

## Note on Pronunciation

The text contains both Sanskrit and Hindi words and names, as well as a few from the Tamil South. Certain words and names I have spelled in Hindi, simply because they are so much a part of the people's tradition that it would be archaic for the student to learn these terms primarily in Sanskrit. Thus, I have used *darśan*, *prasād*, and *āśram* rather than the Sanskrit *darśana*, *prasāda*, and *āśrama*. Similarly, I used the names *Jagannāth*, *Vṛndāvan*, and *Govardhan* rather than *Jagannātha*, *Vṛndāvana*, and *Govardhana*. I have kept in Sanskrit transliteration the names of the gods, rites, and concepts which a student will commonly meet in other reading.

1. There are short and long vowels, the latter indicated by "long-marks" or macrons. Here are some examples from this text:

a	(as in but) <i>darśan</i>	ā	(as in father) <i>prasād</i>
i	(as in it) <i>līṅga</i>	ī	(as in magazine) <i>devī</i>
u	(as in put) <i>Upaniṣad</i>	ū	(as in rude) <i>mūrti</i>

diphthongs: e (as in prey) *Ganeśa*; ai (as in aisle) *Vaiṣṇava*; o (as in blow) (*Govardhan*); au (as in now) *Gauḍīya*

2. The underdotted *r* is pronounced "ri" as in rich. *Kṛṣṇa*, *Vṛndāvan*.

3. Both *ś* and *ṣ* may be pronounced "sh." The underdotted *ṣ* is made with the tip of the tongue slightly curved toward the roof of the mouth. The "c" is pronounced "ch" as in church (*upacāra*).

4. Aspirated consonants (those followed by an "h") are pronounced as follows: bh (as in clubhouse) *Bhagavad Gītā*; dh (as in roundhouse) *Govardhan*; th (as in hothouse) *Rathātrā*.

5. Underdotted consonants — t, th, d, dh, n, and ṣ — are not common phonemes in English and are produced by curling the tongue slightly backward toward the roof of the mouth. The underdotted l is a Tamil phoneme.

6. In Sanskrit, two-syllable words are accented on the first syllable (*devī*, *mūrti*, *Viṣṇu*). In words of more than two syllables, the penultimate (next to last) syllable is accented if it is long (*Ganeśa*, since "e" is a long vowel; *Khajurāho*). In such words, if the penultimate is short, then the accent is upon the antipenultimate (third from last) syllable (*Himālaya*, *Dvārakā*, *maṅḍala*).

7. In the few Hindi words here, there is usually a final syllable (the "a" sound) dropped. Thus, the accent falls on the last syllable in *prasād*, and on the first syllable in *darśan* and *āśram*.

## Glossary

Agni	The Vedic god of fire; also fire itself, especially the sacrificial fire.
ārati	The circling of oil lamp-lights before the image of the deity; used also to describe the entire sequence of honor-offerings made to the deity.
āśram	A forest hermitage; a dwelling place for ascetics, sages, and their students.
āvāhana	"Invoking" a deity to be present at the time of worship. (opp. <i>visarjana</i> ).
avatāra	The "descent" of a deity upon earth; an incarnation, especially of Viṣṇu.
bali	The type of worship offered to the ancient deities of the <i>yakṣa</i> clan, including offerings of flowers, water, incense, as well as meat and liquor.
Bhagavad Gītā	"The Song of the Lord," forms part of the sixth book of the epic <i>Mahābhārata</i> and contains Lord Kṛṣṇa's teaching and revelation to the warrior Arjuna.
Bhāgavata	The name of an early theistic movement which centered around the worship of the Lord ( <i>Bhagavān</i> ) rather than the rituals of sacrifice.
Bhairava	The "terrible, frightful" one; a fearsome form of Lord Siva as well as the name for a wider group of ancient deities.
bhakti	"Devotion; honor; love." From <i>bhaja</i> , meaning to share, to be devoted, to love. The heart's attitude of devotion and love toward the Lord.
Brahmā	The creator god, having four heads, one to look in each direction. Also known as <i>Prajāpati</i> . <i>Brahmā</i> has no cult.
Brahman	The Supreme Being, the One self-existent power, the Reality which is the source of all being and all knowing.
Brahmaṇa	The name of the priestly and ritual texts attached to the four Vedas.
brāhmin	The priestly class or a member of the priestly class, charged with the duties of learning, teaching, and performing rites and sacrifices.

