperor Aurangzeb's rule (r. 1658-1707), the emperor's attitude towards Hindus had stiffened, especially towards those who represented self-assertive political powers, particularly the Marathas and the Rajputs.<sup>5</sup> The empire was beginning to erode. Lying in eastern Rajasthan, Jaisingh's state was after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 positioned in a frontier zone. First of all, Jaisingh had in the struggle for succession after Aurangzeb's death sided with A'zam, the hapless claimant to the throne of Delhi, and this made him vulnerable. Jaisingh's plight was aggravated by the fact that he and his younger half-brother, Bijaisingh, had been rivals of old. Bijaisingh had for many years served the prince who eventually emerged as new emperor and had in the struggle of succession supported him. In 1707 he felt that he was in a strong enough position to insinuate his claim of the throne of Āmer, of which since 1700 Jaisingh had been the incumbent. Jaisingh was thereby in 1707 precipitated into a crisis. The new emperor, Bahādur Śāh, had arrived in Āmer in January 1708. His stay was cut short, because he had to turn his attention to the Deccan where his own brother and rival was giving him trouble. As the imperial cortege proceeded, Jaisingh and Ajit Singh of Marwar left the imperial camp whereas their duty as nobles of the empire would have required that they remain in attention of the emperor, whereby they would also have remained tucked away from conspiracy. As a response to their defection, the emperor confiscated Jaisingh's residence and homeland (*waṭan*), Āmer. The homeland was the portion of a ruler's realm traditionally not alienable from his house. The equally recalcitrant kingdom of Marwar suffered a similarly rough treatment at the hand of the emperor. As for Āmer, the "City of [the Goddess] Ambā",<sup>6</sup> it was now re-named Mominābād,

<sup>5</sup> Chandra 1994 [1993, 1987].

<sup>6</sup> This is how the name of Āmer, then Āmber, was often interpreted in the eighteenth century. Actually its etymology should rather be connected with \**āmrāgiri*.

“City of the Orthodox Muslims”. Bijaisingh was conferred upon the full regnal title, phrased in Persian “Mirzā Rāja Bijai Singh, devoted to Šāh ‘Ālam, the Emperor and Warrior of Faith” and in its Indian version “Mahārājādhirāj Śrī Mirzā Mahārājā Bijaisingh”, whereas the title “Mirzā Rāja Sawāī” was given to Jaisingh only in 1713! Although Sarkar explicitly states that the emperor “gave the Kacchwa kingdom to Bijay Singh”, it remains unknown if his rule was implemented and, if so, how far it was operational.<sup>7</sup> As late as 1711 at any rate he promulgated deeds concerning revenue districts under his control with that grand title.<sup>8</sup> It was only in 1713 that Jaisingh took Bijaisingh prisoner and kept him in confinement in which he died much later.

In the ensuing years the fortune of Jaisingh brightened rapidly. In the year 1708, the Rajput armies joined and expelled the Mughal army from Āmer. Later in the same year, the imperial troops were beaten by the Rajput forces, including Jaisingh and his army, at Sāmbhar. In 1710, finally, Āmer was restored to Jaisingh. In 1712 Bahādur had died to be succeeded by Jahāndār, who in his turn was deposed and murdered by Farrukhsiyar in 1713. In the same year, Jaisingh, relieved of his contestant brother, was able to consolidate his position at the Mughal court. This is emblematically shown by the fact that he was granted the coveted titles “Mirzā Rāja” and “Sawāī” in the same year.<sup>9</sup> In his administrative documents he did not use the first of these titles, that is the Persian one. He also discontinued the maintenance of a Persian chancellery department, which Bijaisingh, of course, had kept for his own diplomatic affairs. Thereby Jaisingh made a clear statement that he had distanced himself from the emperor and sharpened his profile as a Hindu king at the expense of his identity as a *šāh-ẓāda*, a member of the imperial household. Nevertheless, he would remain throughout his life an imperial noble and one of the most illustrious representatives of the empire’s military bureaucracy. As the king of eastern Rajasthan, he was able to vastly expand his territory by taking tax-farming leases for wide ter-

<sup>7</sup> Sarkar 1984: 161; Bhatnagar 1974: 41-50 for the course of events. Bhatnagar could not find any mention of Āmer being conferred upon Bijaisingh (1974: 49, n. 42).

<sup>8</sup> Horstmann 1999: 208-215.

<sup>9</sup> Āṣāḡha ś. 7, 1770/ 19 June 1713: “Mirzā Rāja Sawāī” (in its Indic version “Savāī”); Āṣāḡha ś. 13, 1770/ 25 June 1713: title “Savāī” confirmed in a letter to Jaisingh by his ambassador to the imperial court. RSA 1974, nos. 219 and 220.

ritories which led to their incorporation into his state.<sup>10</sup> Thereby he more than counterpoised the power of the waning Mughal empire. That the power of his state dwindled rapidly upon his death in 1743 is a different matter.

The waning of the Mughal empire and a feeling of the dawning of something new were present throughout Jaisingh's regnal period. This prompted him to define his own role. His perception was clearly that he was ruler at a turning point in history, and he imagined that he would forge principles of statecraft that would be valid for the dawning new age. As would be expected, he perceived that turning point in history in the fashion of the ancient concept of the transition of the Kaliyuga to a new age of perfection, the Satyayuga.

### 3. SAVĀI JAISINGH AND HINDU KINGSHIP

Living in political or ideological frontier zones sharpens the perception of self and other as discrete.<sup>11</sup> However, the quality of self-perception that emerges from this and the ways to articulate it deserve individual examination. The terms in which Jaisingh came to articulate his identity as king were clearly Hindu ones. I may ignore here the much belaboured fact that the quality of being "Hindu" is seldom expressed by that term in the discourse of that period. However, Jaisingh projected himself as a Hindu ruler in the sense of his kingship being based on the *dharmā*, of which, because he was the king, he was the embodiment. The question was only what *dharmā* exactly would suitably deliver its purpose of upholding the state and the cosmic order. In an attempt to find a viable solution of this, Jaisingh did not act without precedent or in an ideological void. He was familiar with contemporary or near-contemporary antecedents, although the vigour and tenacity with which he pursued and enforced his concept against many odds may have been exceptional. He did not act in the splendid solitude of a larger-than-life great man, but he relied on men who by tradition, descent and intellectual rank reached out to pan-Indian dimensions.

When Jaisingh set out for Sāmbhar in 1708 to battle the imperial troops, his march was carefully ritually prepared, orchestrated and concluded by the ritual

<sup>10</sup> Wills 1933.

