

The Authenticity of the Caitanya-Charitamrita-Maha-Kavya

– Jagadananda Das –

1.

Until recently, Kavi Karnapura has generally been accepted without question as the author of a book on the life of Sri Krishna Chaitanya entitled *Sri-Chaitanya-charitamrita-maha-kavya* [CCMK]. The date of this work is given as 1542⁽¹⁾ by the author himself in its final verse. In the two penultimate verses of the work, he identifies himself as the youngest son of Shivananda Sena and as a mere child (*sisu*).⁽²⁾

If Kavi Karnapura is indeed the author, it is certainly a matter of great interest as he is one of the most prolific and authoritative writers amongst Chaitanya's followers. His father, Shivananda Sena, was a rich and influential devotee of Chaitanya, responsible for the management of the yearly trips to Puri which played such an important role in the latter part of the great saint's life.⁽³⁾

Unfortunately, with the exception of a few such autobiographical words in Karnapura's own compositions, such as the *Ananda-vrndavana-campu* [AVC], *Chaitanya-chandrodaya-nataka* [CCN] and *Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika* [GGD] the only information that we have about Karnapura's life is from Krishnadasa Kaviraja's *Chaitanya-charitamrita* [CC].

In the CC (A.D. 1612) it is written that on one of Shivananda's visits to Puri, Chaitanya said to him, "The next son born to you must be named Puridasa (after one of Chaitanya's associates, Paramananda Puri)." On Shivananda's next visit to Puri, he brought some of his sons with him, including the young Paramanandadasa or Puridasa. On that occasion, the young baby sucked the toe of the saint, and this was credited with the later benign effect of making him capable of speaking poetry.⁽⁴⁾ This ability was proved on a later occasion when Shivananda came to Puri and Chaitanya asked the child to recite a verse. This he did, having composed one in the *arya* metre. ⁽⁵⁾ Krishnadasa Kaviraja points out there that the child was only seven years old at the time.

Another anecdote is recounted in the same place about Karnapura as a child of seven. Chaitanya gave him an initiation in the holy name, but the child refused to recite it out loud. This led to some amusement when the saint said, "I have made the whole world sing the names of Krishna, but I have failed with this child." Only Svarupa Damodar, Chaitanya's secretary, was able to comprehend that the boy was not reciting it aloud because of the scriptural prohibition on the audible recital of the mantra given by a spiritual master.

The upshot of these stories, which are at least partially confirmed in Karnapura's own works, is that Paramanandadasa Sena, or Puridasa Sena, was a precocious child, even prodigy, who had some important contact with the great saint. He received

what might be termed "a special mercy" from him which was held to be the cause of his talents. In his concluding verses to the CCN the poet himself admits that his outstanding ability to write poetry was due to the mercy of Chaitanya. (6)

In an eighteenth-century commentary to AVC, 1.4, Visvanatha Chakravarti further informs us that it was Chaitanya himself who bestowed the title *karnapura* on the child. (7)

2.

Krishnadasa Kaviraja's account of Karnapura's meeting with Chaitanya comes near the end of the CC. It is therefore clear that in his view Karnapura was not much older than seven when Chaitanya left the world in 1533. The CCMK is the first book attributed to this young author, dated 1464 of the Saka era, or A.D. 1542, when he would have been not much more than sixteen years old. The verse giving this information is confirmed in all manuscripts.

*vedA rasAH zrutaya indur iti prasiddhe
zAke tatha khalu zucau zuhhage ca masi |
vAre sudhAkirana-nAmny asita-dvitiyA
tithy-antare parisamAptir abhud amuSyA ||*

Further information given in the verse is that it was a Monday, the second day of the dark fortnight in the month of Asharh.

No other title is attributed to our author until 1572, the date of another work, a play on the life of Chaitanya, the Chaitanya-chandrodaya-nataka. (7a) This book is one of the principal sources of information upon which Krishnadasa Kaviraja has relied for his account of the life of Chaitanya at Puri. A great portion of CC's Madhya-lila and some of the Antya-lila are based on it; several of its verses have been quoted, including three glorifying Rupa Goswami. (8) In Krishnadasa Kaviraja's CC, a popular and responsible biography, this is the only book of Karnapura's that is quoted by name.

A third book by Karnapura, Gauraganoddesa-dipika, dated A.D. 1576, is considered important for the reconciliation of divergent opinions on the relative importance of the Vrindavan and Navadvipa lilas of Krishna. In this book, Karnapura first expounds Svarupa Damodar Gosvami's doctrine of the Pancha Tattva, which later plays such an important role in the theology of Krishnadasa Kaviraja. (9) Biman Bihari Majumdar and, more recently, Ramakanta Chakravarty have both emphasized the salutary effects that GGD must have had on the debate between the intractable supporters of the Gauranga Nagara doctrine and the exclusively Krishna-worshipping followers of both Advaita and the Vrindavan school. (10)

In fact, however, Krishnadasa Kaviraja has differed from Karnapura to some extent, particularly in his doctrine of Chaitanya-sakti, for Karnapura has identified Gadadhar with Radha, which Krishnadasa Kaviraja seems to have determinedly avoided. Chakravarty has firmly placed Karnapura in the Gauranga Nagara camp.

After GGD, our author penned several books that parallel to some extent the works

of the authors in Vrindavan. All of them were related to the activities of Radha and Krishna and are less important for the purposes of this article. One of them, *Krishnahnika-kaumudi*, closely resembles in plan a work of Krishnadasa Kaviraja's, *Govinda-lilamrita*. With the information currently available, however, it is impossible to tell whether these two persons were acquainted with one another personally.

We do not know whether Karnapura ever visited Vrindavan. It is known, however, that he was present to Kheturi at the great festival held there, likely at some time in the 1570's (11), a date about which there is considerable difference of opinion. (12) We do not know when and where he died.

3.

In an article entitled "Chaitanya-caritAmrita-mahA-kAvya," which appeared in the Bengali periodical *Caturanga* of May 1985, the late Dr. Tarapada Mukherjee raised a number of questions about the authenticity of CCMK, casting doubt on both the date of its composition and the name of its author. Basing the greater part of his argument on a study of the colophons of a number of old manuscripts, Mukherjee concluded that the work is a forgery dating probably from the seventh or eighth decades of the seventeenth century.

That he felt there was a problem is not altogether surprising. We have already encountered a number of forgeries and doubtful dates in the study of Gaudiya Vaishnava literature. Some of these attempts have been quite sophisticated. The most celebrated, which still has some people mystified, is *GovindadAsera KadacA*, an account of Chaitanya's travels in South India in 1510-12. The first manuscript of this book was apparently discovered by a descendant of Advaita Acharya, Jay Gopal Goswami of Shantipur. It was then published several times, accepted and promoted by many reputable scholars, including Dinesh Chandra Sen. (13) This book has since been vehemently discredited, primarily on account of anachronisms in language and geographical names. (14)

Some other works, not entirely spurious, are also controversial. The *Prema-vilasa*, for instance, is attributed to Nityananda Dasa, a disciple of Nityananda's wife, Jahnava. Nityananda Dasa would have been a contemporary of Krishnadasa Kaviraja, a three-time visitor to Vrindavan in Jahnava's company, as well as an associate of Virabhadra on his mission to East Bengal. (15) As such, one would judge him to be an authoritative chronicler of the early post-Chaitanya period. Nevertheless, much of what he says has raised the eyebrows of modern historians. Some has been proved completely impossible and false, with the result that *Prema-vilasa* has been almost completely discredited.