daita	Popular Oriya form of <i>daitya</i> , one of many class-terms for demons in ancient India, also referring to one of the native non-Aryan tribes. The <i>daitas</i> at Puri are, significantly, the servants of Jagannāth — one of their own deities.
darśan	Sanskrit, <i>darśana</i> . The "auspicious sight" of the deity. Also a "point of view," or a philosophical position.
devī	"Goddess." Used to refer to the thousands of local goddesses, the consorts of the great gods, and the Great Goddess, the Devi or Mahādevī.
dhām	"Abode, dwelling." A sacred place known to be an "abode" of God. There are four great <i>dhāms</i> : Badrināth, Puri, Rāmeśvaram, and Dvārakā.
Durgā	One of the names of the Devi as consort of Śiva. Both a mother and a warrior; her autumn festival Durgā Pūjā is one of North India's great celebrations.
Dvārakā	The <i>dhām</i> of West India, located on the coast in Gujerāt. The capital of Lord Kṛṣṇa in his last days and the site of Viṣṇu's Dvārakādhiśa image.
Gaṇeśa	"Lord of Gaṇas." The elephant-headed son of Śiva and Pārvatī and the keeper of the thresholds of space and time, to be honored at the doorway and at the outset of any venture.
Gaṅgā	The sacred river of North India, also personified as a goddess, the daughter of the Himālayas and the sister of Pārvatī.
Gauḍiya	The Bengali sectarian movement of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, launched by Caitanya in the sixteenth century. The Gauḍiyas "rediscovered" the sites of Vraj.
Govardhan	The holy hill of Kṛṣṇa devotion in the Vraj area; the hill said to have been lifted by Kṛṣṇa to protect the villagers from Indra's rains of wrath; the site of the cultus of an ancient local cowherd hero-god.
Gupta	The name of the great North Indian empire from the fourth to sixth century A.D.
Hanumān	The monkey-god, famous as the faithful servant of Rāma who helped Rāma retrieve Sitā from captivity in Laṅkā; worshiped today in his own right as the focus of a vigorous cult.
Indra	The Vedic warrior god, wielder of the thunderbolt and drinker of the intoxicating Soma. In later times, a directional regent.
Jagannāth	"Lord of the Universe." Name of the deity of Puri in Orissa, said to be a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa.
Kālī	The horrific goddess who is both mother of life and destroyer. Sometimes the Śakti of Śiva, and sometimes the supreme being, the Mahādevī, apparently unattached to any consort god.

Kailāsa	The mythical Himālayan mountain said to be the residence of Śiva.
Kāñcī	One of the seven sacred cities of India, situated in the Tamil south.
Kāśī	The "Luminous, Shining" city, one of the seven sacred cities of India on the banks of the Gaṅgā in the north. Also known as Vārāṇasi, or Banāras.
Khajurāho	A temple site built under the patronage of the Chandella kings of north central India in the eleventh century.
Koṅārak	A great Sun temple on the Orissan coast of East India, built in the thirteenth century.
Kṛṣṇa	The ancient cowherd god and hero of India, the adviser of Arjuna on the battlefield of the Mahābhārata war, the playful lover of the milkmaids in Vraj. Said to be an <i>avatāra</i> of Viṣṇu, but honored and loved in his own right.
kunkum	Saffron colored powder, used to anoint images of folk deities and used also in ordinary decoration and cosmetics. <i>Sindūr</i> , made from red lead, is also used in this way.
Lakṣmī	The goddess who embodies auspiciousness, wealth, and good fortune.
līlā	"Play," especially the play of Kṛṣṇa with his companions and with the milkmaids in Vṛndāvan, where the <i>līlāsthālas</i> are the "places of the Lord's play."
liṅga	The "sign, emblem" of Śiva and the focus of Śiva worship.
maṅḍala	The "circle" or circular diagram that functions as a schematic map of the sacred universe. It is the symbolic form of paintings, temples, even cities.
mantra	A sacred formula or utterance; a prayer.
māyā	"Illusion." The illusory quality of this transitory world of "names and forms." The mistaken perception of the world as permanent, when in truth it is a "passage," <i>saṃsāra</i> .
melā	A fair, especially a religious fair or festival to which people often come some distance on pilgrimage.
mudrā	In artistic representation, a way of holding the hands and fingers so as to indicate a particular meaning; for example, there is a <i>mudrā</i> of protection, a <i>mudrā</i> of teaching, a <i>mudrā</i> of meditation, and so on.
mūrti	"Form, likeness." The image of the deity, as a focus for worship and <i>darśan</i> .
nāga	The ancient serpent deities of India, associated with pools and streams; appropriated by each of the great deities in their rise to supremacy.

