

Śūdra's Salvation Through Reading the *Bhātavatapurāṇa*: A Debate Among

Early Modern Vaiṣṇavas

It is a well-known fact that Gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas considered the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* to be the essence of the Veda and thus of equal or even greater importance.¹ In the *Tattvasandarbhā*, Jīva Gosvāmin argued that the *Bhāgavata* was the 'sovereign ruler of all of the *pramāṇas*'.² It therefore comes as no surprise that several Gauḍīya vaiṣṇava commentators came to the conclusion that the restrictions on the study of the Veda also needed to be interpreted one way or another in relation to the *Bhāgavata*. Primarily, those were prohibitions on the *śūdra*'s access to the Veda that they explicitly tried to reinterpret, but arguably they understood them as

¹ *Kramasandarbhā ad. Bhāg.* 1.3.40. tal-llā-mayatvād evāsyā purāṇasya sarva-śāstra-sāratvam āha—idam iti sārḍhakam | brahma-sammitam iti | narākṛti-para-brahmaṇā śrī-kṛṣṇena tulyam iti vā | “This Purāṇa is the essence of all *śāstra*, since it consists of his *llās*—this is expressed in the quarter starting with the word *idam*. The word *brahmasammitam* [equal to Brahman i.e. the Veda] alternatively means that [the *Bhāgavata*] is equal to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the supreme Brahman in human form.” *Tattvasandarbhā* 15 *ad. Śivapurāṇa. 1.33-34 tad evam itihāsapurāṇayor vedatvaṁ siddham | tathāpi sūtādīnām adhikārah.* ‘Thus it is established that the *Itihāsas* and the *Purāṇas* are the Veda. Even so, *sūtas* and others have qualification (to study it).

See Elkman 1986 :83-84, fn.4.

² *Tattvasandarbhā* 18, Elkman 1986 : 90.

pertaining to both *śūdras* and women. This paper will focus on a number of vaiṣṇava authors, the earliest being Śrīnātha Cakravartin (late 15th-early 16th. cent. CE), who expressed a range of opinions on the issue of qualification (*adhikāra*) to study the *Bhāgavata*, which I think is also relevant to the history of Sanskrit education in early modern India. On the more conservative end, authors argued that *śūdras* (and women) were prohibited from studying the *Bhāgavata* just as they were from studying the Veda, and that they only had the qualification to listen to the *Bhāgavata* from a *brāhmaṇa*. The opponents of this view, while agreeing that the *Bhāgavata* and the Veda were of equal importance, argued that *vaiṣṇava śūdras* had the *adhikāra* to read the *Bhāgavata* themselves, since *bhakti* is what really constitutes the *adhikāra*.

It is also important to preface this discussion by noting that the different *Bhāgavata* commentators in this paper often use the term *śūdra* without explaining how it relates to social realities of their day, so reconstructing their views on contemporary social issues is no easy task. Arguably, for the most part the term is used broadly in the sense of 'one who was born into a *śūdra* family', but theological differences among these authors require a nuanced approach. Furthermore, one cannot assume that the interpretations of these *śūdra*-related statements of the *Bhāgavata* literally engineered the caste dynamics in the 16-18th century vaiṣṇava communities in Bengal and Vraj. Caste identities were constantly redefined and renegotiated. For example, since the status of *kāyastha*, *vaidya*, and other subcastes

(*jātis*) was hotly debated,³ there was also no consensus on whether *śūdra*-related prohibitions pertained to individuals from these castes. Several authors note that in Early Modern Bengal, there existed only two castes—the *brāhmaṇas* and the non-*brāhmaṇas*, and anyone who did not count as a *brāhmaṇa* would be considered a *śūdra*.⁴ Understandably, there was also pushback against this dichotomy. In the scope of this paper, I will focus primarily on textual analysis of the *Bhāgavata* commentaries and will propose hypotheses for their social implications with the full understanding that further research is needed to either prove or disprove them.

1. Śrīnātha Cakravartin On *Bhāgavata* 12.12.64

Śrīnātha Cakravartin is known as the guru of Kavikarṇapūra and the author of the *Caitanyamatamañjūṣā*, one of the earliest commentaries on the *Bhāgavata* in the Gauḍīya vaiṣṇava tradition. Rembert Lutjeharms describes him as ‘a very senior companion of Caitanya in Bengal’ who was ‘influenced by Svarūpa Dāmodara and Advaitācārya’,⁵ and who ‘must have been prominent in the region of Kumārahaṭṭa’.⁶

³ Bordeaux 2015 : 85 fn.232. ‘The question of whether Bengali kāyasthas were *śūdras* or *kshatriyas* was later fought out in the courts.’

⁴ See Dimock 1989 [1966] : 69 fn. 2 “‘Śūdra’ is a general classification referring to castes in the lowest of the four main subdivisions of society. In Bengal the term is often used in reference to all non-Brahmans.’

⁵ Lutjeharms 2018 : 16.

⁶ *Ibid.* 48.

In the commentary on the following verse Śrīnātha defends a *vaiṣṇava śūdra's* *adhikāra* to study the *Bhāgavata*:

vipro'dhītyāpnuyāt prajñām rājanyodadhi-mekhalām |

vaiśyo nidhi-patitvaṁ ca śūdraḥ śudhyeta pātakāt ||⁷

'Having studied [the *Bhāgavata*], a *brāhmaṇa* obtains wisdom, a *kṣatriya*, the earth bounded by the oceans, a *vaiśya* becomes the lord of many riches, and a *śūdra* is purified from sin/loss of caste'.

Śrīnātha writes:

"A *śūdra* becomes purified from sin, having studied [the *Bhāgavata*].

Objection: This Purāṇa called the *Bhāgavata* is equal to the Veda according to *Bhāg.* 1.3.40. Since it is equal to the Veda, how can a *śūdra* study it?

Answer: This is true, however, since it is said [unknown reference] 'if there is *bhakti* in *śūdra* and women <...>', it should be understood that a devoted *śūdra* has the qualification (*adhikāra*) to study [it]. One should not offer another interpretation, "In regard to *śūdro'dhītya*, since the forms *adhyeti* 'he/she remembers/thinks of' and *eti* 'he/she goes/asks'⁸ are used separately,

⁷ *Bhāg.* 1975 : 324, 12.12.64.