Some of the misinformation that Nityananda Dasa puts forth seems to have clear propaganda purposes, but not all has yet been explained. The most famous of the concocted accounts in this book is the supposed suicide of Krishnadasa Kaviraja, said to have jumped into Radha Kunda upon hearing of the loss of the only existing manuscript of CC, which had been sent to Bengal with Gopala Bhatta's disciple, Srinivasa. (16) The story is anachronistic and it is hard to imagine that an author living so close to the actual events would have been able to convince anyone that Krishnadasa had sent the *ChaitanyacaritAmrita* back to Bengal as early as 1575 (the

most probable date of Srinivasa Ācārya's important trip with the writings of the Gosvamis) when the book itself was not written until 1612. (17)

Another title, *Karnananda*, written by Yadunandana, the grand-disciple of the above-mentioned Srinivasa, is said by the author to have been written in 1529 Saka, i.e. AD 1607. This is disproved by the great number of quotations from the Chaitanya-charitamrita, the date of which seems to have been established beyond any doubt. (18)

The inability to establish definitively the authenticity of books in the Gaudiya tradition extends even to the first complete work written about the life of Chaitanya. All the biographies of Chaitanya refer to Murari Gupta's *kadacA* or notebook (MGK) as one of the most important sources of information about the great saint's early life. The printed edition of this work goes by the name of *Sri-Krishna-chaitanya-charitAmritam*. In the introductory verses, this simple poem in quasi-Puranic style purports to be a maha-kavya, not a collection of notes as the word *kadacA* itself implies. Furthermore, in the first printed editions of this work, a date 1425 Saka (A.D. 1501) is given in the colophon, which would be completely impossible. In later editions this date was changed to 1435 (A.D. 1511). Since Chaitanya's life covers the span from A.D. 1485-1533, this date for a biography which mentions even the death of its subject is not believable even to its editor. (19)

Murari apparently received the permission of Chaitanya to write this biography in 1508-9 just prior to Chaitanya's renunciation. It has therefore been suggested that the latter portions dealing with his life outside Nabadwip were added later. It is clear from a reading of the book that the portions covering Chaitanya's life after his renunciation are less detailed and less informed than those to which Murari would have been an eyewitness. Only two manuscripts of this book have ever been found and no critical reading has been able to clarify these problems. From the standpoint of internal evidence also, certain problems present themselves in the MGK, both to the devotee and the historian. Nevertheless, the existence of other works which give direct credit to MGK for source materials and whose debt to that work are demonstrable tend to support its authenticity. In the course of our discussion we shall be obliged to return to some of the problems related to Murari's biography, for CCMK is both the closest to MGK in date and in content.

Last, but not least in the litany of problematic texts in the Gaudiya line, are the numerous spurious Sahajiya works ascribed to Krishnadasa Kaviraja, Narottam Dasa, Rupa and Sanatan and other reputable authors of the sampradaya. (20) These are easily identifiable by their espousal of doctrines that are clearly heterodox.

4.

Dr. Mukherjee spent many years researching the Gaudiya manuscripts found in the Vrindavan Research Institute, most of which came from the Radha Damodar temple library. He prepared the catalogue of Bengali manuscripts held by the VRI, a critical edition of Chaitanya Charitamrita based on its holdings, as well as taking up extended research into legal documents related to the Gaudiya sampradaya. In this case, he based his arguments on certain unusual features of the manuscript evidence found in the Vrindavan Research Institute.

Since Dr. Mukherjee's article appeared in Bengali in a periodical that may not be easily available to the reader, and as his evidence is quite interesting in its own right, I will summarize the main points of his argument here.

(i) Mukherjee's suspicions were first raised by the claim that Rupa Gosvami had copied the text of CCMK by his own hand.

Krishnadasa Kaviraja writes about the beauty of Rupa Gosvami's hand writing.⁽²¹⁾ At this date, such a great interest in an author's handwriting is unusual and consequently very little of the personal handwriting of any medieval Bengali writer has survived. Nevertheless, the Vrindavan Research Institute has received certain manuscripts from the Radha Damodar temple, some of which are ostensibly in Rupa's own handwriting. These manuscripts can be divided into three categories: (a) Those which are attested by the scribe, e.g. have something like *vyAlekhi rUpeNa*, e.g., *Vaisakha-mahatmyam* (dated 1457 Saka), no. 7688. This work contains Padma-purana Patalakhanda, chs. 84-95. The colophon states: *samAptam idam vaizAkha-mAhAtmyam. zri-madhusUdanAya namaH. svarazara-zakre sAke mAsē tapasye tathAngi tapanasya | mAdhava-mAhAtmyam idaM sundara-rUpaM vyAlekhi rUpeNa || zri-govardhanAya namaH zri-gopAla-caraNAya namaH. zri-harAya namaH.*

(b) Those, which have someone else's attestation: e.g. *zriImad-rUpa-śva-hasta-likhita-nRsiMha-paricaryA*; *zriImad-rUpa-gosvAmi-likhita-jagannAtha-vallabha-nATakam*, etc.

(c) Those with handwriting which resembles the above two, such as *Karnamritastotra*, *Kramadīpikā* (Gopaladhyana), *MukundamAlā*, etc. Rupa stayed at Radha Damodar in his last days and his samadhi is on the temple grounds. One would naturally expect that he should give his collection of manuscripts to his successor, Jiva. From several dalils (testimonials) of the period, it is clear that the official library (pustak thaur) of the school was there. Furthermore, the use of quotations from most of the above texts in various works by Rupa lends credence to these ascriptions. Nevertheless, there are several reasons for doubting the claims of the colophons. First, the date written in *VaisAkha-mAhAtmya* raises a doubt. Rupa did not write the date of completion of all the books that he himself authored, so why should we believe that he would do so after simply copying a manuscript? Perhaps it was another, later Rupa (Kaviraja) who could have copied it.

(ii) A manuscript of CCMK belonging to category (b) above is the Vrindavan Research Institute's MS No. 7686. It is written in Bengali letters on 45 folios of which two are missing. At the end of the text is found the verse which has already been quoted above, and another date written in numbers, 1467 = 1545. This is presumably the date of the copying, but the scribe has not given his name or any other information. However, at the head of the manuscript, *CaitanyAmrita 2* is written in Nagari script and to its side, *zri-rUpa-gosvAmi-hasta-likhitaM zri-caitanyAmRta-kAvyam* in Bengali letters. Mukherjee supposes that the Nagari dates to the attested 1665 indexing of the contents of the Radha Damodar library (the writing matches) and that the Bengali postdates it. He poses the question: who at this late date, long after the deaths of Jiva and Kaviraja, would be able to identify Rupa's handwriting? The writer of this anonymous attestation unfortunately did not give his sources.

In this MS the date in numbers is supplemented by the tithi: day one of the dark fortnight of Asharh, 1545, and this closely resembles the date of composition written in the verse (see section ii above). In view of the similarity one may assume that we are merely looking at versions of the same date (given the latitude which is commonly experienced when civil dates are being rendered into tithis), and that the weekday, had there been room for it, would again have been Monday. Mukherjee's suggestion seems to be that the date written in numerals is perhaps only a mistaken reading of the date given in the colophon verse.

(iii) In order for the CCMK to have been copied by Rupa in the short space of three years, the following would have had to have taken place. Karnapura is said to have written his maha-kavya in 1542. Before being sent from Karnapura in Bengal to Rupa Gosvami in Vrindavan, it must presumably have to have been copied by someone else. The journey itself would have taken six to eight weeks on foot. Upon receiving the MS Rupa would have had to drop everything, in particular his important work of composing the Ujivalanilamani which one assumes was absorbing his attention at this time, in order to copy it. (22) Of course Rupa would have been interested in Chaitanya's life, but would he not rather have had someone else do the copying? Although it would not have been a physical impossibility for the above events to have taken place, it does seem an uncommonly quick succession of events for those slow moving times. (23)

(iv) These then are the preliminary doubts which are raised by Mukherjee. He concludes that the authenticity of the claim that Rupa had written this manuscript ought to be rejected unless an impartial external witness were to be found. Unfortunately, though such a witness has indeed been forthcoming, Mukherjee finds that his evidence has simply magnified his suspicions.

The evidence referred to above is found at the end of at least three manuscripts, the first of which comes from Dhaka University and is mentioned in S. K. De's edition of Padyavali (24) It consists of the following four verses and a prose footnote to them.

*caitanya-andro jagad uddidhIrSuH
sva-prema-ratnaM vraja-sAgarottham |
dInAya dAtuM nija-rUpato'sau
ghurNan ghRNI prAdurabhUt sva-vRndaih ||1||*

*arvAg-jive pracura-karuNaih zrIla-rUpAgrajAdyaiH
sammodAn mat-parama-gurubhiH zrIla-kAzizvarAkhyaiH |
bhaTTAcAryair api ca paramAnanda-saMjJair vraje'smin
zrutvA zrutvA mudita-hRdayaiH zazvad AsvAditaM yat||2||*

*caitanya-candra-caritAmRtam adbhutAbhair
dvyaSTAbdikair viracitaM kavi-karNapUraiH |
rUpAkhyai-mat-prabhu-varaiH sva-karAmbujena
zAke hayartu-bhuvane likhitaM purA yat ||3||*

*Alokya sAmpratam anena kumedhasApi
svapne 'pi tad-ratim Rte mRtaka-prabheNa |*

*kenApi lubdha-manasA hata viSNudAsa-nAmnA
sva-jIvana-mahauSadham AcitaM tat ||4||*

1. The moon-like compassionate Chaitanya, desiring to save the world, became incarnate in his own form, surrounded by his associates, to give to the unfortunate the jewel of his own love.

