

# Prabodhananda Saraswati:

## From Benares to Braj

– Jagadananda Das –

### Introduction

Over the past several centuries, the town of Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh has celebrated the loves of the pastoral god Krishna and his beloved Radha. Numerous saints and devotional authors have contributed to the rich cultural heritage of this Hindu holy land, all doing much to strengthen its position as a center for one of the most important streams of religious feeling in India. However, despite the theological claims of universal liberation from mundane preoccupations said to result from such religious feeling, the Vaishnavism of Vrindavan shows the same susceptibility to rivalry that can be detected in all human endeavors. This rivalry takes the form of controversies, many of which have not yet been entirely resolved. In this article and another which follows it, I undertake to address a triad of such controversies, well aware that the matters are still sensitive ones for both the parties involved: the Radha Vallabhi followers of Hita Harivams, and the Gaudiyas, followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

The chief matter contested by these devotees is the authorship of a book well-loved by both sects: the *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi* (RRSN), ascribed to Hita Harivams by his followers and to Prabodhananda Saraswati by the Gaudiyas.<sup>(1)</sup> Before treating this question, however, one is obliged to confront two others: one concerns the identity of Prabodhananda, the second that of Hita Harivams's relation to the Gaudiya school. Both of these personalities are claimed by each of the sects to have, at one time or another, accepted allegiance to their own group.

**All three of these issues have been obscured over time by traditional historians of the two sects who either through silence, deliberate falsification or real ignorance have exaggerated or distorted the relevant facts.** In some cases, the information available is starkly self-contradictory, as in the matter of Prabodhananda's identity. In the absence of sufficient historical records, it is understandable that some feel it impossible to come to any reliable conclusions on any of these matters. In the same way, much of what has been written on these matters by latter day Indian scholars is also colored by sectarian leanings, and **there is a sad ignorance in each of the sects about their rival's traditions and literature.** The necessity for an impartial study is therefore felt, and it is hoped that the discussion presented here will fill that need.

It is here proposed that through the application of scientific literary criticism to the works of Prabodhananda and Hita Harivams, in this case a comparison of style, vocabulary and subject matter, confident conclusions may be reached in the matter of the authorship of RRSN. This, coupled with the available historical evidence, may

enable us to make reasonably confident assumptions about Prabodhananda and Harivams's sectarian affiliations. This exercise commences in this article with an examination of the works of Prabodhananda and other, later authors of both schools to establish as far as possible a reliable biography. In the article which follows, we shall examine the life of Harivams and the RRSN itself.

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(1) Abbreviations of other titles used in this article are as follows: ARP = Azcarya-rAsa-prabandha; BhP = BhAgavata-purANa; BRK = Bhakti-ratnAkara; BRS = Bhakti-rasAmRta-sindhu; CP = CaurAsI Pada or Hita-caurAsI; CCA = Caitanya-candrAmRta; CC = Caitanya-caritAmRta; Gitag = GIta-govinda; HBV = Hari-bhakti-vilAsa; KKA = KRSNa-karNAamRta; PV = Prema-vilAsa; SangM = SangIta-mAdhava; UN = Ujjvala-nIlamaNi; VMA = VRndAvana-mahimAmRta.

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*Samadhi Mandir of Prabodhananda Sarasvatipada*

### **Prabodhananda Saraswati the author**

Prabodhananda Saraswati is primarily known as the author of a number of works in the Sanskrit language, all of which deal with the subject of Krishna or Krishna devotion. None of the works ascribed to him contain any explicitly biographical data, nor are any of them dated.

The list of his works differs in each of the two schools who contest his allegiance. Amongst the Gaudiyas, his most significant works, beside the contested *stotra-kAvya*, *Radha-rasa-sudha-nidhi* (RRSN), include four works of Sanskrit verse: Chaitanya-chandramrita (CCA), Vrindavana-mahimamrita (VMA), Sangita-madhava (SangM) and Ascarya-rasa-prabandha (ARP), as well as a number of commentaries.

The first two of the four verse works are also *stotra-kavyas* in the vein of Mukundamala, Stotra-ratna, and Krishna-karnamrita, the stylistic influence of this last work being particularly noticeable. The two other compositions are descriptions of Radha and Krishna's amorous dalliances, the first (SangM) a *giti-kavya* in the style of the Gita-govinda in sixteen sargas, the second (ARP), an original reworking of the rasa-lila in 284 verses, primarily in the pajjhatika metre.

Prabodhananda's prose commentaries include the Sruti-stuti-vyakhya on the 87th chapter of the Bhagavata-purana's tenth book, another on the Gita-govinda, one on Gopala-tapani Upanishad(2) and the last on Gayatri-mantra. These last two are somewhat doubtful, as they bear a great similarity to works also attributed to Jiva Goswami. All of these works have been published in recent years,(3) for which the efforts of Haridas Das are particularly noteworthy. The CCA in particular is a continuing favorite of the Gaudiyas that has seen repeated publication.

Amongst the Radha-vallabhis, the CCA never attained currency for obvious reasons, but apparently neither did many of Prabodhananda's other writings. In this school, Prabodhananda is known principally as the author of the Vrindavana-sataka, and then primarily through its Brajabhasha translation by Bhagavat Mudita rather than in its original form. This translation contains only the last of the seventeen centuries of the VMA recension known to the Gaudiyas.

The Radha-vallabhis also recognize Sangita-madhava. They also consider Prabodhananda to be the author of Nikunja-vilasa-stava,(4) known to the Gaudiyas as Nikunja-rahasya-stava and held to be the work of Rupa Goswami. There are good reasons for accepting the Radhavallabhi version in this case.(5)

Another work attributed to Prabodhananda by the Radhavallabhis is a short poem called Sri-Hitaharivamsa-candrastaka, eight verses glorifying Harivams. That RRSN is Hita Harivams' own composition is held by the school as an article of religious faith.

An examination of MS collections in Vrindavan and elsewhere leads one to conclude that other than VMA and CCA, Prabodhananda's works did not gain great currency. The RRSN was widely read amongst the Radhavallabhis, and it would appear, according to the manuscript evidence available in the Vrindavan Research Institute, **that it was only later adopted by the Gaudiyas. who apparently added invocatory and signatory verses to Caitanya.**(6) We shall return to a fuller discussion of these matters later.

Another title attributed to Prabodhananda is Viveka-sataka. This work does not seem ever to have been published. The description of the MS given by Rajendralal Mitra in his Notices, "a century of verses on dispassion or indifference to worldly attractions, for the sake of devotion to Krishna," does not in itself help to establish whether or not it is an authentic work by the same Prabodhananda with whom we are concerned.(7)

A further work, Navadvipa-sataka, appears to be a pastiche of CCA in Prabodhananda's style, written to vaunt the glories of Chaitanya's birthplace.(8)

This work has only gained currency in certain limited circles of the Gaudiya sampradaya.

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2. I have done a translation of both Jiva's commentary and that attributed to Prabodhananda. A thorough study led me to conclude that the commentary attributed to him was likely not his, but based on an early commentary by him. I may give a detailed explanation of this at a further time.

3. See bibliography for publishing details of these works.

4. Published in *Stava-kalpa-druma*, 700-706.

5. Lalita Charan Goswami, *Sri Hita Harivams: Sampraday aur Sahitya*, (Vrindavan, 1957) 573-4. This volume is the source of information on Radha-vallabhi knowledge of Prabodhananda's writings. This work is nowhere included in any list of Rupa's works. It contains a number of stylistic similarities to Prabodhananda's other writings, as well as those of Harivams, as will be pointed out later on in this article.

6. The MS. 6626 where the introductory Radha-vallabha has been erased and replaced by Radha-ramana. The verses to Chaitanya and a colophon appear to have been added in a later hand. MS. 3263 is incomplete and the inconsistency of the numbering, altered by the addition of the invocatory verse points to tampering. For a complete discussion see Rupert Snell, *The Eighty-four Hymns of Hita Harivams: An edition of the Caurasi Pada*, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1991. pp. 42ff.

7. MS. 2510. Unfortunately, this manuscript has never been recovered. The introductory and concluding verses found in Mitra's descriptions are very close in style to Prabodhananda's writings and indicate a devotional mood.

Introductory verse:

dehaH prApto virasa-jarasaM kSINam Ayur mamAbhUt  
svalpA zaktir viSama-viSaya-grAhiNI yendriyANAm/  
dUre vRNdAvana-taTa-bhuvaH sveda-bheda-pradAyAH  
kiM kurve 'haM vrata-kula-ziro-ratna-\*\* na vedmi//

Final verse:

zrI-kuNDala-maNDitAnana-vidhau danta-prabhA-kaumudI  
vidhvasta-vraja-vallabhASitam asi protphulla-vaktrAmbuje/  
vaMzI-nAda-vimohitAkhila-jagaj-jantau kizorAvRtau  
zrI-kRSNa-ratir astu me prati\*\*premaAbdhi-sambandhinI//

Colophon: *zrI-prabodhAnanda-sarasvatI-viracitaM viveka-zatakam*. The influence of Bhartrihari, author of the *Vairagya-sataka*, etc., on Prabodhananda is felt elsewhere. It is hoped that this manuscript may one day be found again.

8. ed. N. K. Vidyalankara (Krishnanagar, Nadia Gaudiya Mission, 1941)

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## Knowledge of Prabodhananda in Gaudiya Vaishnava works

In the earliest stratum of Gaudiya Vaishnava literature, the name of Prabodhananda crops up first in those peculiar works, the *Vaishnava-vandanas*, Bengali precursors to the bhakta-malas of North India, in which Chaitanya's associates' names are listed with only the sparsest of biographical detail. In all of these, we find oblique reference to a work by Prabodhananda glorifying Chaitanya.

One of Chaitanya's more important associates, Narahari (d. 1568), in his *Saparshad-gauranga-vandana* writes "Oh Prabodhananda, I implore you. Intoxicate me just once with the glories of Gauranga!" (9)

Devakinandan Das, in his works *Vaishnava-vandana* and *Vaishnavabhidhan*, also states simply that Prabodhananda (to whom he gives the respectful title "gosAi", i.e. gosvAmI) is particularly known for his pure devotion to Mahaprabhu, "whose glories he described." (10)

A bit more information is added by the important author Kavi Karnapur in his *Gaura-ganoddeza-dIpikA* (AD 1576), where Prabodhananda is identified as a *yati* -- an ascetic or monk, most likely of the Shankara orders. This is confirmed by the addition of the adjective *gaurodgAna-sarasvatI*, "he whose words are used in enthusiastically singing out the glories of Gaura (Chaitanya)", (11) where Saraswati is also one of the titles or classes of daza-nAmI renunciates of the Shankara school. In Prabodhananda's own works, the title Saraswati is used in the signature verses of SangM.(12)

Prabodhananda is further described in *Gaura-ganoddeza-dIpikA* as having the identity in Vraja of Tungavidya, the most scholarly of all of Radha and Krishna's chief girl friends. This identity ranks him with Svarupa Damodar, Ramananda Raya, Narahari, etc., who are some of the other Chaitanya associates identified as sakhis.

Another work of this type ascribed to Jiva Goswami specifies that Prabodhananda wrote *Chandramrita* and adds to this information that this Prabodhananda was the spiritual master of Gopala Bhatta.(13)

In his important Sanskrit compilation of ritual, the *Hari-bhakti-vilAsa*, sometimes known as the *Vaishnava-smriti*, Gopala Bhatta, one of the renowned "six goswamis" of Vrindavan, does indeed make obeisance to Prabodhananda as his guru, describing him as "dear to *bhagavat*", which according to Sanatana, the commentator, means Chaitanya.(14)

Thus the earliest literature of the the Gaudiya Vaishnava school indicates that Prabodhananda was well known as someone who had glorified Chaitanya in a work named *Chandramrita*, that he was a *yati* who had the devotional mood of a sakhi. He was also the spiritual master of a significant member of Mahaprabhu's entourage, Gopala Bhatta.