⁸ Since there is no gerund form *adhyetya*, assuming that this is not a mistake in the printed editions and the manuscripts, I break this down as *adhyeti* and *eti*, so the opponent's argument here hinges on reinterpreting the gerund *adhītya* as simply *etvā* without the prefix '*adhi*' when the agent is a *śūdra*.

the meaning is ‘having heard [the *Bhāgavata*].’” Thus a *sūdra* is fit to study this *Śrī Bhāgavata*.⁹

My understanding is that instead of *adhītya* the opponents quoted by Śrīnātha supplied the gerund *itvā* ‘having gone/approached’ in relation to *sūdra* as the agent, and they interpreted *itvā* to mean *śrutvā*. While the verse contains only the gerund *adhītya*, they argued in favor of only a partial repetition without the prefix *adhi*. Who were those opponents? Based on temporal and geographical proximity, my guess is that they must have been some followers of Advaitācārya. Later in the eighteenth century,¹⁰ Rādhāmohana Gosvāmin, who belonged to Advaita Vaṁśa, put forward a similar argument when commenting on the passage in the *Tattvasandarbha* where Jīva Gosvāmin says that *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* count as the Veda, and yet *sūtras* and others (including *sūdras* and women, according Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa) have the

⁹ śūdro’dhītya pātakāt śudhyeta | [idam bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam](#) [bhā.pu. 1.3.40] iti bhāgavatasya brahma-sammitatvāt katham tacchūdro’dhyeta ? satyam | [bhaktiś cec chūdra-yoṣitām](#) ity uktatvād bhaktasūdrasyādhyaynādhikāro boddhavyaḥ | śūdro’dhītyeti pṛthag ‘adhyety’ ‘eti’-pada-prayogāt śrutveti nārthāntaram kāryam | etenaivāsmiṁ śrī-bhāgavate śūdra-kartṛkādhyaṇa-sambhāvanā ||65||

¹⁰ According to Jan Brzezinski, Rādhāmohana Gosvāmin was born in ca. 1740 received land grants from King Krsihnachandra of Krishnagar (Nadia) in 1762).

qualification to study it.¹¹ To reconstruct Rādhāramaṇa's objection in full, it is necessary to consult the manuscripts, but I will quote a few major points based on Jan Brzezinski's incomplete online edition:¹²

'The word *veda* refers to a specific sequence of sounds which bears the name *Ṛk* etc. Its delimiter (*avacchedaka*) is the state of being subject to the injunction to study along with pitch accent, and its other delimiter is the prohibition on studying and listening on the part of a *śūdra*. The state of being the sequence of sounds called the *Purāṇa* is delimited by being subject to the prohibition on study on the part of the *śūdra* as well as the injunction to listen [on the part of the *śūdra*]. This is the difference between the Veda and the *Purāṇas*, even though they are equally non-anthropogenic.'¹³

¹¹ *Tattvasandarbhā* 15 *ad. śi.pu.* 1.33-34. Baladeva: *itihāsāder vedatve'pi tatra śūdrādhikārah 'strīśūdradvijabandhūnām' ityādivākyaabalād bodhyam*. 'It should be understood that even though the *Itihāsas* [and *Purāṇas*] are the Veda, *śūdras* have *adhikāra* in relation to it, based on *Bhāg.* 1.4.25 'The three Vedas are not to be heard by women, *śūdras*, and

¹² 2016 : 27. [Darsana / Gaudiya / Sat Sandarbha / Sat-sandarbhā :: 1 - Tattva](#)

[Sandarbha \(jiva.org\)](#)

¹³ Rādhāmohana Gosvāmin *ad. Tattvasandarbhā* 12. āg-ādy-ākhyānupūrvé-viceṇāvattvaà veda-pada-pravātti-nimittam, svāra-viceṇēēādhyayana-vidhi-viñayatāvachhedakam, çūdrasyādhyayana-çravaēādi-niñedha-viñayatāvachhedakaà ca | purāēādy-ānupūrvémattvaà ca, çūdrādhyayana-niñedha-viñayatāvachhedakam, çravaēa-vidhi-viñayatāvachhedakaà ceti veda-purāēādyor apauruñeyatvāvice'pi bheda-nirdeçau |

Here he clearly states that no *śūdra* at all is qualified to study the *Purāṇas*, but his later arguments are less clear, since there his repeated objection is that ‘a regular *śūdra*’ is devoid of such *adhikāra*. Does he give concessions to a *vaiṣṇava śūdra*?

He writes:

“Even though a Purāṇa is the Veda, since [Jīva] makes a specific mention of the *sūtas* etc., a regular *śūdra* has no *adhikāra* [to study the *Bhāgavata*].”¹⁴

Later he also seems to widen the *adhikāra* to include not only caste identity, but also actions like chanting god’s names and possessing *bhakti*-related virtues.¹⁵ It is not clear to me whether in this section Rādhāmohana wants to define *śūdra* in terms of qualities rather than birth (quoting Mbh. *Vanaparvan* 180 and *na śūdrā bhagavadbhaktāḥ* ‘devotees of the lord are not *śūdras*), or if this is a part of his *pūrvapakṣa* that he is quoting. Based on his prior statement, I am inclined to think that he would not agree with Śrīnātha and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa that a *bhakta śūdra* has the *adhikāra* to study the *Bhāgavata* rather than just listen to it from a *brāhmaṇa*: “[Opponents] say that any *śūdra* has the *adhikāra* [to study the *Bhāgavata*] because of what is said in *Bhāgavata* 12.12.64. This is wrong, since this would contradict the prohibition, ‘A *śūdra* should listen to [the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*

¹⁴ *tathāpi purāēādaū vedatve’pi, “sūtādēnāā” iti sūtāder viṣeṇa-grahaēān na ṣūdra-sāmānyasyādhikāraū |*

¹⁵ *viloma-jātatvaā brāhmaēyāā kṣatriyāt sūtaū ity ukta-lakṣṇāēam | ata eva bhagavan-nāma-kathanādināpy adhikāre jīāpitaū | evaā ca sūtādēnām iti ādi-padena bhagavad-bhakti-yogādi-lakṣṇāēa-guēavatām anyeñāā parigrahaū |* “A *sūta* is defined as one who is born ‘in reverse order’ to a *brāhmaṇī* from a *kṣatriya*, so it is indicated that one who repeats the names of god is also an *adhikārin*. Also, the word *ādi* in *sūtādi* includes others who possess the virtues that define *bhakti yoga* in relation to Bhagavān.”

