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**FEMALE VOICES IN THE VĀRKARĪ SAMPRADĀYA:
GENDER CONSTRUCTIONS IN A BHAKTI TRADITION**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2014

Department of the Study of Religions, SOAS, University of London

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ways the attribution of women's authorship is used in the construction and development of the Vārkarī *bhakti* tradition in order to ask what function the high visibility of female poet-sants (*santakaviyatrīs*) in the tradition might have played in the *sampradāya*'s self-understanding and presentation. The thesis investigates why there are so many women associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, while the *santakaviyatrīs* and the compositions attributed to them are largely absent from contemporary devotional practices. I consider how gender attribution within the sacred biographies (*caritra*) and the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* relates to the basic tension within the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, and within *bhakti* more generally, between complete devotion to God to the exclusion of all others and the worldly duties of a householder; the tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha*. Consequently, the thesis considers the elements that mark the Vārkarī *sampradāya* out as a householder tradition, as well as the importance of the *sants* and their attributed compositions to the devotional practices and the discursive formation of the *sampradāya*. The thesis contends that the presence of compositions attributed to women and *caritras* about women within the Vārkarī literary corpus is indicative of an argument for, and indeed *exemplification of*, the viability of the householder path by those who were involved in constructing the traditions of the *sampradāya*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	3
Table of contents	4
Acknowledgements	7
List of illustrations	9
Transliteration	10
Abbreviations	12
INTRODUCTION.....	13
1. Introduction.....	13
2. Research Questions	16
3. Literature Review.....	17
3.1. Bhakti and the tension between sannyāsa and gṛhastha	21
4. Methodology	27
4.1. The discursive formation of the Vārkarī sampradāya.....	27
4.2. My original contribution	31
4.3. Translation.....	31
4.4. Ethnography	33
5. Outline of chapters	35
CHAPTER ONE	37
Introduction to The Vārkarī Sampradāya In Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.....	37
1. Pandharpur: an historical perspective	38
2. The Vārkarī sants	45
3. The pilgrimage to Pandharpur.....	50
4. Contemporary perspectives: caste, class and social vision.....	60
CHAPTER TWO	64
Ethnography Among Contemporary Vārkarīs.....	64
CHAPTER THREE.....	94
The Discursive Construction of The Vārkarī Sampradāya as a Householder Path	94
1. Introduction.....	94
2. The Vārkarī ‘canon’	97
2.1. Jñāneśvar and the Jñāneśvarī.....	98
2.2. Eknāth and the Eknāthī Bhāgavata.....	104
2.3. The abhaṅgas of the Vārkarī sants.....	109
3. The literary genre of caritra.....	123
4. Summary	129
CHAPTER FOUR.....	130

The Sacred Biographies of the Vārkarī Santakaviyatrīs.....	130
1. Introduction.....	130
2. The caritras of the santakaviyatrīs and some female bhaktas associated with the Vārkarī sampradāya.....	130
2.1. Muktabāī.....	131
2.2. The women in Nāmdev’s family.....	139
2.3. Janābāī.....	149
2.4. Soyarābāī and Nirmaḷābāī.....	155
2.5. Banka and Vāñka.....	158
2.6. Bhāgū Mahārīṇ.....	158
2.7. Kānhopātrā.....	159
2.8. Gaṅgabāī.....	164
2.9. Sakhūbāī.....	165
2.10. Āvalī/Jijabai.....	169
2.11. Bhāgūbāī.....	173
2.12. Viṭhābāī.....	174
3. Summary.....	176
CHAPTER FIVE.....	178
Compositions Attributed to Vārkarī Santakaviyatrīs.....	178
1. Introduction: themes assigned to the compositions attributed to the santakaviyatrīs.....	178
1.1. Nāma: the importance of the name of God for liberation.....	180
1.2. Intimate relations with the divine.....	192
1.3. Biographical images.....	202
1.4. Quotidian imagery.....	213
1.5. Kūṭ: enigmatic, puzzling and obscure compositions.....	219
1.6. Upadeśa or ‘advisory’ abhaṅgas.....	223
2. Summary.....	232
CONCLUSION.....	234
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	241
Appendix A:.....	288
GLOSSARY.....	288
Appendix B:.....	310
Compositions Attributed to the Vārkarī Santakaviyatrīs.....	310
1. Muktabāī.....	310
1.1. Cāṅgadev abhaṅga.....	317
2. Goṇāī.....	317
3. Rājāī.....	325
4. Āūbāī.....	331

5. Limbāi.....	331
6. Lāḍāi.....	331
7. Janābāi.....	332
7.1. Nāmdev abhaṅga.....	353
8. Soyarābāi.....	368
9. Nirmaḷābāi.....	375
10. Bhāgū Mahārīṇ.....	377
11. Kānhopātrā.....	380
12. Bhāgūbāi (Tukārām’s Daughter).....	386
13. Gaṅgabāi.....	387
14. Bahiṇābāi.....	388
15. Viṭhābāi.....	390
16. Sakhūbāi.....	392
Appendix C:.....	395
Translations from the <i>Bhaktavijaya</i> by Mahīpati.....	395
1. Bhaktavijaya 21: Janābāi.....	395
2. Bhaktavijaya 39: Kānhopātrā.....	410
Appendix D:.....	415
List of epithets employed in the compositions attributed to the santakavīyitrīs.....	415
Appendix E:.....	427
Hindi compositions attributed to Muktabāi and Bahiṇābāi.....	427
1. Introduction.....	427
2. Muktabāi’s ‘Hindi’ composition.....	427
3. Bahiṇābāi’s ‘Hindi’ composition.....	431
4. Conclusion.....	432
Appendix F.....	434
The Hindu Calender in Maharashtra.....	434
Appendix G:.....	435
Castes, Classes and Tribes in Maharashtra.....	435
Appendix H:.....	438
Articles, Cuttings and Programmes.....	438

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate 1: The temple complex at Alandi (29 th October 2004).....	66
Plate 2: Nandi bull, Alandi.....	68
Plate 3: Muktabāi shrine, Alandi.....	69
Plate 4: Woman making an offering at the Muktabāi shrine, Alandi.....	69
Plate 5: Vārkarī reading the <i>Jñāneśvarī</i> , Alandi.....	70
Plate 6: Examination of Vārkarī <i>kīrtankārs</i> , the Vārkarī school, Alandi (2004).....	71
Plate 7: Nandī, Cāṅgadev temple, Saswad.....	72
Plate 8: Vārkarī in Paṅdharpūr for <i>kārttikī ekādaśī</i>	74
Plate 9: Vārkarī in Pandharpur for the <i>kārttikī ekādaśī</i>	76
Plate 10: Viṭṭhal and Rakhumāi, Alandi.....	80
Plate 11: Jñāneśvar <i>sañjīvan samādhi</i> , Alandi.....	81
Plate 12: Vārkarī <i>bhajan</i> session at Alandi.....	82
Plate 13: Pilgrims crossing the Indrayani River at Alandi	83
Plate 14: The Jñāneśvar <i>pālkhī</i> en route from Alandi to Pune (20 th June 2006).....	85
Plate 15: The Ganga Maharaj <i>diṅḍī</i> (593) eating lunch (20 th June 2006).....	87
Plate 16: Vārkarī on the Dive Ghāṭ (22 nd June 2006)	88
Plate 17: Main (eastern) entrance to the Viṭṭhal temple in Pandharpur	90
Plate 18: Rear (western) exit of the Viṭṭhal temple in Pandharpur and the cupola.....	91
Plate 19: The Tukārām <i>pothī</i> at Dehu.....	115
Plate 20: Bahiṅbāi at Dehu Temple.....	211
Plate 21: Janī grinding with the help of Viṭṭhal (Gopalpur).....	218
Plate 22: Jñāneśvar <i>pālkhī</i> timetable 1 (2006).....	438
Plate 23: Jñāneśvar <i>pālkhī</i> timetable 2 (2006).....	439
Plate 24: Timetable of the Muktabāi Mahārāj Belagānvakar Diṅḍī, Jñāneśvar Pālkhī.....	440
Plate 25: Timetable of the Muktabāi Mahārāj Belagānvakar Diṅḍī, Jñāneśvar Pālkhī.....	441
Plate 26: Invitation to honour Ulhāsdādā Pavār, Wednesday (21 st June 2006).....	442
Plate 27: Pune Times article (22 nd June 2006).....	443
Plate 28: Tukārām and Jñāneśvar Pālkhī timetables (2006).....	444
Plate 29: Map detailing the route of the Jñāneśvar and Tukārām <i>pālkhīs</i> to Pandharpur.....	445
Plate 30: Birth and work/ <i>samādhi</i> place of Vārkarī female <i>sants</i>	446

TRANSLITERATION

In accordance with the conventional practice for scholars of Hinduism, non-English terms are transliterated and italicised within this thesis. Place names are not as a rule transliterated. Languages or dialects that have an English form, such as Hindi, are produced without diacritics. Caste and proper names are rendered with diacritical marks, at least when first mentioned, as this reflects Marathi speech and reminds the reader of the context. However, the names of Marathi or other Indian authors writing in English are reproduced without diacritics and in an anglicised form (for example Aklujkar). I have avoided using *w* in transliteration except in the rare case where it has been used by others and due to the focus of this thesis the transliteration provided is Marathi.

A Marathi syllabary or alphabet is provided below (minus all the consonant conjunctions) to indicate my transliteration style. This is for several reasons. Firstly, transliteration is fraught with difficulties. Secondly, not all writers of Marathi transliterate Marathi into English in the same way. Thirdly, until the 1950s Marathi was written in Modi when it was replaced by Devanagri. Fourthly, the Marathi syllabary has undergone further changes during the modern period due to the Government of Maharashtra's desire to increase literacy and to bring written Marathi into line with spoken Marathi. When transliterating from texts, particularly the *Śrīsakalasantagāthā*, I have tried to reconstruct the text exactly. This may sometimes include errors, possibly due to scribal inaccuracies, printing errors, the transfer of Modi to Devanagri or confusion arising with the change from 'old' to 'new' writing styles. Consequently, the transliteration of such texts needs to be seen as a guide to pronunciation and articulation—allowing the non-Marathi speaker or reader to gain a feel of the language—rather than as an infallible rendition.

In modern Marathi, words ending in a consonant—e.g. *vāṭ* (way)—are usually transliterated without the ending 'a' as the consonant has an inherent vowel that is lightly pronounced. However, I have retained the 'a', particularly when transliterating poetic compositions, as the 'a' is necessary for metrical structure and would often be pronounced in singing or recitation, and in the case of certain technical/Sanskrit terms (for example *vairāgya*). Nonetheless, certain words like *sant* are not rendered with an 'a' within this thesis, despite this being a Sanskrit word, as this does not reflect pronunciation or

general usage. Finally, when transliterated and italicised words embedded in the English text they are pluralised with an 's', as this is technically inaccurate the final 's' has not been italicised.

Marathi Vowels:

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	ऋ	ं
अः											
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	e	ai	o	au	ṛ	aṁ/ṅ
अḥ											
द	दा	दि	दी	दु	दू	दे	दै	दो	दौ	दृ	दं
दः											
da	dā	di	dī	du	dū	de	dai	do	dau	dṛ	daṁ/ṅ
दाḥ											

Marathi Consonants:

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa	ca	cha	ja	jha	ña
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	त	थ	द	ध	न
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa	ta	tha	da	dha	na
प	फ	ब	भ	म	य	ल	र	व	
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma	ya	la	ra	va	
श	ष	स	ह	ळ	क्ष	ज्ञ	श्र		
śa	ṣa	sa	ha	ḷa	kṣa	jña	śra		

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Amṛtānubhava</i> or <i>Anubhavāmṛta</i>
ARMAD	<i>Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department</i>
BCE	Before the Common Era (equivalent to BC)
BhG	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
BhP	<i>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i>
BLM	<i>Bhaktalīlāmṛta</i> by Mahīpati
BVJ	<i>Bhaktavijaya</i> by Mahīpati
CB	<i>Cauṭhślokī Bhāgavata</i> by Eknāth
CDSL	Cologne Digital Sanskrit Lexicon
CE	Common Era (equivalent to AD)
COED	<i>Concise Oxford English Dictionary</i>
CP	<i>Cāṅgadev Pāsaṣṭī</i>
EAG	<i>Eknāthācī abhaṅgācī gāthā</i>
EB	<i>Eknāthī Bhāgavata</i>
EI	<i>Epigraphia Indica</i>
GG	<i>Gītagovinda</i>
HV	<i>Harivaṃśa</i>
Jñśv	<i>Jñāneśvarī</i>
Mbh	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
RS	<i>Rukmiṇī Svayaṃvara</i>
SJH	<i>Śrī Jñāneśvaramahārājakṛta Haripāthāce abhaṅga</i>
SBG	<i>Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā</i>
SEC	<i>Śrī Eknāth Carita</i>
SSG	<i>Śrīsakalasantagāthā</i>
TA	<i>Tāṭice Abhaṅga</i>

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

In the mid to late 1970s I spent part of my childhood in Pune (Maharashtra) and so my love for India and my interest in Indian religions began. Eventually, I undertook a BA in comparative religion with a focus on Hinduism and the religions of South Asia and an MA in Indian religion during which I began to explore the compositions of Maharashtrian poet-saints like Tukārām. While I was writing my MA dissertation on Vārkarī pilgrimage I noticed there were numerous women associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* and decided to discover more about them. The more I read, the more I saw that scholarship had been focused primarily on male poet-saints, particularly Jñāneśvar, Nāmdev, Eknāth and Tukārām.¹ It seemed to me that female poet-saints were marginalised as addendums to the male poet-saints and as footnotes to history and so, influenced by my parallel interest in feminist scholarship, I decided to explore the compositions and lives of the Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs*. I was keen to locate and identify individual women's voices in an effort to dismantle the hegemonic, patriarchal narratives and perspectives of the past and participate in the project of recuperation.²

Feminist historiography looks to the past in order to recover women 'as subjects and agents in the making of history' because of their absence from most accounts of history (Morgan 2009:381, 383).³ Feminist historiography also includes the task of 'rewriting',⁴ 're-reading',⁵ 're-presenting'/representing (Wilkinson 1996), the retrieval of women's writing (Tharu and Lalita 1991:xvii, 1, 13ff; see Forbes 2003a) as well as recuperating and listening to 'women's voices'.⁶

The feminist project of the recovery bears similarities to the Subaltern Studies early strategy of recovering the subject from elite historiography,⁷ recuperating acts of subaltern resistance and recovering

¹ See Mitchell 1849; Kincaid 1919; Macnicol 1919; Abbott 1922–1930; Ranade 1933; Ajgaonkar 1948; Deleury 1960/1994; Sardar 1969; Lele 1981, 1987; Kolatkar 1982; Zelliott 1981, 1982, 1987a; Chitre 1991; Hoyland 1992; Dabre 1998, and Eaton 2005.

² See Bhagwat 1995:WS24, 2005:170–71; Chakravarti 2005; Ramaswamy 2007 and Pechilis 2012:138.

³ For more on this topic see Roberts 2004; Scott 2011:17; Bennett 2006; Clegg 1997:201; Davis 1975–6; Hannam 1997; Rowbotham 1990; Bhagwat 2005:171; Sangari and Vaid 1990; Ramusack 2005 and Strobel 2005.

⁴ See Scott 2011:17; Chakravarti 2005:202; Hannam 1997:83; Morgan 2009:382; Hall 1992:12, 2002; Newman 1991:60; Glenn 2000:389 and Bhagwat 2005:171.

⁵ See Tharu and Lalita 1991:34; Bose 2000:vii, and King 2006:77.

⁶ See Harvey 1992; Bhagwat 1999; Sangari 1990:1537ff; Zelliott 1996a; Bose 2000:213ff; Mahmood 2005:6; Mason 1980; Gilligan 1982; Smith and Watson 1998; Suleri 1992 and Pechilis 2012:128.

⁷ See O'Hanlon 1988; Guha 1983:vii; Guha & Spivak 1988; Bayly 1988; Chakrabarty 1992, 2000; Prakash 1992, 1994, 2000 and Amin 1996.

the ‘voice’ of the subaltern (Mathur 2000:94–97; see Rajan 1993; Bhagwat 1999). Spivak’s assertion that the subaltern woman could not speak or rather that her speech could not be heard because it could not be interpellated into the site of hegemony, it could not articulate itself in the terms of that hegemony but was instead co-opted by the essentialist and politically interested discourses of colonial and native elite discourses (1988)⁸ offered a challenge to Subaltern Studies and to feminist historiography in terms of their representation of and continued muting of women.

Influenced by these ideas I began reading all the available material in English to locate the compositions of Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs*.⁹ These compositions are in the *abhaṅga* metre, an elongation of the *ovī* (Tulpule 1979:451–52), which is an orally transmitted folk genre that is regarded as being composed by women. The *ovī* is primarily a grinding song, which is also performed while doing other domestic tasks, and village women often compose new *ovīs* while working (Junghare 1983:273; Kiehnle 1997a:8, 41ff; Amshoff 1999:159). Learning of the connection between the *ovī* and women was most exciting with regards to identifying women’s voices but it also drew my attention to the oral nature of the compositions and their transmission.