Further confirmation of this relation is found in three later and somewhat less reliable Bengali histories. These works are the much maligned *Prema-vilAsa*(15) of Nityananda Das (<1650?), Manohar Das's *AnurAga-valli* (AD 1696) and Narahari's *Bhakti-ratnAkara* (mid- to late-eighteenth century). The main subject matter of all three of these works is the life of Srinivasa Acharya and his associates, the important second-generation exponents of Chaitanya's religion, responsible for the transmission of the Vrindavan doctrines of the Goswamis to Bengal. The absence of information in *Chaitanya Charitamrita* about Gopala Bhatta, the initiating spiritual master of Srinivasa, was compensated for in these accounts.(16)

The skeleton of the story, found in *Prema-vilAsa* and expanded in the two other works, runs as follows:

When Chaitanya traveled through South India in 1509-10, he stayed at the house of Venkata Bhatta, the father of Gopala, near Srirangam. Venkata and his two brothers, Gopala's uncles Trimalla Bhatta and Prabodhananda were converted from their Sri-Vaishnava faith in Lakshmi-Narayan to one in Radha Krishna. Venkata Bhatta's young son, Gopala, served Chaitanya and the saint took a liking to the boy, told Prabodhananda, his academic teacher, to give him a good education and then later send him to Vrindavan. Prabodhananda became a great devotee (*bhAgavatottama*) by Chaitanya's mercy, of which he made a description. [This is presumably a reference to CCA.] (17)

On his deathbed, Prabodhananda remembered Chaitanya's instruction and reminded Gopala of his duty to go to Vrindavan. This then Gopala did.(18)

The account of Bhakti-ratnakara is substantially the same, only adding that Prabodhananda was famed far and wide because of his knowledge and this was the cause of his receiving the title "Saraswati."(19) Narahari describes Prabodhananda as a great renunciate, affectionate, a poet and an expert singer, a player of musical instruments and dancer. Though not recounting Prabodhananda's death like Nityananda Das, Narahari nowhere indicates that he went to Vrindavan, nor that he wrote any literature describing the land of Radha and Krishna.

Manohara Das also seems to follow the *Prema-vilAsa*, only adding that the entire Bhatta family made a pilgrimage to Puri on one occasion to see Chaitanya, and that Gopal only left for Vrindavan after the deaths of all three brothers and their wives, thus confirming not only that Prabodhananda died a family man but that he never saw Vrindavan.(20)

These stories appear to have their roots in the account of Chaitanya's travels in South India given in CC, Madhya 9, to which details about Prabodhananda and Gopal Bhatta have been added. In fact, with the exception of the identification of Prabodhananda as a householder and Gopal Bhatta's uncle, there is little to indicate that these authors knew anything concrete about Prabodhananda other than that he was Gopala Bhatta's spiritual master and that he wrote a work glorifying Chaitanya.

Manohar Das betrays this in his *Anuraga-valli* when he supplements his account by translating the few words of Sanatana's commentary on the abovementioned verse

of *Hari-bhakti-vilAsa* in which Gopala mentions Prabodhananda as his guru. This verse is also cited by Narahari in BRK (1.151).

Manohar mentions that Prabodhananda visited Jagannath Puri, but this could easily be deduced from reading Chandramrita, as we shall see in the next section.

The authenticity of these accounts is furthermore suspect for several reasons: It seems quite clear even from the little information that we get from the earliest sources that Prabodhananda was a *yati*. Moreover, Prabodhananda is not a name that resonates with those of his brothers Venkata and Tirumalla, both customary South Indian given names. It is rather a typical brahmacharin or sannyasin's name. Saraswati, too, is a title generally given to sannyasins and only very infrequently a scholar's upadhi. Though the possibility that Prabodhananda changed ashrams at some point is not excluded, none of these writers has suggested it, rather the opposite.

It is also quite clear from Prabodhananda's own writings that at some time he lived in Vrindavan, likely for a considerable period. So any biographical information that contradicts what seems certain knowledge immediately puts us on our guard.

A further rather significant doubt is cast on the entire account by Gopala Bhatta's own statements about his parentage given in the colophons to both his commentary on the *Krishna-karnamrita* and *Kala-kaumudi* in which he identifies himself as the son of Harivams Bhatta, grandson of Nrisimha Bhatta.(21) This may of course mean that another Gopala Bhatta is the author of these works.

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9. Haridas Das, Introduction to *Ascarya-rasa-prabandha*, 3; *ohe zri-prabodhAnanda nivedi tomAre/ gaura guNete bArek mAtAho AmAre//*

10. In *Bhakti-tattva-sAra*, Rasiklal Chandra (ed.) (Calcutta, 1850), p. 10.

*zuddha sarasvatI vanda baRa zuddha-mati/  
mahAprabhur caraNe jAr vizeS bhakati//  
zrI prabodhAnanda gosAni kavir vandan/  
jei kaila mahAprabhur guNer varNan//*

11. *tungavidyA vraje yAsIt sarva-zAstra-vizAradA |  
sA prabodhAnanda-yatir gaurodgAna-sarasvatI || Verse 163.*

12. ed. Haridas Das (Nabadwip, 1953).e.g. *rasika-sarasvatI-gIta-mahAdbhuta-rAdhA-svarUpa-rahasyam*, or *madhura-sarasvatI-gItam udAram gaNaya rasika-jana-hari-rasa-sAram; rasada-sarasvatI-varNita-mAdhava-rUpa-sudhA-rasa-sAre.*

13. *prabodhAnanda-sarasvatIM vande vimalAM yayA mudA/  
candrAmRtaM racitaM yat ziSyo gopAla-bhaTTaH//*

This work is given in full in *Caitanya cariter UpAdAn*, appendix +na, 101-12; this verse found on p.106. The preponderance of metrical and grammatical flaws indicate that this could never have been composed by an accomplished author of Jiva's talents, even considering the possibility of scribal and editorial incompetence.

14. *bhakter vilAsAMz cinute prabodhAnandasya ziSyo bhagavat-priyasya*. HBV 1.2, Shyama Charan Kaviratna (ed.), Calcutta, 1318 Beng. (AD. 1911)

15. See bibliography for publishing information. These works and the difficulties with accepting the evidence contained in them is discussed in B. B. Majumdar's *Chaitanya chariter upadan*, University of Calcutta, 1931. See pp. 424ff. The difficulties of the *Prema-vilasa* are summarized there, pp. 506-15. Nityananda Das claims to be a disciple of Jahnava, which would place him in the latter part of the 16th century, but his grasp of historical detail is tenuous. Though the work cannot be entirely discounted, there are numerous versions containing widely disparate texts. As yet no critical edition has been made.

16. Gopal Bhatta's name is found in four different places in CC (Adi 1.36-7, 9.4, 10.105, Madhya 18.49), but no biographical information is given. Later authors including Narahari ascribe this lacuna to the humble Gopal's request (cf. BRK 1.222, p.10: *zrI-gopAla bhaTTa hRSTa haiyA AjnA dila/ grantha nija-prasanga varNite niSedhila//*)

Tarapada Mukherjee suggests ("Caitanya-caritAmRter racana-kAla evaM brajer gauDIya-sampradAy", *SAhityapariSat Patrika*, 1987 (1), 39) that it was in fact due to Gopal's non-participation in Chaitanya's activities and that he was not alive at the time that Krishna Das Kaviraj took up the task of writing this work. However, Mukherjee's contention is only acceptable if Gopala Bhatta had never met Chaitanya as was the case with Jiva Goswami.

17. *sei prabodhAnanda prabhura prANa sama/  
prabhu kRpA kari kaila bhAgavatottama//  
prabhura erUpa kRpA karila varNan/  
prasange likhila ei sab vivaraN//,*

ed. RAMa NARayaNa VidyAratna (Murshidabad, 1892), 274 (18th vilAsa)

18. *zeSa-kAle prabodhAnander haila smaraN/  
bhaTTa DAKi kahe prabhur je Ache vacan//  
smaraN haila tAhA je AjnA balila/  
vRNdAvana jAbe ei mane vicArila// (ibid.)*

19. BRK, 1.148-56;  
*pitRvya-kRpAy sarva-zAstra haila jnAn/  
gopAler sama ethA nAi vidyamAn//  
keha kohe prabodhAnander guN ati/  
sarvatra haila jAr khyAti sarasvatI//*

20. *AnurAga-valli*, Mrinala Kanti Ghosh (ed.) (Calcutta: Ananda Bazar Patrika Office, 1931), 4-7.



21. zrImad-drAviDa-nIvRd-ambudhi-vidhuH zrImAn NRsiMho 'bhavad  
bhaTTa zrI-harivaMza uttama-guNa-grAmaika-bhUs tat-sutaH/  
tat-putrasya kRtis tv iyaM vitanutAM gopAla-nAmno muda  
gopInAtha-padAravinda-makarandAnandi-ceto 'linaH//

ed. S. K. De, Dacca University, 1938, 342). See discussion in the introduction to that volume, pp. xxxli.

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## Prakashananda Saraswati

In Gaudiya Vaishnava literature, the identification of Prakashananda with Prabodhananda is relatively late. It is explicitly stated for the first time in the *Rasikasvadini* commentary on CCA by Anandin. Nothing is known about Anandin, but at least he had the grace to date his work, given as AD 1718.(22) Roughly contemporary to Anandin is Priya Das's commentary on the Bhakta-mala, which makes it clear that the Prabodhananda who wrote CCA also lived in Vrindavan and wrote about the glories of residence there, an obvious reference to *Vrindavana-mahimamrita*.(23)

Nowhere in any of the above-mentioned Gaudiya works of the Vaishnava-vandana genre is the name of Prakashananda Saraswati to be found. This is rather unusual in view of the importance given to Prakashananda in the two most authoritative biographies of Chaitanya. Though Prakashananda is only mentioned twice in Chaitanya Bhagavata (ca. AD 1560), where he is identified as an exponent of the advaita doctrine in Kashi with whom Chaitanya was displeased, (24) he becomes a rather significant character in Krishna Das's CC (AD 1612). There the greater part of two chapters (Adi 7, Madhya 25) is consecrated to the story of his conversion by Chaitanya. Indeed, it is quite possible that Vrindavan Das intended to complete the story of Prakashananda's conversion, as his naming of Prakashananda has no narrative purpose without some dénouement that was to follow. Vrindavan Das' work ends rather abruptly, leaving the latter part of Chaitanya's life little discussed, making Krishna Das' work a necessity.

According to Krishna Das, Prakashananda was the most important of the Shankarite sannyasi in Kashi at the time of Chaitanya's visit there in AD 1514. Chaitanya, though himself garbed as a sannyasin of a Shankarite order, did not keep the company of the other ascetics, preferring to stay with some devotees, including Sanatan, whom he instructed there for two months. Prakashananda found Chaitanya's emotional bhakti unorthodox for a Shankarite sannyasin and criticized him within his own circle. He particularly denounced Chaitanya's deviation from the practices of Vedanta study and meditation in order to engage in loud singing of kirtan and dancing.