but not study them]'.¹⁶ Furthermore, it is said in the *Harivamśīya* that one born to be a *śūdra* shall obtain welfare by listening [to the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*]. <...> In the words *śūdro'dhītya*, on account of implied causative action, the meaning is 'śūdra, having caused to read'. Just so, [there is implied causative action] in the example 'the master of the house ploughs with five ploughs.'¹⁷

According to Rādhāmohana, this verse actually says that 'a *śūdra*, having caused a *brāhmaṇa* to read the *Bhāgavata*, becomes purified from sin'. Here I take *pāṭhayitvā* specifically as 'having caused to read', since the author juxtaposes this to listening, which does not require literacy, knowledge of Sanskrit or analytical engagement. What about *Bhāgavata* commentators on 12.12.64? The famous Śrīdhara Svāmin is silent on the issue, and so are Sudarśanasūri, Vijayadhvaja Tīrtha, Jīva Gosvāmin, and Viśvanātha Cakravartin.¹⁸ However, Vamśīdhara makes sure to specify that a *śūdra* can only listen and not study the *Bhāgavata*, quoting the same verses attributed to the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* as Rādhāmohana did later:

¹⁶ *śrotavyam iha śūdreṇa nādhyetavyam kadācana*. See *Śrāddhakriyākaumudī* 1904 : 76.

Kālikāpurāṇa 1976 : 74 (pra.sa.pa. 9.5), *Tithyāditattva* (reference?), *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* (reference?).

¹⁷ *yat tu—vipro'dhētyāpnuyāt prajīā rājanyodadhi-mekhalām | vaiçyo nidhi-patitvaà ca çūdrau çuddhyati patakān || [bhā.pu. 12.12.65] iti dvādaça-skandha-vacanāt çūdra-mātrasyādhikāra iti vadanti, tan na—çrotavyam iha çūdreēa ity-ādi-vacana-virodhāt | sugatim āpnuyāt çravaēac ca çūdra-yoniū iti hari-vaàçéyāc ca | <...> çūdro'dhētya ity asya cāntar-bhūta-ēy-anta-kriyayā | pāohayitvā ity arthaū | paicabhir halaiū karñati gāhé ityādivat |*

¹⁸ *Bhāg.* 1975 : 324-327.

“A *sūdra* [becomes purified from sin] only having heard it, since he has no *adhikāra* to study it. This is said in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* in the section on the *adhikāra* pertaining to the *Purāṇas*: ‘A *Brāhmaṇa*, *vaiśya*, and *kṣatriya* should study it, but the *sūdras* should only listen to it and never study it. O best among kings, the *dharma* explained here pertains to the *śruti* and the *smṛti*. Therefore, the *sūdras* should never listen to it without a *brāhmaṇa*.’¹⁹

Vīrarāghava and Bhagavatprasādācārya share the same opinion: ‘A *sūdra* is freed from sin, having heard [the *Bhāgavata*].²⁰ Unlike Śrīnātha, all these commentators argue for a blanket prohibition on *sūdra*’s studying the *Bhāgavata*, without making any exception for a *bhakta sūdra*. It is also important to note how these commentators including Śrīnātha understand *adhi-√i* specifically as independent study that involves knowledge of grammar and literacy. Here *adhi-√i* does not mean simply ‘to understand’, as the (more conservative) commentators

¹⁹ *Bhāg.* 1975 : 325 *sūdraḥ śṛṇvann eva tasya pāṭhānadhikārāt. taduktam purāṇādhikāraprastāve bhaviṣye–‘ adhyetavyam brāhmaṇena vaiśyena kṣatriyeṇa ca. śrotavyam eva sūdrāṇām nādhyetavyam kadācana. śrautam smṛtam ca vai dharmam proktam asmin nṛpottama / tasmāc chūdrair vinā vipram na śrotavyam kadācana // iti.*

²⁰ *Bhāg.* 1975 : 326. *sūdraḥ śrutvā pātakān mucyata ity arthaḥ.* p. 327. *sūdraḥ śrutvā pātakāt mucyeta.*

juxtapose it with what the *śūdra* is allowed to do: to understand the *Bhāgavata* by listening to a *brāhmaṇa*'s explanations. Rādhāmohana also explicitly interprets *adhi* √*i* as √*paṭh* 'to read' when he argues for implied causative action. Whether these authors understood these Purāṇic prohibitions as prohibitions on Sanskrit literacy in general is difficult to ascertain. If these prohibitions on study translated into social realities of early modern India, one may interpret these commentators as viewing *śūdras* and women as ineligible for the study of Sanskrit, as it would grant them direct access to the *Bhāgavata*—being able to read and independently study it. One may assume that during this period the explanations of the *Bhāgavata* heard by non-male and non-high caste individuals would be primarily in the vernacular rather than purely in Sanskrit, much like in present day *Bhāgavatakathā* sessions, so the injunction 'to listen' may well be understood 'to listen in the vernacular'. Of course, they would listen to the Sanskrit text from the *Bhāgavata* reciter, but the assumption is that they would not understand them without a vernacular explanation.

My central thesis in this paper is that the authors constituting the *pūrvapakṣa* for Śrīnātha and Jīva expanded the taboo on the study of the Veda both to the Purāṇas and to Sanskrit education in general. This also concurs with the view of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa (16th cent.), the famous author of the *Rasikāhlādinī* commentary, which according to Jan Brzezinski perhaps precedes those of Jīva Gosvāmin:

‘Just as studying and teaching is a virtue for a *brāhmaṇa*, so it is an evil for a *śūdra*.’²¹

On the other hand, in their objections, Śrīnātha and Jīva defend a vaiṣṇava *śūdra*’s (and arguably women’s)²² right to read the *Bhāgavata*, but by extension also to Sanskrit education that makes it possible.