The author of an *abhaṅga* is usually identified by the name of the poet that appears at the end of the verse and which acts as an oral signature. However, Hawley argues that these signatures say less about the authorship of an ‘author’ and more about ‘the author’s authority’ (2005:22, 30; 1988:270, 275). Thus, the *nāmamudrā* might convey the idea a song is by a particular composer but the song may actually have been composed in his or her name in order to garner its authority.¹⁰ Thus, Dharwadker argues a name like ‘Kabīr’ might better be understood as a ‘poetic pseudonym’ or a ‘discursively constituted mark’ (2003:60). Moreover, if the compositions were transmitted orally until the process of textualisation began in late sixteenth century this meant that the ‘text’ was mediated by performers and editors.¹¹ Consequently, poems cannot be understood as the work of a specific historical person or legendary figure and so need to be regarded as attributed words or speech that were later written and codified (Hawley 2005:5, 9; 1984:44; 1994:5).

⁸ See Morgan 2009:395; Morton 2003:56–9; Forbes 2003a; Kumar 1994a; Visweswaran 1996 and Mani 1998:190.

⁹ See Deshpande 1953; Anandkar 1979; Kher 1979; Nemade 1981:117; Feldhaus 1982; Vanita 1989; Bhagwat 1990, 1995; Tharu and Lalita 1991; Sellergren 1996; Babras 1996; Bahadur 1998; Zelliott 1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, and Pandharipande 2000.

¹⁰ See Novetzke 2008:136; Hawley 1988:274, 1979:64ff, 1984:35–63, 1994:5, and 1997:139–40.

¹¹ See Dharwadker 2003:25, 52, 65; Hawley 1994:4–6, 2005:28; Novetzke 2008:136; Callewaert 1989:11ff, 1992, 200, 2004; see McLeod 1999:12–15 and Vanita 1989:47.

The issue of attribution is barely alluded to by scholars in relation to the Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs* (Feldhaus 1982:601n.6; Bhagwat 1990:223), although I later discovered more on the issue in relation to the male *sants* Jñāneśvar, Nāmdev and Tukārām (Kiehnle 1997a:2ff; Novetzke 2008:139ff; Chitre 1991:viii). However, attribution is discussed by other scholars in relation to *sants* like Mīrābāī. Mukta, for example, states that it is difficult to authenticate any of the Mīrā verses due to the accumulation of Mīrā verses over a long period and thus Mukta argues for the ‘collective formation’ of Mīrā (1994:33–36). In support of this view she cites Tripathi’s proposal that ‘many a clever little woman has composed her own sweet song in the name of Mira...’ (1892:61), as well as Jhaveri’s view that ‘a crowd of imitators...passed off their own verses’ under Mīrā’s name (1938:41), and Hawley and Juergensmeyer’s more recent suggestion that the Mīrā poems were ‘by other “Miras” than the original one, if ever indeed she existed at all’ (1988:123).¹² Consequently, I realised that I had to construe the poems of the Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs* and *santakavis* as ‘the work of a *community of authors*’ and therefore as attributed compositions rather than as necessarily signalling a straightforward connection between authors, compositions, and gender (Dharwadker 2003:59–60).¹³

The realisation that no single figure, no distinct female voice could be recovered as the author of a composition destabilised my proposed project. Moreover, it raised questions about the identity of the *santakaviyatrīs* as there is a close relationship between poetry and sacred biography as *caritras* are usually organised around the poetic compositions of particular figures (Hawley 2005:34ff, 1988:278).¹⁴ Consequently, I realised that the approach offered by feminist historiography and Subaltern Studies was untenable in relation to the women identified as poets and/or *sants* in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Thus, I was going to have to go ‘against the grain’ (Spivak 1988c) and subordinate the feminist project of recovery to an analysis of the existing information (see Bynum 1988; Mahmood 2005). In considering how to address the question of gender I took into account Scott’s submission that gender be employed as an analytical category rather than as a descriptive device (1986: 1055, 1066ff)¹⁵ and Scott’s contention that ‘women’ and ‘men’ are discursively constructed (1986; 1988; 1989:11; 2008:1424).¹⁶ Therefore, I considered what was intellectually possible with the available material and decided it was feasible to look at the ways the attribution of women’s authorship is used in the construction and development of the

¹² See Hawley 2002:301, 2005:117ff; Martin-Kershaw 2000:165 and Martin 2007:243–44.

¹³ See Hawley 2005:9ff; Novetzke 2008:xiii, 90ff and Martin 2007:243–44.

¹⁴ See Hawley and Juergensmeyer 1988:3,6ff; Cutler 1987:36ff; Novetzke 2008:120–21 and Snell 1994:4.

¹⁵ See Isenberg 1995:94; Clegg 1997:205 and Riley 1988.

¹⁶ See Cabrera 2011:43–44; Rajan 1996:129, and Sangari and Vaid 1990c:17.

Vārkarī *bhakti* tradition and to ask what function the high visibility of *santakaviyatrīs* in the tradition might have played in its self-understanding and presentation.

2. *Research Questions*

The predominant question that this thesis thus investigates is why there were so many women ‘poets’ associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* although these *santakaviyatrīs* and the compositions attributed to them are largely absent from contemporary devotional practices. This issue was first raised by Zelliott who noted the ‘extraordinary number of women who sang their devotional songs in Marathi’ and ‘the voices of some dozen women saints [who] are recorded in the collected songs of all the saints’ (2000:192; also see 1999a:89). For Zelliott the recording of poems attributed to women and the inclusion of stories about them within the Vārkarī corpus occurred because the Vārkarī *sampradāya* ‘was and is a householder tradition’ (1999a:89, 99; 1999b:418). However, no scholars appear to have picked up on Zelliott’s connection between the householder nature of the *sampradāya* and the inclusion of poems attributed to and stories concerning women within the Vārkarī corpus.

In her article ‘Three Women Sants of Maharashtra’ Vanita observes that the Vārkarī tradition emphasises ‘living a devoted life while a householder’ (1989:47) and comments that women *sants* seem to have been incorporated into the tradition from the outset despite living ‘relatively ordinary lives’. However, Vanita does not connect the householder nature of the *sampradāya* and the inclusion of women as she regards the integration of women into the tradition as due to each woman being part of a *guru paramparā*. Interestingly, Vanita notes that there is a paradox in the inclusion of women into the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as the compositions attributed to *sants* like Eknāth and Tukārām portray women as ‘a symbol of worldly attachment’ (1989:49). The presence of *santakaviyatrīs* in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* did not alter the image of women in the teachings or the tradition itself according to Vanita as most *santakaviyatrīs* remained ‘subordinate to a male *guru*’ who was often a relative (1989:49). However, it is not always the case that women were included in a *guru paramparā* or subordinate to a male *guru* as Kānhopātrā’s life-story demonstrates (see Chapter Four).

The lives and writings of Maharashtrian *santakaviyatrīs* are of concern for Bhagwat who ponders whether the women have gained adequate recognition and questions why social history customarily considers the women in relation to their male mentors (1990:223; 2005:170). Bhagwat notes that the Vārkarī movement ‘produced a long line of women saints’ (1995:WS-25; 2005:170) who were from ‘all castes and regions in Maharashtra’ (1995:WS-25) and whose literature Bhagwat regards as ‘full

of radical intent, critique and expression' (2005:170; see 1995:WS-26, 29). However, while Bhagwat alludes to the issue of attribution in relation to Jñāneśvar her concern is with why the *santakaviyatrīs* 'suffered non-recognition and oblivion' (1990:223). The possibility that women were elided as part of the discursive formation of the Vārkarī *panth* as a householder tradition is not addressed by Bhagwat. Like Vanita and Bhagwat, Aklujkar notes that the Maharashtrian *sant* tradition records 'women's contribution on many levels' (2005:105). Aklujkar's statement ties in with Zelliott's contention about the number of women and the recording of songs in the *Śrīsakalasantagāthā* (2000:192; also see 1999a:89). However, Aklujkar does not consider how or why the women attained their status as *sants*, the fact that their poetry is best understood as attributed speech, and like Vanita and Bhagwat does not consider why the tradition records women or its possible connection with the householder nature of the *sampradāya*.

I am going to examine the question of why there are so many women associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* by considering the function of gender attribution in the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path. The issue of attribution has been considered by some scholars of *bhakti* (see above) in relation to compositions and/or sacred biography but generally these scholars have not employed gender attribution to consider the discursive construction of a *bhakti* tradition. In the next section I examine some literature pertaining to the discursive construction of *bhakti* traditions to demonstrate where my project concurs or differs from previous studies before considering the tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha* as this relates to construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

3. *Literature Review*

The incorporation of attributed compositions and/or sacred biography into a tradition appears to be connected to the compilers' or biographers' goals. Snell argues that sacred biography must show that 'the sectarian attitude being promoted offers a uniquely correct perception of divine truth' (1994:6). Hawley notes that poems attributed to Sūrdās were included in later versions of the *Sūrsāgar* due to a 'programmatic intent' among the editors whose concerns were with the doctrinal framework of the Puṣṭimārga (1979:66ff). Hawley argues that the later poems added to the *Sūrsāgar* act as commentary on earlier poems, aligning them with Vallabhite views and muting the dominant mood of *viraha* that appears in the early *Sūrsāgar*, and thus supplying a systematic framework for an unsystematic text (1979:67–9). Hawley's statement regarding the sectarian agenda of the *Sūrsāgar*'s compilers ties in with Lincoln's

contention that discourse is an instrument of ‘ideological persuasion’ and ‘sentiment evocation’ that has the ability to shape and reshape society (1989:4–5, 8–9).

It has been proposed that Mīrā’s verses and life have not been preserved in religious compilations as Mīrā was not aligned to an established or establishing *sampradāya* who would have incorporated her compositions into their tradition. Both Mukta and Martin refer to the Vallabha *sampradāya*’s explicit rejection of Mīrā that was probably due to Mīrā’s disregard for social norms like wifhood (Mukta 1994:24–5; Martin 1999:12, 34; see Harlan 1992:205ff). Similarly, Tulsīdās’ renunciation of married life may account for why the Vallabhites rejected him (see Lutgendorf 1991:6), which might be connected to the Vallabha *sampradāya*’s endeavour to establish itself as a householder tradition (see Barz 1992:29, 32).

The biography of *sants* like Mīrābāī and Kāraikkāl Ammaiār now seem to overshadow their attributed compositions in public imagination despite the fact that the sacred biographies were meant to accompany or respond to the poems (Hawley 1984:15–16; Pechilis 2012:2, 82, 104). Pechilis argues that the biography of Kāraikkāl Ammaiār in the *Periya Purāṇam* ‘is a discourse that certifies a woman as a religious exemplar’ (2012:90) as Cēkkiḷār is primarily concerned with representing Kāraikkāl Ammaiār as a wife who renounces wifhood and transforms into a ghoul (*pey*) before becoming a poet. Cēkkiḷār’s concerns thus differ from the Kāraikkāl Ammaiār poems which focus on her experience as a Śīva devotee (2012:82–3). Pechilis’ interest is ‘the relationship of the interpreter to the interpreted as contributing towards a discourse on the identity and significance of Kāraikkāl Ammaiār’ (2012:140,138) and not on the discursive formation of a particular tradition. Significantly, Pechilis overlooks the issue of gender attribution as she states that Cēkkiḷār’s interest in Kāraikkāl Ammaiār ‘played a role in preserving her poetry’ and presenting ‘a glimpse of her through her own utterances’ (2012:138). Pechilis’ programme therefore differs significantly from scholars like Mukta who argue that the life of a woman like Mīrā cannot be extrapolated from published verses and analysed in terms of what she exemplifies (1994:35).

Barz, like Pechilis, suggests that within *bhakti* sacred biographies like the *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan kī vārtā* (CVV) are meant to be understood as indicating ‘prototypic behaviour for the cultivation of a life of devotion’. However, Barz suggests that texts like the CVV ought not to be read as a record of secular history (1994:53). Barz applies Lorenzen’s assertions regarding the importance of the Kabīr legends to the Kabīr *panth* to the *vārtās* of the Vallabha *sampradāya* (1994:53):

For Kabir's followers...these legends have been a vital source and part of their religious faith, of their communal and personal identities, and of their socio-religious ideology. The legends provide the fullest expression of this faith, identity, and ideology at the same time they serve to inculcate them in the minds and heart of those followers. Without the legends the Kabir Panth would, in fact, not exist, just as Vaishnavism would be inconceivable without the legends of Rama and Krishna...

(Lorenzen 1991:8)

Barz argues that episodes in the CVV are interpreted to illustrate Vallabhācārya's key philosophical principles (1994:55) and to reconcile 'the conflict between rules of social morality and the attitudes appropriate to the Kṛṣṇa-centred life' (1994:56). While Barz may not consider the discursive construction of the Vallabha *sampradāya* explicitly one can understand the CVV to indicate 'programmatic intent' as the *vārtās* provide a manual of sectarian precept and practice (Snell 1994:7).

According to McLeod the *janam-sākhīs* are a collection of hagiographic anecdotes regarding Gurū Nānak that seek to portray him as one who reveals the path to liberation (1994:19; 1999:12). McLeod argues that the role of the *janam-sākhīs* relates to their function in the Sikh community, particularly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in terms of 'panthic cohesion', which differs from the issue of purpose as this relates to the motives and intentions of narrators, compilers and redactors (1999:9, 12, 237–38ff). The *janam-sākhīs* can thus be understood to play a role in the discursive construction of the Sikh community like the CVV and the *Sūrsāgar* in the Vallabha *sampradāya*, the *Rāmcaritmānas* in the Rāmnāmī community and the Kabīr legends in the Kabīr *panth*. However, none of the scholars mentioned above consider gender attribution in relation to the discursive construction of a tradition.

The construction of Nāmdev's public memory in Maharashtra through performance rather than text is Novetzke's primary concern (2008). Novetzke suggests that while *sants* like Jñāneśvar and Tukārām may enter public memory textually, Nāmdev's legacy lies in the performance tradition of *kīrtan* (2008:75ff, 245). Consequently, Novetzke argues that the textual records of Nāmdev's attributed songs demonstrate a continuum between performance and permanence as the record remains open and fluid (2008:90ff, 242). Novetzke considers the issue of 'corporate authorship' in relation to Nāmdev and in so doing touches on the issue of gender attribution in the case of compositions ascribed to Janī in connection with public memory (2008:135ff, 42–3, 74–9, 149, 96–98) but Novetzke does not consider gender attribution in relation to the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

The power of the Mīrā symbol is of concern for Mukta (1994:31, 26; see Kishwar and Vanita 1989:90; Harlan 1992) who contends that the Mīrā compositions ought to be considered as ‘an expression which had a popular base...’ (1994:32, 27; see Trawick 1988). Mukta argues that *communitas*, as a community of relations or feelings, stems from the Mīrā *bhajans*. According to Mukta, the Mīrābāī community keeps the memory of Mīrā alive and provides a ‘powerful social base to the Mira bhakti—upon which other figures of Mira were built upon in the course of time’ (1994:37). Mukta views this *bhakti* generated ‘community of feelings’ as the subordinated communities of Rajasthan and Gujarat who are able to describe ‘privation, want, humiliation and pain’ through the Mīrā *bhajans*. Relatedly, Mukta mentions Nāmdev and other Vārkarī *sants* who gathered across caste and sexual divides to form a similar community (1994:38–39). Martin-Kershaw maintains that as Mīrā lived and lives in popular imagination ‘her traditions are a powerful resource to voice resistance among members of lower castes, and her example is an interpretative category that facilitates the choices made by some women to live lives outside marriage in a society where such options are severely limited’ (2000:165, 176; 1999:7–46). Lorenzen regards the Kabīr legends as defining ‘the imagined shared past’, historical identity and values of the *panth* as well as embodying a ‘socio-religious ideology’ of protest against social discrimination and economic exploitation by the poor and powerless (1991:4–5; see Dharwadker 2003:18–19). Similarly, Lutgendorf interprets the derision among Brahmanical elites towards Tulsīdās’ *Rāmcaritmānas*, which is presented in the sacred biographies, as signally the *Rāmcaritmānas* had been received enthusiastically by the lower classes and religious mendicants (1991:8–9).

Consequently, it is apparent that while ‘programmatic intent’ or ‘ideological persuasion’ play an important role in the discursive construction of a tradition along sectarian lines, attributed compositions and sacred biographies also serve the ‘popular base’ in resisting and deconstructing their subordination or the goals of elites (see Lincoln 1989:5). The issue of ‘popular base’ signals a tension in the discursive construction of a tradition. Relatedly, there is a tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha* that narrators, compilers and redactors attempt to resolve so as to construct the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

It is my contention that while the compositions attributed to women say nothing about gender as such they signal that the tradition argues a spiritual life is viable on the householder path. Furthermore, the compositions attributed to women point towards the discursive debate and the tensions between *grhastha* and *sannyāsa*. Thus, I contend that the most plausible explanation for the compositions

attributed to women is that they signify the *grhastha* status of the tradition rather than the existence of specific individuals. Therefore, the tension between *grhastha* and *sannyāsa* within *bhakti* will be explored in order to frame the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path.