When a meeting between the two was finally arranged, Chaitanya's humility, effulgence, charm, and ultimately his knowledge, all led Prakashananda to admit his superiority and accept not only his theological doctrines and practices, but also his divinity.(25)

Despite the obvious importance that Krishna Das gives to this conversion, he gives no information about what Prakashananda did thereafter. This curious silence, maintained in all subsequent histories of the sampradaya, is particularly striking when contrasted with Krishna Das's account of another famous convert, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya -- no prayers are attributed to Prakashananda, as there are to Sarvabhauma, even though Sarvabhauma's *Chaitanya-sataka*(26) seems to have descended into obscurity.

Prakashananda's destination after conversion is also unknown from the CC. Even more significantly, in the three chapters (Adi, 10-12) that Krishna Das devotes to comprehensively listing and eulogizing Chaitanya's associates, neither the name of Prakashananda nor that of Prabodhananda is anywhere to be found. Needless to say, this silence on the subsequent activities of such an important convert is a mystery that requires explanation. As it is difficult to confirm Prakashananda's existence from any other source, suspicions could be raised about the historical veracity of the story.

As we have noted, Anandin is the first to have made the identification of Prabodhananda with Prakashananda. It is clear from other sources that by the beginning of the 19th century at least, many Gaudiya Vaishnavas were convinced of this identification. The *Bhaktamal* of Krishna Das(27) (or Lala Babu as he was otherwise known) written sometime in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, embellishes the accounts of the Chaitanya Bhagavata and Chaitanya Charitamrita with details that support this view. According to Lala Babu, Prakashananda and Chaitanya exchanged letters even before their meeting in Benares. After Prakashananda's conversion, Chaitanya renamed him Prabodhananda because he had been "awakened" by his conversion.

To summarize the discussion so far, the earliest sources know Prabodhananda only as a sannyasin who wrote a work glorifying Chaitanya, explicitly named Chandramrita in one work ascribed to Jiva. He is known from HBV to be the spiritual master of Gopala Bhatta. Chaitanya's biographers have not mentioned him, though they have talked about a significant mayavadi sannyasin from Kashi named Prakashananda Saraswati who was converted by Chaitanya. Sectarian historians interested in Prabodhananda's second generation spiritual descendant Srinivasa identify him as Gopala Bhatta's uncle, a householder who had no known life outside of Srirangam. In works roughly contemporaneous to these histories, Prabodhananda Saraswati and Prakashananda Saraswati are equated for the first time, indicating that conflicting accounts of Prabodhananda's identity arose in the Gaudiya sampradaya around the late 17th to early 18th centuries.

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## NOTES

22 ed. Manindranath Guha (Panihati, 1971). There are two different numbering systems for CCA, one apparently instituted by Anandin. The edition we are using is the one found in *Stava-kalpa-druma*, (ed.) Bhakti Saranga Goswami (Vrindavan, 1959).

23. p.892. Nabhaji only gives Prabodhananda's name with a number of other devotee sannyasins in chappaya 181.

24. Ref. to Madhya, ch. 20, *sannyAsI prakAzAnanda basaye kAzIte/ paRAye vedAnta mora vighraha nA mAne//*. Madhya, ch. 3: *kAzIte paRAye beTA parakAzAnanda/ bAkhAnaye veda, more vighraha nA mAne//*.

25. A rather unreliable source, *Advaita-prakash*, also mention that Chaitanya met a Prabodhananda Saraswati in Kashi. Its author paraphrases the CC account with some anachronistic additions. This work is ascribed to Advaita's servant, Ishana Nagar. (ed.) Mrinala Kanti Ghosh, (Calcutta, Ananda Bazar Patrika Office, 2nd edition, 1929), 77. This is another book whose credibility has been placed in doubt by Majumdar, op.cit., 424-35.

26. A work of this name has been published several times in Bengali editions, including (ed.) Kali Das Nath (Calcutta, 1911), etc. None of them contain either of Bhattacharya's two famous Sanskrit verses cited by Kavi Karnapur (Caitanya-candrodaya-näöaka, 6.32-33) and quoted in Chaitanya Charitamrita (2.6.254-5) and there is some doubt about its authenticity. In tone, etc., however, the work warrants comparison with CCA.

27. ed. Upendranäth Mukhopadhyäya (Calcutta, Basumati Sähitya Mandir, 1949).

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### **Prabodhananda and the *Caitanya-candrAmRta***

Before turning to Radha-vallabhi sources in search of more biographical information about Prabodhananda, it may do well to examine CCA for any clues it might supply about his identity. The work is not written as a historical account or autobiographical record and thus we must glean whatever information we can by inductive reasoning. The conclusions of which we can never provide us with absolute certainty, and yet there are many surprising hints in its 143 verses that excite the imagination.

The work is a panegyric mixed with prayers, a *stotra-kAvya*. It is written in a style that has apparently been much influenced by Bilvamangala's *Krishna-karnamrita* and other South Indian works of the genre, especially *Mukunda-mala-stotram*. This poetic/stylistic pattern ultimately derives from the writings of the Alvars, as has been shown by Friedhelm Hardy.(28) This may or may not indicate the southern provenance of the author; Mukunda Mala is quoted five times in *Saduktikarnamritam*, a Bengali compilation from about 1200 A.D. Prabodhananda could have become familiar with *Krishna-karnamrita* in Puri where we know Chaitanya had great affection for it.(29) At any rate, the link between Chaitanya Vaishnavism and South Indian devotion can be shown in other ways.(30)

### **Prabodhananda in Puri**

It would appear from certain clues in CCA that Prabodhananda had personally met Chaitanya, and if so, certainly at Puri, though not necessarily for the first time there. This is surmised from the importance that is placed on the vision of Chaitanya (CCA, 27, 29, 59, 77, 82) as well as the vivid descriptions given of the saint at Puri.

**May the golden-bodied Hari deliver you  
as he brings joy to your eyes  
with his pacing back and forth,  
his face bathed in tears from his desire to see Jagannath.**

**To count the world-saving Hare Krishna names he is chanting,  
he ties knots in a rope tied around his waist  
with a shaking, love-filled hand.(31)**

Other lines such as "How amazing, the Supreme Truth dances on the shores of the salt-water sea!" (verse 17) and "On the beaches of the salt ocean, a certain form made of molten gold pleases my mind as he remembers the sweet pastimes of his previous incarnation..." (verse 45) support this view.

It also seems likely that Prabodhananda visited Mahaprabhu's birthplace in Nabadwip, (100-2), but not while Chaitanya was there, for he glorifies the dhaman of Nabadwip as the place where Chaitanya had appeared and one which had been transformed by his influence, but gives no descriptions of any of his pastimes there. Prabodhananda knew Chaitanya as a sannyasin. The poem itself may well have been written in Puri not long after the death of Chaitanya, for several verses indicate that Chaitanya is no longer alive, especially verse 83:

**This is the same city of Gauda, blessed on earth,  
and this too the same ocean beach,  
this, the town of Purushottam  
and these, the identical names of Krishna;**

**but nowhere, alas! can I see the same festival of love.  
Ah, Chaitanya, source of all compassion,  
will I ever again see your glories?(32)**

It would also appear that Prabodhananda knew many of Chaitanya's associates, whom he praises in several verses, specifically naming Advaita Acharya (verse 134) and Vakreshwar Pandit (verse 116), whose dancing had impressed him. He also accepted the doctrine that these were various deities or associates from Krishna's lila who had joined him in this incarnation, specifically mentioning the five who come to be known as the Pancha Tattva (verse 52) (33)

Other of Prabodhananda's verses reflect some well-known Sanskrit and Bengali statements made by Chaitanya's associates, most startling is one attributed to Chaitanya himself: Verse 85 (*tRNAd api sunIcatA*, etc.) quotes in part *Padyavali* 47, (*tRNAd api sunécena*, etc.). Some of the others will be noted below.

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## NOTES

28. "Madhavendra Puri: A link between Bengal Vaishnavism and South Indian bhakti," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1, 1974, 37-40.

29. CC, Madhya 2, p.105;

*caNDIdAs, vidyApati, rAyer nATaka-gIti, karNAmRta, zri-gIta-govinda/  
svarUpa rAmAnanda sane, mahAprabhu rAtri-dine, gAy zune parama Ananda//.*  
Mahaprabhu is said to have brought the KKA with him from his pilgrimage to the south (the shores of the Krishnavenva) in 1511. Cf. CC Madhya 9, p.168.

30. See note 28.

31. *badhnan prema-bhara-prakampita-karo granthIn kaTI-DorakaiH  
sankhyAtuM nija-loka-mangala-hare-kRSNeti-nAmnAM japan/  
azru-snAta-mukhaH svam eva hi jagannAthaM didRkSur gatA-  
yAtair gaura-tanur vilocana-mudaM tanvan hariH pAtu vaH//* CCA, 9.

32. *saiveyaM bhuvI dhanya gauDa?nagarI velApi saivAmbudheH  
so 'yaM zri-puruSottamo madhu-pates tAny eva nAmAni ca/  
no kutrApi nirIkSyate hari hari premotsavas tAdRzo  
hA caitanya kRpAnidhAna tava kiM vIkSe punar vaibhavam?//*

33. *sarve nArada-zankarAdaya ihAyAtAù svayaM zrIr api  
prAptA deva-halAyudho'pi milito jAtAz ca vRSNAdayaH /  
bhUyaH kiM vraja-vAsino'pi prakaTA gopAla-gopy-AdayaH  
pUrNa-prema-rasezvare=vatarati zri-gauracandre bhuvI //*

The equivalents given in *Gaura-gaNoddeza-dIpikA* are as follows: Narada = Srivasa Pandit, Shankara = Advaita, Sri = Gadadhar, Halayudha = Nityananda, and of course Hari = Chaitanya. This doctrine is attributed to Svarupa Damodar Goswami, both in Karëapur's work and in CC.

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## Prabodhananda, the brahmavadi sannyasi

Prabodhananda mentions Kashi, the classical name for the town of Benares, on two separate occasions in *Chaitanya-chandramrita*. Not a place of great religious significance for Chaitanya's followers, Kashi is spoken of by Prabodhananda only in relation to the life he has left behind. When this clue is added to indications that he was a sannyasi on the path of monism before his sudden conversion by Chaitanya, Prabodhananda begins to bear an uncanny resemblance to the Prakashananda encountered in CC.

Prabodhananda tells us clearly that he is a sannyasi, though he does not give this status much value. He curses both his learning and his ashram, which to him are nothing more than misfortunes preventing him from developing even a hint of a relationship with Chaitanya (*hA dhig api me vidyAM dhig apy Azramam*, verse 117). The same sentiment is also found in verse 106: *dvijatvam api dhik paraM vimalam AzramAdyaM ca dhik*. In 23, he speaks of sannyasis giving up their regulated cultivation of knowledge upon discovering the devotional path set forth by Chaitanya (*jnAnAbhyAsa-vidhiM jahuz ca yatayaH*).

In verse 8, Prabodhananda condemns those who in ignorance prattle the words *brahmAham*: "I am brahman", (*dhig astu brahmAhaM-vadana-pariphullAn jaDa-matIn*), but he does not hesitate to call Chaitanya *brahman* or *paraM brahman* while underscoring his personal nature: (*paraM brahma svayaM nRtyati*, 17). In another place, he calls Chaitanya *paraM jyotir gauraH* (15). Chaitanya is also called *koTy-advaita-ziromaNi* -- "the jewel at the crown of a hundred-million monistic truths" (140).