2. Jīva Gosvāmin on *Bhāgavata* 10.38.4

While Jīva does not comment on Śrīnātha’s statement about *vaiṣṇava śūdras* in 12.12.64, he does so in his *Bṛhatkramasandarbhā* on 10.38.4, leaving no doubt that he supports Śrīnātha’s position. The following translation of *Bhāg.* 10.38.4 is based on Śrīnātha’s interpretation:

mamaitad durlabhamḥ manyā uttamaślokadarśanam |
viṣayātmano yathā brahmakīrtanam śūdrajanmanaḥ ||

‘[Akrūra says:] I consider seeing Uttamaśloka unattainable for me, just as reciting the *Brahman* [i.e. the *Bhāgavata*] is [unattainable] for someone born a *śūdra* who is attached to material sense objects.’

²¹ *Rasikāhlādinī* ad. *Bhāg.* 10.29.39 *yathā brāhmaṇasyādhyayanam adhyāpanam ca guṇaḥ, śūdrasya tu doṣaḥ.*

²² While there is no evidence that women studied Jīva’s HNV in the pre-colonial period, O’Connell (2019 : 92, fn. 14) notes that ‘literate women among the Jāti Vaiṣṇavas as well as women from of the Nityānanda Gosvāmī lineage are said to have served as tutors to girls in the distinguished Tagore family at Jorasanko’.

caitanya-mañjuṣā : viṣayātmanaḥ śūdra-janmano yathā brahma-kīrtanaṁ
 brahma bhāgavataṁ brahma-sammitam [bhā.pu.1.3.40] iti likhitatvāt,
 viṣayātmana itī vaiṣṇava-śūdravyāvṛttiparam ||4||

“[Read the following words together:] ‘just as for someone born a *śūdra* who is attached to material sense objects’. The words *brahmakīrtanam* mean ‘reciting the *Bhāgavata*’, since it is written in *Bhāg.* 1.3.40 that it is equal to the Veda. The purpose of the word *viṣayātmanaḥ* ‘of one attached to material sense objects’ is to exclude a *vaiṣṇava śūdra*.”

Śrīnātha’s reading of this verse is remarkably different from that of Śrīdhara Svāmin and all the other commentaries I have seen, with the exception of Jīva’s *Bṛhatkramasandarbhā*. On the one hand, Śrīnātha reads *viṣayātmanaḥ* as a qualifier of *śūdrajanmanaḥ* and not of *mama*; on the other hand, he interprets *brahmakīrtanam* as ‘recitation of the *Bhāgavata*’ instead of ‘recitation of the Veda’. Śrīdhara, Vamśīdhara, Sanātana Gosvāmin, Jīva in his *Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*, Sudarśanasūri, Vīrarāghava, Vijayadhvaṇa, Viśvanātha Cakravartin, the *Gūḍhārthadīpanī*, *Bhāgavataṭīppaṇī*, Vallabhācārya in his *Subodhinī*, *Subodhinīsāra*, Giridharalal, *Anvitārthaparakāśikā*, and Bhagavatprasādācārya interpret *brahmakīrtanam* as ‘recitation of the Veda’.²³ Furthermore, all of these commentators except for Sudarśanasūri, Vijayadhvaṇa, and *Subodhinīsāra* explicitly indicate that

²³ *Bhāg.* 1986 : 99-104.

viṣayātmanaḥ is a qualifier of *mama*. The only other commentary that I saw explicitly taking *viṣayātmanaḥ* as a qualifier of *sūdrajanmanaḥ* is the *Subodhinīsāra*: ‘Seeing Uttamaśloka [is unattainable], just as reciting the Veda is unattainable for someone born a *sūdra* whose mind is [immersed] in sense objects.²⁴

Śrīnātha’s interpretation makes the comparison (*upamāna*) in this verse not about the well-known prohibition on a *sūdra*’s reciting the Veda, but instead about the exceptional eligibility of a *vaiṣṇava sūdra* to recite the *Bhāgavata*. In the *Bṛhatkramasandarbhā*, Jīva is visibly in agreement with Śrīnātha, as he favors his interpretations over his own in the *Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī* and the *Kramasandarbhā*.

“In *Bhāg.* 10.38.4, *viṣayātmanaḥ* goes with *sūdrajanmanaḥ*. The word *brahmakīrtanam* means ‘recitation of the very form of the Veda, i.e. *Śrī Bhāgavata* etc.’. The purpose of the word *viṣayātmanaḥ* is the exclusion of *vaiṣṇava sūdras* [from the prohibition], for he is a *vaiṣṇava*. He [i.e. a *vaiṣṇava sūdra*] sometimes reads it [i.e. the *Bhāgavata*] precisely out of love; therefore, if I [i.e. Akrūra] possessed love like that, then that [i.e. seeing Uttamaśloka] would also be possible. Otherwise [i.e. if *viṣayātmanaḥ* were not to indicate an exception for a *vaiṣṇava*

²⁴ *Bhāg.* 1986 : 103. *uttamaślokasya darśanam iti yat viṣayeṣv ātmā cittam yasya tasya sūdrajanmano brahmaṇo vedasya kīrtanam uccāraṇam yathā durlabham.*

śūdra], since [the prohibition] would be accomplished simply by the mention of *śūdrajanmanaḥ*, the qualifier *viṣayātmanaḥ* would be meaningless.”²⁵

3. Gauḍīya Commentators On The Veda and Lower Castes

Arguably, in the *Bṛhatkramasandarbhā* on 10.38.4, Jīva made the discussion more explicitly about *vaiṣṇava śūdra*'s literacy: he is eligible not just to listen, but to independently read (*paṭh*) the *Bhāgavata*. While other commentaries focus on the prohibition on the study of the Veda for all *śūdras*, be they *śūdras* by birth (*jātiśūdra*) or by actions (*karmaśūdra*), these two commentaries on 10.38.4 mark a *vaiṣṇava śūdra* as having a special status in regard to the *Bhāgavata*. This discourse is remarkably absent in other gauḍīya vaiṣṇava commentaries on this verse, for they instead focus on the *śūdra*'s *adhikāra* in regard to the Veda. Elsewhere Sanātana Gosvāmin differentiates between *sacchūdras* and *asacchūdras*, the former being