2. The [CCMK] was listened to again and again and constantly relished here in Vraja by Rupa, his older brother Sanatana, and others who possess so much mercy for the ignorant living beings, and by my grand-spiritual-master named Kashishwara, and with delight by Paramananda Bhattacharya.

3. This CCMK was composed by the amazingly talented Kavi Karnapura when he was only sixteen years old. In the year 1467 Saka it was copied by the lotus hand of my great master named Rupa.

4. Presently this wicked-minded individual named Vishnudasa, who has no affection [for Chaitanya] even in dreams, who is like a dead man, an unimportant person whose mind is filled with greed, has gathered it up as a great medicine which will preserve his life.' (25)

The prose sentence which follows in the Dhaka manuscript is: *idaM kAvyam zrIla-rUpa-gosvAminA caturdaza-zata-pUrva-saptas aSThitama-zaka-varSe likhitaM, tad-anantaraM zrI-viSNu-dAsa-gosvAminA* -- "This poem was copied by Rupa Gosvami in the Saka year 1467, and afterwards by Vishnudasa Gosvami."

No Vishnudasa (Haridas Das lists nine different individuals of that name amongst the followers of Chaitanya (26)) is known who fits the description given of having Rupa as his guru and these three parama gurus. It is clear that he lives in Vraja also and has the ability to write Sanskrit verses. The description does, however, fit Krishnadasa Kaviraja himself. Vishnudasa could be considered equivalent to Krishnadasa.

In an age when so few people cared about the date of even the composition of a work, why should this Vishnudasa pay so much attention to the date of a manuscript's copying? Both he and his presumed disciple seem completely indifferent to the date of the composition of the work itself and yet both repeat the date of the copying, which seems to be misplaced enthusiasm.

(v) The four persons named in Visnudasa's verses are said to have regularly and enthusiastically attending readings of CCMK. They are Rupa, Sanatana, Kashishwara, and Paramananda Bhattacharya, all of whom are prominent figures on the sixteenth-century Vrindavan scene.(27) Mukherjee feels that the idea of a group of devotees listening to Chaitanya's life-story presented in these verses is derived from CC, Âdi 8 where, in the course of glorifying the Chaitanya BhAgavata (CBh), Krishnadasa Kaviraja mentions that Haridasa Âcarya and his associates listened to it constantly in the Govinda temple. Mukherjee argues that Rupa and the others mentioned were direct associates of Chaitanya, whereas Haridasa Âcarya and the others mentioned in the CC were of the following generation. Since they had never known the great saint personally, their attitude must have been different from that of those who had so known him. According to Krishnadasa, the book which was read in the meetings of the first generation of Chaitanya followers in Vrindavan was the

BhAgavatapurAna itself and not Chaitanya's life. (28)

(vi) Mukherjee then argues that one would never have suspected the authenticity of the CCMK if Visnudasa had not gone out of his way to establish it in such an aggressive way. According to him, 'If we understand that the devotees led by Rupa and Sanatana were regular listeners to the CCMK and that Rupa copied the book with his own hand then we will know that every word, every event and every character depiction has been approved by them. In such a case we would know that nothing in the book was not well received by the highest authorities of the disciplic chain.' In other words, the point of Visnudasa's verses is purely and simply to legitimize an illegitimate work. And, since the purpose of Visnudasa and that of the writer on the manuscript in the Radha Damodara temple was identical, therefore we can conclude that the person who wrote it was one and the same.

(vii) Finally, perhaps the most damning indictment of the CCMK is that there is no mention of it in the CC. Generally, Krishnadasa has been very conscientious about giving credit where credit is due for his quotations. He has been liberal in his use of CCN, and has not hesitated to mention it. Why then his silence on the subject of CCMK? Majumdar has expressed disappointment in Krishnadasa Kaviraja for having borrowed most heavily from both CCMK and CCN in the CC, Madhya 8, while stating that he has written on the basis of Svarupa Damodara's notes without giving any credit at all to Karnapura. (29)

Mukherjee's feeling is that Majumdar has uncritically accepted that the CCMK is genuine. This has now been placed in doubt and so the only legitimate conclusion that can be made is that the borrowing has been done in the other direction. In other words, the author of the CCMK has copied from CC.

This is given further support by the absence of any truly ancient MS for, other than the questionable one from Radha Damodar, no other manuscript of the CCMK has been discovered which dates prior to the eighteenth century, even though (unlike the MGK) there is no shortage of manuscripts of CCMK, in either Vrindavan or Bengal.

Briefly then: According to Mukherjee, there is no reason to believe that any of the information given in the verses written by Vishnudasa has any validity. Indeed they awaken suspicions about the claim that the manuscript of CCMK found in the Radha Damodara library could be genuine. The exaggerated claims on the interest of the first generation of Chaitanya disciples in this work is belied by the fact that no other work of the period, particularly the CC, mentions it. The over-emphasis on the date of the copying and the identity of the scribe are also reasons for suspicion. The closest that we come to knowing a factual date for CCMK is thus the date of the library catalogue in 1665, around which time this book must have been written and introduced into the library, probably by Vishnudasa himself and his associates.

NOTES

(1) All dates are A.D. unless otherwise specified; 78 years are added to Saka dates to arrive at A.D., 57 subtracted from Samvat.

(2) CCMK, 20.49.

(3) Information about Sivananda Sena can be found in MGK, 4.17.6; CCN, 8.57, 9.9, 9.31-32, 10.1-6; CCMK, 13.127, 14.10-2, 20.17; CBh, 3.5.445, 3.9.491, 3.9.493; Cc 3.1.12-28, 3.10.139, 3.12.11, 3.12.44, 3.16.60.

(4) CC, Antya 11, p. 411.

(5) CC, Antya 16, p. 434. The verse 15 as follows:

*zravasoh kuvalayam akSNor
aJjanam uraso mahendra-maNi-dAma |
vRNdAvana-ramaNInAM
maNDanam akhilam harir jayati ||.*

This verse does not appear in any of Karnapura's known works. He did write an *Arya-sataka* which was published by Haridas Das from the Haribol Kutir in Nabadwip in 1953. Unfortunately it is incomplete, as the first folios of the only MS had been lost. Haridas Das placed the verse from the *Chaitanya-charitamrita* at the beginning of his printed edition, assuming that this was its proper place.

(6) pp. 394-5 *yasyocchiSTa-prasadAd ayam ajani mama praudhimA kAvya-rUpI, vAg-devyA yaH krtArthikRta iha samayotkIrtya tasyAvatAram | etc.*

(7) The quote is: *tataH santuSTena bhagavata kavi-karNapUra iti nAma tad-dinam Arabhya kRtavatA*. This may be doubtful. If it were true then why did the author of the *Chaitanya Charitamrita* not mention it in the course of his account of Karnapura's meetings with Chaitanya?

(7a) Karnapura quotes his own *Alankara-kaustubha* in CCN (3.31). So it seems he wrote that work before CCN.

(8) *Madhya 19, p. 255, priya-svarUpe dayita-svarUpe prema-svarUpe sahajAbhirUpe | nijAnurUpe prabhur eka-rUpe tatAna rUpe sva-vilAsa-rUpe || CCN, 9.70. See also 9.75, 104.*

(9) GGD, v.9, p. 10. *paJca-tattvAtmakaM kRSNaM bhakta-rUpa-svarUpakam | bhaktAvatAraM bhaktAkhyaM namAmi bhakti-zaktikam ||*. The same verse is quoted in CC, i, 1.14. There are however some important differences. That is to say, the attitude towards Gadadhara Pandit. See Jagadananda Das, 1985, 31.

(10) Chakravarty, *Vaisnavism in Bengal*, 1985, 20-51; Majumdar, *Chaitanya Cariter Upadan 1939* 111-13.

(11) NV, 108.

(12) Chakravarty, *Vaishnavism in Bengal*, 231. This author prefers a date between 1610 and 1620. This is impossible as it would make Jahnava over 90-years-old and incapable of attending and playing the important role which she did according to all the accounts. PV, ch. 19, pp. 308-9; NV 101-8; BRK, 411-30.

(13) ed. D. C. Sen (Calcutta University, 1926).

(14) cf. Majumdar, Chaitanya Cariter UpadAn, ch. 13, pp. 414-24. Majumdar has concluded, despite the anachronisms found in this work, that there is probably some element of truth in the manuscript. Primarily, he has been led to this conclusion by his inability to find a motive on the part of Jay Gopal Gosvami (see op. cit., 420-1).

(15) cf. NiiyAnanda-vamsa-vistAra attributed to Vrindavan Dasa, ed. Nabina Candra Addhya (Calcutta, 1874).