Prabodhananda says that until one sees Chaitanya, talk of brahman, the goal of liberation, will not taste bitter, nor will the chains of fruitive works according to the Vedic path be loosed, and the learned will chatter amongst themselves about the relative merits of different superficial paths of spiritual practice (v. 35).

He further warns his mind not to follow the path of monistic spirituality: *na karNAbhyarNe 'pi kvacana nayatAdhyAtma-saraNeH* (v. 63), and in a well-loved verse, states that monistic liberation is like hell to one who has received Chaitanya's mercy (v. 95):

Identification with brahman appears like hell,  
the heavenly kingdoms like so many figments of the imagination,  
the indomitable black snakes of the senses  
appear to have had their fangs extracted,  
the universe appears to be full of joy  
and the gods Brahma and Mahendra  
seem as insignificant as worms  
to those who have become wealthy  
with the grace of Gaura's merciful glance:  
I offer my praises to him.(34)

According to Prabodhananda, Chaitanya came to show the insignificance of the other goals of human life including *mukti* (57). This attitude is further expressed in Prabodhananda's description of even Chaitanya's uneducated disciples chastising pandits learned in all the scriptures (80);(35) "the disciples of Chaitanya condemn the scholars of the paths of knowledge and ritual" (*dhik kurvanti ca jñAna-karma-viduSaH*, 99). He berates the uselessness of all other practices of renunciation, knowledge, yoga, even devotion to other forms of Narayan. All gains can be found more easily simply through the worship of Chaitanya.(36)

Prabodhananda uses the term *pum-arthAnAM mauliH* (6) "crown of the goals of life", a phrase that is clearly echoed in the Krishna Das Kaviraj's account of the

conversion of Prakashananda, for there Chaitanya explained to Prakashananda that love of Krishna was the fifth or *parama puruSArtha*.(37)

In other words reminiscent of the conversion of Prakashananda described in CC, Prabodhananda indicates that the embarrassment he had felt about publicly dancing and singing disappeared as a result of Chaitanya's blessings.

Some powerful thief of golden complexion  
has stolen everything from me,  
whether it be the performances of worldly and ritual duties,  
all of which had attained faithful regularity,  
**or the embarrassment that held me back  
from festivals of laughter, loud song and dance,**  
and even, wonder of wonders,  
[his grace leads me to neglect]  
the natural activities of maintaining my life and body! (38)

Other verses in *Chaitanya-chandramrita* show further resemblances to descriptions used in the CC which arise in the context of the conversion of Prakashananda. Compare, for example, the following two passages from CCA and CC:

He does not judge who is worthy and who is not,  
he does not see some people as friends and others as enemies;  
he does not ruminate over whether this gift is to be given or not,  
nor does he consider the correctness of the occasion;  
that Gaura who gave the rare taste of devotion  
by simply being heard, seen, bowed to or meditated upon,  
is my destiny.(39)

He does not judge who is worthy and who is not; there is no place that is suitable or unsuitable; Mahaprabhu gives the gift of love to whomever he finds, wherever he finds him.(40)

Though many verses in *Chaitanya-chandramrita* imply the sudden conversion of Prabodhananda, the use of the word *akasmAt*, 'without a why or a wherefore, suddenly', in verses 33 and 88, etc., are further resonances of the Chandramrita in Krishna Das' account of Prakashananda's conversion. Perhaps no one of these resonances in itself would attract our attention, but the juxtaposition of so many significant similarities of language seem too much to be a mere coincidence.

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## NOTES

34. *kaivalyaM narakAyate tridazapUr AkAza-puSpAyate  
durdAntendriya-kAlasarpa-paTali protkhAta-daMSTrAyate/  
vizvaM pUrNa-sukhAyate vidhi-mahendrAdiz ca kITAyate  
yat kAruNya-kaTAKSa-vaibhavavatAM taM gauram eva stumaH//*

35. *tiraskurvanty ajñA api sakala-zAstrajñā-samitim*



36. Cf. *na yogo na dhyAnaM...* (6); *yan nAptaM karma-niSThair* (7); *kva tAvad vairAgyam* (50); *alaM zAstrAbhyAsaiH* (64); *vairAgya-koTir* (127); *jñAna-vairAgya-bhakty-Adi sAdhayantu yathA tathA* (129); *vyarthIbhavanti mama sAdhana-koTayo 'pi* (130); *sarva-sAdhana-hIno 'pi* (131); etc.

37. Similar expressions are found in CCA 6, 12 (*prema nAmAdbhutArthaH*), 14 (*premaBhidhAnaH paramaH pumarthaH*), 20 (*parama-pumartham*), 117 (*sarva-pumartha-mauli-*). Also note CCA 25: "Those who seek the four goals of life may worship the Supreme Lord; others can become Hari's servants by worshipping him. As far as I am concerned, I am hungry to experience something more esoteric and so have taken shelter of Caitanya Candra's lotus feet."

Compare this with CC, Adi 7.84-5;  
*KRSNa-viSayaka prema paramapuruSArtha/  
jAnra Age tRNa-tulya cAri puruSArtha//  
pañcama-puruSArtha premAnandAmRta-sindhu/  
mokSAdi Ananda jAnra nahe eka bindu//*

and CC Adi 7.91: *BhAla haila, pAile parama-puruSArtha*

The use of the word *lobha* in CC Adi 7.87 also resonates with the above quoted CCA 25.

38. *niSThAM prApta vyavahRti-tatir laukiki vaidiki yA  
yA vA lajjA prahasana-samudgAna-nATyotsaveSu /  
ye vAbhUvann ahaha sahaja-prANa-dehArtha-dharma  
gauraz cauraH sakalam aharat ko 'pi me tIvra-vIryaH// CCA, 21.*

Compare CC Madhya 25, p.317:  
*nikaTe dhvani zuni parakAzAnanda/  
dekhite kautuke Aila lañA ziSya-vRnda//  
dekhia prabhur nRtya deher mAdhuri/  
ziSya-gaN sange sei bole hari hari//*

Prakashananda is nowhere described by Krishna Das as an ecstatic, but the verse itself resonates with Mahaprabhu's descriptions to Prakashananda of the effects the name had upon him. Cf. CC Adi 7.89-90.

39. *pAtrApAtra-vicAraNaM na kurute na svaM paraM vlkSate  
deyAdeya-vimarzako nahi na vA kAla-pratIkSaH prabhuH/  
sadyo yaH zravaNekSaNa-praNamana-dhyAnAdina durlabhaM  
datte bhakti-rasaM sa eva bhagavAn gauraH paraM me gatiH// CCA, 112.*

40. *pAtrApAtra-vicAra nAhi nAhi sthAnAsthan /  
jei jAnha pAy tA+nhA kare prema-dAn // CC Adi 7.23.*

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COMMENT



In view of the extensive awareness of Prabodhananda as someone who glorified Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, it is impossible to believe that a widely-read scholar like Krishna Das Kaviraj had never read Chaitanya Chandramrita. Yet, he has nowhere quoted this book or referred to it in his great work, Chaitanya Charitamrita. Nor has he mentioned the name of Prabodhananda, even though the two clearly lived in Vraja at roughly the same time. Whatever the reason for such silence, we must ask why, in this specific place, do we get these resonances?

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## Prabodhananda's view of Chaitanya

Prabodhananda's panegyric shows a sophisticated theological conception of Chaitanya as the godhead Krishna himself, fully incarnate (*pUrNa evAvatIrNaH*, 142) both to taste love for Krishna (*vrajaapati-kumAraM rasayituM*, 1) and to distribute that taste of love to all and sundry (*vizuddha-sva-premonmada-madhura-ptyUSa-laharIM pradAtuM cAnyebhyaH*, 1), irregardless of their caste, sinful character or previously held beliefs (3, 4, etc.). This shows that he understood both the internal (*antaranga*) and external (*bahiranga*) causes for Chaitanya's incarnation, as outlined by Krishna Das Kaviraj.(41)

Prabodhananda appears to have come under the influence of several of Chaitanya's associates: Svarupa Damodar and Narahari Sarkar in particular, for some of their ideas are reflected in his verses. He thus seems to have alternately described Chaitanya according to each of several theological points of view that were extant without making any particular effort at differentiation. Thus, in one place he follows the position attributed to Svarupa Damodar (42) in postulating that Chaitanya is both Radha and Krishna in a combined form: “May the body of Madhava, united with Radha, give you salvation” (*ekIbhUtaM vapur avatu vo rAdhaya mAdhavasya*, 16) or “Gaurachandra is directly manifest as the [combined] form of Radha and the enemy of Madhu” (*sAkSAd rAdhA-madhuripu-tanur bhAti gaurAnga-candraH*, 103)

On the other hand, Prabodhananda more often describes Chaitanya as Krishna himself with a golden color. (43) In particular, one verse (90) describes Chaitanya as *nAgara*, a concept that is usually attributed to Narahari and his followers. The idea of Chaitanya as *sannyAsi-kapaTam* or “fraudulent sannyasi” (64, 96) also appears to be derived from Narahari's *SachinandanASTaka*.(44) The idea of Chaitanya “abandoning” Vrindavan (126) also appears to be an idea of Narahari's. (45)

B. B. Majumdar, S. K. De, and more recently R. K. Chakravarty, refer to Prabodhananda as a founder of *gaura-pAramya-vAda*, or the doctrine of Gaura's supremacy. (46) It would seem rather that he kept the company of Narahari, who is traditionally accepted as the author of this viewpoint. As in the case of Kavi Karnapur, not too much should be made of Prabodhananda's apparent support for this concept, for his later writings, as well as his descriptions in this poem of the various conceptions of devotion and contributions made by Chaitanya, indicate that he (like Karnapur) ultimately considered the Vrindavan lila, i.e. Radha and Krishna,

to be the ultimate goal of his spiritual life. Both he and Karnapur did, however, believe in the identity of the two lilas.

Prabodhananda describes the oscillating moods of Chaitanya in the following way:

Sometimes he danced in the mood of Krishna himself,  
imitating many different postures;  
sometimes he would take the mood of Radha  
and would cry the name of Hari in pain [of separation];  
sometimes he would crawl like a baby or behave like a cowherd.  
In the sweetness of all these different moods  
Gaura astonished the universe. (47)

A description of Chaitanya absorbed in the identity of a gopi suffering in separation from Krishna is also found elsewhere in the work (78).

**would not be an exaggeration to say that during the life or in the period immediately following the death of Chaitanya, no other author wrote a description of Mahaprabhu in the same sophisticated terms that were later popularized by Krishna Das' Chaitanya Charitamrita.** The same may be said about the summary that Prabodhananda gave of the type of devotion that Chaitanya disseminated.

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## NOTES

41. As described in CC, Adi 4.5-6.

42. CC, Adi 1.5.

43. Cf. CCA 126, etc. The same ambiguity can be found in Svarupa Damodar's famous verse quoted in Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika and Chaitanya Charitamrita, and this has resulted in some controversy amongst Gaudiyas up to the present day: is Mahaprabhu Krishna, enjoying the mood of Radharani, or is he a combined form of the two personalities? In that verse Svarupa writes both *tad dvayaM caikyam Aptam* and *rAdhA-bhAva-dyuti-suvalitaM kRSNa-svarUpam* (GGD).

44. Verse 1: *AzcaryaM sakhi pazya lampaTa-guroH sannyasi-vezaM kSitau.*

45. ed. H. K. Mukhopadhyaya, *VaiSNava-padAvalI*, 151. *vraja-bhUmi kari zUnya nadIyAy avatIrNa*, etc.