3.1. *Bhakti and the tension between sannyāsa and grhastha*

Bhakti is characterised by the tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha* according to Biardeau (1992:290) and Dumont (1999:274).¹⁷ The householder stage of life is regarded as the ‘best’ (Manu 3.78, Doniger 1991:50) or most important by *dharmasāstra* and *dharmasūtra* texts (*Gautama* 3.3, *Baudhāyana* 2.11.27, *Vāsiṣṭha* 8.4, and *Viṣṇusmṛti* 8.14–15), although the *āśrama* system sanctions *sannyāsa* for elite men who have fulfilled their *grhastha* role (Manu 6.2).¹⁸ The generosity of the householder in providing for the other *āśramas* seems to account for the exalted status of the householder in the *dharma* texts (Heesterman 1988:251; Malamoud 1981:43; Lingat 1973:49). However, Laine comments that these texts were composed by ‘male brahman householders to continue to justify the male brahman’s role in the caste hierarchy’ and to include, absorb and de-radicalise the ‘challenge to caste particularism’ represented by the renouncer (1998:128). This is because the renouncer, by eschewing society and only being concerned with *mokṣa*, threatens the ‘dharmic order of the world’ (Heesterman 1988:251). Following Dumont (1960:45; 1999:274–75), Heesterman regards the (Brahman) hostility to renunciation as understandable because ‘the renouncer is the archetypal dissenter...for he is a living reminder of a transcendent value that disturbs the settled order...’ Thus, there is an insoluble conflict between the householder and the renouncer (Heesterman 1988:252). Dumont regarded the relationship between householder and renouncer as one of ‘genuine dichotomy’ (1957:16ff; see 1960:37ff and 1999:273ff) and asserted that due to *bhakti* renunciation was no longer necessary as ‘detachment and disinterestedness are sufficient: one can leave the world from within...’ (1999:282). However, Dumont incorrectly understood *bhakti* as ‘a sanyasic development, an invention of the renouncer’ (1999:282; see Lorenzen 2004a:9) and *bhakti* traditions as transcending caste (1999:284; see Laine 1999:129). Bayly argues that Dumont’s binary pairing of renouncer/man-in-the-world is part of his ‘Brahman-centred’ perspective with a ‘hierarchical or purity-centred picture of caste values’ (1999:16–22) while Lorenzen points out most *bhakti* sects tend to uphold the caste system and draw followers from a specific group or a range of castes (2004a:10, 13).

¹⁷ See Doniger 1981a:78–79ff; Lorenzen 2004a:6ff; Kinsley 1980:91; Pechilis 1999:19; Khandelwal 2004:4–5 and Malinar 2007:28.

¹⁸ Doniger 1991:117; Khandelwal 2004:5 and Harlan 1992:216.

Biardeau finds the key term relating to the tension is *kāma* as desire underlies every phase of human life and as it is *kāma* that has to be renounced in order to attain *mokṣa* (1992:86–88). For Biardeau *bhakti* offered a solution to the problem presented in the *sannyāsa* view:

Whereas the starting-point of the sanyāsin’s speculations was karman, the analysis he conducted, parallel to that of the Brahman, on human actions and goals, has shifted the focus of interest. It is this notion of *kāma*—in the all-encompassing sense which the renouncer attributes to it—together with the whole constellation of associated ideas, which comes to constitute a golden thread that runs through all speculations about true universal salvation. *Bhakti* would seek a solution in the abolition of *kāma* in the very heart of man’s ordinary activity. In other words, it would seek to imbue secular life with the sanyāsin’s ideal.

(Biardeau 1999:88)

Renunciation was however an institution that all *bhakti* traditions confronted as they arose. Horstmann believes that *bhakti* traditions rejected the soteriological and ontological concept on which renunciation relies rather than rejecting renunciation in itself (2001:229). Horstmann highlights the fact that *sannyāsa* is based on the idea that *mokṣa* can only be attained if one renounces *grhastha*. Liberation cannot be realised as a householder because a *sannyāsi* candidate has to die to the world during his initiation and exist in ‘an absolute state of freedom and perfect being’, a state to which no *bhakta* could lay claim as it conflicts with the notion of Divine grace (2001:229). Consequently, *sannyāsa* and *bhakti* may be regarded as conflicting concepts.

Vallabhācārya (c.1479–1531), the founder of the Puṣṭimārga, criticised orthodox renunciation in his treatise the *Samnyāsaniṛṇaya*:

It is not necessary to take vows of *sannyāsa* (world-renunciation) in order to practice the nine-fold *bhakti*, for in the practice of that *bhakti* the help of other *bhaktas* is essential; both the pride common to the state of *sannyāsa* and the duties of the state of *sannyāsa* are contrary to the *bhaktimarga*.

(v.3; Barz 1976:33)

Moreover, because there is pride inherent in the *sannyāsa* and specific duties are imposed upon a *sannyāsi*, the two religious systems are incompatible.

(v.4ab; Horstmann 2001:229)

In the first verse Vallabhācārya stresses that *bhakti* is a communal form of religion while renunciation is solitary (Horstmann 2001:230). This highlights the fact that *bhakti* is performed within the world and, ideally, in the company of other *bhaktas* (Barz 1976:33–4). In the second verse Vallabhācārya emphasises that renunciation engenders arrogance while *bhakti* rules out other commitments and attachments as one must surrender completely to the Divine (Horstmann 2001:230; Barz 1976:32).

In *bhakti* there are ‘no pure types’ argues Laine as *bhakti* is ‘mixed up with renunciation’ (1999:130). According to Laine, one usually finds male and female ‘saints’ who are ‘drawn into quasi-*sannyāsi* styles of life, lives described with images drawn from the tradition of *sannyāsa*, but lives often complicated by their being, however reluctantly, householders’ (1999:130). Following on from Laine’s view Horstmann argues that *bhakti* texts and the lives of *bhakti* exemplars demonstrate that ‘bhakti cannot lead anywhere but to withdrawal from the world’ because ‘in its most radical form [bhakti] seems to be incompatible with life in the world’ (2001:231). Horstmann maintains that the charisma of the majority of historical *bhaktas* lay in ‘mystic experience’, which ‘had a tendency to break away from the world’ and that this resulted in a tension between *sahaja* and *viraha* (2001:231). This tension can lead to withdrawal from the world which is brought about by *nirveda* or by *vairāgya*, which Horstmann calls ‘spontaneous individual renunciation’ (2001:232). It must be noted that *vairāgya* is used in *sannyāsa* texts to refer to institutionalized renunciation or monasticism (Horstmann 2001:232ff) while *vairāgya* in a *bhakti* context tends to indicate ‘a strong personal disgust for worldly life and a personal decision to cut oneself away from that life’ (Barz 1992:36). The difference between *sannyāsa* and ‘the spontaneous type of individual *vairāgya*’ for Horstmann is that the *sannyāsi* or his *guru* ‘bring about the candidate’s ascent to the rank of liberated being, while in bhakti only God’s grace is thought to be able to bestow liberation. Moreover, the reward of bhakti is bhakti itself...the experience of the divine. Liberation is considered to be of secondary importance (2001:233).

Furthermore, Horstmann regards the ‘idea of the freely accorded grace of God’ as annihilating the ‘antagonism of householder versus renouncer’ but she argues that this annihilation is counteracted by the desire of the “radical” mystic *bhakta*’ to renounce the world. For Horstmann this then leads to a tension between ‘a kind of *vairāgya* that allows for the fulfilment of the demands of the world and a radical type of *vairāgya*...’ (2001:235–236). Thus Horstmann finds the difference between a householder and a renouncer, particularly within the Dādū Panth, to be operational (2001:236). The sacred biographies of the Vārkarī *sants* Nāmdev and Tukārām portray them as reluctant householders drawn to *vairāgya*, which highlights the tension between the homeless renouncer and the housebound *bhakta* like Tukārām who yearns for and experiences boundless space beyond the confines of *ghar* (Laine 1998:131; see Omvedt and Patankar 2012:173).

Biardeau ventures that the ‘structures of bhakti’ were the work of Brahmins (1992:90) for as Lipner points out Brahminic authority straddled the religious teaching of traditional Vedic religion and

the *bhakti* traditions (1999:126). Furthermore, the Brahman was the custodian of the path towards liberation and even after the rise of *bhakti* traditions that offered salvation to all Brahmans continued to have authority in many *bhakti* movements (Lipner 1999:57, 102; see Lorenzen 2004a:10ff). For Chakravarti *bhakti* continued the dissent of movements like Buddhism as it challenged the caste system but also because it dissolved the distinction between the worlds of the *grhasthā* and the *sannyāsī* (1989:18; 2003:95–6). Both Lipner and Chakravarti regard Buddhism as having allowed women to pursue religious goals and suggest that in response *bhakti* traditions, as Brahmanised theistic traditions, accommodated this change (Lipner 1999:102; Chakravarti 1989:18). The *Bhagavadgītā* asserted that women, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* could attain *mokṣa* despite the fact that their birth resulted from demerit (BhG 9.32). *Bhakti* was thus spiritually egalitarian (Chakravarti 2003:95ff; 1993:585) and open to the lower levels of society while the path of knowledge was considered appropriate only for Brahmans and Brahman ascetics (Lorenzen (1995:15). However, Chakravarti argues that the collapse of the divide between householder and renouncer within *bhakti* only operated in practice in the case of men as the dichotomy continued for women as a tension between marriage and *bhakti* (1989:23, 28). Likewise, Kishwar and Vanita suggest that the ideology of *pativrata* is a site of active conflict as it makes the unanimity of *bhakti* and *grhastha* that is possible for the male *bhakta* impossible for the female *bhakta* (1989:91). Thus the life of Bahiṇābāi suggests an ‘attempt to reconcile *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*’ for Feldhaus (1982:593, 599–600; see Jāvaḍekar 1979, v.451), a compromise between the *pativrata* and *virakta* for Pandharipande (2000:170) and a tension between deviance and conformism for Ramaswamy (1997:217).

The tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha* pertains to the question about the number of women recorded by the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Kiehnle notes ‘the Vārkarīs (at least since the time of Eknāth) propagate the householder’s life’ (1997a:25; see Jones 2009:4–5, 13). Eknāth is significant in this respect according to Keune because he ‘provided the Vārkarī tradition with a model for integrating...the second and fourth stages (*grhasthāśrama* and *sannyāsāśrama*) of a traditional brahman male’s life’ (2011:46). Keune bases his view on Skyhawk who submits that Eknāth’s most significant contribution to the development of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* was the notion of ‘renunciation-in-the-world and asceticism in marriage’ (1983:346). These notions highlight the tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha* in the *sampradāya* but also the discursive construction of the tradition as a householder path.

In colloquial Marathi the term *saṃsāra*—which I transliterate as *sansār* to differentiate it from the Sanskrit and ascetic concept—tends to refer to the domestic or married life (Laine 1998:129), ‘having

a husband or a household' (Feldhaus 1998:77), and 'practical life and its responsibilities, domestic affairs; [the] temporal world, life in this world; household' (Berntsen 1982:155).¹⁹ According to Sarkar, *sansār* as 'the domain of the householder...[is] a vital phase within the prescribed four-stage life-cycle of a pious [male] Hindu...The observance of prescribed ritual, caste and gender norms that had been spelt out by the *Vedas* and subsequent sacred law-codes, would constitute the essence of a pious life or *dharma*'. However, *sansār* is governed by scriptural injunctions and prohibitions (*vidhi niṣedha*), and sustained by the law of *karma*. Thus, Sarkar argues that *sansār* is 'the site of *dharma* as well as the site of trials' (1993:39; 2006:36).

Laine suggests that when reading the negative portrayals of the domestic life of a householder found in religious texts one needs to consider that the male authors 'had critics, or if not critics, perhaps sparring partners (many of whom were women) who...took for granted the values and joys, as well as trials, of the ordinary *samsār* of the ordinary *grhastha*' (1998:129). Tukārām said he turned to God because he was afflicted by the miseries of *sansār*: *sansārācyā tape tāpalo mī deva (abhaṅga 66.1, SSG 2:640)*. Tukārām's second wife, Āvalī or Jijāī, critiqued him fiercely and the speech attributed to her indicates her trials as Tukārām's wife (Aklujkar 2005:115–119; see Chitre 1991:42ff)²⁰ as well as the difficulties a woman might suffer due to a husband inclined to renunciation, which raises the question of how women, particularly those in a *sant*'s family, are understood to have dealt with *sansār* (Zelliot 1999a:94). In her essay on the autobiography of the Bengali woman Rashsundari Debi, Sarkar points out that a woman 'enters *sansar* through...marriage, the only sacrament that is available to her. For her, *sansar* is the unending flow of domestic work and responsibilities, primarily connected with cooking, serving, and child-rearing. Ideally, the woman should have no other religious activity...' (1993:39).

Ramanujan argues that women saints 'invert and even subvert the traditional ideals of womanhood' through five phases: early dedication to God, denial of marriage, defying societal norms, initiation, and marrying the Lord (1982:317–322). Sangari suggests that the lives of women *sants* like Mīrābāī are punctuated by other 'typical conventions': 'the bitter persecutions and miraculous escapes, the displays of wit and logic when questioned and tested by a male authority figure, the association with holy places, the breaking of norms and taboos...the rejection of worldly power and authority...'

¹⁹ The poem *Are sansār sansār*, 'Oh the married life, the married life' by Bahinabai Chaudhari (1982a:103–04; dipiaarmarathi 2008) is an excellent example of this colloquial usage.

²⁰ The relationship between Tukārām and Āvalī/Jijāī is related by Mahīpati: BVJ 49.31–116ff, (Abbott and Godbole 1996:218–227ff); BLM 28.32–43ff, 30.85–91, 31.222–229, 34.50–63, 34.64–74 (Abbott 1996). There are also eight Tukārām *abhaṅgas* in which he comments on Āvalī and eleven *abhaṅgas* where Tukārām advises her to change her perspective (see Chitre 1991:42–49).

(1990:1465). Ramanujan also finds a ‘related pattern in the role of *sants*’ wives’ who ‘appear superior to their husbands, needing no conversion’ as they are ‘the vehicles of divine grace for the male saint or poet’ (1982:322). Ramanujan juxtaposes the woman saint ‘who rejects family and child’ and a *sant*’s wife who ‘out-saints’ him (1982:323). Yet there are other possibilities, for example that a woman might negotiate between *bhakti* and *pativrata-dharma* or that a woman might not ‘out-saint’ her *sant* husband but rather be remembered for the ‘nuisance value’ she offered a male *sant* (Aklujkar 2005:105; see Vanita 1989:49).

Aklujkar’s idea of women remembered for their ‘nuisance value’ to a male *sant* is interesting as it draws attention to the conflict between a man’s disgust for the household life (*vairāgya*) and the desire of his family to perform his household duties (2005:108). Aklujkar notes that both Goṇāī and Rājāī are depicted as named women who despite a dialogue with God do not make Nāmdēv ‘give up his worship completely’ or join him in ‘total disregard for the family’. Rather they are shown ‘taking their social roles of a mother and a wife very seriously...Between the two of them, they have used practically all the arguments to make the Sant assume his share of household responsibility...Therefore the dispute between the divine and the domestic remains unresolved...’ (2005:115, 118). However, Aklujkar does not consider why the *abhaṅgas* and/or the sacred biographies might have wished to draw attention to the conflict and the tension between *vairāgya/sannyāsa* and *grhastha*. Aklujkar observes that Tukārām’s wife is recorded as ‘his major adversary’ in the Tukārām *abhaṅgas* and in the BVJ (49?) where she is unnamed and referred to as *strī*, albeit the oral tradition in Maharashtra names her Āvalī or Jijāī (2005:108; see Chitre 1991:ix). The eleven Tukārām *abhaṅgas* that offer advice to his wife depict an angry woman through speeches attributed to her and portray the tensions between *vairāgya/sannyāsa* and *grhastha* (2005:116–117).²¹ Aklujkar argues that the account of Tukārām’s wife differs from Goṇāī and Rājāī because no miracles occur to convince Āvalī of Tukārām’s greatness, neither does Āvalī dialogue with God, nor is Āvalī remembered for composing *abhaṅgas* but rather as being ‘a cantankerous wife who does not understand the magnanimity of her Sant husband’ (2005:117–118). However Aklujkar regards Goṇāī, Rājāī and Āvalī as ‘typical examples of disempowered women’ to whom a nurturing role is assigned but to whom no protection is offered against a man who refuses to share the burden of family/domestic life. Moreover, Aklujkar argues these women are accused of hindering their men on the *bhakti* path and criticised for attempting to pursue familial life (2005:119).

²¹ See Chitre 1991:42–49, Fraser 2000:41–43 and BVJ 49.57–116.

Aklujkar’s idea of women with ‘nuisance value’ contrasts with Ramanujan’s notion of saints’ wives, as mentioned above. Ramanujan suggests that while many male saints do not reject family life most female saints do; female saints then substitute their natal and conjugal families with a family composed of saints [*satsaṅga*] (1982:323). However, Ramanujan’s view of saint’s wives as superior is not supported by the depictions of Vārkarī *sants* as Aklujkar’s point about ‘nuisance’ makes clear. However, Rājāī is portrayed as accepting *bhakti* (Aklujkar 2005:114) but it is my belief that this, like the tension between *vairāgya/sannyāsa* and *grhastha*, can be understood as part of a ‘construction of particular conjecture’ (Mukta 1994:23).

It is the role and portrayal of women, particularly those now recognised as *santakaviyatrīs* in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* which is of interest for this thesis. It is my contention that the *sampradāya* was formed through ‘discourse’—oral, chirographic, typographic, performative, and communal discourse—and that through this discursive construction the Vārkarī *sampradāya* defined itself as a householder tradition.²² Consequently, the tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha* outlined above is significant for the *sampradāya*. Furthermore, I contend that women play a relatively prominent role in this discursive formation as they are instrumentalised as householders par excellence even if there are ‘no pure types’ in *bhakti* as Laine maintains. The role and portrayal of women is therefore connected to the *sampradāya*’s presentation of itself as a householder tradition.

4. *Methodology*

The unsustainability of reading back into the past to recover the subject and/or ‘voice’ requires an alternative methodology for my project of considering the function of gender attribution in the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Consequently, I have combined elements from Hall’s ‘discursive strategies’ of national culture (1996b: 613–15) and Kolakowski’s typology of national identity (1995:33 cited in Wodak 2009:24–25) to form a framework to track the discursive formation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path.