<sup>11</sup> Eaton 1996 [1993], Talbot 2003 [1985].

specialists serving him. This is actually not particularly surprising, for the ancient prescription has the king's chaplain conduct those particular rituals.<sup>12</sup> However, in that case care was taken to emphasise their significance, for these rituals found conspicuous mention in the long poem that reports the events of 1708 and 1709. That text could be read as a mere sourcebook of historical events; but it is much more a proclamation of the ideology launched by the court. Here the king is portrayed as the quintessential dharmic king. Quite appropriately, that work is called "Poem on the Sports of Rāma" (*Rāmavilāsakāvyaṃ*, RVK), for Jaisingh is identified with Rāma, Viṣṇu this time not embodied to kill Rāvaṇa but the Mughal troops, called the Yavanas or Mlecchas, foreigners and barbarians. Whereas the emperor himself, the lord of those intruders, is mentioned in a rather subdued way and as an honourable opponent,<sup>13</sup> it is also said that Rāma had incarnated himself as Jaisingh to destroy the family of the Yavanas (RVK 1.8). Whereas the barbarian hordes are vilified for devastating the country, the contemporary enemy of Rāma is individualised rather as the Demon of Poverty (*dāridryadaiṭya*). That poverty was essentially the poverty of Brahmans, and was now alleviated by Rāma. Jaisingh was thus portrayed as the good king who upholds the cosmic and mundane order. A basic condition for this was that he support the Brahmans. The richer his donations to them, the better he would fulfil his vocation as upholder of *dharmā*. The rituals conducted before the battle of Sāmbhar took place in Puṣkar, holiest of holy pilgrimage sites, and there, to fulfil his dharmic role, Jaisingh entertained Brahmans for nearly a month. The poem is concerned with the military conflict in which Rāma-Jaisingh prevails in glory; it is not, however, concerned with religious or other cultural differences between Hindus and the barbarians. It has gained some Indological recognition for its description of the royal rituals that Jaisingh had celebrated by his Brahman specialists before and especially after his encounter with the Mughal troops at Sāmbhar. And it is these rituals that dominate the poem. This shows how prominently they figured in the project that was taking shape to formulate Jaisingh's kingship in truly Hindu terms. The climax of the poem is formed by the chapter

<sup>12</sup> Gonda 1966: 65.

<sup>13</sup> The word used for the stance taken by Jaisingh against the emperor is *vidroha*, "opposition" (RVK 1.37). For the trope of the ruler as Rāma, see Granoff 1984; also Pollock 1993.

devoted to the Vājapeya ritual celebrated in the city of Āmer after the victory at Sāmbhar. It testifies to his abiding by a dharmic rule which requires the sustenance of sacrifice, for the land where sacrifices are performed is defined as the realm of *dharma*. The effect of that ritual is—apart from prosperity, fertility and power—that its royal patron acquires the status of a *samrāt*, a sovereign king. This was also a message addressed to Delhi and to the regional kings. It is well possible that this and related texts never reached an audience outside the milieu of the court itself, for they seem not to be referred to in other contemporary literature. Also, their publication took place only when the dynasty that had given rise to them had ceased being a political factor, that is after India gained Independence and with nostalgia and nationalist zeal looked for heartening examples of glory and good governance. At court, however, the texts were recited (RVK 3.110) and they were also referred to by contemporary or near-contemporary authors of similar texts. It is in this fashion that they must have been brought to the attention of also the ambassadors and visitors of neighbouring courts, and this is how their message was transported to their addressees. All these writers refer to roughly the same incidents in what partly seems to be a cross-referential fashion. They seem to take their tropes not only from poetic conventions, but rather also from a common stock of references to particular incidents that must also have been recorded in the court reports, as they used to be drafted on a day-to-day basis. In this way these literati span virtually a cocoon of tropes of royal grandeur, power and *dharma* in which the concept of Jaisingh's rule became couched.

Jaisingh's identification with Rāma was not far-fetched, for the Āmer dynasty claims descent from Rāma over the Raghu line. Rāma is also the state and tutelary deity and Indic language documents from the Kachavāhā chancellery bear his name in the first line. However, that this should be made use of in that ideological fashion can best be explained by pointing to the political ideology which had formed over the three or four decades prior to the events of 1708 and the poem written thereupon in 1709. Its precedents lay in Maharashtra where Śivājī, the Maratha leader and eventually consecrated Kshatriya king, had been praised by his panegyrists in the terms of a *mahārāṣṭradharma* with strong Hindu overtones.<sup>14</sup> The Hindu identity of Rajputs and Marathas had already been conjured

<sup>14</sup> Tulpule 1979; Pollock 1993.



*Savāt Jaisingh in his youth*

upon by Śivājī's son, Śambhu, who in desperate need of support wrote in 1682 to Jaisingh's great-grandfather, Rāmsingh (r. 1667-1689), reminding Rāmsingh of his own words and thereby trying to move him to a commitment for his, Śambhu's, own cause. As for Rāmsingh, he had as a crown-prince connived with Śivājī's escape from Mughal custody, and it was also he who gave the Vaiṣṇava deities shelter in Kachavāhā territory to forestall their desecration by iconoclasts. Thereby he performed also a move towards self-assertion by Hindu symbols in the face of imperial power. Rāmsingh's son, Prince Kiśansingh, died as early as 1682, his own son Biśansingh being only eleven years old. Biśansingh reigned only for ten years and died at the age of twenty-eight, when Jaisingh was thirteen years old. His father may not have inspired Jaisingh politically as lastingly as the model of Rāmsingh. As for Śambhu, this is what he wrote to Rāmsingh:

...You wrote to us in laudable words that we acted rightly in offering shelter in our dominion to Sultan Akbar [who wanted to kill his father Aurangzeb and usurp the throne], that you approved the course we followed and that as we are Hindus, you signified your readiness to execute whatever was considered expedient in the circumstances.

...The Vedas and codes enjoin certain injunctions of religion and caste, which we cannot allow to be trampled under foot, nor can we neglect our duty as kings to our subjects. We are prepared to sacrifice everything...in waging war against the satanic Emperor....The moment has now arrived when the Emperor himself can be captured and made prisoner with the result that we can rebuild our temples and restore our religious practices...<sup>15</sup>

The political resistance voiced by Śambhu has a Hindu-dharmic edge. In 1709, Jaisingh's court-poet wisely abstained from similar rebellious fantasies which would have disturbed the precarious relationship between Jaisingh and the emperor. While mainly venting his wrath against the officer in charge of the occupation of Āmer, the Governor of the Province of Ajmer, Saiyid Husain Khān, and his army, he somewhat played down the role of the emperor.

That the antecedents in Maharashtra should have appealed to the men creating the ideology underlying Jaisingh's rule is not surprising. The regional rulers admired Śivājī for his ability to defy the emperor, in whose name they fought against him; he was held in awe for his expansiveness; the Maratha power was rightly recognised as a formidable political factor. The Maharashtrian example and polemical idiom contributed to the change in the political discourse conducted in the India of that period. Intellectuals, in the religious centres of India and at the courts, furthered its dissemination by their contributions. A typical representative of these was the author of the "Poem on the Sports of Rāma", named Viśvanātha Bhaṭṭa Cittapāvana Rānaḍe. He belonged to the wide circle of Maharashtrian Brahmans resident in Banaras and had studied with Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa, the author of the *Nirṇayasindhu*, the famous *dharmā* digest, and with Ḍhunḍirāja, the poet. Viśvanātha's relationship with the Āmer court had its roots in the regnal period of Rāmsingh. His service of Jaisingh was limited to that poem, but this text prepared the canvas on which the image of Jaisingh

<sup>15</sup> Sarkar 1955: 206.

would be painted henceforth. The reiteration of ever the same epithets and tropes that underscored Jaisingh's Hindu righteousness is first fully displayed in that poem. The literary establishment of these at once rehearses the clichés describing a good king and is owed to the court policy which defined the ideological parameters of kingship.