46. Majumdar, op.cit., 1719, S. K. De, *Early History of the Vaishnava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1942), 137-8; Chakravarty, *Vaishnavism in Bengal, 1486-1900* (Calcutta, 1985), 114.

47. *kvacit kRSNAvezAn naTati bahu-bhangIm abhinayan  
kvacid rAdhAviSTo hari hari harIty Arta-ruditaH/  
kvacid ringan bAlaH kvacid api ca gopAla-carito  
jagad gauro vismApayati bahu-bhangI-madhurimA//*

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## The nature of the devotion imbibed by Prabodhananda from Chaitanya

Prabodhananda apparently came to appreciate the supremacy of Radha from Caitanya, for he says that Hari, in his form as Gaura, exhibited his devotion to the feet of Radha: *svayaM vitanute rAdhA-padAbje ratim* (87). As one progresses in devotion to Mahaprabhu, a pious person suddenly gets a vision of Radha's feet, which are an ocean of nectar (89). He prays for the time when by Chaitanya's mercy, upon attaining a pure, sincere love for Chaitanya, the light from the jewel-like toenails of Radha's feet will illuminate his heart. As we shall see later, the words "the light of the nails of Radha's feet would arise" (*zrI-rAdhA-pada-nakha-jyotir udagAt*; 86), "the ocean of the ambrosia of love [filled with] the new flavor of condensed brightness" (*sAndrojjvala-nava-rasa-prema-plyUSa-sindhoH*, 88), "the ocean of nectar of Radha's lotus feet" (*rAdhA-padAmbhoja-sudhAmbu-rAziH*, 89) are all particularly redolent of the language found in RRSN and VMA.

Furthermore, in a verse that bears close resemblance to a well-known Bengali song by Narahari Sarkar(48), Prabodhananda indicates that he takes Chaitanya to be the source of this type of devotion:

Who'd have heard that the wonderful purpose of life is preman?  
Who would have known the glories of the names (of Krishna)?  
Who would have been able to enter  
into the tremendous sweetness of the forests of Vrindavan?  
And who would have known the extent of the amazing glories  
of the supreme rasa that is Radha?  
Chaitanya alone revealed all these things by his supreme mercy. (49)

By the same token, different associates of Chaitanya developed different relations with Krishna through Chaitanya: the four chief relationships are listed, but those who were the luckiest attained "the sweet ocean of Radha-rasa" (*anye dhanyatama dhayanti madhuraM rAdhA-rasAmbho-nidhim*; 113). Something similar to this is stated in the RRSN. (50) These verses show a knowledge of Rupa Goswami's gradation of the five rasas (BRS 2.5.6, etc.)

Finally, it needs to be pointed out here that Prabodhananda showed a great enthusiasm for the antinomianism that was an apparent feature of Chaitanya's democratic religion. This, of course, was very much the mood of the early stages of the devotional movement as described in Chaitanya Bhagavata, etc. Chaitanya's merciful glance was sufficient to give what hundreds of years of spiritual practice might or might not give. As the movement became sanskritized, the necessity of various forms of *sadAcAra* became integral to the practice of devotion. Prabodhananda's insistence on bhakti's transcendence to any other practice, its independence from any kind of karman is evidenced by many verses in both this and other works, such as the one glorifying Vrindavan (e.g. VMA, 2.1, etc.). (51)

In summary, the reputation enjoyed by Chaitanya Chandramrita in the Gaudiya world in the early 16th century was well-deserved. It was the first Sanskrit work

that dealt with many aspects of Mahaprabhu's personality and teachings that only much later were made current in Bengali through the Chaitanya Charitamrita. Since Krishna Das could conceivably have made use of this work to support many of his own ideas in the way that he made use of Karnapur, Raghunath Das, Rupa Goswami and Svarupa Damodar, the absence of any such reference in Chaitanya Charitamrita is all the more remarkable.

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## NOTES

### 48 Compare Narahari:

*gaurAnga nahita ki mene haita, kemane dharitAm de?  
rAdhAr mahimA prema-rasa-sImA jagate jAnAto ke?  
madhura vRndA vipina madhura, pravez cAturI sAr/  
vrajer yuvatI-bhAver bhakati zakati haito kAr?*

This pada has often attributed to Basu Ghosh, but H. K. Mukhopadhyay has, presumably on the basis of reliable MSS, identified it as Narahari's. *VaiSNava-padAvalI*, 150-1.

49. *premA nAmAdbhutArthaH zravana-patha-gataH kasya nAmnAM mahimnaH  
ko vettA kasya vRndAvana-vipina-mahA-mAdhurISu pravezaH/  
ko vA jAnAti rAdhAM parama-rasa camatkAra-mAdhurya-sImAm  
ekaz caitanya-candraH parama-karuNaya sarvam AvizcakAra//*

50. *kecid dAsyam avApur uddhava-mukhAH zlAghyaM pare lebhire  
zrIdAmAdi-padam vrajAmbuja-dRzAM bhAvaM ca bhejuH pare/  
anye dhanyatama dhayanti madhuraM rAdhA-rasAmbonidhiM  
zrI-caitanya-mahAprabhoH karuNaya no kasya kAH sampadaH// CCA, 113.*

*dUre snigdha-paramparA vijayatAM dUre suhRn-maNDali  
bhRtyAH santu vidUrato vraja-pater anyaH prasangaH kutaH/  
yatra zrI-vRSabhAnuja kRta-ratiH kuñjodare kAminA  
dvAra-sthA priya-kinkarI param ahaM zroSyAmi kAñci-dhvanim// RRSN 74.*

*dUre spRSTy-Adi vArtA na kalayati manAM nAradAdIn svabhaktAn  
zrIdAmAdyaiH suhRdbhir na milati ca hareH snigdha-vRddhiM sva-pitroH/  
kintu premaika-sImAM madhura-rasa-sudha-sindhu-sArair agAdha.m  
zrI-rAdhAm eva jAnan madhu-patir anizam kuñja-vIthIm upAste// RRSN, 236.*

51. CCA, 1: *ati-vimaryAdA*. See also verses 6, 7, 20, 23, 25, 50, 60, 61, 63, 64, et passim. VMA, 2.1: "Better that I should live here devoid of any devotion to Hari's feet and greedy for the most insignificant purposes than live elsewhere, even in the happiness of being initiated in the service to the feet of the lover of the gopis."

Rather unexpectedly for those who only know Prabodhananda in the light of the Gaudiya school and CCA, much light is shed on his identity in the primarily Brajabhasha works of authors of the Radha-vallabhi sect. Hariram Vyas of Orcha, a contemporary of Harivams who had connections to the Gaudiya school through Madhavendra Puri, but whose devotion to Harivams far outstripped that which he felt for Rupa, Sanatan or Chaitanya,(52) poem in praise of Prabodhananda. There he is described as he is best known to the Radha-vallabhi school -- the author of a number of rasika works on devotion to Radha and Krishna in Vrindavan. Vyas indicates that the particular name of the deity to whom Prabodhananda was devoted was Radha-vallabha, the *iSTa* of Harivams. (53) He is described as giving up his wife and family to become the slave of *ravi-sutA* Radha. (54)

The next reference to Prabodhananda found in Radha-vallabhi sources is in a commentary written by Harivams's son Krishna Chandra on his own work, *KarNAnanda*, which was completed in 1578. He writes that the work he had undertaken was finished by Prabodhananda. (55)

Bhagavat Mudita is another author who, like Hariram Vyas, lived on a hazy, ill-defined line between the Gaudiya and Radha-vallabhi schools. He was the son of Madhava Mudita, divan of Agra's subedar, Shuja al-Mulk. The commentator on Nabha Das' *Bhakta-mala* states that he was the disciple of Haridas, the head priest of the Govinda temple in Vrindavan and that his father was a disciple of Nityananda (which is rather unlikely). (56) His relation to the Gaudiya school is confirmed in his own *Rasika Ananya Mala* (dated between 1650-1665), (57) which starts with obeisances to Chaitanya and Nityananda. In spite of this, it is clear that Bhagavat Mudita's affections lie with Harivams and the Radha-vallabhi holy men, whom he chose to glorify in this work, the first real history of the Radha-vallabhi school.

Bhagavat Mudita also rendered a portion of Prabodhananda's work VMA into Brajabhasha as *Vrindavan sataka* (AD 1651). This version faithfully translates the four verses in which Chaitanya's name is to be found (1-3, 89), indicating beyond any doubt that the Prabodhananda who was devoted to Chaitanya and this Prabodhananda are one and the same person. (58)

We give here a full translation of Bhagavat Mudita's biography of Prabodhananda as given in the *Rasika Ananya Mala*(59) :

(*dohā*) Hearing Harivams's songs, Prabodhananda went to him. From him he learned the pleasure of the *nitya-vihAra* and he gave up the joys of Brahman.

Prabodhananda was a sannyasin who was initiated in the impersonal philosophy. Though a second Saraswati who conquered all directions with his learning, he was a scholar who lacked humility. He came to Vrindavan from Kashi and stayed there for one month in great happiness. He visited all its temples and spiritual leaders, and though he heard them speak, he was not convinced by any of them.

Then one day he met Paramananda, a rasika devotee, [a wealthy disciple of Harivams who lived in Mathura] and in their discussions both felt their minds to blossom. When they discussed the concept of *nitya-vihAra*, however, Prabodhananda could not accept it. Paramananda cited evidence from the Sruti, Smriti and itihisas.

Then, citing the *Sanaka-samhita* and *Brihad-Vamana-Purana*, he told him that Man Sarovar was a fitting place to go if one wished to experience the *nitya-vihAra*.

When Prabodhananda heard these things, he started to develop some faith and affection for the concept. Thus, on the full moon day of Vaishakh, he went to Man Sarovar and started to meditate with concentration. On seeing the cows there he was very pleased, but soon afterwards he became depressed [at not getting any visions of Krishna lila]. In middle of the night the deserted area became a frightening place, with lions and lionesses roaming all about, and Prabodhananda started to become anxious on hearing them roar. He also saw male and female cobras, but was not afraid though they tried to frighten him off. The wind started to blow and then it began to rain. Then a cool, gentle and sweet-scented breeze came, bringing pleasure to his entire body. Finally Prabodhananda fell asleep, and in his deep slumber he forgot his body entirely.

Kunja Bihari Krishna thought, "This man has no right to be here; he still has a great deal to accomplish, for without the association of rasikas, one's erroneous ideas do not go away. Though he has come as far as this cottage in Mathura, he is not worthy of staying at Man Sarovar."

When Prabodhananda awoke in the morning, it came to him that the *nitya-vihAra* is truly joy-bestowing. He knew Paramananda's words to have been true and his own stubbornness to have been falsely based. So he went to see Paramananda and told him of his experience at Man Sarovar. "Everything that you said was true; please bestow the joy of the *nitya-vihAra* on me'. Paramananda then thought that he should tell Prabodhananda who really could bestow such rasa on him. "If you serve the feet of Harivams, you will learn the secrets of this rasa."

Upon hearing this, Prabodhananda went to Vrindavan and was introduced to Harivams, which gave him great pleasure. Though Paramananda spoke well of Prabodhananda, Harivams thought to himself, "This man is a renunciate and I am a householder; nevertheless his affection attracts my mind."

Prabodhananda served Harivams and thus he became even stronger in his faith, and soon he took instruction from him about the *nitya-vihAra*. He wrote a song of praise in eight verses about Harivams and always fixed his mind in meditation on his feet. When he heard these verses, Harivams became kind to him and told him the ways of the eternal love (riti) and decided to fulfill his desires. He recounted to him all about the joys of *nitya-vihAra* and revealed that ocean of happiness to his eyes just as one candle lights another. Prabodhananda no longer had any doubts about this principle.

