

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This volume has grown out of a conference held in April 1991 to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the great temple of Govindadeva in Vṛndāvana. The conference was dedicated to the memory of the beloved scholar, Tarapada Mukherji, whose untimely death in the summer of 1990 cut short his brilliant and productive research, much of it in his last years centred around Govindadeva temple.

Jointly sponsored by Sri Caitanya Prema Samsthana in Vṛndāvana and the Indian Council for Historical Research, New Delhi, the conference brought together scholars from around the world who have studied Govindadeva temple, and celebrated the temple as a living presence through a rāsālilā performance and a dance offering in the great maṇḍapa of Govindadeva jī. The conference provided a focus and a springboard for research on the rich history and culture surrounding this temple. There was lively discussion among the participants, and the chapters of this volume reflect some of the different points of view brought to bear.

As always in a volume of this sort, the question of spelling has been a tortured one. After considerable discussion, we decided to transliterate all Sanskrit and Hindi words directly from their written form in Devanagari, ignoring local pronunciations and modern English usage. This is in accordance with IGNCA policy. Although many of the contributors would prefer it otherwise, we take as our guide none other than Frederic Salmon Growse, District Magistrate of Mathurā in the 1870s, who was responsible for rescuing Govindadeva from imminent ruin through neglect. "Any one", he wrote, "having a very moderate acquaintance with Indian history and mythology, would be competent to write a long list of names with unerring precision", because of the exactness possible in transliterating Devanāgarī script. He considered deviation from this rule to indicate carelessness or ethnocentrism on the part of his English colleagues.

Many people have contributed to the production of this volume of collected papers, beyond the contribution of their articles included here. Shrivatsa Goswami, Director of Sri Caitanya Prema Samsthana, convened the conference, and his leadership in intellect and spirit have inspired every stage of this enterprise. This volume would be unthinkable without him. Asimakrishna Dasa, in the true spirit of bhakti, has been generous with his time and expertise, guiding the editor through the esoterica both of Sanskrit transliteration and computer technology. Robyn Beeche's remarkable photographs, which greatly enhanced the ambience of the conference itself, have been a rich source of both knowledge about and feeling for this great monument. This volume has in many senses been a joint enterprise with her. Jagdish Prakash Pathsariya cheerfully undertook the task of printing the manuscript from disk. And as always, it has been a pleasure working with Katey Cooper and the helpful, expert staff of Vakil & Sons Ltd. To them and to each of the contributors, I offer thanks.

MARGARET H. CASE

¹ F. S. Growse, "On the Translation of Indian Alphabets in the Roman Character", *Journal of the Asiatic Society* NS 36:2 (1867), 139.