The creation of the king as the quintessential sacrificer and upholder of *dharmā* by means of lavish rituals was mainly achieved by another Maharashtrian Brahman. He, too, came from a family resident in Benares, and already his father had also received the patronage of Rāmsingh. In both cases, Viśvanātha's and his, Jaisingh continued a court-tradition of patronage. This man's name was Ratnākara Bhaṭṭa Mahāśabde.<sup>16</sup> He was an Udīcyā Brahman of the Śāṅḍilya gotra and a specialist of the *Ṛgveda*. The prolific Mahāśabde family served the Kachavāhā ruling family for four generations and their presence in Jaipur is remembered through their mansion in Jaipur's Brahmapurī, the Brahman township in the north of Jaipur which was built before the construction of Jaipur itself. Ratnākara is described as a devotee of Rāma who conducted worship of the sun, celebrated the five great sacrifices, that is, the whole plethora of Smārta rites, and worshipped Śiva and Viṣṇu alike.<sup>17</sup> Not only did Ratnākara conduct for Jaisingh the rituals preceding the battle of Sāmbhar in 1709, the Vedic sacrifice upon his victory in it and many Vedic sacrifices subsequently, but also was he asked by Jaisingh after the battle of Sāmbhar to compile a digest covering all calendrical festivals. This he completed within four years (completed in 1713). The book is entitled *Jayasimbhakalpadruma*. In the introduction to that hefty tome he writes about his motive: To remind the Brahmans of following the "ancient *dharmā*" (*purāṇadharmā*), as is their duty and only justification as recipients of the king's gifts. The king is described here as the conqueror of the imperial troops under Saiyid Husain. Ratnākara set norms of Vedic and non-Vedic orthodox observances that contributed to the most common epithets of Jaisingh, among which was that of patron of Vedic rites. Ratnākara's reminder directed

<sup>16</sup> His additional titles were Dīkṣita and Pauṇḍarīka because he had conducted Vedic sacrifices, notably the Pauṇḍarīka sacrifice.

<sup>17</sup> ĪVMK 2.38, RVK 3.14. The "five great sacrifices" comprise *balikarma* (*bhūtayajña*), *svadhā* (*pitryajña*), *homa* (*devayajña*), *svādhyāya* (*brahmayajña*) and *atithiyajña* (*manusyayajña*), for which see also *Mānava-Dharmaśāstra* (2005), 3.70.

to the Brahmans was not uncalled for as the debates surrounding the 1720s and 1730s would show, and both the king and Ratnākara must have been more alert to the crisis that was hovering over them than transpires from a certain air of unperturbed confidence that they may exude.

The priests active in the sacrifice of 1709 were mostly from Banaras. Among the Maharashtrian Brahmans of Banaras, the Bhaṭṭa family who had their origin in Paiṭhān and had settled in Banaras around 1522 was especially prominent.<sup>18</sup> Not only was Kamalākara, the author of the *Nirṇayasindhu*, and teacher of the poet Viśvanātha a scion of it, but another descendant of that family, Viśveśvara (commonly known as Gāgā) Bhaṭṭa, had crafted the ritual of royal consecration for Śivājī from which Śivājī emerged as Kshatriya and whereby his Kanbī origin was neutralised. There is no indication that Ratnākara Bhaṭṭa was a family relation of those Bhaṭṭas, but he was part of their circle.<sup>19</sup> Already his own father, Deva Bhaṭṭa, who had enjoyed the patronage of Rāmsingh, was renowned as a Brahman authority of Banaras.<sup>20</sup> At Jaisingh's court, Ratnākara was not the only one of the Mahāśabde family who held a key-position. His nephew, Vrajanātha Bhaṭṭa, who despite his youth also acted as priest in the Vājapeya sacrifice of 1709 and was a member of the Vallabha sect and a philosophical author in that tradition, as well as Vrajanātha's brother could establish a close intellectual relationship with the Jaisingh.<sup>21</sup> Equally distinguished court-scholars were Brahmans of South Indian descent, who too had already gained prominence during the reign of Jaisingh's father, who had had a strong inclination towards Tantra and who had been initiated into that discipline by Śivānanda Gosvāmī, a Tailan-ga Brahman.<sup>22</sup>

Another key-figure at court was the Karṇāṭaka Brahman Harikṛṣṇa, also

<sup>18</sup> Upādhyāy 1994 [1983]: 46ff., Bendrey 1960: 23, Pollock 2005: 13-14.

<sup>19</sup> Gāgā Bhaṭṭa “belonged to the Vishwamitra Gotra, Gadhi Vamshan and Bhatta family, having Goddess Bhawani of Kolhapur as his family deity”, according to Bendrey 1960: 22.

<sup>20</sup> Motīcandra 1985 [1962]: 383-384.

<sup>21</sup> ĪVMK 10.5-10. Vrajanātha is the author of the *Marīcīkā-Brahmasūtra-vṛtti*, a commentary on Vallabhācāryas *Aṅgubhāṣya*, itself a commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*.

<sup>22</sup> ĪVMK 2.7.

Harekr̥ṣṇa, Bhaṭṭa.<sup>23</sup> He was an expert in the Śrauta and Smārta rituals. Actually a resident of Gokul in Braj, he had gained special reputation in Banaras. He may have been a follower of the Vallabha sect.<sup>24</sup> He had acted as the chief *adbvar-yu* in the Vājapeya sacrifice of 1709 and in 1734 also at Jaisingh's horse sacrifice, to which I will turn presently. At one point he became the chief judge, the *prād-vivāka*, of Jaisingh and thereby the chief authority next only to the king himself. He was the man who was to formulate the concept of Vaiṣṇava good conduct which was promulgated to serve as a global concept to be followed by all who claimed to be recognised as orthodox Vaiṣṇavas in Jaisingh's state. According to this, all particularities of the various lines of sectarian tradition and anything that was related to Tantra of the kind that would violate orthodox principles would not be admitted and be considered as beyond the pale of Vaiṣṇavism.

The men who came to Jaipur from Banaras shared a combined religious identity. They were all Vaiṣṇavas, though of different persuasions. Ratnākara himself was a Rāma worshipper, most others Kṛṣṇa worshippers, including Ratnākara's extended family. They were Bhāgavatas,<sup>25</sup> the Vaiṣṇavas who hold that Viṣṇu and Śiva are the same. The scope of the ritual activities of Ratnākara is characteristic of this identity. Farquhar approaches Bhāgavatas to the Smārtas and therefore does not include them in the category of sectarian Vaiṣṇavas.<sup>26</sup> Biardeau thinks that it was in their milieu that the epic-puranic beliefs which we define as Smārta had their origin. She also holds that the opposition between Viṣṇu and Śiva in the epic myths is a structural one which is analogous to the mythical rivalries between Brahmans and Kshatriyas and that sectarian rivalries are the consequence rather than the cause of this opposition.<sup>27</sup> In the later pre-modern-period Rajasthan, at any rate, when Vaiṣṇavism had eclipsed Śaivism, there was an entrenched animosity between the two groups.

<sup>23</sup> In VVS he gives his name as Harekr̥ṣṇa.

<sup>24</sup> His written work does not betray his sectarian affiliation, but he worked in tandem with Vrajnātha. That he was a resident of Gokul puts him in at least topographical relationship with the Vallabha *sampradāya*.

<sup>25</sup> That they form the model of orthodox Vaiṣṇavism is expressed by Harekr̥ṣṇa in VVS, fol. 1b.

<sup>26</sup> Farquhar 1967 [1920]: 4.

<sup>27</sup> Biardeau 1994: 3-4.

The Bhāgavata tradition figures prominently in Maharashtra. Paiṭhān, the place of origin of the Bhaṭṭa family of Banaras, is close to Āpegāv, the place from where the Jñāneśvar of the *Jñāneśvari* hailed. In the thirteenth century he personified religious trends characteristic of the region and period.<sup>28</sup> A Śaiva converted to Vaiṣṇavism, he took a Bhāgavata stance which showed allegiance both to Śiva and Viṣṇu.<sup>29</sup> The catholic Bhāgavatas have their non-orthodox counterpart in the Sant tradition; both these groups would not acknowledge the exclusively sectarian groups as kindred spirits.<sup>30</sup> The Sants of course, being heterodox, were definitely beyond the pale of the considerations of Jaisingh's court and scholars.