Nāthdvārā	The "Lord's Door," a cultic site of the Vallabhites in Rājasthān, where Kṛṣṇa is honored as Śrīnāth-ji.
nāyanmār	The "leaders" (singular, <i>nāyanār</i> ; plural, <i>nāyanmār</i> ) of the Tamil Śaiva devotional movement, beginning especially with the three poet-saints who composed the <i>Tēvāram</i> between the sixth and the ninth centuries.
nirguṇa	"Without <i>guṇas</i> ." The <i>guṇas</i> are "qualities" or "attributes" and <i>nirguṇa</i> refers to that to which no qualities, attributes, or adjectives may be ascribed, i.e. Brahman.
nyāsa	"Placing, marking." The assignment of various deities to different parts of the body, with ritual and prayers.
pādukās	The symbolic "footprints" of a deity or saint, by which the deity or saint is honored.
Pārvatī	"Daughter of the Mountain ( <i>parvat</i> ).": The wife of Śiva, who won the ascetic lord as her husband by austerities.
pīṭha	"Seat, bench." A locus of goddess worship. There are variously said to be 52 or 108 <i>pīṭhas</i> .
pralaya	The universal dissolution at the end of one of the vast aeons called a <i>kalpa</i> , or a day of Brahman.
prāṇa	"Breath, life." The life of the deity as established in the image by the <i>prāṇapratiṣṭhā</i> rite.
prasād	"Favor, grace." In worship, the food which is offered to the deity and then returned, consecrated, as the "grace" of the Lord to the devotee.
pūjā	"Worship." Ordinarily involves the presentation of "offerings" ( <i>upacāras</i> ) to the deity.
pūjārī	The brāhmin priest responsible for the worship ( <i>pūjā</i> ) of the deity.
Purāna	One of the eighteen collections of "ancient stories" which preserve traditions of myth, legend, and ritual.
Purī	The <i>dhām</i> of the Lord in East India, where the great temple of Kṛṣṇa Jagannāth is located.
Rāma	The virtuous king and hero of the epic Rāmāyana. Said to be an <i>avatāra</i> of Viṣṇu, but honored and loved in his own right today. Husband of the faithful wife, Sītā.
Rāmānuja	An eleventh century South India philosopher, who gave a philosophical foundation to the Vaiṣṇava devotional movement which became known as Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.
Rathyātrā	"The Journey of the Chariot." The name of the yearly festival in Purī when the images of Jagannāth, Balarāma, and Subhadrā are taken out in procession in three great chariots.