²⁵ *Bhāg. Samvat* 2042 [1986] : 101. **Bṛhat-krama-sandarbhāḥ** : mamaitad-durlabham ity-ādi | viṣayātmanaḥ śūdra-janmano yathā brahma-kīrtanam brahma vedas tat-svarūpaṁ yac-chrī-bhāgavatādi tat-kīrtanam | viṣayātmana itī vaiṣṇava-śūdra-vyāvṛttiparam—tasya vaiṣṇavatvāt | kadācid ayam nurāgād eva tat paṭhati, tena mamānurāgaś cet tathā bhavati, tadā tad api ghaṭeta | anyathā śūdra-janmana ity eva siddhe viṣayātmana itī viśeṣaṇa-vaiyarthyaṁ ||4.7||

understood to be vaiṣṇava and the latter non-vaiṣṇava,²⁶ but this is not done in the context of Sanskrit education. In the *Bṛhadvaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī* on 10.38.4, he argues that any *śūdra*, whether *śūdra* by birth or by actions, is ineligible to recite the Veda,²⁷ and in his own *Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*, Jīva adds further nuance to this statement:

‘Just as, after there is abundance of that [i.e. of religious practice, *sādhanā*], that [i.e. recitation of the Veda] may become possible for him [i.e. for a *śūdra* by

²⁶ *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.455. | satām vaiṣṇavānām śūdrāṇām, śālagrāme śrī-śālagrāma-śilārcane, anyeṣām asatām śūdrāṇām | [There is *adhikāra*] to worship the *śālagrāma* stone on the part of vaiṣṇava *śūdras*, but not the part of other *śūdras*.’

²⁷ *Bhāg.* 1986 : 101. **Bṛhadvaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī**. śūdra-janmana iti śūdra-jāter ity arthaḥ | sarveṣām eva śūdrāṇām veda-pāṭhe’ nadhikārāt | na ca vaktavyam vipravat sat-karmādi-yuktaḥ śūdraḥ saṁgrhītaḥ, karma-śūdro vipra-kulajo vyavacchinna iti strī-śūdra-dvija-bandhūnām trayī na śruti-gocarā [bhā.pu 1.4.25] ity-ādi-vacanāt tasya svata eva tadanadhikārād iti ||4|| “The word *śūdrajanmanaḥ* means one whose *jāti* is *śūdra*, since all *śūdras* are ineligible to study the Veda. Also, one should not say, ‘A *śūdra* who is endowed with good deeds counts as a *brāhmaṇa*, for a *śūdra* by action, even though born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, is cut off [from being a *brāhmaṇa*].’

According to *Bhāg.* 1.4.25, for him there is naturally the absence of *adhikāra* for that [study of the Veda].”

birth] only when he is born as *brāhmaṇa*, so for a *karmaśūdra* this could become possible in this very birth by performance of certain atonement rites.”²⁸

Here Jīva is consistent with his *Kramasandarbhā* on *Bhāg.* 3.33.6:

“This means that [the person of a *cāṇḍāla* birth who has heard or repeated the holy name even once], may become qualified for it [i.e. performing the *somayajñā*] only in his next birth, after having become a *brāhmaṇa*.”²⁹

He also reiterates the same position in his commentary on the *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* in 1.1.21 and 1.1.22:

“So, low birth is the reason for the ineligibility (*ayogyatva*) for *somayajñā*—this means that low birth is full of sin (*pāpa*) which is contrary to the eligibility for that [ritual]; it is not that [low birth] is complete absence of eligibility. Even though *brāhmaṇa* children are not of low birth, as they are born from [brāhmaṇa] semen, they also require *sāvitra* birth [by *gāyatrīmantra*] to obtain eligibility (*yogyatva*) to perform *somayajñā*. After that, the *prārabdhakarman*

²⁸ *Bhāg.* 1986 : 100. *Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*. śūdra-janmana iti | yathā tasya tadbāhulye sati viprajanmany eva na syāt tadvat karma-śūdrasya tu prāyaścitta-viśeṣeṇa janmany api syād iti ||4|| Note: Based on context and comparison with other commentaries, I think that *tadbāhulye* means *sādhana-bāhulye*, and *na* in *na syāt* is a typo or a scribal error.

²⁹ tad-anantara-janmany eva dvijatvaṁ prāpya tad-ādy-adhikārī syād iti bhāvaḥ. Also see O’Connell & Lutjeharms 2019 : 78.

that gives rise to the low birth that is contrary to the qualification to perform the *somayajña* is gone. However, he [the person born as a *cāṇḍāla*] requires another birth, for *brāhmaṇa* children [too], without the conduct of the learned, without having obtained the *sāvitra* birth, require the merit that comprises the *sāvitra* birth which delimits the absence of qualification for *somayajña*.

Therefore the *Bhāgavata* (3.33.6), too, says *savanāya kalpate* ‘it becomes possible for him [to perform] *somayajñā*, not that ‘he immediately gains *adhikāra* [to perform it]. This indicates that he deserves respect.”³⁰

Even though Viśvanātha Cakravartin disagrees with this interpretation (in his commentary on BRS 1.1.22), arguing that such a *cāṇḍāla* immediately gains

³⁰BRS 1.1.22 comm. tasmād durjātir evety atra savanāyogyatve’pi kāraṇam iti tad-yogyatā-pratikūla-pāpamayīty arthaḥ | na tu tad-yogyatvābhāva-mātra-mayīti | brāhmaṇa kumarāṇām śaukre janmani durjātitvābhāve’pi savana-yogyatvāya puṇya-viśeṣa-maya-sāvitra-janmāpekṣatvāt | tataś ca savana-yogyatva-pratikūla-durjāty-ārambhakaṁ prārabdham api gatam eva, kintu śiṣṭācārābhāvāt sāvitraṁ janma nāstīti brāhmaṇa-kumarāṇām savana-yogyatvābhāvāvacchedaka-puṇya-viśeṣa-maya-sāvitra-janmāpekṣāvad asya janmāntarāpekṣā vartata iti bhāvaḥ | ataḥ pramāṇa-vākye’pi savanāya kalpate sambhāvito bhavati, na tu tadaivādhikārī syād ity abhipretam | anena pūjyatvaṁ lakṣyata iti |

adhikāra to perform a Vedic ritual,³¹ he, too, concludes that that *cāṇḍāla* should abstain from actually performing the *somayajña* for the following reasons:

“One should not object, ‘If such a *cāṇḍāla* has the *adhikāra* to perform a Vedic ritual, why then does he not perform it?’ Since he is a pure *bhakta*, he has no faith in Vedic rituals. Other householders who were born in high-caste families perform rituals for the benefit of the common people, even though they have no faith [in those rituals]. It is also said in the *Gītā* (3.20), ‘You should act [i.e. perform rituals], keeping the welfare of the people in your mind’. However, it should be known that he [i.e. the person born as a *cāṇḍāla*] is also deterred by the fear of calumny by people unfamiliar with *bhaktiśāstras*.”³²

Viśvanātha makes a similar argument in his commentary on 3.33.7, now mentioning *adhyayana* specifically:

³¹ *yogyatvam atra yāgādhikāritva-svarūpam eva* | “Here ‘being eligible’ means to have *adhikāra* to perform the ritual.”