He began to meditate seriously and wrote *Vrindavan sataka*. His mind was ever fixed on the wealth of joy of the conjugal duo of Radha-Krishna (*dampati*) and his pleasure was in the spiritual master, his chosen deity and the saintly persons. Learning the ways of exclusive devotion he took to the path as set forth by Harivams.

In his desire to attain to Radha-vallabha, he took a vow to remain in Vrindavan. He described the rasa of the *nitya-vihAra* in a way that drenches the hearts of the devotees. He constantly sang of the intimate dalliances of Radha and Krishna and

kept a firm faith in the land of Vrindavan. He wrote many books on the mysteries of the groves (kunjā) [of Braj] the essence of which only experienced rasika devotees can understand.

(*dohā*) Bhagavat Mudita says that the teaching of Prabodhananda is as authoritative as the Veda, giving joy to the exclusive rasika devotees.

Snataka suggests the date of 1539 for Prabodhananda's arrival in Braj, but does not state the basis for this conjecture. (60)

Two things stand out in Bhagavat Mudita's account in view of what we already know about Prabodhananda: The first is his identification as an impersonalist sannyasi coming from Kashi. The second is that it does not tell us anything about Prabodhananda's previous relation with Chaitanya! In view of Bhagavat Mudita's translation of *Vrindavan sataka*, where four verses are dedicated to Chaitanya, this seems most astonishing and certainly requires an attempt at at least a hypothetical explanation.

It would appear that this book, written for the benefit of the Radha-vallabhis, deliberately suppressed any mention of Chaitanya's influence on Prabodhananda in order to place Harivams in a more glorious light.

Prabodhananda's *aSTaka* glorifying Harivams(61) is the first external evidence attesting Harivams's existence. (62) It shows that Prabodhananda was primarily impressed by Harivams's songs, particularly those concerning Krishna's lila, and by his voice (verses 1, 2, 3), even describing him as the incarnation of Krishna's flute, which is of course an interpretation of the name Harivams itself.

According to Prabodhananda, devotion to Radha and Krishna could be had from Harivams (5); the moons of Radha's toenails (*nakhara-pada-candrAM*) illuminate the sky of his heart and, in the form of a girlfriend “attained by feeling” (*bhAva-labdhi-Urthi*), he is present in Radha's pleasure grove (6) where he serves Radha and Krishna by their direct order (8).

Though Prabodhananda does indicate that Harivams was “like a thunderbolt that easily beheads the mountain of pride” (7), indicating perhaps an element of truth in Bhagavat Mudita's biography, the overall mood of this *aSTaka* is rather more reserved in its glorification of Harivams than that of Chaitanya found in *Chaitanya Chandramrita*. There is no evidence within these verses that Prabodhananda considered Harivams to be his own spiritual master.

In later works of the Radha-vallabhi school, Prabodhananda is given considerable importance, particularly as one who demonstrated dedication to residing in the holy abode of Vrindavan. In terms of biographical information, however, they add nothing at all to Bhagavat Mudita's account. (63)



52. Hariram Vyas was initiated by his own father Shukla, a disciple of Madhava Das, a disciple of Madhavendra Puri. Thus he was already a follower of the principles of madhura-rasa or sakhi bhajan before coming to Vrindavan where he met Harivams, which he probably did shortly after arriving there, i.e., circa 1540. He makes no reference to Prabodhananda's connection to Chaitanya, but he also wrote verses in praise of Rupa and Sanatan without mentioning their sectarian affiliation. He also wrote praises of Swami Haridas, another Vaishnava luminary of the same period, but appears to have had the greatest respect for Harivams, whom he refers to as his guru on more than one occasion. Cf. Vasudeva Gosvami, *Bhakta kavi Vyasji*(Mathura: Agrawal Press, 1953).

53. *jin rAdhA-vallabh ki lIlA-ras men sab ras ghore* etc, (ibid, 195).

54. (ibid.) *jAyA mAyA gRha dehI soM, ravi-sutA bandhan chore*. This should not be taken to mean that he did so after encountering Harivams.

55. *karNAnandAbhidho granthaH kRSNa-dAsena nirmitaH/  
taT-TIkA ca tad-ArabdhA zrI-prabodhena pUritA//;*  
Lalita Charan Goswami, op. cit., 558.

56. chappay 198. He may have been the disciple of a descendant of Nityananda's.

57. *Rasika ananya mAla*, (ed.) Lalita Prasad Purohit (Vrindavan, 1961), 7.

58. (ed.) Vamshi Das Baba (Vrindavan, no date), 1-3, 63. Bhagavat Mudita confirms. that he was the disciple of a HaridAsa, servant of Govinda (ibid., 90-1).

59. (ed.) Lalita Prasad Purohit (Vrindavan, 1951), 25-27.

60. Vijayendra Snataka, *RAdhA-vallabha-sampradAy: siddhAnta aur sAhitya*, 2nd ed. (Delhi, National Publishing House, 1968), 118.

61. Published in *Rasika ananya mala*, 99-100.

62. Cf. Snell, op.cit., 5.

63. Hita DhruvadAsa's *Bhakta-nAmAvali*, 29:  
*yugala-prema rasa-avadhi meM paryau mana jAi/  
vRNdAvana rasa-mAdhurI gAI adhika laRAi//;*

Chacha Hit Vrindavan Das's *Rasika-ananya-paracAvali*, 125:  
*zrI harivaMza udAra gopya rasa-rIti bakhAnI/  
tAhI mata ArUDha gUDha guna keli ju gAnI//  
sarva dharma saba dhAmaziromaNi yaha vana-rasa hai/  
binA bAsa rasa parasi bhaye binu manu nara pasu hai//  
jauM kInhau kathana kRpAlu hvai vRNdAvana mama hohu gati/  
mahA madhura rasa meM rasika bhaye prabodhAnanda ati//;*

Cf.also Govinda Aliji's *Ananya-rasika-gAthA*, 69. etc.



## **Prabodhananda in the *Vrindavana-mahimamrita*, etc.**

Since Prabodhananda is principally known to the Radha-vallabhis as the writer of a work glorifying Vrindavan, it may be worthwhile to continue our investigation by looking at VMA. Containing 1767 verses in 17 satakas, VMA glorifies Vrindavan in the style of the stotra-kavya. Its emphasis is on renunciation and remembering Radha and Krishna while residing in Vrindavan. Recurring themes are descriptions of the glories of the flora and fauna of Vrindavan, statements of the author's determination to live in Vrindavan despite any difficulties including those presented by 'woman', descriptions of Radha and Krishna following their erotic desires in the kuñjas on the banks of the Kalindi (*dhyAyAmi smara-keli-narma-nirataM zRI-rAdhika-mAdhavam*).

Another important element of the work is the extended descriptions of Radha and her kinkaris or "hand maidens." There are also occasional verses of the "miniature" type found in the anthologies, giving a description of a particular lila.

As with CCA, there is little overall continuity to the work. On occasion, sequences of verses might show some thematic unity, such as the development of ideas leading to the description of Vrindavan, Radha's beauty and qualities and then those of her dAsIs from 7.59 - 8.43; but equally, verses of quite different emphasis might be found juxtaposed.

In mood and theology, Prabodhananda shows a certain degree of independence from both the Gaudiya school as well as that of the Radha-vallabhis. The use of the word tattva in reference to the spiritual body (3.90 and elsewhere), for instance, seems to be unique to this work of Prabodhananda's and is not found elsewhere in his corpus, in which, for the sake of this discussion, we include RRSN. The frequent use of the epithets GandharvA for Radha and Muralidhara for Krishna in VMA is unusual in Prabodhananda's writings, but can be found in Gaudiya works. Other preferred epithets used are MAdhava and Madhubhit, etc., for Krishna, IzvarI, svAminI, etc. for Radha.

Another feature of the work not found elsewhere in Prabodhananda's writings is the recurring misogynous verse. Despite these idiosyncratic characteristics, VMA is recognizable as a work of the same author who wrote the CCA and, as will be demonstrated in a later portion of this article, RRSN.

## **Prabodhananda as a Brahmavadin**

Prabodhananda's background as a Brahmavadin is indicated in VMA as it was in CCA. At the very beginning of the work he says,

Oh forest of Vrindavan,  
make your own real form blossom in my heart,  
[that form, which is] the secret knowledge of supreme bliss  
coming from your extremely wonderful nature;  
for if even the UpaniSads

shy from describing the ambrosia of the Supreme Brahman, saying only it is not this, and not that, then how can one describe this place [which is beyond even Brahman]? (64)

He shows a great affection for the conceit used by Bilvamangala in his Krishna-karNAmNta in which words such as *jyotis*, *mahas*, *dhAman*, *tejas* (meaning 'light, effulgence', etc.), generally used to indicate the Brahman of the brahma-vAdins, as a reference to Krishna (See KKA 4, 5, 11). That this is more than just the adoption of a conceit is clear from 7.56-60(65) where he describes the *jyotis* in a language familiar to the brahma-vAdin, but then goes on to talk of further *jyotis* beyond this one, finally coming to Vrindavan, where everything is *tejo-maya* (as stated in the *Padma-purANa*). This concept, where Vrindavan is described as an island in the ocean of the spiritual light, is repeated frequently.(66)

Key advaita philosophical terms such as *adhyAsa* (2.8), *svapna-kalpaM vihAtum* (1.72), *bheda-traya-rahitam* (2.97),(67) etc. are found sprinkled through the work, further indicating Prabodhananda's familiarity with those doctrines. The inaccessibility of Vrindavan to the Vedanta and Upanishads is another recurring theme.

Prabodhananda's statements urging that one should stay away from "the madding crowd" (1.31-33, 1.58, 1.64-74, 2.18, etc.) indicate the lifestyle which he chose for himself while living in Vrindavan. He advises his reader not to seek to please people. One verse at least may be said to contain a reference to Rupa, SanAtana and RaghunAtha, all of whom reputedly gave up great material wealth and power to dedicate themselves to life in Vrindavan (1.76). His frequent admonishings of those who would criticize the residents of the holy abode (1.13, etc.) might be taken as an indication of frustration with sectarian backbiting. He also speaks of his determination to remain in Vrindavan despite the criticisms to which he might personally be subjected (4.24)

In spite of this, there is little to indicate that Prabodhananda is a sannyAsin other than his recurring calls to renunciation; he does not curse his ashram as he did in CCA. There is rather more about giving up wife and children which reminds one of Hariram Vyasa's statement that he gave these up to reside in Vrindavan. In the knowledge from numerous other sources that Prabodhananda was in fact a sannyasin, it would appear that Vyasa was not fully conversant with Prabodhananda's life history, but rather knew him from the VMA.

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## NOTES

64. *zrImad-vRndATavI mama hRdi sphorayAtma-svarUpam  
atyAzarya-prakRti-paramAnanda-vidyA-rahasyam/  
pUrNa-brahmAmRtam api hriyA vAbhidhAtuM na neti  
brUte yatropaniSada ihAtratyA vArtA kutastyA // VMA, 1.3.*

65. *uccAvacAvagaNitabrahmANDaValimaNDitAm/  
tri-guNAM prakRtiM tIrtvA jaDa duHkhAnRtAtmikAm//  
apArAvAravistAram ekam Ananda-sAgaram/*

svaprakAzamahA-svaccha-jyotIrUpaM paraM padam//  
caitanya-mAtra nirbhAsaM nistarangaM nirAkulam/  
nirastA-jñAnatatKaryaM paraM brahmeti yad viduH//  
tad-antaH param AzcaryaM jyotir aizaM vicintaya/  
carvaNIyamahAnanda-sAndrAbdhim ati nirmalam//  
mahA-suvistIrNatamaM mahojjvalatamaM param/  
lokAdibhir ghanI-bhAvair mahitaM mahad adbhutam//  
tadantare tato 'py atyAzcaryaM jyotir anusmara/  
kArSNyaM mahAsvacchatamaM pArAvAravivarjitam// etc.

