**Glossary**

*of Bengali/Sanskrit words and other technical terms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bengali/Sanskrit Term</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abhay-mudrā</td>
<td>A posture of hand indicating assurance or protection; in it the palm, with the fingers pointed upwards, is oriented towards the viewer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ākṛti</td>
<td>A shape or form</td>
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<tr>
<td>āmalalaka</td>
<td>It is a disc resembling an ‘āmalaka’ fruit (<em>pyllanthus emblica</em>), usually placed on the top of a <em>Rekha-deul</em>, the <em>vimāna</em> tower of a north-Indian temple.</td>
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<tr>
<td>aṅgarāg</td>
<td>The act of repainting, and sometimes repairing, a divine image.</td>
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<tr>
<td>aṣṭadhātu</td>
<td>Alloy of eight metals: gold, silver, copper, mercury, iron, tin, lead and brass.</td>
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<tr>
<td>āṭcālā</td>
<td>A typical Bengali hut in two storeys, having four sloping on four sides in each storey</td>
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<tr>
<td>atibhaṅga</td>
<td>An exaggerated form of <em>tribhanga</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bāṅglā</td>
<td>Bengal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bāṅglār</td>
<td>Of Bengal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>bhakti-movement</td>
<td>Journey through the path of love and affection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>bhaṅga</td>
<td>Breaks in a body-posture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>bhaṅgi</td>
<td>Pose or posture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>bhogāsan</td>
<td>Seated posture of a deity, mainly <em>Viṣṇu</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bhuniā</td>
<td>Landed proprietor; a title of a landlord.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brahma-khaṇḍa</td>
<td>The first part of a text; used in ancient <em>Sarhskṛt</em> literature.</td>
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<tr>
<td>candimanaṇḍap</td>
<td>Temple of goddess <em>Durga</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>chaitya</td>
<td>A temple or monument, originally of funerary character, essentially Buddhist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>chaitya vṛkṣa</td>
<td>In Indian mythology the concept of Chaitya Vṛkṣa means ‘tree-temple’, where a tree itself is converted into a shrine by means of erecting an enclosure, or a even a elaborate temple, around it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cauṣṭṭ-kaḷā</td>
<td>The sixty-four arts of Indian culture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dadhibāman</td>
<td>The idol of Jagannāth, when is worshipped alone without <em>Balarām</em> and Subhadra</td>
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<tr>
<td>dārusilpa</td>
<td>The art of woodcarving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daśāvatār</td>
<td>Ten incarnations of <em>Viṣṇu</em>: Hasti (elephant), Kurma (tortoise), Varāha (boar), Nṛsīṁha, Vāman, Paraśurām, Rām Candra, Balarām, Buddha and Kalki</td>
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<tr>
<td>deul</td>
<td>A big temple – usually with a tall <em>śikhār</em> or peak.</td>
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devī A goddess.
dhyanāsan A meditative sitting posture, where legs are interlocked; hands, with palm upwards, lie upon one another on the lap.

Dvādaś Gopāl The twelve cowherd boys who came down with Balaram, when he descended as Nityananda; their names are Śridām> Abhīram; Sudāmā> Sundarananda; Vasudāmā> Dhananjay; Subal> Gauridas; Mahābal> Kamalakar; Subāhu> Udhāran; Mahāāhu> Mahesh; Stokakṛṣṇā> Purusottam; Dāma> Nagar Purusottam; Arjun> Paramesvar; Lavanga> Kaliya Krisna; and Kusumāśava> Kholābeca Sridhar.

gana Attendants of Lord Śiv and Pārvatī.
Gaur, It is a historical region in Bengal, its eponymous capital.
Gaurīya Vaiṣṇāv The followers of Viṣṇū in Gaur-Bengal.

hāoda The seat on elephant’s back.

Jagannāth-triad The divine-triad comprising Balaram, Subhadra and Jagannāth.

kalpa vrksa Also known as Kalpataru, Kalpadruma and Kalpadāpada – its a mythological, wish-fulfilling divine tree, mentioned in Sāhāsṛt literature.

Kāmikāgama An important scripture among the 28 Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas. The verses from its Kṛyā-pada, on ritual and temple construction, are a crucial reference for South Indian priests.

Karanāgama Another āgama-text.

Karmakār Blacksmith.

kāśṭha Wood.
kāther kāj Wood-work.

kīrttana Bengali devotiona song in the name of Hari or Kṛṣṇa.

kīrttimukha A typical motif, showing lion’s head – sometimes even with horns.

kharām Wooden slippers.
kīrttana-mukuta A tall cylindrical crown, usually worn by lord Viṣṇu.