As for the Vedic stance of these Vaiṣṇavas, it is almost needless to say that the Vedic sacrifices which they celebrated for Jaisingh were shot through with Vaiṣṇava elements. More importantly, the Vedic sacrifices were expressly conducted to serve two purposes, the upholding of *dharmā* in an endangered world and the perfection of bhakti, culminating in the attainment of Viṣṇu. This is no novelty, for in this they follow exactly the blueprint of the Vedic sacrifices described in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas. The epitome of these is the horse sacrifice, celebrated by Jaisingh much in the puranic fashion. A reanimation or conservation of pristine Vedic rituals—an Indological project, as it were—was not intended thereby.

Given the fact that they combined belief in some form of Viṣṇu as the supreme god with Smārta ritual practice, one would want to call them Vaiṣṇava Smārtas. For Rajasthan, however, the term Vaiṣṇava Smārta is both anachronistic and, quite literally, out of place, because the divide between Vaiṣṇavas and Smārtas in that region was much advanced at that time. Smārtas were readily identified with (non-tantric) Śaivas, and Śaivas were not unlikely to encounter the hostility of Vaiṣṇavas of a sectarian hue. Against this, in Banaras and in South India the concept and term of Vaiṣṇava Smārtas was and is to this day alive.<sup>31</sup> Whereas sectarian Vaiṣṇavas are often exclusive in their worship of their personal

<sup>28</sup> For the debated authorship of the works attributed to Jñāneśvar alias Jñāndev, see Vaudeville 1969: 5-11.

<sup>29</sup> Vaudeville 1985: 37. Vaudeville sees in the exaltation of the divine name which bridges the distinction between Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas and is common in the Sant religion the effect of Bhāgavata concepts.

<sup>30</sup> Vaudeville 1985: 49, n. 33.

<sup>31</sup> See Clémentin-Ojha 2000.

god, this is not the case with the Bhāgavatas and Vaiṣṇava Smārtas in general who include Śiva in their worship. Jaisingh was anxious to reduce the animosity between the Vaiṣṇavas and the Śaivas in his attempt to prevent the state from being rent by their mutual hostility. He and his counsellors therefore tried to formulate and enforce a broad Vaiṣṇava *dharma* that would do justice to non-sectarian and sectarian identities. Ratnākara in his *Jayasimbakalpadruma* distances himself from a Smṛti saying that claims that only he who is initiated according to the ritual texts (*āgamas*) of the Vaikhānasas and others can claim the status of a Vaiṣṇava by saying:

Even if someone has received in the line of his father the initiation prescribed by the *āgamas*, his son and so on do not possess the Vaiṣṇava identity of a man of that description. Nevertheless the wise hold that there exists a Vaiṣṇava and a Śaiva identity brought about by one's own traditional affiliation.<sup>32</sup>

The issue which Jaisingh and his counsellors faced lay precisely in the fact that by their period the exclusivistic sects had come to play a dominant role, more particularly the Vaiṣṇavas who formed the target of the various deliberations conducted at court. These held that only initiation into a sect would make one a true Vaiṣṇava, and that this sectarian identity would rule out any allegiance to other deities. This caused considerable split-up in Vaiṣṇavism. These sectarian debates had also sharpened the sense of distinction of Vaiṣṇavas against Smārtas. The very term Smārta was now widely used as the opposite of Vaiṣṇava, for Vaiṣṇava now mainly meant a follower of one of the various tantric sects. Moreover, by the fourteenth century, the Smārtas had been identified with non-tantric Śaivas, and the monism of Śāṅkara, which is felt by Vaiṣṇava bhaktas to be inferior to their views, with Smārta doctrine.<sup>33</sup> The Vaiṣṇava experts from outside of Rajasthan were thus more than figures of prestige in the rank contest among regional rulers. They had been brought to Jaipur to battle at the sectarian front.

<sup>32</sup> Ratnākara Dīkṣita v.s. 1982: 407: *smṛtyantare'pi vaikhānasādyāgamoktadikṣāyukto hi vaiṣṇavaḥ| iti| yadyapi pītrāder āgamoktadikṣāyām tanmātrasyaiva vaiṣṇavatvaṃ na putrādeḥ tathāpi svapāramparyaḥprasiddham eva vaiṣṇavatvaṃ smārtatvaṃ ca manyante budhbāḥ|*

<sup>33</sup> Hacker 1965, Potter 1982. The enmity between Vaiṣṇavas and *sannyāsīs* was endemic where it was yoked to competition for material resources, as was the case on the military labour market where warrior-monks of both groups were present.

It is noteworthy that all these Brahmins of a Bhāgavata orientation had the credentials of the Brahmin establishment of Banaras. Against these, the local Brahmins of Jaipur did not figure prominently in Jaisingh's project. These were fragmented and it would have been hardly possible, even an absurdity, to engage them in the project of constructing a uniform orthodox Vaiṣṇava practice.

In his *Vaidikavaiṣṇavasādācāra* (VVS), Harekr̥ṣṇa Bhaṭṭa confirmed the basic tenets of Bhāgavata Vaiṣṇavism (fol. 1b) by sifting and refuting the sectarian allegations against these. His task was not an easy one, for he had to reckon with the fact that tantric sectarian Vaiṣṇavism occupied firm ground by the time that he wrote. He defined Vaiṣṇava conduct in accordance with the teachings of the *Bhāgavatapurāna*, which sanctioned Vedic practice with the admixtures of Tantra that would not contradict Vedic rules (the *vaidika-mīśra-mārga*). The proofstone of the permissible Tantra was the ritual manual of the Gauṛīyas<sup>34</sup>, the *Haribhaktivīlāsa*, which in its turn accepts the Tantra propounded by the *Gautamīyatantra*. All that the *Gautamīyatantra* would not sanction would be inadmissible Tantra. This shows the impact of the Gauṛīyas of the day.

From the last decades of the seventeenth century, the powerful Vaiṣṇava groups from the area of Braj had moved westward in order to protect their deities from desecration and thereby themselves from ruin. This disturbed the balance of religious power in the Kachavāhā state. The newly arrived groups were accommodated in the religious system of the state and thereby threatened the rank of the hitherto leading groups. This was especially acute because in the second decade of his reign Jaisingh started building his new residence, Jaipur. Basically carried over to Jaipur were the principles of the ritual and rank topography of the old residence, Āmer. That is to say, places of worship and residences of the elite were arranged according to principles prevailing there. However, with new players in the power game, these had to be fit in.

