CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This chapter sums up the results of investigation in above chapters.

The Vrndavana based Gosvāmis made effort to link Caitanya’s Philosophy of bhakti with the ancient Vaiṣṇavite puranic legend. Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is one of the vaisnava works which has envisaged devotional practices as the means to attain summum bonum of the philosophy of bhakti of Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavism. Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is a liturgical and disciplinary compendium. The entire body of ritual and devotional practices of Caitanyaism has been codified by Gopala Bhatta, one of the six Vrndavana Gosvāmis. In his outstanding work, the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. The Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is an epitome of Vaiṣṇavite customs, which envisages some topics on Smṛti, and in this sense it may be considered as an important Smṛti work of Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavism. The Hari-bhakti-vilāsa testifies to the erudition of its author in the Vaiṣṇava literature and purānas from which numerous extracts have been quoted in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa has dealt elaborately with the extant Vaiṣṇavite texts of the medieval period. For a study of Vaiṣṇavism in medieval Bengal we cannot perhaps do without it. This stupendous compilation is now regarded as the highest ritual authority of the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavism.
There are questions about the identity of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi. Several later authors give Sanātana credit for the authorship of the *Himabhai* or ascribe some kind of collaboration between the two. The author of the commentary has not named himself.

It is undisputed that Sanātana with his equally able brother Rūpa was the acknowledged center of inspiration of the Bengali Vaiṣṇava group at Vṛndāvana, but if Gopāla Bhaṭṭa is presumed to have merely elaborated a work of Sanātana, it is extremely unlikely that he should have failed to acknowledge it, especially as he actually mentions that he wrote the work for the satisfaction of Sanātana and others.

The view that the idea of composing a Vaiṣṇava smṛti originated in the mind of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa but the work was actually composed by Sanātana in Gopāla Bhaṭṭa’s name for fear of Sanātana’s contact and service in Muslim government is not tenable. Sanātana’s other works are never known to have met with disrespect.

Hence, it can be conclusively said that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa wrote the *Himabhai* and collected the greater part of the *Pramāṇas* found there. However, as Caitanya instructed Sanātana to collect these evidences, it was he who gave direction to Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. In other words he appointed Gopāla Bhaṭṭa to search through the scriptures for these proofs and to write them.
Therefore, full credit for Gopāla Bhaṭṭa’s authorship is given in the colophon to every chapter.

Secondly, though the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is regarded as a Vaiṣṇava Smṛti, it is clear from our foregoing discussions that it cannot be termed as a Smṛti proper. In our view this work is Āgamic in character. The chapters are arranged so as to give a thematic survey and overview of devotional practices, rites, forms of worship and sacred time to observe these all. Themes and issues of the book explore core theme which is Āgamic in nature.

But the main distinguishing feature of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa when compared to other Āgama or Pañcarātra literature is its 10th and 11th chapters where aspects of Bhāgavata dharma are emphasized. In fine it is seen that the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is more a compendium of different ritualistic injunctions and prohibition or a guide book to a Vaiṣṇava devotee than a work on the social and legal customs and usages prevalent in medieval Bengal.

On study of the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa another aspect comes out which I like to point out. It can be said that Hari-bhakti-vilāsa has not unscrupulously adhered to the familiar orthodox views of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava sect rather it represents the views of an outstanding scholar who had some inclination to Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

The Bisnupriya Manipuris are a race of Indo-Aryan people. They have very fine artistic instincts, and are lovers of nature; of flowers and trees.
which both men and women beautifully bedeck themselves. They have high
sense of cleanliness both in their persons and their ways and habits. The
essential necessities regarding food and cloth to some extent are produced in
their own land and ways.

If Manipur of the Mahābhārata or the Bhāgavata be the same as
Manipur of today then the civilization of the Bisnupriya Manipuri must have
existed earlier than 4th century B.C. The Bisnupriya Manipuris have derived
from the successive waves of Aryan invaders and as such their origin is
remembered as Nongchupharam in the history of Manipur. This people have
Indo-Aryan features.

Prior to 11th or 12th century A.D. the Bisnupriya Manipuris had been
known as the people of the Khumal or Kṣamūl dynasty. On the basis of
historical proofs it can be concluded that Bisnupriya Manipuris are group of
Indo-Aryan people living in the political boundary of Assam, Tripura,
Myanmar and Bangladesh are a fraction of the people who migrated from
Manipur during 18th and 19th century on account of political insecurity and
Burmeese attack.

Bengal Vaisnavism characterized the culmination of Rādhā-krṣna cult.
The cult developed the philosophy of divine love mixed up with extensive
spiritual emotionalism. The devotional theology and ecstatic mysticism of the
Gopāla Bhaṭṭa primarily derived its base from the testimony of Bhagavata Mahāpurāṇa as well as from the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The Bisnupriya Manipuri community was greatly impressed by Caitanya’s thoughts. Mass propagation of Vaiṣṇavite Hindu customs and traditions in Bisnupriya Manipuri society is the indicator of their reverence towards the Hindu deities and temples with the impact of Vaiṣṇavism: a new culture with new and old elements involved. The society as a whole came under the fold of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism carrying its ancestral worship and animistic traditions with it. As a matter of fact such composite religious culture gives rites to the characteristic of Manipuri Vaiṣṇavism. Under the impact of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism the Bisnupriya Manipuri Society has become free from caste rigidity and as a result a classless society came into being. The Bisnupriya Manipuris have become conservative Vaiṣṇavas. For the Bisnupriya Manipuris the adoption of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism has acted as a media in leading this community under the purview of the Hari-bhakti-viśva.

Caitanya taught the worship of Kṛṣṇa. His bhakti movement was a liberating force. It stood against the elitist culture and the degenerated caste system and suppression of human rights. Caitanyaism provided the theological framework of the Vaiṣṇavism of Bisnupriya Manipuri. This religion preserves the method of worshipping Kṛṣṇa with kīrtana.
Hari-bhakti-vilāsa as a Vaiṣṇava Āgama with a dominant single supreme God unifies the Bisnupriya Manipuri as a Vaiṣṇava sect in a oneness of thought instilling in adherence to the joyful arts of divine. God is love, and to love God is the pure path prescribed in this Āgama. It has inspired this community to give up love of the transcient and adore instead the Immortal. Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is an authority and usually acts as the source of living religion of the Bisnupriya Manipuris. However, it is noteworthy that Bisnupriya Manipuri Vaiṣṇavism has reconciled Caitanya worship with Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, while the author has not recognized the cult of Caitanya worship or the worship of Caitanya’s image.

The healthy admixture of Caitanyaism and Hari-bhakti-vilāsa was developed their culture in the line of bhakti leaned towards the philosophy of mādhuryabhāva propagated by Caitanya of Bengal. A manifestation of bhakti movement centering round the worship of Viṣṇu in the form of Kṛṣṇa served.

The elaborate account of ritualism given in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is meant for those who are still in need of purification of mind and body, of course, constitute the less enlightened and larger mass of devoted followers. The Bisnupriya Manipuris have been finding solace or spiritual satisfaction for centuries by performing devotional practices following the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.