(16) pp. 169. In KarnAnanda, ch. 7, p. 489, the author refers specifically to PremavilAsa, mentioning this incident in relation to Raghunatha Dasa. We know that Raghunatha was dead in 1584 which is much closer to our hypothetical date of 1575. Thus, this one scribal lapse may have led to undue confusion. For Raghunatha's will and death date see Mukherjee, 1987, 324.

(17) cf. Chakravarty, Vaishnavism in Bengal, 208.

(18) cf. Mukherjee, 'ChaitanyacaritAmRter racanA-kAl evaM vrajer gauDIya-sampradAya', 1987.

(19) Introduction to the third edition by Mrinal Kanti Ghosh (p. xxv).

(20) cf. M. M. Basu's Post Chaitanya Sahajiya cuit contains numerous examples. Also S. B. Das Gupta, Obscure religious cuits (Calcutta, 1947).

(21) CC, Antya 1, pp. 330-1. 'kAhAn puthi likha?' bali eka patra nila | akSara dekhiyA prabhura mane sukha haila || zri-rUpera akSara yena mukuTARA pANti | prIta haJA kare prabhu stuti ||

(22) The Ujjvala-nilamani is undated. Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu is dated as A.D. 1541. Utkalika-vallari is the next dated work, 1549. It is assumed that UN was written between these two works.

(23) Mukherjee writes "While Rupa is absorbed in the creation of a completely new rasa-zAstra on the basis of the entire philosophy, literature and religious writings of India, he takes the time out to make a copy of a copy of the Makakavya. This is quite hard to believe. Indeed it is as hard to swallow as the suicide of Krishnadasa Kaviraja by jumping into Radha Kund. However, some anonymous reporter wishes us to believe in this astonishing affair." ("Chaitanya-charitamrita mahakavya," 1985, 35.)

(24) The Dhaka University Library, MS No. 2389, date unknown. The two others referred to here are Mathura Research Institute's No. 358010 and Vrindavan Research Institute No. 1147, both said by Dr. Mukherjee to be relatively recent.

(25) Mukherjee has not translated these verses, but he seems to have interpreted the word *mat-parama-gurubhiH* to refer to all the personalities mentioned. In fact, it is in apposition to Kashishwara alone, which is in the honorific plural.

(26) Haridas Das, Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidana, 1957. See vol. 4, under name.

(27) BRK, 1.2024 seems to be based on Vishnudasa's verses:

lokAnAtha bhUgarbha paNDita kAzIzvara |
zrI-paramAnanda krRSNa-nAma vijJa-vara ||
e sabAra yaiche prema AcaraNa |
tAhA eka mukhe kichu nA yAya varNana ||
vrndAvana sadA sanAtana rUpa saGge |
vilasaye zrI-kRSNa-caitanya-kathA raGge ||

Paramananda Bhattacharya was a disciple of Gadadhara Pandit and a founder of the Gopinath temple in Vrindavan with Madhu Pandit (BRK, 1.267, 2.475 if.). Cf. also SadhanA-dipikA, 1.16 if., 1.20, p. 2. Kashishwar was the first sevAyat of Rupa's own Radha Govinda temple.

(28) Raghunath Bhatta: rUpa gosAJira sabhAya kare bhAgavata paThan | CC, Antya 13, p. 420.

(29) See discussion in Majumdar, Chaitanya Cariter UpAdAn, 184-92.

5.

Mukherjee's arguments can be met as follows:

(i) Whatever Krishnadasa Kaviraja may have written of Rupa's handwriting, and whatever beauty it may have possessed, it was inevitable that Rupa's handwriting would be an object of interest for the devotees in the sampradaya. There can be no doubt that relics still excite a great deal of respect among devotees of all persuasions in India. That so few movable relics remain is probably due to this very interest. While I was in Vrindavan, there was a great to-do about the prayer beads, supposedly Jiva's own, which were stolen from his bhajan kutir at Radha Damodara. Nevertheless, it is hard to see that Rupa's handwriting has anything to do with the argument that has been presented here. Visnudasa's comments make no mention of Rupa's calligraphy. It is Rupa's authority as the helmsman of the 'official' course of devotional practice in the post-Chaitanya period which is important here and not the quality of the calligraphy.

Well-known people and scholars were known to copy manuscripts. To give just one example, the poet and court scholar Vidyapati of Mithila made a copy of the BhAgavatapurAna which is still extant.⁽³⁰⁾ Mukherjee has argued that the manuscripts which do seem to be written by Rupa's hand are all ones which he copied in order later to quote from them in his other works. Why then would he personally copy this one since he never refers to or quotes from it anywhere? It could be argued from the words sundararupam in the Vais'AkhamAhAtmyam colophon that he actually took pleasure in his calligraphic abilities. If he was as good as Chaitanya himself seems to have said, could he not have thus enjoyed the employment of his talents?

Nor is the date of the Vaisakha-mahatmya of any great relevance, except that it supports the idea that Rupa sometimes wrote the date at the end of a book that he had simply copied. This was not an unheard of practice; scribes were known to write the date at the end of manuscripts they had copied. The Vidyapati manuscript too has a date of completion. That there is an absence of consistency should not surprise us and we should not draw too many conclusions from it. Yet we cannot argue that because Rupa neglected to put the date on certain of his own books that he never put the date on manuscripts which he had simply copied, especially when we have evidence to the contrary. Indeed, the fact that these manuscripts had been found in the Radha Damodar library does increase their credibility. If the forgery of the CCMK was a great plot, did the plotter also go to these other manuscripts and write verses on them giving the copying date to increase the credibility of his own claims? If so, he was further-sighted than any of the forgers who have been discussed above. Even the twentieth-century counterfeiters did not go to such lengths!

Mukherjee has presented an argument about the word Monday in the colophon of the CCMK, presumably as a type of sthunanikhananyaya, an attempt to add more fuel to the fire. Unfortunately, the absence of the weekday in the copyist's date makes the whole argument completely pointless. Other than 'the dark fortnight of Ashadh' there is no absolute correlation of one date to the other. If the date was an intentional forgery with devious purpose, then it certainly would have been counterproductive to make it too similar to the original date of composition. But there is little point in pursuing this argument because of the lack of correlation.

(iii) Would Rupa Goswami have copied a copy of a manuscript written by a mere boy from a far-off land? Would he have had the time? Could he have been bothered while engaged in more important matters?

First of all, we must understand that Rupa Goswami considered Chaitanya to be God incarnate. He was the object of his and his associates' spiritual lives. Although Rupa and his followers gave priority to the VrndaAvanalila, they still worshipped Chaitanya. It is sometimes said that Rupa only perfunctorily mentioned Chaitanya in his books, but we must remember that he wrote three astakas to glorify him, in the phalazrutis of which he states unequivocally the importance of hearing about Chaitanya's activities. (31) Even today, we find that disciples of a powerful spiritual master spend a great amount of time talking about their guru, much as members of a fan club discuss their hero, if I may use the example. Why should we think that Rupa, etc. were any different? Radha and Krishna may have been the object of study, but Chaitanya was surely the topic of conversation.

In view of this, if there were a maha-kavya written by a young devotee who had received 'special mercy' from the Lord, who by this special mercy had developed a prodigious poetic talent, who in the rich zamindari atmosphere of his family home in Kancadapada had every opportunity to develop that talent, and who in the association of his father, of Srivasa (the fifth member of the Pancha Tattva) who lived nearby in Halisahar, and of Nityananda who lived only five or six miles away in Khardaha, had first-hand accounts of the early and middle events of Chaitanya's life, would not such a major work have excited the interest of Rupa, his brother

Sanatana and their friends?

Shivananda was undoubtedly proud of his son's talents. He was also an important man in the sampradAya, both as a devotee and as a donor. When his son wrote a book that displayed his formidable talents, what would such a parent have done, if not send it to the highest authority for his approval? We have noted above some of the external difficulties with the MGK. It seems that MGK did not meet with universal approval amongst Chaitanya's devotees. In some ways CCMK even seeks to 'correct' portions of MGK. (32) Would not Shivananda have sought the approbation of the person who had succeeded Svarupa Damodara as the supreme arbiter in the sampradAya of not only theological correctness but also poetic good taste? By 1542, none of the Pancatattva was left alive, Svarupa Damodara was dead--to whom else could one have turned but the famed Rupa and Sanatan?

Even if the copy were not sent for judgement or approval, it might have been just sent as a present. In either case, it is hard to imagine Rupa ignoring it. If it had been sent to Sanatan, who was after all, the elder brother and Rupa's spiritual master, then it would have been up to Rupa to have a copy made of the book if he wanted one for himself. The copy itself seems to have been written in more than one hand. For what reason, we do not know. Perhaps Rupa did not approve, or perhaps he did not have the time to complete it. Ultimately, for our argument's sake it is not important whether Rupa wrote it at all. What is important is the date of copying which has been given as 1545 and remains perfectly plausible.

