

RELIGION G8515
BHAKTI TEXTS OF NORTH INDIA: THE *SURSAGAR*
Fall, 2013

Jack Hawley
Tuesdays 4:10-6:00, Knox 116
Additional hour to be arranged: Thursdays 11:00-11:50?
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Introduction

Surdas (precise dates unknown, sixteenth century) is one of a handful of preeminent poet-saints who composed in dialects belonging to the Hindi language family. Some scholars, in fact, rank Sur as the finest of all Hindi poets--certainly the finest of Krishna poets--and the impact of his hagiography has been almost equally great.

In this course we will examine selections from the huge corpus of poetry (more than 5000 compositions) attributed to Surdas and in so doing study the genesis and development of the Sur tradition. Use will be made not only of traditional editions but of the current computer-assisted project aimed at producing a new critical edition of the *Sursagar*. Sur's position in relation to other Krishna poets and theologians, particularly those active in the influential Braj area of North India, where Krishna himself is said to have lived, will be examined.

Course description

Early in the course we will consider materials bearing on the historical status of the poet himself, and will try to appreciate--both in that light and others--the early hagiographical writing on Sur. We will also launch our reading of poems attributed to Sur by reading selections from the collection of Dharendra Varma called *Sursagar Sar* (see below). Increasingly, however, we will move to the 16th-century *Sursagar* itself, and as well to the actual manuscripts that give us access to that collection.

Course requirements

Prerequisite: two or three years of coursework in Modern Standard Hindi, or their equivalent.

Regular attendance and participation; two quizzes to test mastery of the Brajbhasa prose and poetry; a final paper and a class presentation linked to it.

Core texts

Largely speaking, paper copies of these will be made available from the instructor. Where possible, Courseworks will list the remainder.

Hardev Bahari, *Sur Sabd-Kos* (Allahabad: Smrti Prakasan, 1981).

Gopal Narayan Bahura and Kenneth E. Bryant, eds., *Pad Surdasji ka / The Padas of Surdas* (Jaipur: Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, 1982 [actually published, 1984]).

Kenneth E. Bryant and John Stratton Hawley, *Surdas: Sursagar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming 2014 or 2015 in the Murty Classical Library of India).

Gokulnath (attributed), *Sur Das ki Varta* from the *Caurasi Vaisnavan ki Varta* (xeroxed). Also, notes on the *Sur Das ki Varta* (xeroxed, as above).

J. S. Hawley *The Memory of Love* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

-----, *Three Bhakti Voices: Mirabai, Surdas, and Kabir in Their Time and Ours* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

-----, "Surdas." *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Hinduism*, ed. Alf Hiltebeitel. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). <http://www.oxfordbibliographiesonline.com>.

-----, *Sur's Ocean*, volume 1, introduction (Harvard Oriental Series, forthcoming 2015).

K. C. Sharma, K.C. Yadav, and Pushpendra Sharma, *Suradasa: A Critical Study of His Life and Work* (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 1997).

Rupert Snell, *The Hindi Classical Tradition: A Braj Bhasa Reader* (London: SOAS, 1991), selections available on Courseworks.

Dhirendra Varma, *Sursagar Sar* (Allahabad: Sahitya Bhavan, 1977).

Other materials on Surdas specifically

Vidyut Aklujkar, "Battle as Banquet: A Metaphor in Surdas," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111:2 (1991), pp. 353-361.

A. J. Alston, *The Divine Sports of Krishna: Poems of Sur Dasa* (London: Shanti Sadan, 1993).

Krishna P. Bahadur, *The Poems of Suradasa* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1999).

Hardev Bahari, *Sur Sabd-Kos* (Allahabad: Smrti Prakasan, 1981).

Gopal Narayan Bahura and Kenneth E. Bryant, eds., *Pad Surdasji ka / The Padas of Surdas* (Jaipur: Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, 1982 [actually published, 1984]).

Kenneth E. Bryant, *Poems to the Child-God: Structures and Strategies in the Poetry of Surdas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

Kisori Lal Gupta, ed., *Sampurna Sursagar*, 5 vols. (Allahabad: Lokbharati, 2005).

Gokulnath (attributed), *Sur Das ki Varta* from the *Caurasi Vaisnavan ki Varta* (xeroxed). Also, notes on the *Sur Das ki Varta* (xeroxed, as above).

J. S. Hawley, *Krishna, the Butter Thief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

-----, *Sur Das: Poet, Singer, Saint* (Seattle: University of Washington Press and Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984).

Prashant Keshavmurthy, "The Local Universality of Poetic Pleasure: Sirajuddin 'Ali Khan Arzu and the Speaking Subject," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 50:1 (2013), pp. 27-45. Also available online: <http://ier.sagepub.com/content/51/1/27>.

Jaganathdas "Ratnakar," et al., *Sursagar*, 2 vols. (Varanasi: Kasi Nagaripracarini Sabha, 1972 and 1976 [originally 1948]).