In the process and in order to create clearer criteria of orthodox and non-orthodox practice, there was enforced a principle according to which only religious groups with orthodox credentials would be reckoned among the "four Vaiṣṇava sects" and accordingly recognised by the state. The principle of the "four Vaiṣṇava sects" had been operational in Rajasthan at least since the begin-

<sup>34</sup> I am using the modern spelling instead of the Sanskrit "Gauḍīya".

ning of the seventeenth century.<sup>35</sup> It served as a means to provide the Vaiṣṇava sects which had risen since the fifteenth century with orthodox legitimacy. Its origins are to date not well explored. Whereas that principle had already operated for about a century, now in the course of the debates at Jaisingh’s court the credentials of the sects concerned were examined. Were they factual or fabricated? What were the proofs? In the process, sects felt increasingly obliged to relate in commentaries of their own to the three kinds of texts that were authoritative to the Smārtas for whom Śaṅkara as commentator of those texts, namely *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, was the model. It is obvious here that thereby the Vaiṣṇavas were examined on the proofstone of the Smārtas. This strategy was certainly engineered by the Brahman experts, whom we can perhaps simply dub the “Brahmapurī-faction”. The leaders of the recent bhakti sects, for their part, fought their contest both in disputations at court and in the arena of the new walled city of Jaipur where they wanted to position themselves as fountainheads from which would spring the king’s religious power. The candidates for orthodox recognition were the Rāmānandīs, who became now related to the sect of Rāmānuja; the Nimbārkas, the sect of Vallabhācārya and the Gauṛīya sect of Caitanya. Whereas the Nimbārkas and the Vallabhācāryas remained relatively inconspicuous, for they could at once produce the scriptural proofs required and did at that time not yet conspicuously claim physical space in the topography of power and restricted themselves to their role as counsellors of the king, the case of the Rāmānandīs and the Gauṛīyas was different. Chronologically, the balance of power had started veering with the advent of the Gauṛīyas who became prominent in Jaipur after their deities had moved westwards from Braj. Of these, the most important one was Govinddevjī. The Vaiṣṇava deities were prestigious assets of royal power, for the Kachavāhā kings had been entitled by the imperial court to continue the patronage earlier given to them by the emperor. At the same time, the Kachavāhā house as one of Vaiṣṇava bhaktas had a close relationship to them. As for Govinddevjī, he was first taken to the precincts of the new city palace of Jaipur—then not yet built—in 1716. He was made a new state deity and would over the years become the divine complement of the king. Orthodox credentials of the Gauṛīyas could be culled from the scholastic works of the Gauṛīya Gosvāmīs, but there was a vibrant and

<sup>35</sup> The system is first fully operative in Nābhādās’s *Bhaktamāla* (around 1600).

strong tradition among the Gauṛīyas which was both tantric, non-orthodox and accordingly critical of ritual, the very corner-stone of the Smārta system. Around the beginning of the eighteenth century the conflict between the orthodox faction and the non-orthodox one had been fuelled by the teachings of a man from a distinguished lineage of the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas whose name was Rūpa Kavirāja and who was condemning ritual.<sup>36</sup> He had a large following and his heresy, as it was seen by the scholastic faction of Braj, where he had chosen to reside, could not be quelled. Connected with this was another scholastic conflict which related also to principles of orthodox conduct, but was in fact caused by the clash of the deeply rooted tantric tradition of Bengal with orthodoxy. This was the debate about the status of the wives of the cowherds of Braj, the *gopīs*, vis-à-vis Kṛṣṇa. To enforce orthodox Vaiṣṇava principles, the leaders of the orthodox Gauṛīya faction and Jaisingh now joined in a project vital to both of them. The Gauṛīya orthodoxy wanted to eliminate the obstreperous heretics, whereas Jaisingh could not allow his envisaged state deity to be outside the pale of orthodox Vaiṣṇavism. He therefore worked hand in hand with a Bengali Brahman, Kṛṣṇadeva Bhaṭṭācārya, a scholasticist of distinguished parentage, who confirmed for him the orthodox principles of Gauṛīya religion in a number of treatises which reflected and digested the result of arduous discussions at court. The king's perspective was not sectarian but overarchingly Vaiṣṇava. Accordingly, he was keenly interested that the principles which would ensure that sectarian and orthodox doctrine and practice be defined. This was achieved by Kṛṣṇadeva to the king's satisfaction. He did not satisfy everyone, though. Indeed, viewed from a wider perspective, he failed. In 1718 Jaisingh organised a disputation in Jaipur.<sup>37</sup> At this the Gauṛīya delegates from Bengal were persuaded to accept orthodox principles, with which they dutifully but rather disheartenedly complied and which they took home to propagate. In Bengal they met not only with resistance, but after a renewed debate on the points of controversy at the court of the Nawab of Bengal, they were threatened with expulsion from the Gauṛīya fold and to be branded as criminal, both these penalties endorsed by the Nawab him-

<sup>36</sup> Haberman 2001 [1988], chapter 8; Horstmann 2005. I am discussing the debate surrounding Rūpa Kavirāja at greater length in my book *An der Wende der Zeit: Herrschaftskonzept und Religion bei Savāi Jaisingh* [in progress].

<sup>37</sup> Sen 1914: 1639-1643.

self. This only goes to show how important the Gauṛīyas of Bengal and their wealthy supporters— often local magnates on whose cooperation the state depended — were and how the non-orthodox bhakti was a living reality with firm theological underpinnings. Kṛṣṇadeva went home, only to return after some time to Bengal to press his case with renewed vigour. Again he was humiliated. All this did not prevent him from becoming, and officiating as, an unassailable authority of Vaiṣṇava orthodox propriety in Jaisingh’s state. Kṛṣṇadeva was author and victim at the same time of a scholastic attempt to bypass the living reality of religion and its social moorings. Perhaps it is no coincidence that after Kṛṣṇadeva no contribution of the Gauṛīyas to the intellectual life of Jaipur was forthcoming. The spate of theological literature from the period of Jaisingh was produced for ammunition in a power contest rather than for the inspiration of a wider audience, whose willingness and ability to share in the debate for its possible intellectual gains may be doubted in any case.

As for the Rāmānandīs of Galtā, the other group that came under severe attack, their case was different. They were by no means newcomers, but as the line descending from Kṛṣṇadāsa Payohārī, the guru of Pṛthvīrāj (1503–1527), and custodians of a state-deity had enjoyed a distinguished position for two centuries. The Rāmānandīs had, of course, not cared to foreground orthodox principles. Their very mainspring was that they were open to all, twice-born and non-twice-born, orthodox and non-orthodox, supporters and detractors of ritual. Their lineage had proliferated in the intervening two centuries. The abbot of Galtā had from the beginning of that lineage been a celibate ascetic. So far nobody had taken offense at this. Now, with the new orthodox idiom being so severely applied, these Rāmānandīs came under attack. Imposed on them were principles of the orthodox Vaiṣṇavas, in their case particularly the ŚrīVaiṣṇava sect. The main consequence of this was that their religious head had to turn householder-*ācārya* and thereby become entitled to conduct rituals of the orthodox kind. Other Vaiṣṇava sects and even sects expressly non-orthodox and non-Vaiṣṇava, but of some consequence for the court, and similarly headed by ascetics, also became targets of royal reformist zeal. The model held out to all Vaiṣṇavas were the householders of the Vedic-Vaiṣṇava type. In Galtā Jaisingh proceeded ruthlessly, for Galtā was at the hub of a network of power and the life-style there seems to have been anything but austere. He deposed the abbot, who went into exile on Mount Citrakūṭ, and installed his disciple, who had to

turn householder. Ever since the abbots of Galtā have been householders which is held against them by ascetic Rāmānandīs and accounts for unending venomous debates in contemporary politics, mainly whipped up with right-wing political support.<sup>38</sup> In any case, the religious groups that would guarantee that the king execute his dharmic duties were forced to comply with the new precepts.