4.1. *The discursive formation of the Vārkarī sampradāya*

The first of the discursive strategies identified by Hall is *narrative*, which he regards as providing ‘a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events...symbols, and rituals which...*represent*, the shared experiences, sorrows, and triumphs and disasters which give meaning...’ (1996c:613 *italics* in original). In the context of the discursive formation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* narrative operates within

²² See Ong 2012; Hartley 2012:206, 212; Day 2002; Wodak 2009; Kendall & Wickham 2003 and Novetzke 2008.

various genres including poetry and sacred biography. *Caritra* in the Indian context is part of the process by which a tradition grows and develops as it can ‘play a central part in the formulation and transmission of sectarian theology and communal identity’ declares Snell (1994:2, 13). In his discussion on Śrīvaiṣṇava sacred biography Hardy argues that biographies aim to imbue a life with religious significance and define its position in relation to its environment. *Caritra* therefore ‘constitutes a particular symbol-system which is involved in the construction of a universe of meaning’ (Hardy 1992:82). The intentions and aims of sacred biographies or biographies are varied but Snell notes they include some common patterns: *satsaṅga* (see Tulpule 1994b:166), ‘didactic instruction, the benefits of spiritual life, charity, the grace of God, the merit of praise, the example of conversion stories, the certain rewards earned by pious service...the efficacy of composing and singing hagiographical works [and] a search for closeness or communion with charismatics of the past’ (Snell 1994:2). The biographer’s agenda includes an ‘interpretive element which controls, directs or otherwise manipulates the reader’s [or hearer’s] perception of the tradition’ argues Snell (1994:3). For example, the biographies of the Puṣṭimārg highlight the importance of the *guru* as an intermediary (Barz 1994:55; Dalmia 2003a:133ff). Snell notes that there is a contradiction regarding sacred biographies as *bhaktas* usually insist the individual is subservient to the deity and that details of an individual’s life are therefore irrelevant (1994:3). Poetry also acts as a form of narrative as poets relate details of other poets or *bhaktas* lives. For example, Nāmdev was a poet and biographer of Jñāneśvar but also the subject of sacred biography, thus highlighting another common element in the genre that hagiographers become ‘ideal subjects for hagiology’ (Snell 1994:10; Tulpule 1994b). Snell also notes that sacred biography reveals ‘facets of belief and attitude which, though at some remove from historical actuality lie at the very heart of the traditions they represent’. Furthermore, sacred biography is characteristically reverential and tends towards timelessness (Snell 1994:1).

An emphasis on *origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness* is the second discursive strategy (Hall 1996c:614; emphasis in original) and this resonates with some of the objects of canon formation which forms part of the discursive construction of the Vārkaṛī *sampradāya*. Von Stietencron argues that one of the main functions of canon is to ‘arrest time’ or rather to select ‘essential and eternally valid’ elements that provide the community with continuing direction (2003:15).²³ According to Christof the reason canonical and sacred texts differ is that while sacred texts ‘show a tendency to normativity and

²³ See also Hammer & Lewis 2007:1–2.

provide a direction, they are open to additions and interpretations' while a canon is 'the institutionalization of permanence, and is believed to be based on an ahistorical connection with primeval times' (2003:63). In this view Christof follows J.Z. Smith's notion that canon is a list that is 'held to be complete' (1982:48). Consequently, particular expression—language, stories, agreements, prescriptions, and examples from a specific social and cultural context—also become fixed. A canon may therefore become a 'snapshot' of a cultural and socio-religious moment; a moment out of time. This can lead to a gap between the canon and its receivers and von Stietencron argues that in this context an important role can be played by personal charisma (2003:15–16; see Graham 1993:xi).

The third discursive strategy (Hall 1996c:614) is what Hobsbawn calls the *invention of tradition*. Hobsbawn defines an 'invented tradition' as 'a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past' (2000a:1). Hobsbawn also contends that a feature of an 'invented' tradition is that this continuity with the past is largely factitious as the object and characteristic of traditions is 'invariance' (2000a:2). Hammer and Lewis find a comparable situation with regard to religion noting that in many invented sacred traditions 'the actual processes of human agency...are overlaid with a historiography that confers legitimacy to religious claims and practices' (2007:2). Furthermore, Hammer and Lewis argue that once the charismatic leader ceases to be present, 'charisma needs to be transferred to some other medium for the movement to continue existing' (2007:4). Charisma is thus a key element in the interplay between the second and third discursive strategies of 'inventing' and developing and maintaining a sacred tradition.

The *foundational myth* or the *myth of origin* is the fourth discursive strategy which Hall regards as 'a story which locates the origin of the nation, the people, and their national character so early that they are lost in the mists of, not "real," but "mythic" time. Invented traditions make the confusions and disasters of history intelligible, converting disarray into "community" and disasters into triumphs' (1996c:614). Hall's view connects with Hobsbawn's notions of 'factitious' and 'invariance' in *the invention of tradition* but also raises questions about how one might understand myth in the context of a religious tradition (see Doniger 1995; Eilberg-Schwartz 1995).

For Barthes 'since myth is a type of speech, everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse. Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message...' (2000:109). Thus for Barthes, myth is defined by the way in which it is used to communicate

rather than by its content. However, verbal discourse is not the only means of producing myth as anything can become a myth if it is used as a sign to convey meaning (Flood 2013:161–162): ‘We shall therefore take *language, discourse, speech*, etc., to mean any significant unit or synthesis, whether verbal or visual...even objects will become speech, if they mean something’ (2000:110–111 *italics* in original). For Barthes myth is a system of meaning constructed from pre-existing material ‘which has *already* been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication’ (2000:110). Eliade regarded myth as narrating a ‘sacred history’ and relating how ‘reality came into existence’ (Eliade 1998:5) which connects with the first two discursive strategies. Consequently, myth as a means of communicating a system of meaning may explain the ‘sacred’ origins of the *sampradāya*, its charismatic figures and encapsulate the *sampradāya*’s beliefs and values (see Chapter One).

The fifth discursive strategy is *historical memory* (Kolakowski 1995:33 cited in Wodak 2009:25) or *collective memory* (Halbwachs 1992 *my italics*). There are numerous terms for memory research and significantly the various terms suggest memory is a social phenomenon (Novetzke 2008:26). The social aspect of memory follows the notion put forward by Halbwachs that memory operates in a group: ‘it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories’ (1992:38). Novetzke proposes that just as Pechilis suggests *bhakti* be understood as ‘participation’ (1999:24ff; 2008:26) one might also think of memory as participation, ‘as predicated on social cooperation’ for where *bhakti* and memory intersect is the space where publics are created (2008:26). This intersection is significant as it highlights the association between memory and factors such as orality, literacy, performance and myth in the discursive formation of a tradition (see Novetzke 2008:29; Ong 2012:136ff; Klein 1995:279; Lévi-Strauss 1962).

It is probable that one of the desired outcomes of the discursive formation of the *sampradāya* was/is creating Vārkarī identity for as Hall has argued identities are constructed within discourse and ‘through, not outside, difference’ (1996a:4; see Derrida 1981). If the formation of identity is based on exclusion (see Laclau 1990:33) and on leaving something out (Hall 1996a:5) then one may suppose that in order to constitute itself as a householder tradition the Vārkarī *sampradāya* excluded *sannyāsa* or at least excluded renunciation to a certain degree. However, there still remains the issue of the construction of a gendered identity and role via the discursive formation of the *sampradāya* as Butler (1993:1), Chakravarti (1999a:78, 86n.124) and Mani (1998; 1999) all argue that a gendered subject is discursively

constructed. It is the issue of gender, as attributed and as employed in the discursive construction of a tradition which differentiates my project from other scholastic studies.

4.2. *My original contribution*

My original contribution highlights the fact that due to the issue of attribution it is impossible to understand the poetic compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* as the work of a specific historical person or legendary figure. It is therefore unfeasible to recover women as subjects or retrieve women's voices as there is no clear-cut connection between authors, gender and compositions. However, my work reveals that it is possible to examine the ways the attribution of women's authorship is used in the construction and development of a *bhakti* tradition like the Vārkarī *sampradāya* and to ask what function the prominence of 'women' might have played in the *sampradāya*'s self-perception and representation. Furthermore, my focus on gender attribution could have implications for the analysis of caste in similar contexts as it is unviable to recover the caste status of an attributed author (see Hawley 1984:28; Vaudeville 1971:36–7; Chakravarti 1993, 2003a).

Additionally my contribution lies in the translation and presentation of new material. I have translated more than one-hundred-and-fifty compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* and at least eighty-eight of these are completely new translations (see Appendix B). Moreover, I have also translated two chapters pertaining to the lives of Janābāi and Kānhopātrā from Mahīpati's *Bhaktavijaya*, which are presented in Appendix C. This is the first time that any chapters of the *Bhaktavijaya* have been translated into English since 1933 (see Abbott and Godbole 1996).

4.3. *Translation*

The selection of compositions for this thesis was based on providing translations of all the *santakaviyatrīs* associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, some of whom do not appear in the *Śrīsakalasantaḡāthā* (SSG). It was also my aim to try and include poems from many of the themes or groupings identified by the editors of the SSG. My selection was further directed by my desire to explore certain themes, such as grinding grain (*daḷane*), the domestic setting and *sansār*. Moreover, due to the discursive construction of the *sampradāya* it seemed germane to provide translations of compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs*.

The primary sources for the compositions attributed to the *sants* were the SSG (Gosāvī 2005) and two websites—'Marathi Documents List' and 'Marathi World'—while my translations from Mahīpati's *Bhaktavijaya* were based on an 1850 edition. The translations of compositions were

undertaken in conjunction with Dr. Kasturi Dadhe (2004–2007) and the author V.P. Kanitkar (2010–2011) with some additional help from Veena Dadhe and Sulu Abhyankar. I sought aid in translating the compositions partly due to my less than fluent Marathi but also because translation is an act of ‘intercultural negotiation’ (Chitre 2005:127) that involves translating ‘modes of thought’ (Lienhardt 1954; see Asad 1986:142).

The translations of the compositions attributed to Vārkarī women are provided in Appendix B with the Marathi text and transliteration. I have provided the Marathi text to avoid silencing/marginalising/Otherising the authors/composers utterly and to allow their voices to speak for themselves (hooks 1990; Spivak 1988, 1996; Bhabha 1996:209–210) even if those voices cannot be identified as female. The Marathi is provided as many academic works provide inadequate referencing while the transliteration is supplied so that the reader unfamiliar with Marathi will be able to get a sense of the rhythm and rhyme but also in the hope that the reader may be ‘powerfully affected by the foreign tongue’ (Rudolf Pannwitz quoted in Benjamin 1990:81).

My aim has been to try and keep my translations as close to the Marathi as possible. Thus, I have attempted to follow the structure of the *abhaṅgas* by translating the first ‘foot’ of each line and retaining the number of lines. However, I have not attempted to reproduce the syllable based rhyme (see Tulpule 1979:451–52) and as a result my translations are in prose, although I hope they retain some ‘poetic qualities’ (Pechilis 2012:23). In attempting to follow the Marathi I have sometimes used phrases that, in English, may sound awkward to the reader but which I feel reflect the composition more accurately. Conversely, I am aware that I have inadequately rendered some Marathi and Sanskrit terms and concepts into English due to the lack of a direct equivalent. However, I have provided detailed footnotes that I hope will assist the reader. I have also tried to avoid using any vocabulary borrowed from Christian terminology as the context within which the *abhaṅgas* originated and exist is predominantly a *bhakti* one. I have retained all epithets as their use is often intentional and they suggest a certain meaning in specific contexts and these are detailed in the text, footnotes or glossary. I have retained a few Sanskrit and Marathi terms that are fairly standard in English (for example *guru*, *mantra* or *yoga*). I have also retained terms for which no adequate English word or phrase exists (such as *nirguṇ*, *ovāḷaṇī* and *soham*) and explanations for these are provided in the footnotes or glossary. Occasionally I have inserted a few clarificatory words in square brackets to aid meaning or if the syntax requires them. I have also inserted

personal pronouns and articles, and used the active voice for some passive constructions in Marathi as this reads better in English (see Bryant 2003:lxxix–lxxxix).

I am aware that translation is a representational act. It is an attempt to represent what some other person or persons, in another context *may* have said and what they *may* have meant. It is therefore also an interpretational act. However, translation is also relational as it involves the translation of one's own ideas and an attempt to fuse them with those of an author or authors (Pechilis 2012:5). I do not believe that I have 'final authority in determining the subject's meanings' (Asad 1986:162), whoever the subject might be. My translations, representation(s) and productions (Gadamer 2004:296; see Pechilis 2012:5) may be/become 'a textual construct' because it cannot be contested by those to whom the 'texts' are attributed (Asad 1986:163). Nonetheless, my translations are not fixed as new translations can be undertaken at any time. Obviously, this does not resolve the issue of the production of a text for the consumption of a Western, academic audience. Neither does it alter the fact that by undertaking research to gain a doctorate I am sanctioned and empowered by the academy to 'create meanings for a subject' (Asad 1986:162). I readily accept that translation is 'an active site of conflict' (Spivak 2005:105): a conflict between languages—words and concepts—and cultures but also within the translator. Translation is difficult and I have found apt Leach's statement that the 'perfect translation is usually impossible' (1973:772). Consequently, my interlingual and intercultural translations should be regarded as *an* interpretation of a dynamic historical-religious cultural context.

4.4. *Ethnography*

Ethnography is regarded by scholars such as Clifford and Asad as a form of cultural translation that results in a textual construct. Clifford contends that 'ethnographic writing is allegorical' (1986b:98) because ethnography 'translates experience into text' (1986b:115). Asad argues that 'the ethnographer's translation/representation of a particular culture is inevitably a textual construct' because it is not typically 'contested by the people to whom it is attributed' and thus 'the process of "cultural translation" is inevitably enmeshed in conditions of power' including 'the authority of ethnographers to uncover the implicit meanings of subordinate societies' (1986:163). However, Chambers suggests that while 'epistemic violence' inheres in anthropology's history one should also be aware of its potential as an 'enabling violation' (2006:3; Spivak 1988:280–83, 1999:95, 271, 371). For Spivak the best example of epistemic violence is the project of constituting/effacing the Other (1988:280–81; 1996:219), an issue also highlighted by Said (1995:21ff). Dingwaney recognises that the process of translation involves

‘varying degrees of violence, especially when the culture being translated is constituted as that of the “other”’ (1995:4). Furthermore, Spivak has argued that the subaltern/Other cannot speak (1988) which leads Sharpe to argue that when the subaltern/Other is a woman ‘the subaltern must always be caught in translation, never truly expressing herself, but always already interpreted’ (2009:111). These perspectives raise some serious issues, with which I have wrestled, in relation to cultural translation and ethnography such as: excluding dissenting voices and information (Chambers 2006:5); the need to avoid erasing historical and environmental factors (Chambers 2006:14 see Appadurai 1988:16); the importance of the interaction between the ‘problem of place’ with ‘the problem of voice (“speaking for” and “speaking to”)’ as the ‘the problem of voice is a problem of multiplicity as well as a problem of representation’ (Appadurai 1988:16–17); the value of including the personal so as to counter ‘the tendency toward alienation and dehumanization’ (Pratt 1986:33).

My primary method of inquiry was qualitative research, which included overt participant observation, informant interviewing—usually based on some prepared questions and electronically recorded and transcribed—additional note-taking and journal-keeping, and some photography. In order to conduct my ethnographic research I based in Pune with a Marathi-speaking Brahman family from September 2004 to March 2005 and with a Maharashtrian, formerly-Bohra family from June to July 2006. During 2004–2005 I continued to take Marathi lessons from an MA student at Pune University while I undertook textual translation and ethnographic research with my research assistant Kasturi Dadhe.

One major obstacle I encountered was of access to rural, low-caste Vārkarīs as a white, western woman whose connections were primarily with urban Brahmans. Many of those who provided information were ‘elite’—educated, middle-class, high-caste men in positions of religious authority and/or power—but not all my informants can or should be thus categorised as some of the people who spoke to me and my research assistants (Kasturi Dadhe and Gayatri Gurjar Gajabhiye) occupied different subject positions and might be considered part of the ‘popular base’ (see Mukta 1994:32–33). Another issue of my data collection was that the information I gathered was usually mediated by my research assistants, which meant that I was not always acquiring ‘direct testimony’ from my informants (see Crapanzano 1986:79). Nonetheless, it was often fruitful to work with another woman and clarify much of what I had seen, heard and read through discussion.

The primary question to which I sought a response while conducting my fieldwork was ‘what is the role of the *santakaviyatrīs* in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*?’ In October 2004 I produced a list of almost

100 questions developed from Knott (1998), Raheja (1988), Uberoi (1998), Hall (1996), Gold and Raheja (1994), Bhagwat (1990, 2004) and Shrotriya (1993). The list began with questions such as ‘what marks the *sants* out’ and ‘why are there so many women *sants* in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*?’ and concluded with questions such as ‘what meaning, if any, do these *santakaviyatrīs* have in the lives of contemporary Vārkarīs?’ However, as there appeared to be a lack of familiarity with *santakaviyatrīs* other than Muktabāī, Janābāī or Mīrābāī I soon realised that it was necessary to enquire which *santakaviyatrīs* people could identify before I could begin exploring the position/role of the *santakaviyatrīs* in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Consequently, the questions I asked in relation to the Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs* altered depending on the situation and the interviewee. Furthermore, I found that in interviews with male gurus and senior figures that the interview often took its own course once an initial question had been posed. However, it was one of these figures who highlighted the connection between the householder nature of the *sampradāya* and the inclusion of poems attributed to and stories concerning women within the Vārkarī context/corpus. The Vārkarī corpus will be explored in Chapter Three of this thesis as the summary of chapters below outlines.