Jaikishandas Sadani, *Rosary of Hymns: Selected Poems of Surdas* (New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Ltd., 1991).

K. C. Sharma, K.C. Yadav, and Pushpendra Sharma, *Suradasa: A Critical Study of His Life and Work* (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 1997).

Premnarayan Tandon, *Brajbhasa Sur-Kos* (Lucknow: Lucknow University Press, 1950).

Dhirendra Varma, *Sursagar Sar* (Allahabad: Sahitya Bhavan, 1977).

NB: Numerous other works, primarily in Hindi, are listed in the bibliographical sections of books by Bryant, Entwistle, Sharma et al., and Hawley.

What is an author? A *bhakti* author?

David Shulman, "From Author to Non-author in Tamil Literary Legend," *Journal of the Institute of Asian Studies* (Madras), 10:2 (1993), pp. 1-23.

Norman Cutler, *Songs of Experience: The Poetics of Tamil Devotion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 19-38.

Philip Lutgendorf, "The Quest for the Legendary Tulsidas," in Callewaert and Snell, *According to Tradition*, pp. 65-84.

Christian Lee Novetzke, "Divining an Author: The Idea of Authorship in an Indian Religious Tradition," *History of Religions* 42:3 (2003), pp. 213-241.

J. S. Hawley, "Author and Authority in the *Bhakti* Poetry of North India," *Journal of Asian Studies* 47:2 (1988), pp. 269-290.

Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structural Criticism*, ed. Josue V. Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979).

Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies*.

On narrative and hagiography

Richard Barz, "The *Caurasi Vaisnavan ki Varta* and the Hagiography of the Pustimarg," in *According to Tradition: Hagiographical Writing in India*, edited by Winand M. Callewaert and Rupert Snell (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1994), pp. 43-64.

Winand M. Callewaert, *The Hagiographies of Anandadas: The Bhakti Poets of North India* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000).

Winand M. Callewaert and Rupert Snell, eds., *According to Tradition: Hagiographical Writing in India* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1994).

Vasudha Dalmia, "Forging Community: The Guru in a Seventeenth-century Vaishnava Hagiography," in Vasudha Dalmia et al., eds, *Charisma and Canon: Essays on the Religious History of the Indian Subcontinent* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 129-154.

Edward C. Dimock, Jr., and Tony K. Stewart, eds., "*The 'Caitanya Caritamrta' of Krsnadasa Kaviraja* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

Rebecca J. Manring, *The Fading Light of Advaita Acarya* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Christian Lee Novetzke, *Religion and Public Memory: A Cultural History of Saint Namdev in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

Lorenzen, David N., with Jagdish Kumar and Uma Thukral. *Kabir Legends and Anantadas's Kabir Parachai* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

Heidi R. M. Pauwels, *In Praise of Holy Men* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2002).

William L Smith, *Patterns in North Indian Hagiography* (Stockholm: Department of Indology, University of Stockholm, 2000).

Tony K. Stewart, *The Final Word: The Caitanya Caritamrta and the Grammar of Religious Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

On meter and performance

Kenneth Bryant, *Surdas: Sursagar*, introduction.

Francoise 'Nalini' Delvoye, "Les Chants *Dhrupad* en Langue Braj des Poetes-Musiciens de l'Inde Moghole," in Francoise Mallison, ed., *Litteratures Medievales de l'Inde du Nord* (Paris: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient, 1991), pp. 139-185.

-----, "The Thematic Range of *Dhrupad* Songs Attributed to Tansen...", in Alan W. Entwistle and Francoise Mallison, eds., *Studies in South Asian Devotional Literature: Research Papers 1988-1991* (Paris: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient and New Delhi: Manohar, 1994), pp. 406-429.

Prem Lata Sharma, "Musical Element in Surdas's Poetry," in Nagendra, ed., *Surdas: A Revaluation* (Deli: National Publishing House, 1979), pp. 174-179.

Rupert Snell, *The Eighty-four Hymns of Hita Harivamsa* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, and London: SOAS, 1991).

Indurama Srivastava, *Dhrupada* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980).

Selina Thielemann, *Musical Traditions of Vaiṣṇava Temples in Vraja: A Comparative Study of Samaja and the Dhrupada Tradition of North Indian Classical Music*, 2 vols. (New Delhi: Sagar, 2001).

Richard Widdess, "Dhrupad as a Musical Tradition," *Journal of Vaisnava Studies* 3:1 (1994), pp. 61-81.

General reference and dictionary materials

Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya* (Faridabad: Thomson Press, 1976).

Allison Busch, *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Winand M. Callewaert with the assistance of Swapna Sharma, *Dictionary of Bhakti: North-Indian Bhakti Texts into Khari Boli Hindi and English*, 3 vols. (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2009)

Alan W. Entwistle, *Braj: Centre of Krishna Pilgrimage* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1987).

S. H. Kellogg, *Grammar of the Hindi Language* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1972 [originally 1875]).