All this concerned aspects of the state ideology, for it is obvious that the reforms administered by the court did not fit well with practised religion. The principle of personally and emotionally relating to God could not be totally muted, and clashed over and over again with orthodox mores. Also, it would be erroneous to relegate the genuine stance of bhakti to a putative religion of the masses, for the debate took place on a broad base. What we call bhakti was also connected with a perhaps increasing criticism of the ugly face of religion, much beyond the simple divide between twice-borns and non-twice-borns or the Muslim orthodoxy and their co-religionist critics. In art, this criticism is evidenced in the genre of religious caricature, in literature in satire. These genres were part of the inherited tradition, but now they became broadcast, mainly in religious discourse.<sup>39</sup> However biased such criticism may have been at times, religious criticism had now become an engaging idiom. Also, certain strands of religion emphasised a more individualistic and less caste-bound adherence to faith. In other words, the element of individual faith and moral accountability of those who claimed to represent religion had become important topics in the public discourse. Jaisingh's concept of an orthodox Vaiṣṇava *dharmā*, developed by men who not only had a vital interest in securing their own position, but were also ensconced in their own orthodox system, did not relate in any significant measure to what was going on outside the court and the religious groups fighting for influence in its orbit. Their's was rather a fight behind the walls of an orthodox system. But did they feel protected by that wall or did they perceive cracks in it? Pollock (2005) argues that the scholastic system as it had *inter alia*

<sup>38</sup> This is based on my observation of the activities surrounding the celebrations of the seventh centenary of Rāmānand in the year 2000 in Jaipur, and the regular resurgence of the topic in the local press. After this lecture was held, the latest upsurge of that conflict occurred in February and March 2006 after the demise of the Ācārya of Galtā when a band of sadhus tried to usurp his seat.

<sup>39</sup> An even cursory glance at works and MSS of the Sant spectre reveals this.

been represented by the large Bhaṭṭa family of Banaras had by the eighteenth century stopped making notable contributions. His hypothesis is that the very cause of the end of that scholastic tradition was that it had reached a degree of perfection that was encapsulated in its own world with no inherent urge for innovation. He emphasises the total intellectual freedom of these scholars, in whose mental universe the very idea of freedom did not figure as a motive for change.<sup>40</sup> He also points to the fact that the social correlates of the work of Indian intellectuals of that period remain insufficiently explored.<sup>41</sup> The case of the eighteenth-century-Vaiṣṇavas who worked for Jaisingh opens a small window on these social correlates. These scholars were hired to conduct various projects in the interest of *dharmā*, statecraft and good governance. They may have been free to pursue their trade along the lines of their traditions, but they were not freelancing. They were rather part of the state machinery. The very reason why their services were sought was that the sectarian cleavages were felt to endanger the dharmic system. It is true that they worked within the confines of their intellectual universe. However, they could not have helped realising that it was their duty to stem a tide of adversity. It is an altogether different matter that they may have acquitted their duty with complacency at their scholastic perfection and may not have been aware that the tools of their trade did not suit the changed conditions.

The Vaiṣṇava *dharmā* which was distilled from the numerous disputes and writings commissioned by the king was focused on the maintenance of ritual order and, implicitly, cosmic order, and not on matters of faith. The fomenting plural reality of religion was thereby sought to be kept at bay. It was a system well compatible with the Smārta religion in general. Formulated in a way that would avoid reproducing sectarian clefts, it tried to create a rapprochement between the Vaiṣṇavas and the Smārtas at large. In the process, the differences were

<sup>40</sup> Pollock 2005: 85, 87–88.

<sup>41</sup> Pollock 2005: 81.

inevitably spelt out.<sup>42</sup> The system vehemently distanced itself from the particularities of the various sects with their often rigidly exclusive practices and forbade those practices that were not in conformity with the orthodox Vaiṣṇava conduct. The whole arduous procedure was aimed at wielding the Hindu populace—or the segment of the populace that was found to be of any consequence for the project of upholding *dbarman*—into one dharmic body, beyond the internal differences and splits. The dissenting, vibrantly articulate groups were simply ignored by the programme. Muslims and other non-Hindu groups were not targeted by Jaisingh's programme. To emphasise it, the project of good kingship did not expressly draw borderlines against non-Hindus and their religious concepts.<sup>43</sup>

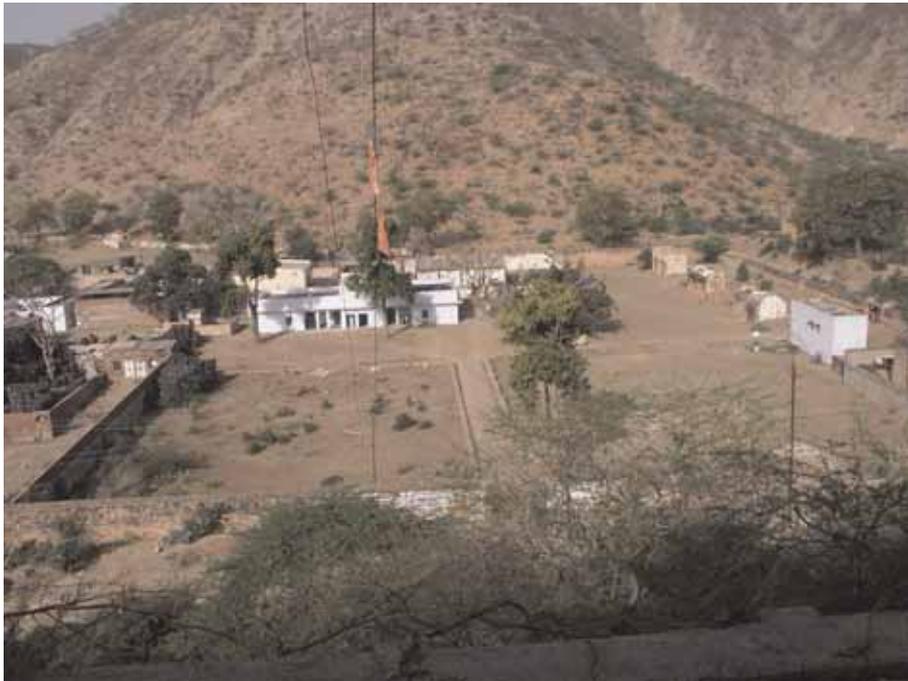
The foundation of royal *dbarman* being scholastically retrieved, the concept of Hindu kingship was put before the public in countless ritual acts. The apogee of this was the celebration of the horse sacrifice and the ensuing recasting of the king as the saviour of the age. The first horse sacrifice took place in 1734, another in 1741.

The celebration of that sacrifice, which, as I said, was ritually at once Vedic and Vaiṣṇava, as it certainly was in spirit, was prefigured by mythical horse sacrifices

<sup>42</sup> The differences lay mainly in the rules concerning fasting on the eleventh and twelfth lunar day of the month, respectively, how one was to reconcile the injunction to fast and the injunction to consume the *śrāddha* offerings, and the issue of *nirmālya* offered to Śiva, which Vedic Vaiṣṇavas do consume whereas this is forbidden for non-Vaiṣṇava Smārtas.