5. Outline of chapters

The first chapter provides an historical and social profile of the *sampradāya* as a framework for later discussions. The reasons Zelliott put forward for the householder character of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*—its rural nature, the lack of a strong renouncer tradition in the Marathi-speaking area and the leadership from Śūdras or unorthodox Brahmans—are considered in this context. The second chapter investigates the role, if any, of the Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs* in the *sampradāya* today through ethnography. The aim is to demonstrate the almost total absence of women *sants* from current devotional practices and from public memory. It is my contention that this absence could indicate the successful construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path as women no longer need to be cited as figures of exemplary religiosity while fulfilling their duties as householder.

The third chapter examines the discursive formation of the *sampradāya* as a householder *bhakti* tradition by considering the issues of attribution, transmission and textualisation. The texts which constitute the Vārkarī *sampradāya*’s corpus or ‘canon’ will be examined after an initial discussion outlining the theories of canon in relation to the Indian context so as to situate the Vārkarī ‘canon’ and its formation. The sacred biographies of the *santakaviyatrīs* associated with the Vārkarīs are examined in Chapter Four. The chapter seeks to address what these portrayals reveal about the discursive construction

of a tradition and how the gender attribution within the biographies relates to the basic tension in the Vārkaṛī *sampradāya* between *sannyāsa* and *grhasṭha*. The chapter will show that while the stories of women exemplify the tension they do not fully resolve the conflict. The compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* are explored in Chapter Five so as to understand genres such as philosophical and yogic mastership, grinding songs and spiritual autobiography in the context of the tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhasṭha* as well as the dichotomy between *nivṛtti* and *pravṛtti*. The chapter also explores how the women, particularly those in *sant*'s family, deal with *sansār* (see Zelliott 1999a:94). The final chapter responds to the questions put forward in each chapter and concludes that there were probably so many women 'poets' and/or *sants* in the Vārkaṛī *sampradāya* as the tradition constructed itself discursively as a householder tradition. The conclusion also raises questions for future research relating to ethnographic research among the 'popular base'.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE VĀRKARĪ SAMPRADĀYA IN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

The Vārkarī *sampradāya*—sometimes referred to as the Bhāgavata *sampradāya* of Maharashtra¹—is a Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* tradition whose distinctive feature is its pilgrimage to Pandharpur, in south-eastern Maharashtra. The term *vārkarī* refers to those who regularly ‘do’ (*karī*) the ‘pilgrimage’ (*vārī*) to Pandharpur and who worship and are devoted to Viṭṭhal/Viṭhobā of Pandharpur.² The Vārkarī *sampradāya* recognises over fifty Marathi male and female *sant*-poets spanning a period of over five hundred years, whose compositions form the teachings and corpus of the tradition, and whose lives are regarded as paradigmatic (Schomer 1987:4; Zelliott 1987a:94, 2000:192; Bhagwat 2005:166). The lives of the *sants* are commemorated in compositions attributed to various *sants* and in sacred biographies—Mahīpati (c.1715–1790) being the most renowned and productive of all the Marathi biographers—and these accounts also form part of the Vārkarī corpus. As I noted in the Introduction, the inclusion of poems attributed to women and of stories about women within the corpus appears to have occurred because the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is a householder tradition (Zelliott 1999a:99; 1999b:418) and Zelliott proposes three aspects that mark it as such: ‘the rural nature of the *bhakti* movement in Maharashtra’, the ‘lack of a strong *sannyāsī* tradition in the Marathi-speaking area’ (2000:198; 1999b:424) and the fact that ‘leadership from either Śūdra or unorthodox Brahmins may be most responsible for Maharashtra’s householder *bhaktas*’ (1999b:423–24). The purpose of this chapter is to provide historical and contemporary social contexts to ground my subsequent discussions of the women poet-*sants* associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* and the formation of the tradition as a householder path. It is therefore not intended to be a comprehensive history of the *sampradāya* which has been done adequately elsewhere.³ My discussion begins by examining the town and deity at the heart of the *sampradāya* before exploring the concept of *sant* within the Vārkarī context so as to understand their importance to the tradition. A brief sketch of the four main male *sants* is provided before outlining the female *bhaktas* and poets

¹ See Joshi 2009:371, Klostermaier 2007:307, Hardy 1983:21, Timm 1997:117 and Colas 2003.

² See Tulpule 1979:327, 1999:642; Chitre 1991:xxv; Deleury 1994:2; Kiehnle 1997a:5; Mokashi-Punekar 2003:130; Pande 2010:505–506; see Zelliott 1987b:35; Molesworth 1857:750; Berntsen 1982:138, and Engblom 1987:23ff.

³ See Ranade 1933/2003; Deleury 1960/1994; Tulpule 1979; Vaudeville 1974, 1987b, 1996; Engblom 1987; Zelliott 1987b; Iwao 1988; Kiehnle 1997a, 1997b; Pande 2008; Novetzke 2008 and Dhare 2011.

associated with the *sampradāya*. The *vārī* will then be delineated along with some of the *sampradāya*'s key practices before discussing aspects of the *sampradāya*'s contemporary social profile.

1. *Pandharpur: an historical perspective*

The city of Paṇḍharpūr is situated in south-eastern Maharashtra on the left bank of the river Bhima, also known as the Candrabhāgā. Pandharpur is a *tīrtha* according to Engblom (1987:10–11) as the town is a 'sacred pilgrimage complex' while Dhare indicates that the river Bhima is the *tīrtha* (2011:114, 221; see Sand 1990:58, n.45). Nonetheless, Pandharpur is home to the deity Viṭṭhal or Viṭhobā whose presence is said to sanctify the town and surrounding area making Pandharpur a *kṣetra* (Vaudeville 1996:201ff).⁴

The earliest mention of the town seems to be as Pāṇḍaraṅgapaḷī—'the village of Pāṇḍaraṅga' according to Vaudeville (1996:201) or Pāṇḍaraṅga 'a settlement of wild tribes' according to Sontheimer (1989:70)—in a copperplate inscription dated 516 C.E. carved under the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Āvideya (ARMAD 1931:197–198, II.b.19; Deleury 1994:24–8). Vaudeville suggests that the name Paṇḍharpūr derives from Paṇḍuraṅgapūra 'the town of Pāṇḍuraṅga', the 'white-coloured' deity (1996:203; see Dhare 2011:27, 29; 300 n.16). However, Dhare believes that 'Pāṇḍuraṅga' does not refer to 'Śiva, who is white as camphor' because the Marathi *sants* regard 'Pāṇḍuraṅga' as referring to Kṛṣṇa the cowherd who is called 'Pāṇḍuraṅga' as 'he is dusty all over from the dust raised by the hooves of the cows' (2011:27). Nonetheless, Hemacandra (c.1089–1172), the Jain scholar-monk, suggested Pāṇḍuraṅga was an epithet for Rudra-Śiva (*Deśīnāmamālā* 6.23; Pischel 1938:219; Dhare 2011:27) and Bhandarkar intimates that Pandharpur was once an important site for Śaivite worship and that as Śiva's importance declined Viṭhobā's importance increased until Pāṇḍuraṅga and Viṭhobā became synonymous (1929:125).⁵ Vaudeville suggests that Śaivism was the 'basic faith in Maharashtra' and that 'nominal Vaishnavism or Krishnaism', where the role of Śiva as supreme Lord and Guru is transferred to Kṛṣṇa, may have come about due to the interpenetration of the Nāth *panth* and Vedāntic traditions (1987:217, 219–220). The change in orientation from Śaiva to Vaiṣṇava, or the 'gradual merging' of the two according to Vaudeville (1996:243–252), may also have been due to the transformation of the *deś* from a largely pastoral to a largely agrarian economy. The Vaiṣṇava Brahmans played an increasingly prominent role in this transformation as they were granted land in return for authorising the ruling dynasty, executing administrative functions or performing rituals argues Eaton (2005:138–139; see Sontheimer 1989:147).

⁴ See also Dhare 2011:114, 138, 221, 231ff; Deleury 1994:36, 202; Sand 1990:36, 42 and 1992b:138.

⁵ See also Ranade 2003:183; Vaudeville 1996:203–4; Dhare 2011:26, 80; Dhanpalvār 1981, and Sontheimer 1989:70.

Brahmans thus supervised agrarian activities and performed a religious role, gaining dominance over the non-brahman population on a social and spiritual level.⁶ Deleury, following Kosambi, suggests that Paṇḍharpūr was donated to a Brahman called Jaydviṭṭha in 516 C.E. and that Pandharpur was Brahmanised from the late ninth century C.E. onwards (1994:198–99). The Vaiṣṇava priests at Pandharpur were thus responsible for promulgating Viṭṭhal as a form of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa according to Dhere (2011:44). Consequently, Viṭṭhobā may have been regarded as a *svarūpa* of Viṣṇu by the fourteenth century due to the influence of Vaiṣṇava Brahmins.⁷ Eaton argues that this identification of Viṭṭhobā with Viṣṇu coincided with the expansion of agrarian communities in the pastoral *deś* which tended to be ‘preoccupied with...social categories, distinctions, and hierarchies’. Consequently, Eaton equates the advance of agrarian society in the *deś* with the growth of the caste system and ‘ideas of social categories and graded hierarchies presided over by Brahmins’. Moreover, Eaton argues that Viṭṭhobā’s identification with Viṣṇu was strongest among agricultural castes like the Kuṇḍīs and weakest among pastoral communities (2005:140), for as Sontheimer states ‘the nomadic Dhangars are more inclined towards Śaiva deities; even Viṭṭhobā of Paṇḍharpūr is not (yet) Viṣṇu for them’ (1989:147).

The exact origins and derivations of the names Viṭṭhobā and Viṭṭhal—for which numerous epithets are employed (see Chapter Five)—are uncertain and have been much debated.⁸ It is possible that Viṭṭhobā was a Kannada deity—he was certainly worshipped by the Hoysaḷas of Karnāṭaka (Vaudeville 1996:202; Deleury 1994:135ff; Iwao 1988:184)—as *viṭho* is a Kannada form of Viṣṇu with a suffix contracted from *bābā* that expresses loving respect (Vaudeville 1996:202; Deleury 1994:127ff; Bhandarkar 1929:124). Sontheimer refers to the oral traditions of the Gavḷīs who assert that Viṭṭhobā/Viṭṭhal came from Karnataka (1989:47, 106; see also Bhagwat 1974:116), which seems to correspond with the perspective of Vārkarī *sants* like Jñāneśvar, Nāmdev and Eknāth:

*Kānaḍā ho viṭṭhalu karnāṭaku / tyāṇē maja lāvilē vedhī*⁹
The Karnāṭak Viṭṭhal who attracted me is Kānaḍa.
(Jñāneśvar *abhaṅga* 764.2, SSG1:203; Kiehnle 1997:17 n.85, 65).¹⁰

Viṭṭhala kānaḍe bolū jāṇe / tyācī bhāṣā puṇḍalīka neṇē//
Viṭṭhal knows how to speak Kannada; Puṇḍalīk does not understand his language.
(Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 374.1, SSG1:323; Dhere 2011:36)

⁶ See Kosambi 1955:228ff; Thapar 2003:291–97; Keay 2001:219; Omvedt 2003a:172–174 and Altekar 1960:564.

⁷ The Vārkarīs regard Viṭṭhal as the Maharashtrian *svarūpa* of Viṣṇu according to Engblom (1987:2) and Vaudeville (1996:216) but Dhere points out that the Vārkarī *sants* consider Viṭṭhal to be a form of Viṣṇu but different from the twenty-four incarnations listed in the *BhP* (2011:35). See Vaudeville 1996:203, 213, 242, 250–51; Tulpule 1978:1012; Settā and Sontheimer 1982; Sontheimer 1989:171–72; Eaton 2005:139 and Zelliott 1987:28.

⁸ See Dhere 2011; Deleury 1994:126–146ff; Crooke 2003:602; Abbott 1990:166; Vaudeville 1996:202 and Eaton 2005:139ff.

⁹ The title of this *abhaṅga* is पांडुरंगांती दिव्य तेज झळकती। *Pāṇḍuraṅgakāntī divya tej jhaḷakatī*

¹⁰ Kiehnle asserts that both the *Jñāneśvarī* and the *Jñāneśvar Gāthā* were influenced by Kannada (1997a:75).

Tīrtha kāṇaḍē deva kāṇaḍe / kṣetra kāṇaḍē paṇḍharīye /1/ Viṭṭhala kāṇaḍe bhakta he kāṇaḍe.
The holy water place is Kāṇaḍa, the deity is Kāṇaḍa, the holy site Paṇḍharī is Kāṇaḍa. Viṭṭhal
is Kāṇaḍa, the devotees are Kāṇaḍa...
(Eknāth *abhaṅga* 323.1–2; SSG 2:123; my translation).¹¹

The etymology of the name Viṭṭhal is uncertain. Dhéré suggests that each syllable in the name Viṭṭhal may have a philosophical meaning—‘*viḍā* (through knowledge), *thān* (ignorant people), *lāti* (grasp)’—so that ‘Viṭṭhal is the one who accepts ignorant people through knowledge’ (2011:6). The name is also often taken to mean ‘one who stands on a brick’, possibly deriving from the Marathi word *vīṭ* ‘brick’ and *thal* ‘place’ (Crooke 2003:602; Deleury 1994:144–146). However, the name of the deity additionally appears to be connected to the various legends about how and why Viṭṭhal/Viṭhobā came to reside in Pandharpur (Zelliot 1987:28, see 1987b:35, 37; Vaudeville 1996:204; see Dhéré 2011).

The *sampradāya*’s foundational myths go some way towards elucidating the origins of the *sampradāya* and encapsulating some of its key beliefs and values. The first legend to provide a basis for the connection between Pandharpur, Viṭṭhal and the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is that of Puṇḍalīk. The *muni* Puṇḍalīk is mentioned in several inscriptions in Pandharpur: one dated to 1237 C.E. refers to Viṭṭhal and Puṇḍarīka (Puṇḍalīk) being present in Pandharpur, while a Sanskrit copperplate inscription dating to 1249 C.E. refers to Pandharpur as the Paṇḍalīka *kṣetra*, ‘the sacred site of Puṇḍalīk’ (Vaudeville 1996:202ff; Deleury 1994:33; Ranade 2003:183). These inscriptions may suggest that Puṇḍalīk was a historical personage but almost nothing is known about him apart from what the legends relate.

The earliest account of Puṇḍalīk is probably one of three Sanskrit *Pāṇḍuraṅga Māhātmyas* (Dhéré 2011:18ff; Engblom 1987:12). However, the Vārkarī *sampradāya* takes the Marathi *Pāṇḍuraṅgamāhātmya* by Śrīdhara (Śrīdharsvāmī Nājharekar, c.1658–1729) as its authorised version although Mahīpati gives an account of Puṇḍalīk in his *Bhaktalīlāmṛta* (BLM 6.86ff; Raeside 1965:83, 85 n.19; Dhéré 2011:22, 24; Deleury 1994:144).¹² Śrīdhara describes how Puṇḍalīk neglected his parents as he bestowed all his attention on his wife (Mate 1962:191–93; see Sand 1990:52), thus Śrīdhara portrays Puṇḍalīk as a householder. However, Raeside notes that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* rejects the notion that Puṇḍalīk had a wife (1965: 85 n.19), a view which coincides with the Bahiṇābāi account. Bahiṇābāi (c.1628–1700) is regarded as the first *sant* and the first woman to give a full account of Puṇḍalīk in her *Puṇḍalīkamāhātmya*. Bahiṇābāi, like Śrīdhara, details Puṇḍalīk’s conversion and relates how Nārada tells God about Puṇḍalīk’s extraordinary devotion towards his parents. God comes to see Puṇḍalīk but he is so

¹¹ Also see Eknāth *abhaṅga* ‘Kāṇaḍa viṭṭhala’ (321.1, SSG 2:123).

¹² Zelliot regards this eighteenth-century text as presenting ‘a traditional Brahman view’ as it does not mention the Vārkarīs (1987b:37).

engrossed in washing his parents' feet that he tosses a brick towards God, which God stands on. Śrīdhar and Mahīpati do not refer to Puṇḍalīk throwing a brick but rather state that God stands on a brick looking at Puṇḍalīk (13.466.1–75; Abbott 1985:148–156, २९२-२९८; Deleury 1994:144). One informant explained the use of the brick to me thus: 'the brick keeps a constant temperature; [it] doesn't get heated in the sun. There was sand when Viṭhobā went to Puṇḍalīk so Puṇḍalīk probably just picked up a brick and threw it to him...Puṇḍalīk was probably an *agnihotra* so thought "I'd better give God something to sit or stand on"' (N. Utpat, personal communication, 22nd November 2004).

Dhere notes that Śrīdhar's *Māhātmya* is the most popular version of the story in Maharashtra (2011:96), which may be due to the fact that he was a Brahman male and 'one of the brahman's most significant roles...is to write *Māhātmyas*' according to Feldhaus (2005:58). Furthermore, Śrīdhar's text fits in with the process of Vedicising Viṭṭhal that Dhere believes began before the rise of the *sants* (2011:222ff). It is therefore probable that the relative unimportance of Bahiṇābā's account is an indicator of the position of women in the *sampradāya*. However, the story of Puṇḍalīk is an important one within the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as it accounts for the presence of God in Pandharpur. The story has further significance as it highlights Puṇḍalīk's transformation from a disrespectful and abusive son to the epitome of devotion and service, which is a strong householder theme. The story also demonstrates the power of *bhakti* on Viṭṭhal and portrays him as the ultimate *bhakta-vachaḷa*. Viṭṭhal loves his *bhaktas* like a mother loves her children so he is prepared to accept any form of rebuke and is willing to wait—'on the brick'—forever.¹³ The Vārkarīs regard God as taking form in answer to and in return for the devotion shown by Puṇḍalīk (Deleury 1994:113). The brick is viewed as holy due to the fact that it bears an impression of the divine feet and enjoys Viṭṭhal's treads, and has thus become a Vārkarī symbol of complete surrender to God (Deleury 1994:145).