66. Bilvamangala is usually portrayed as having been a Brahmavadi at one time before becoming a Vaishnava.

67. bheda-traya-rahitam asti  
brahma mahAnanda-sAndraM yat/  
tat-savizeSa-camatkRti-tatir  
iha VRndAvane gata kASThAm//

"That Brahman which is the essence of great joy, devoid of the three differentiations (svajAtIya, vijAtIya and sva-gata), has attained its supreme form in Vrindavan, where it is at its most wonderful."

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## Chaitanya and Harivams in VMA

Prabodhananda names Chaitanya several times in VMA (1.1, 2.95, 4.29, 5.100, 17.1-3, 17.89). Of particular interest is one verse that has been repeated (4.29, 5.100): "Chaitanya is far away, the great age of Kali has manifested itself. How can one attain prema without love for Vrindavan?"(68)

It is a well-known conceit of the Bhagavatapurana that the age of Kali could not exercise dominion on the earth as long as Krishna was present. Once he had ascended into his heaven, Kali took hold. This verse would thus appear to confirm that Prabodhananda wrote VMA after the disappearance of Chaitanya.

Other verses state that without the mercy of Chaitanya, no one could hope to know this site of Radha and Krishna's sports (17.2), or pray for devotion to the holy names preached by Chaitanya while in Braj.

Besides these verses dedicated to Chaitanya, another appears to contain a reference to Harivams, as Snataka has pointed out: (69)

To those who are fixed at the feet of Radha-vallabha,  
whose lives have been spent in pious acts,  
who have constantly served the dust of the feet of the Vaishnavas,  
and have reached the limits of renunciation,  
ah, to those whose minds have entered  
into the spirit of single-minded devotion,

but for whom they yet remain distant,  
may the merciful glance of Radha  
be soon encountered in Vrindavan.(70)

The name of Radha-vallabha, appearing in this verse for only the second time in the VMA, appears to be a direct reference to Harivams who established the service to the deity of this name. The tenor of the verse would, through the use of the honorific plural as well as the nature of the adjectives, show the respect Prabodhananda evidently had for Harivams. **It would seem, however, that Harivams was not in a position of authority over Prabodhananda, but rather a junior to whom blessings could be given.**

The word *dUrataH* is somewhat obscure, though the obvious sense would be that though these various good qualities were possessed by the respected individual or individuals in question, nevertheless, he (or they) was (were) still some distance from achieving the spiritual goal he (they) sought.

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## NOTES

68. *dUre caitanya-caraNAH kalir AvirabhUn mahAn/ kRSNa-prema kathaM prApyo vina vRndAvane ratim?//*

69. op. cit., 111.

70. *rAdhA-vallabha-pAda-pallava-juSAM sad-dharmanItAyuSAM nitya-sevita-vaiSNavA+ngHri-rajasaM vairAgya-sImAspRzAm/ hantaikAnta-rasa-praviSTa-manasAm apy asti yad dUrataS tad RADhA-karuNAvalokam acirAd vindatu VRndAvane// VMA, 17.11*

Bhagavat Mudita does not draw a connection between this verse and Harivams in his translation, even though accolades to Harivams are found in his preface to *VrndAvana-zataka*.

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## Radha-vallabhi doctrines in VMA

The independence of Prabodhananda's ideas has already been alluded to. However, Lalita Charan Goswami's reading of VMA has led him to conclude that either the book was written by a follower of Harivams and that verses dedicated to Chaitanya were later interpolated by some other person, or that Prabodhananda was a convert to Harivams's doctrine as stated by Bhagavat Mudita. (71) His reasoning is based on the four following principal points, the supporting evidence is given in brackets:

1. Radha and Krishna are seen as eternally united in Vrindavan, enjoying their erotic pastimes in the nitya-vihAra (VMA, 6.9, 9.38).
2. Radha has a natural pre-eminence and is worshipped distinctly from Krishna (12.11).

3. Lalita and the other sakhis are pictured as purely devotees of Radha and have no role as nayikas in their own right (9.45). To this, Goswami also adds that Harivams held that there is no competition amongst the various gopis for Krishna's affections, but that they are all followers of Radha, unlike Rupa, who considered those who held this point of view to be *a-pUrva-rasika* [UN, 9.41].
4. Prabodhananda's view is that there are three Vrindavans: the cowherd settlement and pastures, the Vrindavan where Krishna enjoys with the gopis, and the kuñja where Krishna relishes erotic sports with Radha alone and where her superiority is uncontested. This last realm is the supreme goal of the rasika devotee.

The point of reference from which these doctrines can be identified as those of the Radha-vallabhI sect is, of course, *RAdhA-rasa-sudhA-nidhi*; if one considers RRSN to be the work of Prabodhananda, the argument becomes circular as Prabodhananda naturally agrees with himself. Indeed, this similarity of mood goes to support our contention that Prabodhananda is the author of that work, but we will deal with this question more fully at a later time. Whether or not the first two of Lalita Charan Goswami's points can be considered the position of the Gaudiya school at all is one that will also be faced later in this article, when we examine Harivams's life and teachings. The following may be said about the two latter points:

(3) First of all, Goswami has quoted a verse that reveals little of the doctrine that he claims it illustrates: *jayati jayati vRndaM sat-sakhinAM dvayaikyam*. Indeed the last word of this sentence would indicate an equality of the sakhis' feelings towards both Radha and Krishna, that which Rupa Goswami has defined as *sama-snehatvam* (UN 8.135). VMA and RRSN define *zuddha-sakhya* ('pure friendship') in terms not dissimilar to the Gaudiyas' *mañjarI-bhAva*, which is called *rAdhA-snehAdhikatvam* by Rupa (UN 8.131). Lalita and Vishakha are listed amongst the *nAyikAs* by some of the PurANas, thus the Gaudiyas give them a special position, even as they do the other sakhis. It is precisely their position as equals to Radha that makes it possible for them to share friendship with her. Radha's friendship with these other gopis is expressed in *Azcarya-rAsaprabandha* 182-9, where Radha requests Krishna to take numerous forms in order to fulfill the desires of the other gopis to be made love to by him. The *dAsIs* or *kinkarIs* (or *rAdhA-snehAdhikA* sakhis) are distinct from the *sama-snehA* sakhis and it is they who have taken the firm vow never to engage in any erotic activity with Krishna, even if he should make advances, and even if those advances should be engaged in at Radha's personal request. Examples of this strict vow are given in UN 8.132-3.

This determination of the kinkaris is illustrated in VMA where Prabodhananda advises that one should remember the kinkarIs, whose beauty, service and glory he describes repeatedly: "in past, present and future, they know no other desire but to serve Radha." (*rAdhA-pAdAbja-sevAnyA-spRhA-kAla-trayojhitAm*, VMA 8.34). A verse describing Radha's incitement of a sexual incident between Krishna and the kinkari is also found in VMA, 16.94:

A certain dasi, whose mind was fixed on service  
to Radha's lotus feet alone,  
who never thought of bathing herself

in the joy of Hari's touch;  
burst into tears, saying, 'don't do that!'  
when Krishna forced himself upon her,  
tearing her cloth  
and doing whatever it was...  
Meanwhile, my soul [Radha] stood by and laughed.(72)

The Radha-snehAdhikatva spirit is even more apparent in RRSN, where the author clearly prays that whatever service he performs for Krishna is ultimately turned into service to Radha and her favor (257-9). In RRSN 118, one finds a scene in which Krishna rewards the dasi for worshipping Radha with even more affection than he rewards his own devotees, by embracing her, kissing her, giving her the pan from his mouth and the garland from around his neck. But in RRSN 56, the author writes, "Radhe, even if Krishna should kiss me, embrace me, madden me with the sweetness of love, and show me a marvelous increase in affection, all because I am the object of his mistress's mercy, nevertheless, my own pleasure remains fixed in the pleasure of service to your feet."

Something similar is also stated in RRSN 88. The author of RRSN further makes it clear that *dAsya* is superior to *sakhya* (129, 148). The reward for the pure attitude of the dasis is that they are allowed to serve in the kuñja itself (RRSN, 129). The great reward of the dasis, that they have access to the intimate pastimes of Radha and Krishna in a way that is not accessible to the sakhis is stated as follows:

What more can be said [about their good  
fortune]?  
Even while Radha is frolicking with her lover  
in the vine-covered bower,  
she sits the dasi on her bed  
and covers her with a cloth.(73)

This last verse clearly shows that the Radha known to the *dAsIs* is not known even to the sakhis. This is stated most pithily by the Gaudiya Raghunath Das in his *VilApakusumAñjali* (16):

Other than this service to your lotus feet,  
I pray for nothing, ever, oh goddess;  
I bow my head to your friendship, I bow my head.  
My desire is for your service only,  
that alone is my pleasure.(74)

In VMA 3.107-9, the dasis are pictured wearing prasadi clothes, as they are in RRSN, 53. Another vision, that of Radha's transferring the betel she has herself received from Krishna to her dasi, is found both in VMA, 16.93 and RRSN, 156. Other rewards of the post are that Krishna is obliged to the kinkaris as go-betweeners who can change Radha's mind. In VMA he is described as *dAsInAm anunetari*, 'appealing to the dasis for the favors of Radha,' as he is in RRSN 8, 94, 219. In VMA 16.63, the kinkaris are seen as subordinate to the commands of the sakhis like Lalita. Despite this

primordial distinction, Prabodhananda occasionally uses the term sakhi somewhat indiscriminate manner, as is the case in RRSN.

Indeed, Prabodhananda does not write much about the competitiveness amongst the various gopis as does Rupa Goswami, who takes particular pleasure in showing the trickery used by them in their attempts to win Krishna for their yUthezvarI, Radha or Chandravali. There are some exceptions to this: Prabodhananda does describe Chandravali as an adversary of Radha in two verses of VMA (15.10-1). Even there, Radha's reaction to Krishna's infidelities is pictured as rather less ferocious than Rupa would have described it; for the Gaudiyas, Radha is vAmA, i.e. not easily appeased once wronged. All in all, despite the numerous similarities of his ideas of *sakhi-bhAva* with the Gaudiyas, this particular difference does seem to correspond to an affinity of Prabodhananda with Harivams's school of thought.

Considering the commitment that Prabodhananda shows for the kinkari mood, it becomes somewhat difficult to understand Karnapur's identification of him as a sakhi. Haridas Das suggests that Prabodhananda's writings show the *dakSiNA prakharA* character, which according to the Gaudiya authorities matches that of Tungavidya. The *dakSiNA prakharA* girl friends were unable to tolerate Radha's pouts, etc., and intervene on behalf of Krishna.(75)

(4) Lalita Charan Goswami contrasts the Gaudiya concept of Vrindavan to that vaunted by Prabodhananda whom he sees as a spokesman for the Radhavallabhi school.(76) To this end he has used Karnapur's *Ananda-vRndAvana-campU*, a work describing Krishna's career in Vrindavan based on the BhAgavata-purANa. The Radha-vallabhi concept of the kuñja, the site of Radha and Krishna's erotic activities (and thus supreme over all other divine lieux) is matched amongst the Gaudiyas by that of Radha Kund in Rupa Goswami's work *UpadezAmRta* (9-11).