<sup>43</sup> An extremely salient question which cannot be tackled for lack of research in the area is the role of the business elites. The expansion of Jaisingh's state by means of tax-farming leases required bankers who would come forth to advance money. The enormous ostentation that the court and the nobility displayed swallowed fortunes, and so did the building of an entirely new city. I can only point to this issue which would certainly add new dimensions to an examination of Jaisingh's project which so far is bound to remain incomplete. How did these business elites, overwhelmingly Vaiṣṇavas or Jains, figure in Jaisingh's programme of a homogenised Vaiṣṇavism as its prop? For Bengal, the nexus of Gauṛīyas, wealthy businessmen and local magnates with the court of the Nawab is obvious. Among these there were also Marwaris and Khattris from Rajasthan or, in more general terms, the west. See Chakrabarty 1985, and Eaton 1996 [1993], and for the early colonial period, Chaudhury 1988.

in the epic tradition. Jaisingh's horse sacrifice implicitly likens Jaisingh to King Yudhiṣṭhira of the Mahābhārata who thereby initiated a prosperous, righteous rule, notwithstanding the fact that Yudhiṣṭhira himself after the horse sacrifice renounced kingship. The second incident is that of Indradyumna's horse sacrifice, as it occurs in the *Brahmapurāṇa* (ch. 47). Both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Brahmapurāṇa* provide models for Jaisingh's horse sacrifice. The elements connecting his to that of Indradyumna's in the *Brahmapurāṇa* are first of all the setting of the sacrifice in an idyllic, flowering landscape, abounding in greenery, water and gifts to the Brahmins. Jaisingh's horse sacrifice was, secondly, structurally moulded on the model of Indradyumna's sacrifice in being the first act in a two-act sacrificial cosmic play. Though producing regnal sovereignty and prosperity in a strengthened cosmic order, both sacrifices culminated in the descent of Viṣṇu into the human realm. The horse sacrifice only prepared the ground for the advent of Viṣṇu. In Indradyumna's case, this was Lord Jagannātha of



*Sacrificial ground of the horse sacrifice (with modern buildings)*

the Blue Mountain of Puruṣottamakṣetra (as Śrī-Jagannāth-Purī was still called in the days of Jaisingh); in Jaisingh's case, it was Viṣṇu's tenth *avatāra*, Kalkī, in a significantly unusual iconographic form.

By 1734, Jaisingh had already revised the Vaiṣṇava state pantheon by adding Govinddev, the Gauṛīya deity of Vrindaban, to it. The horse sacrifice was, however, celebrated midway between Āmer and Jaipur, thus linking the ancient residence built by Mānsingh and at least into the late eighteenth century the venue for the coronation of the new king with the new city of Jaipur.<sup>44</sup> The sacrificial ground was a plain stretching at the foot of a hill on which the presiding deity of the sacrifice, Viṣṇu, had been installed for that purpose.

Here he is represented as Varadarāja, the Royal Dispenser of Boons or the Lord of the Dispenser(s) of Boons, which tallies so well with the emphasis on the wealth showered on the Brahmans. The priests of Varadarāja hail from Kanchi and were invited to settle in Jaipur by Jaisingh, but they were no ŚrīVaiṣṇavas, according to the present-day priest of that temple, who represents the seventeenth generation of their family. They will have fallen in the category of Vedic Vaiṣṇavas. Also the image of Varadarāja is from Kanchi. The priests have, for an unspecified period, been Nimbārkas, but they were no Nimbārkas to start with.<sup>45</sup> Suffice it to say that the origin of both the image and its custodians re-

<sup>44</sup> Documentary evidence for the coronation rites produced by Jörg Gengnagel in collaboration with myself in the course of a research project presently conducted in Heidelberg on the court ritual and ceremonies of Jaipur.

<sup>45</sup> Personal communication of Mahant Shri Jayaji Krishna, custodian of the deity, 20 March 2005. Shri Jayaji Krishna represents exactly the ideal of an orthodox Vaiṣṇava also worshipping Śiva, for he is also the custodian of a temple of Gyārah-Rudra (Eleven Rudras), a representation of Śiva found in several Vaiṣṇava temples of the Jaipur area of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A similar Vaiṣṇava-Śaiva configuration can be found in the Rāmānandī temple of Bāṅgaṅgā-Rādhākāntajī at Bairāṭh, where the family of the officiant priest has conducted worship for Viṣṇu and Śiva alike for four generations (personal communication of Shri Joshi, officiant priest of that temple, 7 February 2000). At the time of the consecration of the temple in 1783, the images of the temple consisted of Rādhākāntajī, a Pañcamukhīgyārārudrī-Sadāśiv, Śyāmkārttik, Gaṇeś and Hanumān. The images of the Five Pāṇḍavas, appropriate to the site of the temple at the Bāṅgaṅgā, are more recent. Horstmann [forthcoming].



*Varadrāja Temple*

flects the recourse that Jaisingh and his counsellors took to the South Indian models of Vaiṣṇavism.

The Varadarāja temple is a small *śikhara* temple. There is in Jaipur proper, that is in the walled city, only one *śikhara* temple built by Jaisingh, the Kalkī temple. In Jaisingh's architectural vocabulary, the Kalkī temple with its tapering tower is considered rather unusual.<sup>46</sup> Why this architectural device distinguishing it from other—notably sectarian—temples of Jaipur from Jaisingh's period? I argue that the two temples, Varadarāja and Kalkī, combined reveal their underlying programme, and for this the contemporary literature provides also clues. The Kalkī temple was added on to Jaisingh's visual arsenal of statecraft in 1740. The Kalkī residing therein is no revengeful apocalyptic horseman, he is rather a benevolent two-armed youth in sitting posture with his hands bestowing

<sup>46</sup> Asher 2000.



*Kalkī Temple*

boons (right hand of the deity) and fearlessness (left hand), respectively. He is Kalkī with the attributes of Varadarāja. Contemporaries expressly described him in these terms.<sup>47</sup> Jaisingh, the patron of the horse sacrifice, was in the language of a court-poet the king born to rescue the *dharmā* at the beginning of the fourth wake of the Kaliyuga, our present age. Whereas the horse sacrifice was celebrated at the end of the Kali age when the third wake of it was in progress, the installation of Kalkī eventually took place at the beginning of the fourth wake to instal the new Satyayuga.<sup>48</sup> Horse sacrifice and the installation of Kalkī were therefore *cosmically* contiguous events. Also, as the oral tradition of Jaipur goes, a horse for Kalkī was installed in the courtyard of the Kalkī temple (not in the temple itself) after the horse sacrifice. Compared to the image

<sup>47</sup> Bahura 1979: 83, verses 76-80.

<sup>48</sup> ĪVMK 4.20 and 6.1.



*Kalkī*

of Kalkī it is of gigantic size, which points to the incoherent origin of both images.

The horse is therefore at once the sacrificial horse and Kalkī's horse Devadatta. That the two temples should architecturally "stick out" from the rest of the temples built by Jaisingh seems now explicable. They point to the king himself as a benevolent, boon-giving guardian of the cosmic order. He is even more than a guardian, he is held to be Kalkī himself.<sup>49</sup> The poet describing the Kalkī temple sees in it a crystal mountain.<sup>50</sup> The causeway leading to the temple is slightly ascending, but its topography does not even remotely resemble a hill, let alone mountain. The crystalline quality of the mountain and the temple poetically adorned with precious jewels reminds one of that other temple situated on top of an imaginary mountain, the temple of Jagannāth situated on the Blue Mountain of Purī, the Puruṣottamakṣetra, and Indradyumna's vision of

<sup>49</sup> Bahura 1979: 83, Str. 76.

<sup>50</sup> ĪVMK 6.44.