(iv) It is true that we know of many Vishnudasas and that we cannot be sure which one this is. Like Krishnadasas or Gopaladasas, we have so many that we are hopelessly lost. There are fewer Vishnudasa Gosvamis, however, and the disciple who refers to him in this way has helped us to recognize this person as a disciple of Krishnadasa Kaviraja who lived in Vraja with him at the time that he was writing the CC, and probably for some time before that. The proposition that Vishnudasa means Krishnadasa is untenable. (33) If for devious motives someone wished to increase the credibility of a manuscript why would he disguise the name of the very person through whom he wished to gain such benefit? Does such a contrivance not defeat its very purpose by expecting too much subtlety on the part of its audience?

Vishnudasa was known as Gosvami to his followers (rather than Prabhu, Prabhupada, Maharaja, Mahazaya, Acarya, Thakura, Bhatta, or any of the other honorifics commonly used by disciples to refer to their spiritual masters). He was a Vrajavasi who knew how to write Sanskrit verses, and was close enough to the senior devotees to refer to them in the way our mysterious Vishnudasa did in the verses that follow CCMK.

At the end of the Ujjvala-nilamani commentary (*SvAtmaprahodhini*) our known Vishnudasa Goswami has written five verses. Unfortunately, he does not refer to himself by name anywhere in these verses or in the text of his commentary. For his identity we are dependent on a note found on the title page of a manuscript of it found in the Jaipur library of the Govinda temple: *zrI- viSNu-dAsa-gosvAmi-krtA ujjvala-TIkA*(34) Here too, the writer of this note identifies Vishnudasa as Goswami.

I have quoted those five verses below, so that the reader can see their stylistic

resemblance to the verses quoted from the CCMK manuscript. In particular, I call attention to the use of the words *prabala-karuNa* which fills the same position in a *mandAkrAntA* metre (verse 4) as *prapura-karuNa* in the CCMK verses, both of them in reference to Rupa. Other points of similarity are in references to Rupa as *mat-prabhu-varaiH*, *zrI-rUpAGghri-yugAzritAH* (v. 3) and *rUpaika-dhAmnA* (v. 5), the use of the word *kenApi* as a humble reference to himself in both works, and the attention to dates in which word codes are used for numbers.

*na hi para-mata-khaNDanAya vAdair
na ca nija-mata-saGgrahAya loke |
api tu nija-mano 'valambanArthaM
param iha kila naH prayatna eSaH ||1||*

*so 'haM yasya krpAmRtena sucirAt puSTaH suduHsAhase
yasyAjJA-madhu-dhArayA ca nitarAM mattaH pravRtto 'tra hi |
tasya zrI-kavirAja-sad-guNa-nidher mat-sarva-ziksA-guroH
karNANanda-bharAvahaM tu bhavatAt saivAsakRn mat-kRtih ||2||*

*kSudreNApi mayA yad atra viduSAm apy asphuTAdhvany aho
svAlambAya paraM yathAmati mudA vyAkhyAtam AtmecchayA |
zrI-rUpAGghri-yuga-zritah krta-dhiyas tuSyantv iha svair guNair
mat-prauDha-zrama-sat-phalaM param idam nAnyan mamApekSitam ||3||*

*zrI-rUpeNa prabala-karuNA-zAlinA darzitam yan
mAdRG-mugdha-prakRti-janata-zreyase rAga-vartma |
tasmin yeSAM ratir atitarAM vartate sAra-bhAjAM
teSAM pAdAmbuja-nati-matI koTizah syAj janir me ||4||*

*saMvatsare bAji-rasa-rtu-candre
vRSastha-sUryAsita-paJcadazyAm |
kenApy asau rUpa-padaika-dhAmnA
vyalekhi TIka sva-manorathAptyai ||5|| (35)*

The date given here is 1667 Samvat or A.D. 1610.

We cannot say with absolute certainty that these two Vishnudasas are one and the same person. Even if they were, it does not free us from the doubts in question. Could not this disciple of Krishnadasa have had access to the library at Radha Damodara? After all, Krishnadasa probably wrote his CC seated there, taking advantage of the library in order to write this resumé of all the works of the six Gosvamis. His samadhi is there, beside that of Jiva. Vishnudasas would have thus been able to forge and place his manuscript of CCMK in the library as well as effect the numerous changes which would have been necessary to provide supporting evidence.

On the other hand, he would also have had the chance to find a genuine manuscript of CCMK, become genuinely excited about a book that had fallen into disuse and yet seemed to have received the holy attention of Rupa. He would have been in a position to make some inquiries about it from the highest living authorities of the sampradaya and finally, to make his own copy and add his exultant comments. He

would undoubtedly have known the legend of Karnapura from Kaviraja and thus the same appreciation of a prodigious talent would have awakened in him, just as it had in Rupa before him.

(v) What books were read publicly in Vrindavan in the early years of the Goswamis' residence there? Certainly we should be prepared to accommodate a certain amount of variety here. In CBh, Gadadhar Pandit is said by Vrindavan Dasa to have read Dhruva and Prahlada stories to Chaitanya and it is said that these were his favourites. (36) On the other hand, Krishnadasa prefers to think that besides the BhP (rAsa-lila), Chaitanya listened to five famous texts: that is, Gita Govinda, Krishna Karnamrita, Jagannatha-vallabha-nataka and the songs of Vidyapati and Chandi Dasa.(37) At any rate, the reading of one book does not preclude the reading of another. We know from CC that upon arrival in Vrindavan, Raghunatha Dasa used to recite Chaitanya's lila to Rupa and Sanatan. After all, even though the two brothers were Chaitanya's associates, they had not been with him in Nabadwip and later had only spent a few months with him in Puri. Since these latter pastimes were more important to them and more revelatory of the purpose of the incarnation than those related to Nabadwip, they were naturally more interested in the accounts of Raghunatha Dasa when he came to join them in Vrindavan sometime after 1534. In CC, Adi 10, Krishnadasa writes that after the death of Svarupa Damodara, Raghunatha Dasa decided to come to the holy land of Vrindavan and commit suicide by jumping from Govardhan. Rupa and Sanatan did not let him die, but adopted him as a third brother and kept him as their companion. "From his mouth they heard all activities of Mahaprabhu, both private and public... Night and day he performed the mental service of Radha and Krishna, but for three hours a day he would speak about the deeds of Chaitanya."(38)

In the face of such evidence, it is hard to see how Mukherjee can suggest that "during the period when the direct and intimate associates of Chaitanya were alive they did not have assemblies to discuss the pastimes of Chaitanya, but rather they discussed the Bhagavata which Raghunatha Bhatta recited for them."

Since Raghunatha Dasa arrived in Vrindavan in 1534 after seventeen years of living in close association with Chaitanya in Puri, there is some validity in the question of whether Rupa, etc. would concern themselves with another work on the life of Chaitanya at all, especially if the new work were neither completely original nor particularly superior, being subject to faults attributable to the author's youth and inexperience. My answer to this is simply that the statement zAzvatam in VisnudAsa's verses need not be taken at face value. The great 'Church fathers' may not have read the work constantly, but why not a few times? Even though to read through the whole work with commentary might only take a few sessions, that is enough to qualify for zrutvA zrutvA. Hyperbole and exaggeration are not absent from Gaudiya writings. The CCMK became less interesting with the arrival of the vernacular works CBh and the Chaitanya Maugala of Locanadasa (CM), and was reduced to only peripheral interest with the completion of the CC. The reasons for this will be given below.

(vi) If attention to dates was rare, then how much more rare was critical historical judgement! If someone wrote the CCMK in the seventeenth century, he would have to have been possessed of extreme discernment to have been able to do the

following: (a) extract from the finely woven web of Kaviraja Gosvami's account of CC the original elements which were absent from MGK; (b) add others of his own imagining, not in CC; AND (c) yet to avoid using any material which was unique to works post-dating the hypothetical date of 1542 to which he had attributed CCMK's composition. Mukherjee has implied that Vishnuda sa, or the other members of this clique, must have been possessed of such historical awareness if they put such emphasis on the date of the copying of the manuscripts by Rupa, but this conclusion is over-extended.

Another unanswered question which needs serious consideration is why would such a plot be hatched in the first place? One simply cannot believe that anyone in Vrindavan would go to so much trouble for no apparent reason. Furthermore, it must have been quite an important reason, for this person acted not as an individual, but as a member of a clique, for more than one hand has been involved in the various confirmations and copyings. Unless we can show a reasonable motive, we cannot accept any argument purely on the basis of suspicions arising out of a commentator's overly strong attestations.