Scholars such as Deleury and Tulpule suggest that Viṭṭhal's origins lie with a cult of a deified hero-stone (Deleury 1994:181; Tulpule 1978:1009–10; Sontheimer 1981; Eaton 2005:137). Viṭṭhal could have been a Kannada hero who died fighting cattle thieves and was commemorated with a hero-stone (*bhaḍakhambā* or *vīragal*). A deity may subsequently have been identified with the hero of the memorial stone resulting in Viṭṭhal-worship.¹⁴ Dhere considers whether Viṭṭhal might have been a pastoralist hero-deity because his stance 'with his hands on his hips' suggests that the name of the deity might originally

¹³ See Vaudeville 1996:205–207; Tulpule 1978:1009; Deleury 1994:7, 113, 144 and Mate 1964:191–193.

¹⁴ See Deleury 1994:181–192, 198–203; Tulpule 1978:1009–15; Settar & Sontheimer 1982 and Sontheimer 1989:70–71n.10.

have indicated his form (2011:121–23). However, Dhare concludes that there is insufficient evidence to support the idea the Viṭṭhal was originally a deified hero-stone because the hero-stone Tulpule located opposite the main door of the Pandharpur temple had not been installed there intentionally and because the local folk tradition does not include any memory about that particular hero-stone in relation to Viṭṭhal (2011:126, 138).

There is a third myth which asserts that Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla came from Dvarka to Pandharpur as a wandering cowherd in search of his wife Rukmiṇī, who had abandoned him due to his amorous relationship with Rādhā, and that the couple were eventually reconciled at Viṣṇupad.¹⁵ This story, like that of the deified hero, has a pastoral focus which probably stems from the fact that the *deś* region in which the stories are set is one associated with pastoralism and cultivation (Eaton 2005:137–139; Sontheimer 1989:47–8; see Bhagvat 1974:116ff). Both Dhare and Sontheimer argue that Viṭṭhal was originally the deity of pastoralists like the Gavḷīs, Dhangars, Gollas and Kurubas and that this deity was subsequently Vaiṣṇavised.¹⁶ Significantly, Dhare suggests that the political, social and religious history of the medieval period connects most of the royal families of the region with the Yadu lineage or Yādava clan of pastoralists or cattle herders (2011:246, 120). It is therefore probable that the rural nature of the *sampradāya* is connected to the pastoral and agrarian nature of the *deś* region.

In 1237 a significant change occurred around Pandharpur as it came under Yādava control. Kannada had previously been the predominant language but under Yādava rule Marathi rose to prominence as the official language of the kingdom (Vaudeville 1996:201–02; Deleury 1994:30–33; Sontheimer 1989:151). Moreover, the Yādavas paid homage to Viṭṭhal as a temple inscription records the visit of Hemādri, minister to King Rāmacandra, to Pandharpur in 1273 C.E. The inscription details donations given, by Hemādri in 1276 C.E. and Rāmacandra in 1277 C.E., for the maintenance of the temple (Deleury 1994:36ff; see also Sontheimer 1989:151). Dhare suggests that one reason that the Yādava dynasty supported and developed the worship of Viṭṭhal was that they descended from pastoral tribes known collectively as ‘Yādavas’ and consequently Viṭṭhal was the Yādava’s deity (2011:120, 237ff, 246). It was during this period that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* arose with the composition of songs and texts in Marathi¹⁷ by *sants* like Jñāneśvar and Nāmdev.

¹⁵ Sontheimer 1989:46–47, 71; Raeside 1965:83, 97; Vaudeville 1996:207–209; Dhare 2011:43ff, 313, n.11 and Deleury 1994:197.

¹⁶ Dhare 2011:31, 120, 221ff; see Feldhaus 2011:vii, xiii; Sontheimer 1989:47–8, 70–72, 171–72, 190 *passim*.

¹⁷ For more on the Marathi language see Bloch (1970), Pandharipande (1997), and Guha (2008).

The term *sant* in Marathi *sant* means ‘holy’, ‘meritorious’ (Tulpule 1999:704), ‘gentle’ or ‘calm’ (Molesworth 1857:810) and refers to a ‘good’ (Berntsen 1975:151) or ‘holy’ man (Vaze 1911:530; Molesworth 1857:810). The Vārkarī *sampradāya* is marked by its unique link between *sants* and Viṭṭhal. Tradition maintains that it was not only for the sake of his *bhakta* Puṇḍalik that Viṭhobā remains waiting on the ‘brick’ but for the sake of all *sants* (Vaudeville 1996:216). The Vārkarī *sants* are revered as the preeminent proponents of *bhakti* and personifications of the Lord’s grace according to Vaudeville (1996:215). Furthermore, within the Vārkarī *sampradāya* a *sant* is often revered as an *avatāra* of the deity by his or her disciples and descendants but is also regarded as spiritually ‘still present’ and as ‘still living for the good of the community’ according to Deleury (1994:73). Moreover, among the Vārkarīs a *sant* is regarded as an intermediary between the deity and the people:

When he lived, the ‘santa’ used to go on pilgrimage to Paṇḍharpūr with the group of his disciples. While on the way he assumed a very special holiness in the eyes of the ordinary Vārkarī, he was God himself walking across the country, giving to everybody the possibility to come near him and receive his blessing. To have a darśana of a ‘santa’ on his way to Paṇḍharpūr was to have a ‘darśana’ of Viṭhobā himself: the ‘santa’ was thus...a special messenger to carry on to God the various requests of the faithful...

(Deleury 1994:73)

However, the term *sant* is not confined to the *sants* of the past or to a known *guru* but also applies to any Vārkarī en route to Paṇḍharpūr; for as Deleury says it is ‘as if the road had somehow the power to sanctify’ (1994:75). Consequently, Engblom observes that the *sants* are almost as important to the *vārī* as Viṭṭhal himself (1987:13).

In general *sants* are both male and female *bhaktas* who are credited with poetic compositions and are therefore known as *santakavis* or *santakaviyatrīs*. *Sants* were usually householders, rather than Śaivite *sannyāsīs* or Vaiṣṇava *vairāgīs*, and thus eschewed asceticism. *Sants* tended to belong to the lower strata of society and the majority were *sūdras*, although a number were *atiśūdras* and some leading *bhaktas* were Brahman. On the whole the *sants* were poor, uneducated or illiterate and had no access to Brahmanical or orthodox knowledge. Consequently, they were usually unacquainted with Sanskrit, the sacred liturgical language, and expressed themselves in Marathi (Vaudeville 1987:22, 1987a:36–7; Bhagwat 2005:165–166; Lele 1981:109). It is probable that the preoccupation with *grhastha* religiosity came about later with the programmatic intent of Brahmans like Eknāth and Mahīpati, as I will consider in Chapter Three.

The *sants* associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* were primarily ‘a community of active producers’ according to Lele (1981:107; see Bhagwat 2005:165). The compositions of the Vārkarī *sants*

were largely ‘in the idiom of their caste based occupation’ declares Bhagwat (2005:166; see also Zelliott 1987b:41) and their expression of ‘everyday life practices’ as well as use of Marathi facilitated communication within the community and the dissemination of the *bhakti* message (Bhagwat 2005:166, 168; Vaudeville 1987:22; Lele 1981:108ff; see Pechilis 1999:27). It is probable that the *sants*’ low-caste status and practice of traditional occupations was a contributing factor to the rural and householder nature of the Vārkarī tradition. However, with regard to Zelliott’s contention about the leadership of the *sampradāya*, it is probably best to see it as a mixture of *śūdra* and Brahman during the medieval period, as I will highlight in Chapter Three.

The literature composed by the *sants* comprises ‘the real “scriptures”’ of the *sampradāya* according to Vaudeville (1996:215; 1974:156). *Sants* are often viewed as contesting ‘Brahmanism, caste hierarchy, untouchability and Islamic orthodoxy’ as Bhagwat suggests (2005:166). However, Pechilis argues that *bhakti* poets expressed both conformism and dissent (1999:27; see Sharma 1987:24–5) and this is an aspect that my discussions in subsequent chapters will show. The Marathi-speaking *sants* did not formally reject the authority of the Vedas or the Vedāntic tradition according to Vaudeville (1987:23) and Joshi (2009:371). However, O’Hanlon argues that Tukārām critiqued the ‘equivalence of spiritual merit with high caste status’ but that his critique did not lead to intellectual criticism or a direct challenge of caste hierarchy and the religious pre-eminence of the Brahmans within the *sampradāya* (2002:61; see Omvedt 2012). Lele argues that ‘the Varkari blueprint for a new and renewed society aimed at revolutionising orthodoxy without seeking to destroy tradition’ (1987:124). Moreover, he argues that Jñāneśvar rejected the transcendental authority of the Vedas and challenged the ‘foundations of Brahmin-Maratha hegemony without advocating self-destructive defiance’ by maintaining that the meaning of the *Bhagavadgītā* was both eternal and new (1981:111). Following Lele, Eaton contends that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* was concerned with reform as it sought to reappropriate ideas contained in texts like the *Bhagavadgītā* (2005:153). It is my contention that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* was thus discursively constructed as a householder tradition that offered a spiritually egalitarian path open to all and compositions attributed to women were a key element in achieving this objective.

The attitude of the Vārkarī *sants* towards the deity Viṭṭhal is characterised as *prema-bhakti* or *bhāva-bhakti* by Vaudeville (1987:29) due to the fact that the Vārkarī *sants* tend to approach Viṭṭhal/Viṭhobā as their mother or *māyabāpa*, and as Viṭhobā and Pandharpur are viewed as their *māher* ‘maternal home’ (Tulpule 1979:161; Vaudeville 1996:220; Dhere 2011:213–14ff). Dhere argues that the

sants were attracted to a ‘universal mother’ who would ‘take all to herself equally...who would accept everyone...and would save everyone’ as most of the *sants* came from the lower social orders and were thus seeking egalitarianism (2011:219). However, the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is also identified as advocating *advaita bhakti* (Joshi 2009:375–76; Pande 2008:46, 2010) while other forms of *bhakti* such as *dveṣa-bhakti* (Lipner 1994:317; O’Flaherty 1982:73ff), *virodha-bhakti* or *ārtta-bhakti* are also found in the compositions attributed to the Vārkarī *sants*. The Vārkarī *sants* propose various *sādhana* to achieve spiritual liberation but highlight *nāmasmaraṇa*, *bhajan* and *kīrtan*, and *satsaṅga* or *santasaj janāncī māṅdī* ‘the company of *sants*’ as Chapter Five will demonstrate.¹⁸

2. The Vārkarī *sants*

Traditionally four male *sants* are marked out as significant, probably as their texts and compositions in Marathi can be credited with constructing the *sampradāya* discursively (I develop this argument further in Chapter Three below). However, these *sants* are also distinguished because they exemplify Zelliott’s contentions that ‘the Saint-poets lived in their households, did their normal daily work, and in most cases their wives and their children joined them in devotion to the God’ (1999b:424), and that ‘leadership from either Śūdra or unorthodox Brahmins may be responsible for Maharashtra’s householder *bhaktas*’ (1999b:425).

Jñāneśvar (c.1275–1296) is remembered as the author of the Vārkarīs’ most popular text the *Jñāneśvarī*. Jñāneśvar and his siblings lived and travelled together as *sannyāsīs* as they probably could not marry as their father had been declared an outcaste for returning from his *sannyāsī* state to his wife and thereafter fathering of four children (Zelliott 1999b:418; 2000:192). Furthermore, Jñāneśvar was probably initiated in the Śaivite yogic tradition of the Nāths by his brother Nivr̥tti.¹⁹ Consequently, Zelliott proposes that Jñāneśvar and his siblings may be the ‘exception to the idea of the importance of the household’ (1999b:418). Nāmdev (c.1271–1350) was a *śimpī* and thus a *śūdra* householder, who is remembered for composing songs, performing *kīrtans*, travelling widely and spreading *bhakti* in central, western and northern India. Eknāth (c. 1533–1599),²⁰ the author of the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata*, was an educated Brahman householder from Paithan who fraternised with *śūdras* and because he advocated social equality was thus persecuted by other Brahmans. Tukārām (c.1598—1650) was a Kuṇbī merchant

¹⁸ Vaudeville 1987:31, 35–6; Deleury 1994:3, 123; Engblom 1987:25 and Novetzke 2008:74ff.

¹⁹ Dhare 2011:169, 200, 285; Deleury 1994:9, 110–124; Ranade 2003:29; Zelliott 1999b:423; Vaudeville 1987:218, 220, and Gold & Gold 1984:115.

²⁰ This is the commonly accepted date for Eknāth but 1528/1548–1599/1609 are also proposed (see Zelliott 1987a:91, Ranade 2003:214–215).

from Dehu and therefore a *sūdra* householder who is remembered for composing *abhaṅgas* and performing *kīrtans* but also for being persecuted for taking up religious leadership. Tukārām is regarded as the greatest exponent of Vārkarī philosophy, the last of the great *bhakti* poets in Marathi and the link between medieval and modern Marathi poetry (see Chitre 1991:xx).²¹

Typically the only compositions discussed in a Vārkarī *kīrtan* are those attributed to these four *sants* (Dadhe 2012: 34; Novetzke 2003:224, 226) as there is an unwritten convention among the Vārkarīs that forbids expatiation on the compositions of any poet-*sant* that followed Tukārām, although an exception is made for the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Tukārām’s posthumous disciple Niḷobā (Tulpule 1979:392).²² There are however up to sixty male and female *sants* associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* and exposition of their deeds and achievements is permissible during a Vārkarī *kīrtan* (Dadhe 2012:34). A brief survey of the women *sants* is provided here as their sacred biographies and attributed compositions will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Muktābāī (*c.* thirteenth century) is remembered as the youngest of four siblings—Nivṛtti, Jñāneśvar and Sopān—who, despite being the children of an outcaste Brahman, became spiritual adepts and poets at an early age. Muktābāī is thought to have spoken words of advice to her brother Jñāneśvar in the *tāḷice abhaṅga* and to have challenged the *yogi* Cāṅgadev and *sant* Nāmdev. There are forty-two compositions attributed to Muktā in the SSG and many of these use yogic terms associated with the Nāth *sampradāya*. Mukta is regarded as a *mahāyoginī* by Bhagwat (2005:171),²³ as *citkalā* rather than a *yoginī* by Baba Maharaj Satarkar (personal communication, 10th December 2004), the incarnation Ādiśakti (Swami Radhika Anand, personal communication, 28th January 2005; Wadia 2011) or Ādimāyā according to Mahīpati (BVJ 1.98; 8.9, 186; 9.6, 71), as the ‘founder’ woman of the Vārkarīs by Shrotriya (1992:12; see Tulpule 1979:337), and as having ‘a greater spiritual understanding than the other women *sants*’ according to Bhat (1998).

Goṇāī (*c.* thirteenth–fourteenth century) is primarily remembered as ‘Mātā Goṇāī’ the mother of *sant* Nāmdev. The compositions attributed to Goṇāī are in the form of a dialogue with Nāmdev and Viṭṭhal demanding that Nāmdev should return to the householder life instead of singing the praises of God (Gosāvī 2000:256). Like her mother-in-law Rājāī is remembered for suffering due to Nāmdev’s disinterest in the householder life. The compositions attributed to Rājāī—in the form of a dialogue with

²¹ Dhare suggests that Jñāneśvar belongs to the Nāth sect, Eknāth to the Datta sect and Tukārām to the Caitanya sect (2011:200).

²² See Zelliot 1987b:45; Deshpande 2007:153 and Novetzke 2008:139.

²³ See Shrotriya 1992:20–21; Tulpule 1999:755 and Vanita 1989:54.

Rukmiṇī (Viṭṭhal’s wife) and with Viṭṭhal and Nāmdev—express anger and distress, often using acerbic language. Aklujkar suggests Goṇāī and Rājāī are examples of disempowered women who try to fulfil their traditional roles but who are hampered by a God-centred man. Consequently they are remembered ‘mainly for their nuisance value to the Sant, or as his stepping stones towards his world-weariness’ (2005:105, 119). These women are portrayed as *grhiṇī* struggling with *sansār* and their attributed compositions and life-stories appear to indicate the tension between *vairāgya* and *grhastha*.

Nāmdev’s *kuṭumb* seems to have included his elder sister Āūbāī, his daughter Limbāī and his daughter-in-law Lāḍāī, each of whom have a single verse in their name. Lāḍāī’s *abhaṅga* is considered important as it narrates the *samādhi* of Nāmdev, and possibly other family members, in 1350 C.E. There is a possibility that Nāmdev’s niece, Nāgarī, also formed part of the family group composing devotional poetry. There are some apparently autobiographical poems attributed to Nāgarī and according to Dhare these *abhaṅgas* are probably the first autobiography by a woman in Marathi (1977; see Shrotriya 1992:65–67).

