

FOREWORD

This is the second volume to be issued in the Vraja Nāthadvāra Prakalpa Series, part of a holistic project being undertaken jointly by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Sri Caitanya Prema Samsthana. The project aims to study the rich intellectual and cultural heritage of Vraja, an area central to Indian culture. Such centres have generally been studied in isolation, that is, solely from one point of view, such as history, religion, or economics, but not in their totality, as integrated complexes emanating creative activity in manifold fields. We envisage the study of Vraja as an integrated unit, in order to discern its holistic impact on the culture of the local people.

The present volume on the great temple of Śrī Govindadeva in Vṛndāvana is such a study, for besides the thorough architectural and iconographic documentation it undertakes through drawings and photographs, it considers social and economic history as recorded in manuscripts and the oral tradition, as well as the ritual and devotional aspects of the temple. This volume was conceived together with a great Vraja-rasa-rasika, Dr. Tarapada Mukherji, on a chilly winter day on the roof of Jayasiṃha Gherā, overlooking the remains of Śrī Govindadeva temple. Our friend did not wait to attend the conference or see the book, but his last scholarly contribution was on this "Golden Edifice".¹ It is hoped that this volume, dedicated to his memory, will serve not merely to document a great religious and cultural monument, but will help to elucidate what constitutes the capacity of Vraja as a whole for continued regeneration and renewal.

Apart from the constant participation and encouragement of my colleague Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, many people have contributed to this study over several years. We wish particularly to thank Dr. M. C. Joshi, then Director of the Archaeological Survey of India, for permission to photograph and make measured drawings of Śrī Govindadeva temple. Equally important was the help and guidance of the gosvāmīs of the Śrī Govindadeva tradition. We are grateful to Ācārya Śrī Pradyumna Kumar Deva Goswami and his family — serving Govindadeva at the Navīna Govinda Mandira at Vṛndāvana and at Jayapura (where the original mūrti of Śrī Govindadeva is now housed) — and Ācārya Śrī Pañcānana Kīśora Deva Gosvāmī and his family — serving at the Prācīna Govinda Mandira at Vṛndāvana — for sharing their paramparā and wisdom, and always encouraging those who participated in this special darśana of Śrī Govindadeva.

We are happy that this volume can now be made available for all to enjoy.

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¹ "Vṛndāvanera Suvarṇa Sadana," Govinda Mandirera 400 bachara (1590-1990) pūrti upalakṣe, *Deśa* 57/25 (April 21, 1990).