We have three possible motives for such a forgery:

(a) Was it done for fame and fortune or personal aggrandizement? If so, Vishnudasā would have done better to write it in his own name. Indeed, if our two Vishnuda sa's are one, then he is of such great humility that he does not even put his own name on a work (SvAtmaprahodhini) to which he had consecrated great efforts.

(b) Was it done to gain approval for an idea contained within it? This seems to have been Mukherjee's proposition. If so, we must first find what that idea was. Is there anything new in CCMK? There are certainly some new details if it is taken as a work written in 1542 and following the MGK, for the writer makes numerous emendations and additions to the accounts of Mura n. On the other hand, from the point of view of the period following CBh, CM, CCN, CC, there is absolutely nothing at all that can be considered new or startling, nothing which could be seen as philosophically or theologically significant or supportive of any position in seventeenth-century debates on the life or nature of Chaitanya. Rather, it carries archaic characteristics that would affirm its early date. If the author wished to add a greater element of VrdAvanahla to it, he did so, but even this has been done without any indication of a familiarity with the siddhAntas of the CC, or even the works of Rupa.

(c) Was it then written merely to confirm the Karnapura legend? The tone of amazement found in Visijudasa's verses shows why he valued this book not for any new information found therein, but because it is the proof of Kavi Karnapura's young genius, and through that, a confirmation of Chaitanya's divine glories. Other than CCMK, however we have a sufficient number of works written by Karnapura, superior do it, which establish sufficiently his reputation. According to Kaviraja, it was Karnapura's AryA verses which were his earliest. These were apparently available to him at that time. What need was there of anything further to prove that Karnapura was a child prodigy? Kaviraja's personal reputation was sufficiently high that no necessity for such a special work, purely for the sake of supporting his statements in CC, could possibly have been felt.

(vii) Now we come to the difficult question of why this book was not mentioned in

the CC. First, we should note that Krishnadasa Kaviraja, despite using twenty-eight different incidents from Karnapura's CCN as well as several from the CCMK never states unequivocally that Karnapura is one of the authoritative sources for the life of Chaitanya. He has recognized only Murari Gupta, Vrindavan DAsa, Svarupa Damodara and Raghunatha Dasa in this way. In some places, his rejection of Karnapura appears to be an oversight, such as when he credits Vrindavan Dasa as being the source of a story which in fact can only be found in the CCN. (39) however, nowhere does Krishnadasa ever quote MGK or CBh literally, whereas much of what has been borrowed from Karnapura is literally translated, and is even quoted directly eight times, though he is nevertheless never given the same level of credit. Thus the problem to be resolved is not simply one of Krishnadasa's ignoring the CCMK, but of a general relegation of Karnapura to a secondary position as an authoritative source. (40)

It may well be possible that Kavi Karnapura, who apparently waited thirty years before completing his next known work, Chaitanya-chandrodaya NATaka, in 1572, was perhaps ashamed of what he had done as a young lad. CCN is something of a revision of his earlier work. This is doubly possible if we know that the book did not meet with the response which had been hoped for. We know this sensation amongst authors; it is not uncommon. CCMK was superseded by the Chaitanya BhAgavata, which also drove Murari Gupta's kadacA into oblivion. The CCMK is decidedly an immature work, though not entirely without charm, yet Rupa knew of the boy's reputation and was interested in this composition about the life of Chaitanya. Thus at first it could have been an object of great interest, but later became less so amongst the Vais ijavas in general for the reasons discussed. Along with Muran Gupta and Locanadasa, Karnapura's views are not strictly in line with that of the Vrindavan school that Chaitanya was a sort of combination of Radha and Krishna rather than simply Krishna himself.

6.

Ultimately, the only way in which the question of the authenticity of CCMK can truly be settled is by a critical comparative reading of it, examining it in the light of other texts on Chaitanya's life. This is the method by which it might be established that the CC could only have borrowed from CCMK and not vice-versa. Although a thorough execution of this procedure will have to await a later occasion, I should like to point to at least three instances in which I believe it possible to establish exactly this conclusion, all taken from passages dealing with Chaitanya's pilgrimage to the South.

Example (i)

(a) When Chaitanya left Puri, Muran Gupta pictures him singing:

kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa he
kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa pAhi mAm |
kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa he
kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa raksa mAm || (3.14.9)

(b) In the CCMK, Karnapura has him chant:

kRSNa kezava kRSNa kezava kRSNa kezava pAhi mAm |
rAma rAghava rAma rAghava rAma rAghava rakSa mAm || (12. 120)

(c) In his presumed second version of the story, Karnapura pictures the same Chaitanya singing the following in the CCN,

kRSNa kRSNa jaya kRSNa kRSNa he
kRSNa kRSNa jaya kRSNa kRSNa he |
kRSNa kRSNa jaya kRSNa kRSNa he
kRSNa kRSNa jaya kRSNa pAhi naH ||(7.5)

(d) Krishnadasa Kaviraja has the following:

kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa he
kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa he |
kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa pAhi mAM
kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa kRSNa rakSa mAm ||
kRSNa kezava kRSNa kezava kRSNa kezava pAhi mAm |
rAma rAghava rAma rAghava rAma rAghava rakSa mAm ||

(Madhya 7, p. 141)

This serves as a typical example of Krishnadasa's procedure. He has used all sources as completely as possible. Where there is a conflict between accounts, he has been selective. Where there is none, he has combined them as far as possible.

In this case, the only source for the second stanza in his version of Chaitanya's song is CCMK. If the author of CCMK were borrowing from CC then he would have deliberately rejected the portion that was common to the MGK, CCN and CC to select only that portion that was unique.

(ii) As Chaitanya departs from Puri, Murari describes Kashi Mishra, Chaitanya's host, lamenting at his departure, saying that he felt more distress at the loss of his guest than at the death of his own son. In CCMK and CC it is Sarvabhauma who says these words.⁽⁴¹⁾ Furthermore, other than the CC only the CCMK and CCN versions contain Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's advice to Chaitanya to visit Ramananda Raya.

(a) yady evaM gantAsi tadA krpAlo
godAvari-tIra-bhuvaM samlyAH |
tatrAsti kazcit paramo mahAtmA
zrI-kRSNa-pAdAmbuja-matta-bhRGgaH |
nopAjihIthA viSaliti rAmA-
nandaM bhavAnanda-tanUja-ratnam || (CCMK, 12.74-5)

"Oh merciful one, if you must leave, then please go to the land on the banks of the Godavari River. There lives a great soul who is a maddened bee at the lotus-like feet of Sri Krishna. Do not reject Ramananda, the jewel amongst the sons of Bhavananda, thinking him to be a materialistic person."

(b) In the CCN (Act 7, p. 231) Karnapura writes:

Sarvabhaumah: gantavyam iti nizcaye kRte mayokta-godAvarI-tIre rAmAnando
vartate, so'vazyam evAnugrAhyaH... sa khalu sahaja-vaiSNavo bhavati. pUrvam
asmAkam upahAsa-pAtram AsIt. samprati bhagavad-anugrahe jAte tan-mahima-
jnatA no jAtA.

"If you have decided that you must go then you must definitely be merciful to Ramananda who lives by the Godavari of which I have spoken. He is reputed to be a 'natural' Vaisnava. Previously he was the object of my ridicule, but by your mercy I have come to know of his greatness."

(c) If we compare Karnapura's two accounts to the one found in the CC (Madhya 7, p. 140), we see that Krishnadasa has made a selective mixture of them:

tabe sarvabhauma kahe prabhura carane |
avazya karibe mora ei nivedane ||
raya ramananda ache godavart tire |
adhikari hayen temho vidyanagare ||
sudra-visayi-jnane tamre upeksha na karibe |
amara vacane tamre avazya milibe ||
tomara sangeri yogya temho eka jana |
prthivite rasika bhakta nahi tamra sama ||
panditya ara bhaktirasa, dumhara temho sima |
sambhASile janibe tumi tamhara mahima |
alaukika vAkya-ceSTA tamra na bujhiya |
parihasa kariyachi vais nava baliya ||
tomara prasade ebe janila tamra tattva |
sambhasile janibe tamra yemana mahattva ||

Translation: Then Sarvabhauma said to the Lord, "You must grant this request of mine. On the banks of the Godavari lives the governor of Vidyanagara named Ramananda Raya. Do not ignore him on the grounds that he is of a low caste and a materialistic person, but be sure to meet with him on my word. He is someone who is worthy of your association for there is no rasika devotee in the world equal to him. He possesses the ultimate in scholarship and in devotional sentiment, and if you speak to him you will know his greatness. Not understanding his other-worldly utterances I mocked him, calling him a Vaishnava, but after receiving your grace, I now know the truth about him. If you speak with him you shall know the extent of his glories."