Janābāī is primarily remembered as the *dāsī* in Nāmdev’s household: an orphan who became a servant and then a devotee (see Aklujkar 2005:105ff). There are over three hundred poems in Janī’s name many of which detail domestic chores such as grinding and that bring the deity—in feminine form—into the domestic sphere (see Sellergren 1996:219–226; Vanita 1989:58). Mahīpati devotes an entire chapter to Janābāī’s life (BVJ 21, see Appendix C) in which he intertwines miracles from Nāmdev’s life with those of Janābāī thus highlighting the connection between their lives (Novetzke 2008:68ff). Janābāī is considered the foremost *santakaviyatrī* according to Bhat (1998), possibly because there are more compositions in her name than any other *santakaviyatrī*. Janābāī is also one of three *santakaviyatrīs* to have been celebrated in film: *Sant Janābāī*, a Hindi film directed by Govind B. Ghanekar (1949), the Marathi film directed by Raju Phulkar (2003) and the Marathi film directed by Rajesh Limkar (2011).

Soyarābāī (c. fourteenth century) is repeatedly described as ‘Cokhā’s Mahārī’ in the compositions attributed to her although the poems hardly refer to her husband Cokhāmeḷā (Zelliot 2005b:160). The sixty-two Soyarā compositions in the SSG often refer to her low-caste status (Zelliot 2010:82). There are also numerous references to Nirmaḷā, Soyarābāī’s sister-in-law, in the Soyarā *abhaṅgas*. The poems attributed to Nirmaḷā refer to her brother Cokhāmeḷā as her guide but the compositions do not mention Nirmaḷā’s husband Banka, although he is thought to have been Soyarā’s brother (Zelliot 2005b:161). Significantly, the poems attributed to Soyarā and Nirmaḷā contain almost no

household images but do refer to the burden of *sansār* (Zelliot 2010:83, 2005b:163–164). There is another female Mahār poet identified as ‘Bhāgū Mahārīṇ’ in the five compositions attributed to her. Shrotriya suggests Bhāgū was a contemporary of Cokhāmeḷā (1992:78) so it is possible that her inclusion in the Vārkaṛī corpus, as with Soyārā and Nirmaḷā, is due to her status as a Mahār (Kher 1979:62).

Kānhopātrā (c. early fourteenth or mid-fifteenth century) is remembered as the beautiful daughter of a courtesan who, rather than continue in her mother’s profession, became a Viṭṭhal-*bhakta*. There are about thirty *abhaṅgas* attributed to Kānhopātrā and Bhat suggests these ‘can be sung easily as she was a singer’ (1998) although only a few are well-known today. Like Janābāī, Kānhopātrā has been immortalised in film: *Sant Kānhopātrā* (1931), *Kānhopātrā* (1937) directed by Bhalaji Pendharkar, and *Sant Kānhopātrā* (1950) directed by D. S. Ambapkar.

Bhāgūbāī, who has one or two compositions in her name, may be Tukārām’s daughter Bhāgīvathī by his second wife Āvalī/Jijābāī. Tukārām died while his children were very young after which they may have lived with their grandparents but nothing is really known about Bhāgū. The compositions attributed to Bhāgū appear in the SSG but she is not, to my knowledge, remembered elsewhere.

Bahiṇābāī (c. seventeenth century) is remembered particularly for her (attributed) spiritual autobiography, which details her marriage, aged four or five, to a thirty-year-old Brahman widower. The biography describes the verbal and physical abuse to which Bahiṇā/Bahiṇī was subjected by her husband, who despised her inclination towards *bhakti* and her discipleship of the *śūdra sant* Tukārām.

Sakhūbāī (c. seventeenth century) is remembered as a great Viṭṭhal-*bhakta* who suffered abuse at the hands of her mother-in-law and her husband but who is miraculously saved by Viṭṭhal. The story of Sakhū, like those of Bahiṇābāī and Viṭhābāī, present the experiences of housewives who are abused and suffer the torments of *sansār*. Sakhū’s life has also been commemorated in numerous films: the silent film *Sant Sakhūbāī* (1922) by the Hindustan Cinema Company; the 1932 film by Prabhat Films; a Hindi and Marathi film called *Sant Sakhū* (1941) directed by V.G. Damle, Sheik Fallelal and Raja Nene;²⁴ *Santa Sakhūbāī* (1944) a Hindi film directed by G.V. Sane, the Marathi *Kay Ga Sakhū* directed by Shankarrao Chavan (1982), the Marathi *Sant Sakhū* directed by Rajesh Limkar (2000) and Subhash Sharma’s *Ashi*

²⁴ The film has been described as a ‘family melodrama’ as Sakhū is saved from domestic oppression by her devotion. Pauwels says the message ‘seems to be that self-sacrifice and long-suffering submission to patriarchal structures, if coupled with intense devotion, will pay off in the end’ (2007:177n7).

Hoti Sant Sakhū (2013). H.N. Apte also wrote a play called *Sant Sakhūbāī*, which was first staged as a musical drama in 1911 (Deshpande 1959:278; Chandvankar 2007:43).

Śantābāī was a Carmakār/Cāmbhār woman who is honoured with a *samādhi* at the Carmakār *dharmaśālā* in Pandharpur. Zelliott and Mokashi-Punekar note that Śantābāī's story relates that her devotion to Viṭṭhal persisted despite opposition from her family: 'locked in the house at night, she was still able to spend the night in adoration of Vithoba...and when this miracle was recognized, she became free of family pressure and is acknowledged as a saint' (2005:40; see also Zelliott 2005:171–72). Kadam notes that there is a 'monastery' dedicated to 'Saint Santabai' as part of the circumambulation of Pandharpur (2012:99) and Deleury refers to the 'Śantābai pālkhī', which is not part of the official list of *pālkhīs* as Śantābāī is one of the *sants* to have taken *samādhi* at Pandharpur and therefore her *pādukās* do not travel (1960:80). This is all the information currently available about Śantābāī as she not a widely remembered *sant* and so she will not be discussed further.

Gaṅgabāī (c.1599–1665 C.E.) is said to have been widowed at the age of sixteen after which she spent her time at *bhajan-kīrtan* and singing discourses of Jñāneśvar's works at night to large audiences. Gaṅgabāī is said to have met Gaibināth who initiated her into the Nāth panth and gave her the name Guptanāth (the compositions attributed to her are in the name 'Gupta'). Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth is believed to have considered Jñāneśvar as her *guru* and it is this tenuous connection that links Gaṅgā with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* (Shrotriya 1992:46–48) as none of her attributed compositions appear in the SSG and Mahīpati does not record her life. From this sketch of the *kaviyatrīs* and *bhaktas* it is clear that most of the women were *grhiṇī* with the exception of Muktabāī, Janābāī and Kānhopātrā, which makes the familial nature of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* clear as many of the *sants* were part of family groups that formed the wider community of *sants*.

More suggests that the Vārkarīs are a *kūḷ* with *sants* like Jñāneśvar and Tukārām as ancestors, and that this extended family includes the *kuladevatā*, *kuladharmā* and *kulācāra* (1998:209). Tukārām credits the earlier *sants* with introducing the *kuladevatā*, Viṭṭhal: *kuḷīcī he kuḷadevī / kelī ṭhāvī santānī //I//* (*abhaṅga* 1363, SSG 2:776).²⁵ While Nivṛttināth says: *Nitya harikathā nitya nāmāvalī / vaiṣṇavānce kuḷī dhanya janma //I//* (*abhaṅga* 10, SSG 1:33).²⁶ 'A birth in the Vaiṣṇava [Vārkarī] family is a blessed event for in this family the names and legends of the Lord are continuously recited'. More points out that

²⁵ कुळीची हे कुळदेवी। केळी ठावी संतानी।१।

²⁶ नित्य हरिकथा नित्य नामावळी। वैष्णवांचे कुळी धन्य जन्म।१।

the Vārkarīs believe that the *sants* recognised the real nature of Viṭṭhal and revealed it to the people, who accepted him as their *kuladevatā*. Consequently, the *sants* are regarded as forming the Vārkarī *kul* (1998:210; Baba Maharaj Satarkar, personal communication, 10th December 2004). Tukārām describes the *kuladharmā* of the Vārkarīs as *āmhā vaiṣṇavāncā kuḷadharmā kulīcā / viśvāsa nāmācā ekā bhāvē* //1// ‘Our Vaiṣṇava [Vārkarī] family’s particular practice is our continual faith in the name [of Viṭṭhal]’ (*abhaṅga* 3134, SSG 2:963).²⁷ Furthermore, More argues that the most important *kulācāra* in a Vārkarī family is the *vārī* to Pandharpur (1998:210).

3. *The pilgrimage to Pandharpur*

The Vārkarī *sants* are venerated by the *sampradāya* and are part of the reason that pilgrims undertake the *vārī* across the *deś*. Pandharpur is regarded as ‘the city of saints’, the place where all the *sants* and their followers come together. It is the anticipation of this meeting with the *sants* and the sight of Viṭṭhal on his ‘brick’ that motivates pilgrims to undertake their arduous journey according to Vaudeville (1996:216; see also Tulpule 1979:329; Zelliott 1987b:35; Pechilis 1999:36; personal communication, Dñyānoba Utpat, 21st November 2004). The tradition of the *vārī* dates to at least the thirteenth century if not earlier (Engblom 1987:15, 18; Deleury 1994:36) and the first mention of the *vārī* appears in the Hebbalī (Dharwad district, Karnataka) stone inscription of Kṛṣṇa Yādava in 1248 (Tulpule 1979:328n.99). Eaton argues that by the early seventeenth century the Vārkarī pilgrimage tradition encompassed the Marathi-speaking *deś* and had been transformed into ‘a broad-based social movement’ by *sants* like Tukārām who expressed ‘in ordinary language the socio-religious aspiration of non-Brahmins’ (2005:136–137, 152; see also Pechilis 1999:36, 47). The fact that the *vārī* encompassed the *deś* by the seventeenth century suggests that the case for the householder path had been won by those with programmatic intent.

To become a Vārkarī one undergoes a simple ceremony (Deleury 1994:4; Morje 1992:163). The candidate presents him/herself, with a Vārkarī friend, before the *mahārāj* or *guru* of one of the *diṅḍīs* and expresses a desire to join.²⁸ The candidate must bring a *tulasīmālā* with them. The *diṅḍī mahārāj* tells the candidate to place the *tulasīmālā* on a sacred book—usually the *Jñāneśvarī*, *Eknāthī Bhāgavata*, or *Tukārāma Gāthā*—and then places the *tulasīmālā* around the initiate’s neck (Morje 1992:163). Thus, Vārkarīs are also known as *mālkarīs* ‘one with a garland’ (Deleury 1994:2) and the *sampradāya* is

²⁷ आम्हां वैष्णवांचा कुळधर्म कुळीचा। विश्वास नामाचा एका भावे।१।

²⁸ The *diṅḍī* leader is also called a ‘*vīṅākarī buva*’ according to Manjul (2008:413). The term *vīṅākarī* could connote one who bears as litter from *viṅe* ‘to bear a litter’ (Berntsen 1982:140) or could connote one who carries the *viṅā*. The term *buvā* is an ‘honorific suffix added a to man’s name; religious leader’ (Berntsen 1982:105).

sometimes referred to as the *mālkarī panth* (Morje 1992:163; Pande 2008:46, 2010). The key feature of being a Vārkarī is to commit to performing the *vārī* at least once or twice a year in the company of the *sants* and other Vārkarīs (Engblom 1987:16). However, the *vārī* is an obligation freely undertaken and is thus what defines a Vārkarī (Deleury 1994:103; Engblom 1987:24). This fits with Pechilis’ understanding of pilgrimage as ‘the preeminent example of the public demonstration of one’s individual decision and commitment to participate in worship (1999:50) as being a Vārkarī means going on pilgrimage.

The *vārī* to Pandharpur can be undertaken by Vārkarīs up to four times a year—for the *ekādaśī* of Caitra, Āṣāḍh, Kārttik and Māgh. However, the *āṣāḍhī vārī* is considered the most important and is the pilgrimage undertaken by the majority of Vārkarīs (Engblom 1987:2, 16; Joshi 2009:371; Deleury 1994:73; Wagle 1987:58).²⁹ In Caitra the Vārkarīs go to Pandharpur to celebrate *gudhīpāḍavā* and *rāmanavamī* by having *darśan* of Viṭṭhal (Gupta 2006:988–999; Encyclopaedia of Observances 2007). The four months of the monsoon between Āṣāḍh and Kārttik are considered holy (*cāturmāsya*). The *āṣāḍhī vārī* culminates on *devaśayanī ekādaśī*, when Viṭṭhal ‘goes to sleep’ until he is awoken on the *śukla ekādaśī* in Kārttik. Many Vārkarīs remain in Pandharpur during *cāturmāsya* and return home after the *kārttikī vārī* (‘Pandharpur Pilgrimage’). The *kārttikī vārī* celebrates the *samādhi* of Jñāneśvar in Alandi. Vārkarīs go to Alandi for the *vadya ekādaśī* and then walk to Pandharpur for Viṭṭhal’s awakening on the *prabodhinī ekādaśī*. It is during this *vārī* that the Nāmdev *pālkhī* leaves Pandharpur—the only time it does so—and travels to Alandi to honour Jñāneśvar (Novetzke 2003:12, 2005:135n.40, 2008:84, 2009:218–19; Pande 2008:506, 2010; Bahirat 1961:14; Vaudeville 1996:217). There is also a *vārī* in Māgh, lasting for the fortnight between the *śuddha pratipadā* and *pūrṇimā*, which celebrates the *Bhakta Puṇḍalik Utsava* ‘Festival of the Devotee Puṇḍalik’ (Sanagala 2012).

The *āṣāḍhī vārī* allows the Vārkarīs to meet and honour the *sants* as well as glorify Viṭhobā (Vaudeville 1996:216; Tulpule 1979:329). During the pilgrimage all the members of the *sampradāya*, the living as well as the dead, are said to gather at the feet of Viṭṭhal (Deleury 1994:73). The most sacred part of the Vārkarī is the feet as they bear the burden of the journey towards Viṭṭhal (Deleury 1994:75–76; Stanley 1992:80; personal communication, Baba Maharaj Satarkar, 10th December 2004). Stanley suggests that the feet are significant in the Vārkarī context because the *bhakta* moves to express *bhakti*

²⁹ There are four kinds of Vārkarīs according to Stanley: those who go to Pandharpur and Alandi once a year, usually to Pandharpur in Āṣāḍh and to Alandi in Kārttik; those who go to Pandharpur and Alandi twice a year; those who go to Pandharpur and Alandi quarterly, and those who go to Pandharpur and Alandi monthly called *mahinemāha* Vārkarīs. These Vārkarīs are greatly respected and it appears that their numbers are growing (1992:83–4.n12; see More 1998:206 and Dñyānoba Utpat in Chapter 2 below).

while temples and deities are static: Viṭhobā ‘stands’ on a brick in his temple in Pandharpur (1992:80). Similarly, Hawley regards the brick as Viṭhobā’s *vahan*, in the same way that the bull Nandī is Śīva’s vehicle, but while Nandī makes Śīva mobile the brick makes Viṭhobā immobile (1992:83n.9).³⁰ Stanley’s argument is based on Ramanujan’s discussion of the opposition between standing (*sthāvara*) and moving (*jaṅgama*) at the heart of Vīraśaivism in which Ramanujan identifies the Jaṅgama as ‘a religious man who has renounced world and home, moving from village to village, representing god to the devoted, a god incarnate’ (1973:21). Consequently, it might be possible to view the Vārkarīs undertaking the *vārī* as temporary renouncers (something that would again underline the householder nature of the *sampradāya*) but this is not the accepted view.

It is quite common to see Vārkarīs greeting each other by touching each other’s feet irrespective of caste. However, Kiehnle argues that this act must be understood as one that occurs within the traditional structure of society because Vārkarīs only touch each other’s feet within the context of the *vārī* or when they meet as Vārkarīs (1997b:4–5). Consequently, Kiehnle believes that Turner’s definition of ‘ideological communitas’—‘an attempt to describe the external and visible effects...of an inward experience of existential communitas, and to spell out the optimal social conditions under which such experiences might be expected to flourish and multiply’ (2008:34)—is applicable to the Vārkarīs in this instance:

In fact, the Vārkarī communitas meets traditional society carefully and respectfully. In so far as the *bhaktas* are Vārkarīs, ‘those undertaking the *vārī*...’, and perform the ensuing activities, they belong to the communitas. They are then in a sort of liminal context as defined by Turner...as temporary *sannyāsīs*, in a ritual outside society. Yet, in ‘normal life’ they belong to their respective castes and abide by the rules of brahmanized Hinduism. So a *brāhmaṇ* Vārkarī will touch the feet of a *kunbī* (farmer) when he recognises him as a co-Vārkarī, but never marry his daughter to him.

(Kiehnle 1997b:5)

Engblom regards the *vārī* as a journey that conveys individuals ‘from everyday profane environments to a sacred place’ (1987:28; see Morinis 1984). Furthermore, Engblom believes that Turner’s use of the *vārī* to exemplify the ‘liminality’ of pilgrimage (1973; 1974), where ‘normative communitas’ governs the social relations of the pilgrims during the *vārī*, is apposite as it recognises that *bhakti* lies at the heart of the *vārī* (1987:29). However, Stanley argues that Turner saw the Vārkarī’s promise (to perform the *vārī*) as ‘so unconditional’ that it took the Vārkarī out of the structure of ‘normative communitas’ and, wrongly, into that of spontaneous or ‘existential communitas’ (1992:79; see Turner 1973:193). According to Stanley the Vārkarī experience is one of normative communitas as the

³⁰ See Sontheimer 1989:205; Zelliott 1997b:35 and Eaton 2005:138.

vārī has organisational structures such as the ‘order of the march, prescribed stopping times and places, and sometimes elaborate eating arrangements’ (1992:79; see Karve 1988; see Plates 15, 22–25, 28–29). However, it seems that Turner is aware that while pilgrimages reduce structural divisions, limit the constraints of status and role and remove the pilgrim to another type of time, *communitas* does not abolish social and cultural structures (1973:221). Turner is aware that distinctions of caste are maintained on the *vārī*, as members of a *diṇḍī* tend to belong to a single *jātī*, and accepts that the *vārī* ‘remains within an established religious system’ (1973:195, 220–221). Turner exemplifies his point by referring to Deleury’s explanation for the single-caste *diṇḍī*:

this is not in opposition to the ideal...it is on the contrary a solution of the problem of the distinction of castes and of their life together. The idea of a group composed of individuals coming from various castes with different cultures, traditions and customs could be an artificial juxtaposition and not a true community: this idea can exist only in the minds of idealists who have lost contact with human and social reality. The Vārkarī solution is a happy compromise between the reality of the distinction between castes and the ideal of a social community to unite them.