³² *na ca tādrśa-śvapacasya yāgādhikāritve sa katham yāgam na karotīti vācyam, tasya śuddha-bhaktatvena karmaṇi śraddhā-rāhityāt | anye sat-kuloṭpanna-grhasthās tu śraddhā-rahitā api loka-saṅgrahārtham karma kurvanti | tathā ca gītāyām—loka-saṅgraham evāpi sampāśyan kartum arhasi iti | asya tu karma-karaṇe praty uta bhakti-śāstrānabhijña-jana-pravāda-bhayam api pratibaddhakam astīti jñeyam |*

“Objection: Then let a *cāṇḍāla* perform [Vedic] rituals, study [of the Veda], and *tapas*. To this [*Bhāgavata* 3.33.7] replies—‘Why speak of him alone? Others also who utter Your name have already performed *tapas*,—this is ascertained. <...> The use of the past tense here in *tepus* ‘they performed *tapas*’ etc. and of the present in *gṛṇanti* ‘they utter’ [indicates that] only one who utters Your name has already performed all the *tapas*, rituals (*yajñā*) etc. They are not being performed now and will not be performed in the future. So why should they perform them again? From this it should be deduced that *bhaktas* have no *adhikāra* in regard to [Vedic] rituals.”³³

I interpret Viśvanātha’s statements about *adhyayana* and rituals specifically in regard to the Veda because he would most likely encourage *vaiṣṇavas* (at least those at the stage of *vaidhī bhakti*) to perform *vaiṣṇava* rituals such as those prescribed in the *Haribhaktivilāsa*, and it seems unlikely that he would endorse a blanket prohibition on any study for a *cāṇḍāla*-born *vaiṣṇava*. Furthermore, he makes these statements in the context of 3.33.6, where he specifically talked about a *cāṇḍāla*’s *adhikāra* to perform *somayajña*, so *adhyayana*, *yajña* and *tapas* in 3.33.7 are also likely to be understood in the Vedic context.

³³ Viśvanātha on *Bhāg.* 3.33.7 also writes: nanu tarhi sa śvapaco yajñādhyayana-tapa-ādikaṁ karotv iti, tatrāha—tepur iti | tasyaikasya kā vārtā, anye’pi ye tava nāma gṛṇanti te eva **tepur** ity avadhāraṇaṁ labhyate | <...> atra tepur ity-ādiṣu bhūta-nirdeśāt gṛṇantīti vartamāna-nirdeśāt tvan-nāmāni grhyamāṇa eva tapo yajñādayaḥ sarve kṛtā eva bhavanti, na tu kriyamāṇāḥ, nāpi kariṣyamāṇā ity atas tāms tu kathaṁ punaḥ kuryuḥ ? ity ata eva bhaktānām karmasv anadhikāro’pi jñeyāḥ |

The theological difference between Jīva and Viśvanātha here is that Jīva separates the potential, future eligibility (*yogyatā*) for the Vedic ritual that the holy name bestows and the immediate *adhikāra* to perform the Vedic ritual, which he believes can come only in the next birth. Viśvanātha, on the other hand, believes that *yogyatā* is not potential, but constitutes the immediate *adhikāra*, so there is no religious demerit accrued if such a *cāṇḍāla*-born vaiṣṇava performs the Vedic ritual.³⁴ Despite their differences, neither of them advocates for public performances of Vedic rituals by lower caste individuals. As O’Connell notes, ‘Here we see worked

³⁴ atra savanāya kalpate ity atra soma-yāga-karṭvat pūjyo bhavatīti vyākhyāne granthasya kaṣṭa-kalpanāpatteḥ | prakṛta-granthasyāsaṅgateś ca | yataḥ savanāyogyasyaiva prārabdha-nāśakatvam, na tu pūjyatvasya, tathābhūta-durjāitva-prayojakī-bhūta-prārabdhavatām jñāninām pūjyatva-darśanāt | “When *savanāya kalpate* is interpreted [by Jīva] as ‘he becomes worthy of respect just like the person performing somayajña’, then there is the undesirable consequence of inventing a difficult interpretation of the text, and incongruence in the given verse, for [the holy name] destroys the *prārabhdakarman* of someone who is not eligible for *somayajña*; it does not simply indicate ‘being worthy of respect’, since it is seen that *jñānins* who possess such *prārabdhakarman* which is the cause of such low birth are respected.” Also see O’Connell & Lutjeharms 2019 : 61. ‘There is a difference between self-esteem and respect by others on the one hand, and ascribed social status and de facto economic class differentiation on the other.’

out with precise theological explication the standard Caitanya Vaiṣṇava policy of not challenging the Brāhmaṇas' restrictive jurisdiction over Vedic ritual.³⁵ Even so, this relatively conservative (by modern standards) position does not put them in the same camp as the *Bhāgavata* commentators arguing that a *śūdra* cannot study the *Bhāgavata*, or even study at all.

Jīva and Viśvanātha are proponents of *tantra*-based vaiṣṇava methods of worship, which was meant to include *śūdras* and women. It is remarkable that in the commentaries on 10.38.4, neither Sanātana, nor Jīva, nor Viśvanātha extended the prohibitions as far as did Śrīnātha's opponents and Rādhāmohana Gosvāmin.

Arguably, a *vaiṣṇava śūdra's* right to a Sanskrit education that would enable him to study the *Bhāgavata* is at the very core of Jīva's and the other gosvāmins' Sanskrit literary oeuvre and investment in creating Sanskrit grammar textbooks. If Jīva and Sanātana argued here against a *vaiṣṇava śūdra's* qualification to study the *Purāṇas* and studying in general, as did Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, that would imply that the gosvāmins' entire Sanskrit literary project excluded *vaiṣṇava śūdras* as their audience, but this does not seem to stand up scrutiny. I would like to propose that the creation of *vaiṣṇava* grammars of Sanskrit within the gauḍīya vaiṣṇava tradition was closely linked to this position on *śūdra* education.