*The horse in the courtyard of the Kalkī Temple*

Viṣṇu sitting on the crystalline island of Śvetadvīpa and appearing to Indradyumna after the horse sacrifice. This occurs in the *Brahmapurāṇa* in chapter 48, following the one describing Indradyumna's horse sacrifice. Similarly, the chapters on the horse sacrifice and that on the Kalkī temple form the consecutive climax of Kṛṣṇabhaṭṭa's, the court-poet's, great narrative poem. Thereby, the Varadarāja and the Kalkī temples underscore Jaisingh's apotheosis as embodiment and rescuer of the cosmic order. This is not only alluded to, but the identification of Jaisingh as embodied *dharmā* and Kalkī is found in literature, works by Kṛṣṇabhaṭṭa and others.<sup>51</sup> Reversely, according to the *Kalkīpurāṇa*, only he who is able to carry out the horse sacrifice can move Kalkī to descend to earth and

<sup>51</sup> Bahura 1976: 467-469, MSS 4801 and 4641; for Kṛṣṇabhaṭṭa, see especially pp. 468-469.

re-install the Kṛta- or Satyayuga.<sup>52</sup> Only the righteous king is capable of preparing the descent of Kalkī. After identifying not a few Maharashtra precedents inspiring Jaipur, it will not come as a surprise that in Maharashtra Śivājī, too, had been identified with Kalkī as the harbinger of a new age.<sup>53</sup>

The exact date of the consecration of the Kalkī temple in the year 1740 is uncertain. From the poetic imagery used in the description of its consecration, we gather that that consecration took place a little before the full-moon-day of autumn (which is the full-moon day of the month of Āśvina). The spectators are described as yearning on that night for the sight of the full moon. From the first to the tenth day of that half, the annual grand royal rituals of the Nine Nights and the Tenth Day of Victory are celebrated to confirm the warrior-king's power, victory and prosperous rule. Traditionally, after that day military campaigns were started. Going by the literary clues, the consecration of the image of Kalkī may have happened close to the full-moon-day, that is subsequent to those martial rituals confirming sovereignty. Thereby, Jaisingh was transported from dharmic Hindu ruler to Kalkī himself. In other words, within the bright half of the month of Āśvina of the year 1740 CE Jaisingh made the transition from glorious king to divine saviour, portrayed as the one being who conducted the world from a perilous crisis to restored ideal order.

<sup>52</sup> *Kalkipurāna* 1.3, quoted from Abegg 1928: 88.

<sup>53</sup> Kane 1968-77, vol. 3: 925. As for the Smārta Vaiṣṇavism of Jaisingh's programme, it seems noteworthy that the panels on both sides of the *garbhagrha* of the Kalkī temple show Śiva and Pārvatī riding on Nandī on the left panel (from the beholder), Brahmā on the right panel, and Gaṇeśa in the middle of the lintel, while the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu adorn the door-frame. The panels are identical with those of the Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ temple at Choṭī Caupaṛ. It also needs to be remembered that in the year of the horse sacrifice of 1734 the Sun Temple on top of the hill of Galtā was built. Also this temple is a *śikhara* temple, and it fits well into the Smārta programme of Jaisingh. My colleague, Jörg Gengnagel, reported that it was pointed out to him that allegedly Ratnākar's house in Brahmaṇpurī was built in such a way that it offered from the same room a view on that Sun Temple and the Gaṇeś Temple of Motī Ḍūngṛī. To connect this with Ratnākar's own intentions is anachronistic, for he died in 1719. However, the fact of the visibility of those temples from the room in question remains and also that in popular opinion it is thought to express a religious programme.

#### 4. AN ASSESSMENT IN HINDSIGHT

What remained of all this beyond the time of Jaisingh? After Jaisingh's death the Vaiṣṇavas continued holding the dominant position at court. There were shifts in emphasis of royal patronage as far as the individual sects were concerned. To extricate himself from the clutches of their camarilla who also devoured the proceeds of the state, King Rāmsingh II (r. 1851-1880), under the influence of a Śaiva guru turned Śaiva himself. Upon this and following precisely Jaisingh as his model, he attacked the religious dignitaries with questionnaires and humiliating debates at court, which were devised by opinionated scholars. From these he concocted as a result that all Vaiṣṇava leaders must henceforth comply with Śaiva mores.<sup>54</sup> The Vaiṣṇavas of Jaipur again sought advice from Banaras, to no avail, of course, because the result of the debate was pre-determined. It has been argued that the excentric strategy of Rāmsingh was prompted also by the newly emerging paradigm of an "essential Hinduism". Beyond this, it was, no doubt, encouraged by the scandals surrounding the sect of Vallabha in the early 1860s. All this strengthened the king's fierce resolution, but for his procedure, he followed as his model the precedent launched by Jaisingh. Both rulers also acted similarly, namely as proponents of an older style *sanātana dharma* which emphasised ritual as the prop of *dharma*.<sup>55</sup>

The subsequent discourses on Hinduism differ from those of the *ancien régime*. They no longer revolve around *sanātana dharma* as a core of *ritual obligations*, but on issues of *faith*. When in the last third of the nineteenth century Hariścandra pleaded for a homogenised Vaiṣṇavism as the Hinduism suitable for the India of his time, he essentially had in mind a monotheistic faith.<sup>56</sup> This categorial difference was caused by modern issues raised in a shared public sphere totally dif-

<sup>54</sup> These events, which took place in the 1860s, form the topic of a fascinating study by Catherine Clémantin-Ojha (1999).

<sup>55</sup> In some way that old model was once again, for the last time, I think, applied in the aftermath of the Maharaja Libel Case of 1861 when the impressive scholastic apparatus of Vaiṣṇava theology was once again put into use to produce an apology of Vaiṣṇava and particularly Vallabhācārya religion, written by Gaṭṭūlāl in 1897 and entitled *Satsiddhāntamārtanḍa* (Gaṭṭūlāl 1942).

<sup>56</sup> See for this Dalmia 1997, ch. 6.

ferent from that of the *ancien régime*. Faith as a paradigm had been prominent in the bhakti milieu also during the *ancien régime* and its discourse would prove productive, indeed, in the modern public sphere. However, in the modern period the discourse on faith and individual belief was added on to new social stances and the quest for political empowerment. In the discourse of faith and the individual as the pre-colonial bhakti milieu had conducted it, the social dimension may have been logically implicit—or so we are inclined to think reading back our preceptions into an earlier period—but it was not momentous.

Finally, the exclusive *sanātana dharma* as the good practice of Vaiṣṇavas or *sanātana* Hindus in general, was no precursor of Hindutva. The exclusion of all non-Hindus, even non-Vaiṣṇavas and non-Smārtas, from the *sanātana* concept, which was by scholastic reasoning logical, may superficially create a misunderstanding to the opposite. The apocalyptic discourse, in which the *mlecchas* were pointed to as the arch-evil, became certainly productive in the modern construction of a consolidated category of Hindus as confronting non-Hindus, and may have come in handy as a trope, but yet that discourse is of a category not related to Hindutva. In the discourse of Jaisingh as well as in that of Rāmsingh II, no one besides the *sanātani*s figured, because it was ritual propriety that they were demanded to uphold. By definition, no Muslims, Christians or whosoever outside the orthodox fold could possibly figure in this. These non-Hindus and the non-orthodox Hindus were rightful members of the populace, but they could by definition not help uphold the *dharma*. Also, in the debate which concerned us here, the battle for hegemony was fought with the weapons of theology.<sup>57</sup> In the weaponry of that period nationalism did not yet figure. Nationalism itself in order to achieve homogenisation has a propensity for a civil religion defined in a fashion that is alien to earlier theological discourse. That civil religion rigorously does away with the distinctions that were at the hub of earlier theological debates. Civil religion defines “fundamental values” that do not only level theological distinctions, but considers these antagonistic to its own civil project. It is the handmaiden of nationalism, and it claims to supersede the theological distinctions which it considers both anti-modern and potentially subversive of its project.

<sup>57</sup> See also Dalmia [forthcoming].

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### *Abbreviations*

ĪVMK	see Kṛṣṇabhaṭṭa 1958
RSA	see Rajasthan State Archives
RVK	see Vishwanath Bhatt Chittapavan Raṇade
VVS	see Harekrṣṇabhaṭṭa

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