sādhu	A "holy man," generally an ascetic as well.
saguna	"With <i>guṇas</i> ." The <i>guṇas</i> are "qualities" or "attributes" and <i>saguna</i> refers to that understanding of the divine which is describable with qualities, attributes, and adjectives (opp. <i>nirguṇa</i> ).
Śaiva	Name for the cult of Śiva and for his followers.
Śākta	Name for the cult of the Devī and for her followers.
śakti	"Energy, power." A term applied to the Goddess, either alone or as the consort of one of the male deities.
śālagrāma	The smooth stone said to be a "natural form" ( <i>svarūpa</i> ) of Viṣṇu.
satsāra	"Passage." The term used to describe the ceaseless round of birth and death and rebirth. The changing world.
Sāṅkara	The ca. ninth century teacher ( <i>ācārya</i> ) who is the principal exponent of Non-Dualistic philosophy, called Advaita. Said to have organized Indian ascetics into four orders, with headquarters at the four corners of India.
sannyāsin	"Renouncer." One who has left behind worldly attachments for a life of contemplation, wandering, and asceticism.
śāstra	"Teaching." A sacred treatise or body of learning, such as <i>Dharmaśāstra</i> , the "Teachings about Dharma."
Śeṣa	"Remainder." The serpent upon which Viṣṇu reclines on the primordial waters; also called Ananta, the "Endless" one. Śeṣa "remains" even when the universe is destroyed.
śikhara	The spire of a temple, literally the "peak." Also the word for "mountain peak."
śilpaśāstras	The religious treatises having to do with architecture and the arts, the making of temples and images. Intended for <i>śilpīns</i> , "artists."
Śiva	The "Auspicious One." The many-faced deity, both creator and destroyer, auspicious and seemingly inauspicious, who, along with Viṣṇu and Devī, is one of the three most widely worshiped deities of India.
Skanda	The God of War, son of Śiva and Pārvatī: said to have been raised by six foster-mothers (the <i>Kṛttikās</i> ) and therefore is often depicted with six heads and called Kārttikeya.
Śrī Vaiṣṇava	The Viṣṇu <i>bhakti</i> movement of South India, which emerged from the line of the Alvar poet-saints and the philosopher Rāmānuja.
svayambhū	"Self-born, self-manifest." That which is beginningless, uncreated; therefore, used to describe certain images which are said to have appeared spontaneously and were not established by human hands.

tapas	"Heat." Especially the heat generated by ascetic practices, believed to be creative, like the brooding heat of a mother hen.
tīrtha	"Ford, crossing place." A place of pilgrimage.
tīrthayātrā	The journey ( <i>yātrā</i> ) to the sacred place ( <i>tīrtha</i> ). Pilgrimage.
upacāra	"Honor offering." A means of showing respect, thus the offerings made to the deity in worship, such as flowers, perfumes, incense, etc.
Upaniṣad	One of the speculative sacred texts attached to the four <i>saṁhitās</i> (the "collections" of hymns) of the Vedas.
vāhana	The "vehicle" upon which a deity rides, usually an animal.
Vaiṣṇava	Name for the cult of Viṣṇu and for his followers.
Vallabhite	Following the tradition of Vallabha, the fifteenth/sixteenth century philosopher-devotee who gave a philosophical foundation to the rising Kṛṣṇa <i>bhakti</i> movement in North India.
Vārāṇasī	India's most famous sacred city, one of the seven sacred cities, located on the banks of the Gaṅgā in North India. Also Kāśī, Banāras.
Vārkarī	Name of the sectarian devotional movement in Mahārāstra which honors the deity Vīthobā (a form of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa) in Paṇḍharpur.
Vāstupuruṣa	The archetype of a house or temple, personified as a person ( <i>puruṣa</i> ) whose limbs and bodily parts, subdued by the gods, become the symbolic foundation of the temple.
Veda	"Wisdom, knowing." Applied to the sacred wisdom of the four Vedic "collections" ( <i>saṁhitās</i> ): The Rg, Sāma, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas. More loosely applied to the Brāhmanas, Āraṇyakas, and Upaniṣads attached to each collection as well.
visarjana	The "dismissal" of the deity after the worship is complete (opp. <i>āvāhana</i> ).
Viṣṇu	Along with Śiva and Devī, one of the three most widely worshiped deities of India. The "Pervader," known for his three great steps by which he claimed the whole universe.
Viśvanāth	Śiva, the "Lord of All," as present in the sacred city of Kāśī, Vārāṇasī.
Vīthobā	The deity of Paṇḍharpūr and the focus of Mahārāṣṭrian devotion.
Vraja	The homeland of Kṛṣṇa in the Mathurā area of central North India.
Vṛndāvan	The village of Vraja especially celebrated as a center of Kṛṣṇa worship, the place of Kṛṣṇa's childhood and youth.

yakṣa/yakṣī	The ancient male and female deities of the "life cult" of non-Aryan India; associated with trees, pools, and vegetative abundance.
yantra	A "device" for harnessing the mind in meditation or worship. A diagram, usually of geometric interlocking triangles and circles.