4. Sociolinguistics of Vaiṣṇava Grammars

Śrīnātha's disciple, Kavikarṇapūra, is known to have written a grammar of Sanskrit, the *Caitanyāmṛtavyākaraṇa*, which is no longer extant. Without the chance

³⁵ O'Connell & Lutjeharms 2019 : 79.

to examine the manuscript, it is impossible to ascertain its target audience and whether it meant to include *vaiṣṇava śūdras*. However, it is known that Kavikarṇapūra was a *vaidya*, not a *brāhmaṇa*, so it would be logical if his grammar were meant not only for *brāhmaṇas*, unlike the grammars of the *Pāṇinian* traditions (at least in the eyes of many contemporaries). As for *Laghuharināmāmṛtavyākaraṇa*, which is believed to have been composed either by Rūpa or Sanātana Gosvāmin, it would be difficult to defend the position that it was meant only for an upper caste audience, since Rūpa and Sanātana viewed themselves as having lost their caste status due to their service to Alauddin Husain Shah. As for Jīva's HNV, there are several indications that its target audience included not only high caste individuals.

In the *Bṛhat* version, Jīva dedicates the HNV in the concluding verse to his disciple named Gopāladāsa, and in the *Sāadhanadīpikā* Rādhākṛṣṇagosvāmin (17th cent.)³⁶ designates him as his dear disciple (*priyaśiṣya*) who was a *vaiśya*. Since caste identity was viewed as dichotomous in Bengali society, other contemporaries might have viewed Rādhākṛṣṇa's identification of Gopāladāsa as a euphemism for a lower caste. Rādhākṛṣṇa contends that the same Gopāladāsa is mentioned in the *maṅgala* verse of the *Gopālacampū*. Irfan Habib also mentions a Gopāladāsa who

³⁶ 1946 : 260. *tatra śiṣyaparamparāśravaṇam āha-gopāladāsanāmā ko'pi vaiśyaḥ śrījīvagosvāmipādānām priyaśiṣyaḥ. <...> harināmāmṛte tannāma spaṣṭam evoṭṭankitam, tad yathā-harināmāmṛtasamjñam yadartham etat prakāśayāmāse ubhayatra mama mitram sa bhavatu gopāladāsākhyāḥ.*

was the son of Rādhāvallabha (Rādhādāmodar No. 11),³⁷ and in *Braj Bhum in the Mughal Times* cites multiple documents that identify Gopāladāsa as the *pujārī* and *sevak* of Madan Mohan temple and the agent (*wakīl*) of Jīva Gosvāmin in purchase of land in village Āriṭh/Rādhākund in 1579.³⁸ Habib notes that even though in the *farmān* of 1565, 'there is no indication that Gopāldās had any religious status', this must be the same Gopāladāsa mentioned later in the documents from 1579 as the *pūjārī* of the Madan Mohan temple.³⁹ I hypothesize that if Jīva dedicated his HNV to a non-*brāhmaṇa* disciple, it is unlikely that his intended audience excluded non-upper caste *vaiṣṇavas*.

Secondly, in the HNV Jīva not only excludes Vedic rules, but also nowhere quotes Vedic examples, only indicating that a certain form may be Vedic. Arguably, it is Vedic rules and quoted Vedic examples in texts like the *Kāśikā* and later texts that rendered them inaccessible to the *śūdras* in many contemporaries' eyes. This makes the HNV technically eligible for all *vaiṣṇava* non-*dvijas*, at least in accordance with Jīva's own stance on a *vaiṣṇava śūdra's* literacy *ad. Bhāg.* 10.38.4, since the prohibition on the study of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is specifically based on its inclusion of the Vedic register.

³⁷ Habib 2011 : 215.

³⁸ Habib 2020 : 209.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 58-59.

Thirdly, according to *Premavilāsa* (Ch. 12,) Jīva is known to have taught Śyāmānanda Sanskrit grammar ‘with all of its limbs’ (which includes *dhātupāṭha*, *gaṇapāṭhas* etc.), poetry, and *bhakti* literature’.⁴⁰ Śyāmānanda was of *sadgopā* caste and did not receive an education earlier in his childhood before coming under Jīva’s tutelage. Even though *Premavilāsa* does not mention which grammar was used to teach him, one may assume that it would be some non-Pāṇinian grammar. A need for a *vaiṣṇava* grammar that would explicitly define *adhikāra* by religious rather than caste affiliation becomes the more apparent in the context of the debate among the *Bhāgavata* commentators—if opponents objected against the use of existing grammars for lower-caste individuals, creating one’s own with a newly defined *adhikāra* would be a conflict-avoidant strategy. Narottamadāsa, a *kāyastha*, on the other hand, had access to Sanskrit education, starting with *vyākaraṇa*, since childhood.⁴¹ So did Raghunāthadāsa, Jīva’s senior, who authored a number of works

⁴⁰ *san.* 1320 : 85. Vilāsa 12. *vyākaraṇa sāṅga haila kāvya kichu dekhe/ kakhana basiyā bhaktigrantha kichu likhe// paḍhitei vyutpanna haila atīśaya/ bhaktigrantha paḍite gosāñir ājñā haya// bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu āmūla haite/ ānandita haila citte paḍite paḍite// siddhānta vaidhī rāga tattva dekhite śunite/ pūrvapakṣa karena gosāñī sukha pāna cite// tār sthāne ujvala paḍe ṭikāra sahite/sarvatra yogyatā haila kahite śunite//*

⁴¹ Narottamavilāsa 1889 : 22. *vyākaraṇa ādi karāilā adhyāpana // narottame yei vidyā ye jana paḍāya/ tāhāra sandeha ghuce ñihāra kṛpāya//*

for individuals of any caste, and it was only religious identity that circumscribed the *adhikāra*. One may assume that, like other grammars of Sanskrit written in Sanskrit, this text was intended for memorization by vernacular-speaking beginners with zero knowledge of Sanskrit, and that the language skills were expected to grow as the student memorized more of the Sanskrit text and its explanations.