Krishnadasa appears to have started with a rough translation of the CCMK verses quoted above, but adds to it the word shudra. He has also added details of Ramananda's occupation absent from all other editions and corrected his place of residence from the Kanchi found in MGK, CCMK and CM to Vidyanagar. The glories of Ramananda are expanded out of Krishnadasa's own imaginings based on his reputation as he knew it, particularly in the emphasis on rasa. The latter portions of Sarvabhauma's speech are taken from the CCN version from which Krishnadasa has noticeably dropped the word sahaja.[\(42\)](#)

Comparing the three readings above, we ask the following questions: If the author

of CCMK had borrowed from CC rather than MGK, would he not have adopted Krishnadasa's correction of the place name? Why did he drop Krishnadasa's *zudra-viSayi*, Karnapura's *sahaja-vaiSNava* for simply *viSayi*? Most strikingly absent to one aware of the far-reaching influence that Krishnadasa had on later Gaudiya Vaishnavism, is the concept of bhakti rasa. It seems impossible that any work from that school would show no consciousness at all of Rupa's doctrines, particularly not one by a Vishnudasa who had written a commentary on the Ujjvala-nilamani.

(iii) Of course, the Ramananda episode is much longer and contains many other complications and discrepancies, a few more of which we will now deal with.

(a) According to MGK, 3.14.1-5, Chaitanya leaves Jiyada Nrisingha and arrives at Kanchinagara to see Ramananda. He comes to Ramananda's house, finding him engaged in meditation on Krishna at the end of his daily worship. Ramananda sees the golden form of Chaitanya three times during the course of his meditation and then opens his eyes to see the Lord in the form of a sannyAsin before him. Ramananda then pays obeisance to Chaitanya and Chaitanya embraces him, calling him *zri-rAdhika-pada-saroja-SaT-pada*. (Note the similarity to the vocabulary of CCMK, 12.75 quoted above.) Chaitanya then reveals the secrets of the Vrindavan sports of Krishna to Ramananda, and tells him to join him later in Puri. (43) Murari also describes one other meeting when Chaitanya makes his return to Puri, at which time they again conversed.

(b) The account of Ramananda's vision of Chaitanya as Krishna himself is confirmed by Lochana's CM (iv, 1.82-114), but this author omits almost all other details. He does relate that Chaitanya returned to Godavari to stay with Ramananda for the four months of the rainy season. (iv, 2.13)

(c) The CCMK departs from the MGK version considerably. Here, Chaitanya does not see Ramananda at all the first time he arrives at the Goda vari, being somewhat indecisive about whether he should do so or not (13.130):

*tataH sa godAvarikAm upetya
manasy athAndolitatAM jagAma |
sambhASitavyaH kim asau na veti
zrimad-bhavAnanda-suto mahAtmA //(44)*

This is perfectly in keeping with Sarvabhauma's warnings about Ramananda's reputation of being a materialistic person. He only sees Ramananda on his return trip at which time he engages him in the conversation which Krishnadasa has made so famous. Later on, however, after a short stay in Puri until Snanayatra (the bathing festival), Chaitanya, sad at not seeing Jagannath, went to Alalanath and then again to Kanchi where he stayed with Ramananda for the duration of the rainy season. (45)

(a) In the CCN, (46) Karnapura writes a very similar account of the meeting, with the difference that it took place on Chaitanya's first visit to the banks of the Godavari. Here he does not mention the return visit or the Chaturmasya sojourn at ail. Nevertheless, in the CC, Krishnadasa has followed the CCN version most closely. He does, however, admit that Chaitanya visited Ramananda on his way back to Puri,

while omitting any mention of a stay for the rainy season.

The first question that arises upon a comparison of the above accounts of Chaitanya's meetings with Ramananda Raya is on the marked difference between the two attributed to Karnapura. Clearly, CC has adopted the CCN version in describing the first visit to the Godavan as being of prime importance. The CCMK is idiosyncratic in that it is the only version in which Chaitanya is indecisive about a meeting with Ramananda upon his first arrival there. If the forger of the CCMK had written his book with the intention of ascribing it to Karnapura, then why did he reject all the other accounts, particularly that of Karnapura's own CCN, to chalk out an entirely new course for the tale? Karnapura himself, rewriting this portion of Chaitanya's career, might have dared to rearrange some of the details, perhaps because of new information available to him, or more likely because of the restrictions placed on him by the dramatic medium he had adopted. Naturally, Krishnadasa would have inclined to the revised edition, but would a forger have dared to reject both the version of Karnapura in 1572--the one that had convinced Krishnadasa (possibly with Raghunatha Dasa's confirmation), as well as that of Murari himself, the original version that had been backed by Lochanadasa?

In the case of the change of names from Kanchi to Vidyanagara, if the author of CCMK had borrowed from CC rather than MGK, would he not have adapted his corrections about the place-name to MGK? If he was showing preference for MGK's version in this regard, then why does he reject other portions of MGK to take a limited part of Krishnadasa's version? Though Karnapura seems to have reconsidered his original position on these details, in many others the CCMK account is far closer to CCN than CC. Most importantly, CCMK shows absolutely no influence whatsoever of Rupa Goswami's theological doctrines, which permeate Krishnadasa's account of the conversation. (47)

7.

Of particular importance to both Majumdar and Mukherjee is the colophon to the chapter of the CC where Krishnadasa daims that he has based his description of the meeting with Ramananda on the notes of Svarupa Damodara. (48) Since these notes are no longer extant, there is no way that we can verify or negate this daim. Nevertheless, we are reasonably certain of Svarupa Damodora's intimacy with Ramananda in the later life of Chaitanya, so he must be considered an authoritative source of information on details of Rama nanda's life. On the other hand, we find that there are significant similarities between the two Karnapura accounts and that given by Krishnadasa. We have already pointed out that Kavi Karnapura has recounted this story both in CCMK and CCN. CC has woven these two accounts together, making direct quotations from both works, adding another verse attributed to Ramananda in the PadyAvali and finally adding more sophisticated details based on the doctrines of Rupa Gosvami. (49) In this we find no statement which is attributable to any source other than those which have already been mentioned. What specific element in Krishnadasa's version of Ramananda's encounter with Chaitanya shows Svarupa Damodara's identifying stamp that would account for Krishnadasa's claim that he was the source for his account?

All we really know of Svarupa Damodara's contribution to the evolution of Gaudiya theology is that he was the originator of the *milita-tanu* doctrine of Chaitanya, a doctrine that plays such a significant part in Krishnadasa's work. Yet this one fact seems sufficient to answer the question that we have raised. In CC, Ramananda's vision of Chaitanya is exactly parallel to that outlined in Svarupa Damodara's famous verses used to introduce CC, (50) that of *rasarAja mahAbhAva, du-i eka rupa--* Radha and Krishna combined to make one, Krishna covered with the mood and golden colour of Radha. On the other hand, MGK and CM describe Ramananda's vision of Chaitanya somewhat differently. I summarize these passages here for scrutiny:

(a) MGK, iii, 15.2-3: Here, while meditating on Krishna, Ramananda sees him three times as having a golden form. When he finally opens his eyes, he sees the same param brahma standing before him in the dress of a sannyAsin and he offers obeisance to him, etc. (51)

(b) CM, IV, 11.106-111. Lochanadasa has elaborated directly along the lines in MGK. He goes to greater lengths to describe Ramananda's vision of Chaitanya, seeing him switching back and forth from the black Krishna form to the golden form of Chaitanya. (52)

(c) The CCMK contains nothing on the subject of visions. As in all the other accounts, Chaitanya embraces him, but this is all. Ramananda does not acknowledge that Chaitanya is his God in any way. In the CCN, Karnapura does not describe any vision either, rather Ramananda makes a simple statement of recognition that Krishna is playing the role of a renunciate, and since he has had so many other incarnations, this is not a matter for great astonishment. (53)

(d) CC, Madhya 8, 226-9, 280, 285-6 (pp. 155-6). This version seems to have adopted a great deal of the flavour present in CM above, with the further addition of Svarupa Damodara's theological vision. (54) Ramananda says:

"At first I saw you in the form of a monk, and now I see you as a black cowherd. In front of you there is a golden doll and your entire body is covered by its golden effulgence. Within that I see you with a flute against your lips, with lotus eyes that are constantly moving in many moods. Seeing you in this way I am astonished, please tell me honestly what is the reason for this?... 'Then the Lord laughed and showed him his real form, the king of rasa and the highest love (bhAva) together in one body'... 'The Lord embraced him and consoled him saying, "Other than you I have shown this form to no one. The pale skin colour is not my own, but (has arisen from) the touch of Radha's limbs. She touches no other but the son of the king of the cowherds. I have made my body and mind take on her sentiments, and now (through that) I relish my own sweetness.""