Rebecca Manring, "Outline of Braj Grammar" (Indiana University, n.d., xeroxed).

R. S. McGregor, *The Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary* (Oxford and Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993).

-----, *Hindi Literature from its Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984).

Kalika Prasad et al., eds., *Brhat Hindi Kos* (Varanasi: Jnanamandal Limited, V.S. 2030).

Satyendra, *Pandulipi Vijnan*. Jaipur: Rajasthan Hindi Granth Academy, 1978).

Rupert Snell, *The Hindi Classical Tradition: A Braj Bhasa Reader* (London: SOAS, 1991).

Syamsundardas et al., eds., *Hindi Sabd Sagar* (Benares: Kasi Nagaripracarini Sabha, 1935).

R. L. Turner, *A Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

Dhirendra Varma, *La Langue Braj (Dialecte de Mathura)* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1935).

COURSE SYLLABUS

UNIT I. The Vallabhite Surdas: Biography, Hagiography, Text

Week 1. Brajbhasa grammar and literature.

- 9/3 Introduction to the course
Rebecca Manring, "Outline of Braj Grammar" (xeroxed).
9/5 Rupert Snell, *The Hindi Classical Tradition*, pp. 3-18, 29-38, 71-76.

Week 2. *Surdas ki Varta* (xeroxed) - 1.

- 9/10 Snell selection, completion
Surdas ki Varta, *bhavprakas*, introductory, pp. 400-404 (xeroxed).
9/12 *Surdas ki Varta*, *prasang* 1, pp. 404-409
K. C. Sharma et al., *Suradasa*, pp. 12-51.
J. S. Hawley, *The Memory of Love*, introduction, pp. 3-44.

Week 3. *Surdas ki Varta* - 2.

9/17 *Surdas ki Varta*, *prasang* 1, pp. 409-412. Omit *prasangs* 2 and 3 (you have already read most of *prasang* 3, thanks to Rupert Snell). Also *prasangs* 4-6 (pp. 418-422) and 8-9 (pp. 425-433). Note: Skip the long poem on pp. 430-431.

Richard Barz, "The *Caurasi Vaisnavan ki Varta* and the Hagiography of the *Pustimarg*," in Winand Callewaert and Rupert Snell, eds., *According to Tradition: Hagiographical Writing in India* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1994), pp. 43-64.

J. S. Hawley, *Sur Das: Poet, Singer, Saint*, pp. 3-33.

Kenneth E. Bryant, *Poems to the Child-God*, pp. 1-18.

- 9/19 Nabhadas, *Bhaktamal*, entry on Surdas (Courseworks).

Hariramvyas, '*Bhaktamal*', pad 31, in which Surdas is mentioned (edited by Heidi Pauwels in her *In Praise of Holy Men* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2002), pp. 84-86 (Courseworks)).

Week 4. *Surdas ki Varta* - 3.

9/24-26 *Surdas ki Varta*, prasangs 10-11, pp. 434-442.

J. S. Hawley, *Sur's Ocean: Introduction*, chapter 1 (in draft).

Week 5. The Vallabhite *Sursagar*

10/1 Dharendra Varma, *Sursagar Sar*, selections to be announced.

Jaganathdas "Ratnakar," et al., *Sursagar*, 2 vols. (Varanasi: Kasi Nagaripracarini Sabha, 1972 and 1976 [originally 1948]), table of contents (Courseworks).

10/3 Quiz on the *brajbhasa* read so far.

UNIT II. The 16th-Century Surdas: Poetry and Criticism

We will work our way through a wide selection of poetry represented in manuscripts that give us a view of the Surdas poems that were in circulation in the 16th century, and will also consider problems of appreciation/criticism and edition that arise in connection with them. Our text is an advance copy of Bryant and Hawley, *Surdas: Sursagar* (Harvard University Press, forthcoming), which we will occasionally compare with what appears in the "vulgate" edition of the Nagaripracarini Sabha. From time to time we will also bring in the facsimile edition of the oldest manuscript in which poems attributed to Surdas are archived: the Fatehpur manuscript of 1582. Notes on certain of these poems can be found in Hawley *The Memory of Love*.

Week 6. Krishna growing up

10/8-10

Week 7. The pangs and politics of love

10/15-17

Week 8. Krishna departs for Mathura, never to return

10/22-24

Week 9. The bee-messenger

10/29-31

Week 10. Lordly encounters—and others

11/7

Week 11. Ramayana

11/12-14

Week 12. The poet's petition and praise

11/19-21

Week 13. Interval

NB: No class on 11/26: American Academy of Religion.
Or on 11/28: Thanksgiving.

Week 14. Wrap-up

12/3 Quiz on poems read in the second unit of the course.

12/5 To the holy rivers.

Week 15. Papers and presentations

12/7 Draft papers are posted to Courseworks: discussion board

12/10 Class discussion of the papers

12/16 Final version of the papers posted to Courseworks: discussion board.