Mahāprabhu The great master; Chaitanyadev, the Vaiṣṇava saint, was called by this name.

manḍap The front porch of a temple with pillars either attached to or separate from the main structure.

maṭh A kind of hermitage.
mudrā A gesture exhibited by hands and fingers.
**mukhā** A wooden mask, used in the traditional dance-form of Maldah and Dinajpur.

**mūrti** A sculpture.

**Namghar** Place of worship.

**Navakalevar** Presumably, this very concept came from the neighbouring Orissa. There, in Puri, 'Navakalevar' is the periodical renewal of the wooden images of Sudarśan, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannāth. This ritual is performed when double Aṣāṅga month (June-July) happen to come in a local calendar year. Generally it occurs on every 8th or 11th or 19th year.

**pārā** Locality.

**pāṭā** Wooden cover of palm-leaf manuscripts.

**pan-Indian** Something that is present across India (PAN, i.e., 'Presence Across Nation').

**Pargāṇā** It is a former administrative unit of the Indian subcontinent, used primarily, but not exclusively, by the Islamic kingdoms.

**plastic** Material, which is capable of being molded or of receiving form; produced by molding; being able to create, especially within an art form; having the power to give form or formal expression.

**prem-dān** Offering love and compassion.

**Purāṇ** A genre of Indian religious texts, notably consisting of narratives of the history of the universe from creation to destruction, genealogies of kings, heroes, sages, and demigods, and descriptions of cosmology, philosophy, and geography.

**Rādhāvallabh** It's a Vaiṣṇav denomination which began with the theory of Harivamsha Goswami; this theology under Harivamsha Goswami’s leadership created the Rādhāvallabh sect; it is also a popular name of Kṛṣṇa, meaning the consort of Rādhā.

**rāhi** Palanquin.

**Rāi-Rājā** A custom of Santipur, Nadia, where a young pre-puberty girl is dressed as Rāi or Rādha and worshipped; in certain cases many deities of Mahāprabhu are dressed as Rādhāraṇī and known as Rāi-Rājā.

**rarh** 'Rarh' region of West Bengal is the piece of land that lies between the Western plateau and high lands (bordering Chotanagpur plateau) and the Ganges Delta. Parts of the districts Murshidabad, Birbhum, Bankura, Bardhaman, Hooghly, Howrah, Medinipur and Nadia constitutes this region.

**rasa** Aesthetic delight, described in Sanskrit texts.

**rath** Processional carts or chariots.

**rath-yātra** A festival of pulling the rath.

**rekha-deul** North-Indian style of temple architecture.

**Śarabhuja** One, who has six hands; generally used to describe a form of Chaitanyadev.
Sara Gosvami

The Six Goswamis — Roop, Sanatan, Raghunath Bhatta, Jeev (nephew of Roop and Sanatan), Gopal Bhatta and Raghunath Das — were devotional teachers from the Gaurīya Vaśrāv tradition during the 15-16 cent AD. They were closely associated with Vrindavan, where they spent much time in service of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. They are highly regarded for their practice of Bhaktī Yoga, and the philosophical presentations. Besides producing a prolific amount of writings on Vaśrāv philosophy and practices, they uncovered many ancient and sacred areas in Vrindavan associated with Rādhā, Kṛṣṇā and the Gopīs and also inspired the building of a number of temples of Kṛṣṇā-Rādhā.

śaka

They were a Scythian tribe or group of tribes; the Śalivahana era, also known as the Śaka era, is used with Hindu calendars, the Indian national calendar, and the Cambodian Buddhist calendar. Its year zero begins near the vernal equinox of the year 78 AD; the era was also used by Javanese courts until 1633.

sakaccha

It’s a fashion that consists of taking the cloth round the waist from right to left and fastening on to it (sometimes with a waist-band), generally below the navel. Then one portion (about one half) — called ‘kachā’, is passed between the legs and tucked up behind the waist, the other portion — called ‘koncā’ — is suspended in graceful folds in front; even today, in Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Maharashtra, women wear saris in this fashion.

Śākta

A follower of the Śakti-cult.

Śakti-cult

The Śakti-cult or ‘Saktism’ is a denomination of Hinduism that focuses worship upon ‘Ādi paraśakti’ or ‘Śakti’ or ‘Devi’ or ‘Pārvatī’ – the Hindu Divine Mother – as the absolute, ultimate Godhead. It is, along with Saivism and Vaisnavism, one of the three primary schools of devotional Hinduism.

samabhāṅga

A standing posture, in which the body-weight is equally balanced on both legs.

samapadaṁsthānaka

The stance in which the feet are firmly and squarely planted.

sannyās

Religious mendicancy.