Conclusion

I think that Jīva's theological project in the HNV is concerned both with theoretical and social issues. On the level of theory, it is an expression of his theology of language and of *bhakti*, which he inscribes into his theory of action. On the practical level, it defines an ideal *vaiṣṇava* and his behavior. In Jīva's understanding, an ideal *vaiṣṇava* is one who wants to study the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and other literature about Kṛṣṇa (which, as he suggests through *śleṣa*, will lead to 'being close to Kṛṣṇa', *kṛṣṇasāhitya*) and is willing to master the disciplines required for this.⁴⁴ These requirements include Sanskrit grammar, but also Prakrit grammar, as well as *alaṅkāra śāstra*, in addition to studying texts on ritual and pure theology, such as the *Sandarbhāṣ* (Gupta 2007 : 26, fn.36 *vyākaraṇa nāhi jāne, na jāne alaṅkāra... 5.104-105*). The hierarchy in which this 'ideal *vaiṣṇava*' occupies a high status is not based on caste (Stewart 2010 : 299, Edelmann 2022 : 12, Jīva's *Bṛhatkramasandarbhā ad. Bhāg. 10.38.4*), but rather on *bhakti*-related criteria. It is most likely that for Jīva, defining an 'ideal *vaiṣṇava*' is necessary not only for

⁴⁴ HNV 1975 : 1, verse 1. *kṛṣṇam upāsitum asya* etc.

inscribing Gauḍīya *vaiṣṇava* identity, but also for building bridges with other *vaiṣṇava* communities. He avoids many of the purely *gauḍīya* elements in the HNV, making it uncontroversial and acceptable (at least in theory) for non-*gauḍīya* communities (especially the Vallabhites).

I do not propose that Jīva's views on *adhikāra* for rituals and education in general entirely excluded caste considerations. Instead, *vaiṣṇavas* of different castes were understood to have *adhikāra* for different rituals and grammars. When Jīva comments on BRS 1.2.101, he contends that *vaiṣṇavas* must practice *bhakti* in accordance with the injunctions of the *śruti*, *smṛti*, *purāṇa*, and *pañcarātra* in accordance to individual *adhikāra*.⁴⁵ He also clarifies in the commentary on 1.2.102

⁴⁵ **BRS 1.2.101** || brahma-yāmale ca—*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-pañcarātra-vidhiṃ vinā | aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate* || ‘It is said in the *Brahmayāmala*: ‘single-minded devotion to Hari which is [practiced] without the injunctions of the *śruti*, *smṛti*, *purāṇa* etc. and *pañcarātra*, only leads to calamity.’ **śrī-jīvaḥ**: tatas tad-akaraṇe doṣam āha śrutīti | *śruty-ādayo’py atra vaiṣṇavānāṃ svādhikāra-prāptās tad-bhāgā eva jñeyāḥ | sve sve’dhikāra [bhā.pu. 11.21.2] ity ukteḥ |* «Then [the author] describes in verse 1.2.101 the fault in not doing it. It should be known that these *śruti* etc., i.e. parts of it [of the items in the list] are appropriate for *vaiṣṇavas* in accordance with individual *adhikāra*, since this is what is said in *Bhāg.* 11.21.2.” **1.2.102** || *Jīva–īyaṃ nāstikatāmayī bauddhādīnāṃ buddha-dattātreyādiṣu bhaktir yad aikāntikīva pratīyate, tad apy avicārād evety arthah | tatra hetuh yad yasmād aśāstrīyatā śāstrāvajñā-mayatā tatreksyate, śāstram atra vedas tad-aṅgādi |* “This means that only because of lack of deliberation it may seem that the *nāstika* devotion of the Buddhists towards the Buddha, Dattātreyā and others is *aikāntika*. The reason for this is that contrariness to the *śāstra*, i.e. the state of being neglectful towards the *śāstra* is seen there. Here *śāstra* means the Veda and its limbs.”

that what counts as *śāstra* is the Veda and its limbs (*śāstram atra vedas tad-aṅgādi*), and neglect towards the Veda and its *aṅgas* would make one a *nāstika* like the Buddhists. So, practicing *bhakti* properly entails following one of these methods of worship, and based on the *Bhāgavata* commentaries above, it would be safe to conclude that Jīva viewed *śūdras* as having *adhikāra* not for Vedic, but for *purāṇic* texts. Arguably, just as *vaiṣṇavas* of different castes were seen as eligible for different rituals, so they were seen as eligible for different grammars—while twice-born *vaiṣṇavas* could study Pāṇini, Jīva wanted to make sure that there would also be an HNV that all *vaiṣṇavas* could study and that would lead them to reading the *purāṇas* and the gosvāmins’ *bhakti* literature. Just as he intended the *Gāyatrīvyākhyāvivṛtti* only for a twice-born audience,⁴⁶ so he wrote the HNV for the broadest audience possible (within the broadest definition of *vaiṣṇava*).

It is also known that Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa later wrote several works on (mostly Pāṇinian) grammar that included *Laghusiddhāntakaustubha*, *Bṛhatsiddhāntakaustubha*, *Padakaustubha*, and *Śabdāsudhā*.⁴⁷ Without examining these manuscripts, it is impossible to say who the intended audience was, but given Baladeva’s statements about *śūdras*’ lack of *adhikāra* in regard to the Veda and their *adhikāra* in regard to the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*, one may extend the same logic to Pāṇinian (Vedic) and non-Pāṇinian (largely non-Vedic) grammars. Why did Baladeva

⁴⁶ See *Gāyatrīvyākhyāvivṛtti* 1982 : 43. *brāhmaṇebhyo’bhyanujñātā gaccha devi yathāsukham*. ‘Allowed for the *brāhmaṇas*, go, o goddess, as you please.’

⁴⁷ [Baladeva Vidyabhusana Project: LECTURE](#)

not simply comment on the HNV and instead write several commentaries on Pāṇini? Perhaps, inspired by the burgeoning of *navya vyākaraṇa* in the post-Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita period, he thought that twice-born Gauḍīya *vaiṣṇavas* also needed a Gauḍīya commentary on Pāṇini, while the HNV already fulfilled the need for a pan-*vaiṣṇava* grammar for the broadest category of *vaiṣṇavas*. Just as Gauḍīya *vaiṣṇavas* of every station had *mantras* and rituals corresponding to their devotional and caste *adhikāra*, so arguably these authors wanted to make sure that they would have different grammars of Sanskrit tailored to their *adhikāra*.

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