Prabodhananda has also written a few verses about Radha Kund (VMA, 5.3-12), though he does not dilate on its supreme status. He seems, like the author of RRSN, to take the kuñja on the shores of the Kalindi as the preferred spot for Radha and Krishna's meeting. For the Gaudiyas, the meeting at Radha Kund takes place at midday, while that by the Yamuna takes place at night. Prabodhananda does show a preference for Radha-Krishna as never separated, *nityAviyukta* (VMA 15.23).

Another area in which the author of VMA shows characteristics true to Harivams's school has not been taken up by Goswami, but is mentioned by SnAtaka. (77) In a work by a RasikottaMsa, *Prema-pattana* (VS 1695 = AD 1639), both Harivams, as the author of RRSN, and Prabodhananda, as the author of VMA are quoted under the rubric "where irreligion is established as religion." The verses quoted are RRSN, 81 and 82, and VMA, 17.49.(78)

This confirms, as Rasikottamsa was evidently aware, that both Prabodhananda and Harivams shared a common attitude towards the external rules, regulations and rituals of religion. Those Gaudiyas who use the RRSN as a religious book interpret the word mahAbuddhayaH (most intelligent) in RRSN 82 as mahA-abuddhayaH (most foolish), even though Prabodhananda uses the term in its clear sense in VMA. The specific rituals rejected there are the painting of the VaiSNava symbols of the conch and wheel, etc., and of marking the forehead with tilaka, and of wearing the

tulasi neck beads. The first of these three, though heartily approved by the Hari-bhakti-vilAsa, is not in currency amongst the Gaudiyas; the other two are considered absolutely indispensable. There are no specific statements in VMA about which rituals Prabodhananda considered useless, though he does appear to approve the rejection of the guru if he should interfere with one's determination to live in Vrindavan.

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71. op. cit., 563-70.

72. *ananya-zrI-rAdhA-pada-kamala-dAsyaika-rasa-dhIr  
hareH sa+nge ra+nga-snapana-samayenApi dadhati/  
balAt kRSNe kUrpAsaka-bhidi kim apy Acarati  
kApy udazrur meveti pralapati mamAtmA ca hasati//*

73. *bahunA kiM svakAntena krIDantyApi latAgRhe/  
paryankAdhiSThApitAM vastrair vAcchAditAM kvacit//*

74. *padAbjayos tava vinA vara-dAsyam eva  
nAnyat kadApi samaye kila devi yAce/  
sakhyaA te mama namo'stu namo'stu nityaM  
sakhyaA te mama raso'stu raso'stu satyam//*

75. Introduction to *\_Azarya-rAsa-prabandha*, vi. See RAdhA KRSNa-gaNoddeza-dIpika for the qualities of Tungavidya (88) and UN 8.38 for the dakSiNA qualities:

*asahA mAna-nirbandhe, nAyake yukta-vAdinI/  
sAmabhis tena bhedyA ca dakSiNA parikIrtitA//.*

76. op.cit., 285.

77. *Prema-pattana*, 35. *yatrAdharma eva dharmah sthApitaH. tathaiwoktaM zrI-harivaMza-  
mahAnubhavaiH... tathoktaM tair eva:*

*likhanti bhujamUlato na khalu zankha-cakrAdikaM  
vicitra-hari-mandiraM na racayanti bhAla-sthale/  
lasat-tulasi-mAlikaM dadhati kaNTha-pIThe na vA  
guror bhajana-vikramAt ka iha te mahA-buddhayaH//*

*tatraivoktaM zrI-prabodhAnanda-sarasvatI-pAdaiH:*

*kuru sakalam adharmaM muñca sarvaM ca dharmam tyaja gurum api vRndAraNya-  
vAsAnurodhAt// etc.*

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**Preliminary conclusions about Prabodhananda**



Now that we have looked exhaustively at all the evidence that is available to us, taking into account Prabodhananda Saraswati's own writings, information we get about him in outside sources, both Gaudiya and Radhavallabhi, are there any firm conclusions that can be drawn about this rasika poet so loved by both these sampradayas?

It seems certain that Prabodhananda was at one time a sannyasi of the Advaitins' Saraswati order. **Attempts to turn him into a "tridandi sannyasi" are unsupported by any evidence whatsoever.**

Several elements of the story of the conversion of Prakashananda written by Krishna Das Kaviraj have echoes in CCA. Furthermore, the confirmation by Bhagavat Mudita that Prabodhananda was a sannyasi from Kashi, indeed one who was filled with the pride of his own learning like the Prakashananda of CC, leads us to suspect that Prabodhananda was the source of inspiration of Krishna Das' account.

On the other hand, the sannyasi Prabodhananda who came to Vrindavan could not have been the same person who is described as a householder in the *Prema-vilasa* and other works. These works appear to have been ignorant of Prabodhananda's life and their authors to have written about him only on the basis of a few scanty details from the written materials available to them. Of Prabodhananda's writings, they seem to know only Chaitanya Chandramrita; they furthermore seem to have no knowledge of his life in Vrindavan, for he was considerably older than Gopal Bhatta. **It does not seem tenable that there were two different Prabodhanandas, one a sannyasi in Vrindavan and one a householder in South India, nor that the two versions of his biography are somehow reconcilable.**

Though it is thus quite possible that Krishna Das was indeed writing of Prabodhananda when he described the conversion of Prakashananda, his account cannot be accepted as entirely true. If Prabodhananda was alive (and functioning) in 1578, then it is not likely that in 1514 or thereabouts, when Mahaprabhu made his visit to Kashi, he could have become the powerful teacher and leader of Advaitin monks that the CC makes him out to be. With doubt cast on this element of the story, nothing much is left to us in the way of concrete information about this part of Prabodhananda's life other than that he was a sannyasi who lived in Kashi where at some time he was converted by Chaitanya Deva.

Though the correlations are undeniably strong, it cannot be stated with any certainty that he was ever known as Prakashananda, unless we accept the Gaudiya tradition represented by Anandi and Krishna Das (Lala Babu). Unfortunately, we are in a situation where none of the traditions appears to give us an entirely reliable account of Prabodhananda's life and so are forced to do the best with what we have been given.

Though Prabodhananda's home base appears to have been in Kashi at one time, he traveled, probably after his conversion, to Puri, also visiting Nabadwip while in the East. He stayed long enough in Gauda and Puri to come into close contact with Chaitanya's followers, of whom Narahari and Svarupa Damodar seem to have most influenced him. He was probably in Puri or Bengal at the time of Chaitanya's death. At this time he wrote his first known work, *Chaitanya-chandramrita*, which earned

him the respect of many of Chaitanya's devotees who showed their appreciation of the panegyric by offering their respects to him in their lists of Mahaprabhu's devotees, specifically mentioning his glorification of the Lord. From the tone of their praises of him and his work, it can be deduced that Prabodhananda was at the forefront of Gaudiya writers on Chaitanya at this early date.

Like so many other Gaudiyas, Prabodhananda came to Vrindavan not very long after Chaitanya's death, where he sought the acquaintance of other devotees. It cannot be said, as Bhagavat Mudita does, that he gave up *brahmAnanda* at this point, for he had already been converted to the devotion of the Chaitanya school. In Vrindavan he may have been persuaded by a disciple of Harivams, Paramananda, to follow the path of *nitya-vihAra*, a type of devotion that worshipped Radha and Krishna exclusively in their amorous dalliances and ignored all other customary aspects of Krishna's lila. This led him to an association with Harivams, whose songs on the loving affairs of Radha and Krishna particularly impressed him.

It does appear, however, again in contradiction to the statements of the Radha-vallabhi sources, **that he was senior to Harivams, both in age and in gravitas, and that much of his conception of the erotic devotional mood can be identified as coming from Gaudiya sources, though some differences in taste can also be discerned.**

Nevertheless, it is clear that Prabodhananda shared with Harivams a strong belief in a path of devotion that did not consider the limits of scriptural injunctions, *rAgAnugA bhakti* according to the Gaudiyas, *puSTi-mArga* according to the Vallabhis and *rAsa-mArga* according to the Radha-vallabhis. This idea he may have taken to a degree unacceptable to the Gaudiyas, as we shall see in the next sections of this article.

The remainder of Prabodhananda's life was spent writing books that defined a devotional attitude somewhat independent of the Gaudiya school. This was apparently done in close contact with the circle of devotees that included Hita Harivams, Swami Haridas, and Hariram Vyas. He continued to be respected by the descendants of Harivams, whom he outlived, even collaborating on a work in Sanskrit by Harivams's son, Krishna Chandra. He probably did not live much beyond 1578, which is when he assisted Krishna Chandra Goswami in writing *KarNAnanda*. His samadhi, however, is found in Kalidaha in Vrindavan where it is under the aegis of the Gaudiya sect, indicating that his association with Gaudiyas evidently continued to the end of his days.

How, when, and where Prabodhananda became spiritual master to Gopala Bhatta remains unanswered. There is, in fact, no reason to believe that Prabodhananda was not a south Indian Brahmin and uncle to Gopala Bhatta. The Radha Raman Mandir accepts this particular tradition, though they do not seem to be able to show any evidence apart from the abovementioned Gaudiya Vaishnava histories for this belief.

Another mystery is the silence about Prabodhananda in Krishna Das' CC and the absence of verses from the CCA therein. And why did Krishna Das not give the status of a branch of the Chaitanya tree to either Prabodhananda or Prakashananda, if they

be two different persons? Even Lokanath and Gopala Bhatta, who are said to have asked their names not be included in Krishna Das' biography, are still named as branches, so this cannot be given as a valid reason.

B. B. Majumdar(79), while denying the Prakashananda = Prabodhananda equation, has also found this a matter to ponder. His conjecture is that perhaps the similarity of some of Prabodhananda's verses to the ideas put forth by Narahari put him in the Gauranga Nagar camp and that this would have made him anathema in the eyes of orthodox Chaitanya followers, for Vrindavan Das writes in the Chaitanya Bhagavata that such praises are not permitted for Chaitanya.(80) This conjecture does not seem possible in view of the many other verses in Chaitanya Chandramrita that show another mood. And why, when Narahari and other Khandavasi Vaishnavas are mentioned in the Chaitanya Charitamrita, would Prabodhananda have been specifically singled out for ostracization?

Whether for this reason or any other, it seems that Prabodhananda was independent in his opinions, making him a rather exceptional character who was not necessarily appreciated by those who considered Rupa Goswami to be the supreme authority of the Gaudiya school. Prabodhananda's close friendship with Harivams in particular may not have been looked upon with great favor by the Gaudiya Vaishnavas. Let us now turn to an examination of Harivams' relationship to Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

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79. op. cit., 174.

80. *ataeva yata mahAmahima sakale/  
gaurAnga-nAgara hena stava nAhi bole//*

Caitanya Bhagavata. It appears that for this reason Vrindavan Das does not mention Narahari Sarkar anywhere in his biography of Caitanya's early life, although it is known that Narahari was an important associate of his in Nabadwip. This ban on Narahari was apparently lifted by Krishna Das, who mentions him with the other devotees from Sri Khanda dancing separately from Chaitanya's other devotees at the Rathayatra festival in Puri (CC, Madhya 13.46). Thus identification of Prabodhananda as a Gauranga Nagar may have caused him not to appear in Chaitanya Bhagavata, it cannot be a valid reason for his absence from Chaitanya Charitamrita.