Sahāskṛti

Culture.

śārī

A ‘śārī’ or ‘śārī’ is a strip of unstitched cloth, ranging from 4 to 9 metres in length that is draped over the body in various styles. It is a popular dress for the ladies in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Burma, and Malaysia.

sebālt

Worshipper of a temple or idol, generally through generations.

Śīlparatna

A classical text on traditional South Indian arts, particularly influential in painting and theatrical performance. It was authored by Śriśāntaka in 16th century AD.

sīmhasan

Lion-throne.

sinduk

Iron safe.

Śrī

Another name of goddess Lakṣmi, it is also used as a prefix before the name of a Indian or a Bengali man.

Śripāṭ

Alter-complexes in a Vaśrāv monument.

Śrīvatsa

An auspicious sign, of varying design, often decorating the chest of Viṣṇu or a Jaina Tīrthankar.

stupa

A Buddhist monument, shaped like a mound or tumulus, stupendous or miniature, pyramidal or dome-like, erected over the sacred relics of lord Buddha, or on spots considered as scenes of his life.

Surasundarī

Celestial nymph.
Sūta
A caste of mixed origin engaged in works of architecture and woodcarving

sūtra
Sarhskṛt hymn; also means a thread or a string.

Sūtradhar
A person who holds the measuring tape or string, the surveyor and drafter; it even denotes a carpenter.

tāla-māna
Indian iconometry; Measuring units of length and width, used in iconography.

Tārā
Also known as ‘Jetsun Dolma’ in Tibetan Buddhism, she is a female Bodhisattva in the Mahāyāna stream of the religion, who appears as a female Buddha in Vajrayāna Buddhism. In Japan she is known as ‘Tarani Bosatsu’, and little-known as ‘Tuoluo’ in the Chinese Buddhism.

Tarkashi
Metal-thread works on furniture.

thāk
A unit of division, applicable for the artisan castes of Bengal.

tilak
The Vaiṣṇavas use to mark their foreheads – either as a daily ritual or on special occasions – with different styles of ‘Tilak’. This ‘Tilak’ denotes which particular lineage, or sampradāy the devotee belongs to. Each sampradāy has its own distinctive style, based on the rule of their particular lineage. The general ‘Tilak’ pattern is of two or more vertical lines resembling the letter U, which commonly represents the foot of Viṣṇu.

toran
Tower, attached to any architecture.

tribhāṅga
It’s a tri-bent pose of standing/stance used in traditional Indian sculpture, art and classical dance forms.

tribhāṅga-murāri
A triple-bent flute-playing posture, typical to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Uttar-khanda
Last part of a text.

Vaikhānasāgama
An ancient text related to Vaikhānas – one of the principal traditions of Hinduism, which primarily worships Viṣṇu and his associates as the Supreme God.

Vaiṣṇav
Worshipper of Viṣṇu; follower of the religion.

Vaiṣṇavī
Woman follower of Vaiṣṇav religion.

Vaiṇīśībadan
One, who is playing flute.

vana-māla
An elaborate garland made of different flowers worn by lord Viṣṇu.

vara
A boon or a special favour; also means the hand-posture suggesting the same.

Varadā-mudrā
The boon-giving gesture made by the hand lowered, with palm open outward and fingers pointed downwards.

Varendra
It was a region of Bengal, now in Bangladesh, including the area of Pundra Kingdom, known as Pundravardhan; according to Cunningham, its boundary was Ganges and Mahananda river on the west, Karatoya on the east, Padma on the south and Coach Bihar and Terai on the north.

Vāsudev-form
The erect standing posture of Lord Viṣṇu with four hands; it is a very common iconography, widely available on the stone sculptures of the Pal-Sen period.
vikaccha

It’s a style of wearing šārij, where the cloth is worn like a petticoat without any portion to serve as kaccha or kāchā and the rest covers the upper part of the body; and if necessary, may also serve as veil to cover the head. This is the typical Bengali style and is seen followed by women of the neighbouring regions of Bihar and Orissa now a days.

Vṛṣa-kāṭha

Commemorative pillar, carved on wood.

Yogāsan

See ‘dhyanāsari’

Zamindar

A farm-revenue collector in Mughal-era, who used to pay a fixed sum on the district assigned; a land-property owner in British-India, who had to pay taxes to the government.