Within all the accounts of the encounter between Ramananda and Chaitanya, the importance of the former, especially his awareness of the highest devotional truths is emphasized. It may indeed be that he had a hand in the formulation of the *radha-bhAva-dyuti-suvalita-kRSNa-svarUpa* theory of Chaitanya's nature. Nevertheless, no knowledge of that theory creeps into any of the accounts prior to CC. If Krishnadasa indeed felt this feature to be the essential fact of the Ramananda-Chaitanya encounter, then Karnapura's omission of it would no doubt have influenced him negatively and induced him to give full credit for his account to Svarupa Damodara.

I have concentrated here on certain aspects of the tale of Chaitanya's meeting with Ramananda, and that too somewhat superficially. This discussion has centred on an account that has been dealt with by nearly all of Chaitanya's biographers. It should be remembered, however, that the scope of CCMK as a whole is greatly limited in comparison not only to the CC but even to CCN. Krishnadasa did not concern himself greatly with the first part of Chaitanya's life, feeling that it had been adequately covered in MGK, CBh, CM and CCMK. Of these, the first two were the most authoritative and so he referred only to them by name. Though none of these four books contain a great deal of information about the later events of Chaitanya's career, nevertheless, where they did serve Krishnadasa with original and valuable or even colourful data, no matter how trifling, Krishnadasa used them. Thus vestiges of idiosyncratic details of not only CM and MGK, but also the CCMK can be found throughout the CC. This is clearly seen in the above examples and a more thorough scrutiny would yield hundreds more in the same vein.⁽⁵⁵⁾

In conclusion, the doubts raised by Dr. Mukherjee are insufficient to establish that Kavi Karnapura is not the author of CCMK. Although the MS evidence led him to understandable doubts, it seems equally understandable that Majumdar accepted its authenticity without question. Nevertheless, it remains true that Kavi Karnapura is unfortunately one of the major Gaudiya Vaishnava authors left whose works have not yet been critically edited or subjected to scholarly analysis. A more complete examination of his work is necessary. It is hoped that this will be done in order to establish more about him personally and what his importance was to the sampradaya, both as a historian and as a theologian.

NOTES

(30) See Mitra and Majumdar, *Vidyapati PadAvali*, 1952, Introduction, p. xlix. The MS is kept at the Darbhanga Government Library.

(31) These ashtakas are to be found in *Stavamala*. See also *Stava-kalpa-druma*, ed. Bhaktisaranga Gosvami (Vrindavan, 1959), 5964.

(32) cf. Das, 'The role of zakti in Gauralila', 1985. Some examples of expansions and changes are given in the later portion of this article. Other examples can be found.

(33) There is no record anywhere of Krishnadasa being so named. In fairness, however, such confusion of names is not altogether uncommon in the subcontinent.

(34) UN, 555.

(35) Translation:

1. This effort has not been made for the purpose of defeating the opinions of others by argument or to convince other people of my own position. It has simply been for my own personal education.

2. May this work of mine just once bring pleasure to the ears of Krishnadasa Kavirya, who is my teacher in all subjects, by whose sweet orders I have dared to take up this

difficult task, and by whose mercy I have been nourished for a long time.

3. Even though I am insignificant, I have joyfully written this commentary out of my own desire, according to my own understanding, etc. May those of mature intelligence, who have taken refuge at the lotus feet of Rupa Goswami find satisfaction in it, out of their own good qualities. This will be the supreme fruit of my labours and I expect no other reward.

4. Furthermore, the path of spontaneous devotion was demonstrated by Rupa Goswami, who is possessed of powerful mercy for the benefit of people like myself who are of an ignorant nature. I pray that I may be born millions of times with an inclination to those persons who are wholeheartedly devoted to that path.

5. In the Samvat year 1667, on the dark moon day while the sun is in Taurus, someone whose only abode is the feet of Rupa Goswami has written this commentary to attain the fulfilment of his desires.

(36) CBh, iii. 10.32-34. *prahlAda-caritra Ara dhruvera carita | zatAvRtti kariyA zunena sAvahita ||*

(37) CC, Madhya 2, p. 105.

(38) *tabe dui bhAi tAGre marite nA dila |
nija tRtIya bhAi kari nikaTe rAkhila ||
mahAprabhur lIlA yata bAhira antara |
dui bhAi tAGra mukhe zune nirantara ||
rAtri dine rAdhA kRSNera mAnasa sevan |
prahAreka mahAprabhura caritra kathan ||*

(39) The story of the cleaning of the Gundicha temple described in CCMK, 10 and CC, Madhya 11.77-146.

(40) cf. Majumdar, op. cit., 1024, 338-9.

(41) MGK, iii, 13.17; CCMK, 12.97; CC, 7.47.

(42) The word sahaja is fraught with nuances, and its usage here has been a cause of some controversy. It is thought by some that Ramananda was a Tantrik. Certainly CCMK 13.39 has some such overtones. However, O'Connell has argued persuasively that too much should not be made of this term when used about Ramananda.

(43) MGK, iii, 16.9-11.

(44) Note the use of the word sam|bhAS, found twice in the CC version.

(45) CCMK, 13.56-60.

(46) CCN, Act 7, pp. 236-43.

(47) Anyone interested in seeing how Krishnadasa has depended on CCMK and CCN

for details of this conversation should look at Majumdar, op. cit., 332-8.

(48) Madhya 8.310, p. 156 dAmodara svarUpa kadacA anusAre | rAmAnanda milana lIla
karila pracAre ||

(49) PadyAvali; vv. 11, 12. The first of these two is CCMK, 13.41 and CC, Madhya 8.69,
p. 146.

(50) CC, Adi 1.6

rAdhA-kRSNa-praNaya-vikRtir hAdini-zaktir asmAd
ekAtmAnAv api bhuvI purA deha-bhedaM gatau tau |
caitanyAkhyAM prakaTam adhuna tad dvayaM caikyam AptAM
rAdhA-bhAva-dyuti-suvalitaM naumi kRSNa-svarUpam ||

(51) sa sva-gRhe kRSNa-pUjAvasAne dhyAyan
param brahma vrajendra-nandanam |
dadarza vAra-trayam adbhutam mahat
gaurAGga-mAdhuryam atIva vismitah ||
unmIlya netre ca tad eva rUpAM
dRSTvA paraM brahma sannyAsa-vezam |
praNamya mUrdhna vihitaH kRtAjjaliH
papraccha kutratya bhavAn iti prabho ||

(52) ye chila sekhaNe kRSNa-zveta-rakta-dyuti |
sakala dekhAya eka gaura-mUrati ||
kaSita e dazabAna kAJcana-varaNa |
tAhA chADi hailA prabhu zyAma-sucikkana ||
kAnaDA kusumAkRti aGgera varaNa |
mayUra zikhaNda zire murali-vadana ||
naNa AbharaNa aGge cikanIya kAla |
pIta-vastra paridhAna gale vana-mAla ||
tAhA dekhi mahArAja Anandita-mana |
punar api hailA prabhu gaura varaNa ||
pazu pakSi vRkSa Ara yata latA pAta |
gaura-aGga-chatA jhAlamala kare tathA ||

(53) CCN, 7.17

mahA-rasika-zekharaH sarasa-nAtya-lIla-guruH
sa eva hrdayezvaras tvam asi me kim u tvAm stumaH |
tavaitad api sAhajam vividha-bhUmika-svIkRtir
na tena yati-bhUmika bhavati no 'tivismApanI ||

(54) pahile dekhila tomA sannyAsi-svarUpa |
ebe tomA dekhi muji zyAma-gopa-rUpa ||
tomAra sammukhe dekhoG kAJcana-pajcAlika |
tAra gaura-kAntye tomAra sarva-aGga DhAkA ||
tAhAte prakaTa dekhi sa-vamzi-vadana |
naNa-bhAve caJcala tAhe kamala-nayana ||
ei mata tomA dekhi haya camatkAra |
akapaTe kaha prabhu kAraNa ihAra ||
tabe hAsi tAre prabhu dekhAila svarupa |

rasarAja mahAbhAva dui eka rupa ||
AliGgana kari prabhu kaila AzvAsana/
tomA vinA ei rUp nA dekhe kona jana ||
gaura aGga nahe mora rAdhAGga-sparzana |
gopendra-suta vinA teGho nA sparze anya-jana||
tAGra bhAve bhAvita Ami kari Atma-mana |
tabe nija-mAdhurya rasa kari AsvAdana||

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