(Deleury 1994:105)

In my view, this point about an ideal social community is significant as it suggests the formation of the Vārkarī tradition as a householder path in which caste and gender equality are regarded as an ideal rather than a social reality. Furthermore, Deleury’s statement highlights the notion of compromise within the *sampradāya* which connects with Lele’s and Eaton’s argument, outlined above, that the Vārkarīs were concerned with reforming orthodoxy and Brahman-Maratha hegemony while maintaining traditional views.

A *diṇḍī* leader from Alandi, Muktabai Maharaj, told me that some of her male followers do not want to touch her feet as it makes them feel inferior. Muktabai Maharaj said that she felt responsible for doing something about this and showing people the strength of women (personal communication, Alandi, 25th March 2005). Thus, it is notable that while Vārkarīs are usually willing to touch each other’s feet when they meet as Vārkarīs, gender appears to be an impediment to this egalitarian practice in some contexts. It may be that Muktabai Maharaj is suffering the repercussions of being a woman in a position of authority as there are almost no authoritative women in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* apart from a few contemporary female *kīrtankārs*: Shantabai Maharaj Deshmuk; Bhagavati Maharaj Satarkar, the daughter of the famous *kīrtankār* Babamaharaj Satarkar;³¹ and Miratai Mirikar (Schultz 2013:125).³² Dnyanoba

³¹ V.N. Utpat informed me that no one had been willing to allow a woman to perform *kīrtan* until he permitted the first *kīrtan* by Bhagavati in the Pandharpur temple—c. 2000 according to Dnyanoba Utpat (personal communication, 21st November 2004)—and that because she had performed in Pandharpur the people in Alandi allowed Bhagavati to perform there too (V.N. Utpat, personal communication, 22nd November 2004). There are clips of Bhagwati Maharaj Satarkar performing *kīrtan* on YouTube (see babamaharajsatarkar 2011).

Utpat also mentioned Gitabai Sarnikar as a contemporary *kīrtankār* and *sant* (personal communication, 21st November 2004). However, Muktabai Maharaj’s experience may also be related to the fact that she is a single woman and a *sannyāsī* (like her namesake). This all suggests that despite the *sampradāya*’s avowal of spiritual egalitarianism patriarchy and casteism remain in operation as confirmed by one of my informants when he said ‘the Vārkarīs are affected by class and caste while the Rāmadāsīs were ahead of their time [with women heading *maṭhs*]’ (personal communication, V.N. Utpat, 22nd November 2004).

The feet of the Vārkarīs en route to Pandharpur are regarded as an object of veneration as I discovered when I got back from Pandharpur and was told jokingly that the family should touch my feet. Stanley observes that spectators take *darśan* of the feet of the pilgrims, the horses and the *pādukās*: ‘Moreover, the dust from the pilgrims’ feet, as well as the dust from the horses’ feet stepped on in the *ringan* ritual, is regarded as holy and is either mixed with, or applied to, the forehead in place of Vithoba’s holy powder (*bukka*)’ (Stanley 1992:80).³² The feet of the *sants* are venerated in the form of *pādukās*, usually rendered in silver, which are carried or driven on a *pālkhī* by the *sant*’s followers (Deleury 1994; Engblom 1987:16; Eaton 2005:152). Thus, the *vārī*—in particular the *āṣāḍhī vārī*—is also known as the ‘pālkhī festival’. The term *pālkhī* refers not only to the palanquin but also ‘the organised procession that accompanies it’ states Engblom (1987:17). The most renowned *pālkhīs* are those of Jñāneśvar from Alandi and Tukārām from Dehu, which travel a distance of about 150 miles to Pandharpur over a period of about fifteen days. These two *pālkhīs* attract the largest number of followers and the *sants* combined names—‘Dñyānoba-Tukārām’ or ‘Dñyānoba-māulī-Tukārām’—are chanted by Vārkarīs en-route to Pandharpur (Engblom 1987:16; Vaudeville 1996:216–217; Chandawarkar 2005).

Tukārām is credited with transforming the pilgrimage to Pandharpur from an informal and personal event into a communal experience—he is said to have been followed by 1,400 devotees—and after Tukārām’s death his brother Kānholā and his son Nārāyaṇ continued the tradition. Nārāyaṇ (c.1650–1723) is said to have taken the silver Tukārām *pādukās* and mask on a *pālkhī* from Dehu to Alandi and included the Jñāneśvar-*pādukā* on the *pālkhī*. The Jñāneśvar-Tukārām *pālkhī* then travelled to Pandharpur from about 1685 to 1830, until a dispute among Tukārām’s descendants led to two separate *pālkhīs* being established (Eaton 2005:152; ‘Pandharpur Wari’; ‘Pandharpur Palkhi’; Tulpule 1979:237n.94; Glushkova 2014:124n.3). In 1832 Haibaṭrāv/Haibatrao Baba Arphalkar (d.1836) started a separate *pālkhī* for *sant*

³² The late Gayabai Manmadkar and Mirabai Shirkar were followers of Gadge Maharaj and, like the Muslim *sant* and *diṇḍī* leader Jaytunbi Maharaj, were only marginally Vārkarī in their *kīrtan* style according to Schultz (2013:196n.3).

³³ Lucia King’s film ‘The Warkari Cycle’ shows Vārkarīs picking up the soil where the horses have trod (2011).

Jñāneśvar, in order to avoid conflict affecting the whole *vārī* tradition ('Pandharpur Wari'). Haibatrao Baba was a *saradār* of Shinde in Satara but he gave up his profession after being saved from some robbers, which he ascribed to Jñāneśvar's grace. Subsequently, he moved to Alandi and lived a life of devotion (Kiehnle 1997a:22; Deleury 1994:18). Haibatrao Baba reorganised the *āṣādhī vārī* by providing a *pālkhī*, a bullock cart to put it on, and all the accessories such as tents, carts and horses. Moreover, Haibatrao Baba established the first official *dinḍīs* and set their order within the *pālkhī* procession, as well as establishing the route and the liturgy of the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* (Kiehnle 1997b:22, 1983:195–212; Kosambi 1996: lxiv, n.12; 'Pandharpur Wari'; Deleury 1994: 18; Engblom 1987:18; Daṇḍekar 1980; personal communication, V.N. Utpat, 22nd November 2004; Glushkova 2014:110). In recognition of his devotion and contribution to the Vārkarī *sampradāya* Haibatrao Baba is now buried under the first step at the Jñāneśvar *mandir* in Alandi (Engblom 1987:18). Haibatrao Baba's revival of the *vārī* is regarded as having led to the Vārkarī *sampradāya* becoming a mass movement in the nineteenth century according to Laine (2003:108n.11; see Eaton 2005:136–7, 152). Clearly the programmatic intent to construct the *sampradāya* as a householder tradition had succeeded. Nevertheless, the organisation of the *vārī* continued after Haibatrao Baba, as Deleury makes clear with reference to Neurgaonkar's call in 1952 for trees to be planted to protect the Vārkarīs (1994:109).³⁴ There are still demands for the state Government to provide better amenities for the Vārkarīs (see 'Govt apathy' 2012) although there is much charitable giving, for example: the Rotary club of West Pune states that for its Vārkarī *sevā* it distributes thousands of food packets to Vārkarīs ('Incidental' 2014) and people serve the Vārkarīs tea, bananas, dosas and *pohe* (Sahni 2013).

Deleury suggests that the organisation of the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* inspired the commemoration of other *sants* with *pālkhīs* (1994:18), although the majority of today's *pālkhīs* were established in the twentieth century (Eaton 2005:152 n.55; Deleury 1994:18; Engblom 1987:19). Most of the *pālkhīs* come from Maharashtra or from Marathi-speaking communities and honour *sants* associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.³⁵ The only *santakaviyatrī* to be commemorated with a *pālkhī* is Muktābāī for whom there are at least three *pālkhīs* from the Jalgaon district where her *samādhi* is located (personal communication,

³⁴ At one point Deleury seems to suggest that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* lacks organisation: 'There is no centralised organisation, no hierarchy, no general councils, no credo, no sacraments. It is a spiritual movement, or more exactly a body of spiritual groups gathered around spiritual Gurus'. However, Deleury is making the point that the *sampradāya* should be understood not as a 'church' but as 'a body of spiritual groups gathered around spiritual Gurus' (1994:4).

³⁵ One of my informants, Anand Joshi from Belgaum, used to lead a *dinḍī* from Hallur in Karnataka—via Darur, Athani, Balligeri, Waifal (Maharashtra), Gherdi, Laxmi Dahiwadi and Kasegaon—to Pandharpur (personal communication, 28th December 2004).

V.N. Utpat, 22nd November 2004).³⁶ There is a *pālkhī* from Muktaīnagar which was formerly Edalābād (diliptiwari98jalgaon 2009), from Mehun near Bhusawal (Rajendran 2013; see Deleury 1994:76, Plate 30) and from Jalgaon (EJalgaon.com, 11th June 2013).³⁷ There was a suggestion that there is a Kānhopātrā *diṇḍī* from Maṅgaḷvedha as the *diṇḍīs* of the *santakaviyatrīs* ‘come from their own place, their birthplace’ (Personal communication, Anand Joshi, 28th December 2004) but I found no evidence of this *diṇḍī*. Currently about forty-three *pālkhīs* travel to Pandharpur for the Āṣāḍh *vārī* (‘Palkhi Festival’ 2010) although in the past the number may have been as high as fifty (Kosambi 1962:131).³⁸ There is no longer a *pālkhī* associated with Cokhāmeḷā since the Nirmaḷā and Banka *pālkhī* from Mehunpur lapsed due to the Mahārs’ rejection of Hinduism and mass conversion to Buddhism in 1956 that was led by Ambedkar (Zelliot 2000a:190; 1978a:89, 96ff; 1996). The majority of Vārkarīs travel to Pandharpur independently for the āṣāḍhī *vārī* and only join the *pālkhīs* for the procession from Warkhari to Pandharpur on the eve of the āṣāḍhī *ekādaśī* (Engblom 1987:19; Kosambi 1962). The number of Vārkarīs undertaking the āṣāḍhī *vārī* seems to depend on the completion of the ‘initial sowing’ according to Brahme (2010) and ranges from five hundred thousand to a million (‘Pandharpur Wari’; Shedde 2002; Savaikar 2010).³⁹

The *pālkhīs* are divided into *diṇḍīs*, which number between thirty and several hundred members often connected by family, being from the same village, or following the same *guru* (Engblom 1987:20; Grewal 2006:154; Deleury 1994:83; Vaudeville 1996:216). Dattatreya Rasne said that the Kāsārsamāj *diṇḍī* (number 125), honouring Mahātmākāsār, consisted of about twenty family members (personal communication, 3rd January 2005) while Vimalabai, a servant in Baner, said her *diṇḍī* (the Nandedkar *diṇḍī*) was made up of about three hundred people from eighteen villages (personal communication, 20th December 2004). However, Eaton notes that *diṇḍīs* tend to be ‘differentiated by caste and ranked hierarchically’ with the oldest *diṇḍīs* nearest the *pālkhī* (2005:152–53; see also Engblom 1987:20; Deleury 1994:83). Furthermore, a *diṇḍī* may itself be divided into caste units even though such a division is contrary to the egalitarian teachings of the *sants* but the practice seems largely based on social custom and differences in diet between the castes (Karve 1988:153ff; Deleury 1994:104–5; Ramaswamy 2007:199). However, commensality does occur within *diṇḍīs*: Vimalabai stated that in the Nandedkar *diṇḍī*

³⁶ Deleury also suggests that there is a Śantābāī *pālkhī*, which resides in Pandharpur permanently (1994:80).

³⁷ The ‘Muktabai Lord Rama Palakhi’, organised by the Lord Rama Temple Trust, was leaving old Jalgaon at 5pm on the 22nd June 2013 to arrive in Pandharpur on the eve of Āṣāḍhī *ekādaśī* and part of the journey was to be accomplished bare foot (EJalgaon.com 11th June 2013).

³⁸ Deleury (1960: Plate 40) lists twenty-eight *pālkhīs* while Ahirrāv (1997:38) lists forty-nine (Feldhaus 2011:viii, 297 n.3).

³⁹ Dnyanoba Utpat told me that 5–600,000 Vārkarīs take part in the *kārttikī vārī* (personal communication, 21st November 2004).

everyone eats together (personal communication, 20th December 2004). The number of Vārkarīs has been increasing over recent years and thus new *dinḍī*s have been organised. For example, in 2009 a new *dinḍī* was organised from Mulgaon-Bicholim that included about 250 Vārkarīs in 2010 at a cost of about ₹ 550 per Vārkarī (Savaikar 2010).⁴⁰

According to Zelliott, the Vārkarī *sampradāya* advocates religious egalitarianism but ‘practises neither religious nor social equality’ (2000a:187) as the division of a *dinḍī* into caste units indicates. The Viṭhobā temple in Pandharpur was a stronghold of Hindu orthodoxy and was thus inaccessible to ‘untouchables’ (Dalits) until 1947 when Sane Guruji—Pāṇḍuraṅga Sadāśiva Sāne (1899–1950)—undertook a fast unto death to gain them admittance to the temple. Staunch *bhaktas* who were Mahārs were not allowed beyond the *samādhi* of Cokhāmeḷā at the foot of the steps leading into the Viṭhobā temple but due to Sane Guruji’s actions the temple priests eventually capitulated and admittance to the temple was achieved.⁴¹

However, Manjul states that before the temple priests capitulated they used the Rām Rājya Pariṣad and orthodox leaders such as Pandit Bhagwanshastri Dharurkar, Pandit Gopalshastri Gore and Dhundamaharaj to campaign against the entry of ‘untouchables’ to the temple and employed public meetings, seminars and fasts to oppose Sane Guruji (2005:185).⁴² Manjul recalls that the passing of the new law prompted a ‘very peculiar act’: on the 10th November 1947 a group of local orthodox people led by Dharurkar performed a *mahāpūjā* to remove the divinity of the Viṭṭhal-*mūrti* and store it in a copper pot. This act was undertaken to make plain that the devotees were only worshipping a stone statue. Furthermore, the pot containing Viṭhobā’s divinity was removed to Dharurkar’s home since when his home has functioned as an orthodox Viṭhobā temple (Manjul 2005:186–87; C. Naik 2012). The ritual of storing Viṭṭhal’s divinity in a copper pot was repeated in 1997 by people who continue to believe that the temple has been polluted by the act which lifted the restrictions placed on former ‘untouchables’. Significantly, this ‘divinity removal’ has not altered the devotion of Viṭṭhal’s followers as millions of Vārkarīs go to the temple each year. While the orthodox do not enter the temple at Paṇḍharpūr, they do worship at the Viṭṭhal temples in Dehū (connected with *sant* Tukārām) and Āḷandī (connected with *sant*

⁴⁰ There was also a *dinḍī* led by a Muslim/Sufi woman, Jaitunbī, (whom I met 12th July 2006) who died in 2010 (see Mokashi 1987:219–222; Ramaswamy 1997:199, 207; TNN July 8th 2010).

⁴¹ See Joshi 2001:30ff; Staffner 2000:77–79; Mehta 2006:119; Zelliott 1981:143, 2000a:188; Gandhi 1999:259 and Manjul 2005:186ff.

⁴² The Rām Rājya Pariṣad (Organisation of Rāma’s Kingdom) was a North Indian, conservative Hindu political party instituted by Swami Karpatri (1905–1980) but which was reduced to a marginal presence within a dozen years of its founding in 1947 (Lochtefeld 2002:563).

Jñāneśvar) despite the fact that both these temples have been open to everyone for some time, a paradox Manjul finds inexplicable (2005:187).⁴³ However, the paradox reinforces the notion of two discrete elements in the worship of Viṭhobā as Deleury states: ‘the ritualistic worship of the baḍvās’, the *deśastha* Brahmans who have been responsible for the administration of the temple in Pandharpur and collecting the offerings brought by pilgrims since the time of the Adilshahi dynasty (late fifteenth century), and ‘the spiritual worship patronised by the Vārkarīs’ who have no role in the administration of the temple (1994:64, 72; personal communications Dnyanoba Utpat, 21st November 2004 and V.N. Utpat, 22nd November 2004).

It is worth noting that the temple entry *satyāgraha* was viewed by some as a pointless action (Rege 2006:144) and was undertaken after most Mahārs had left Hinduism for Buddhism according to Zelliot (1978:82). Nonetheless, the quest for social and political reforms continued to affect the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. In the 1970s communities of former ‘untouchables’ agitated for better treatment and increased participation within the *sampradāya*. One significant change that occurred was that the Cāmbhār *diṇḍī* to Rohidās—the north Indian *sant*—won the right to a new position within the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* (Engblom 1987:7; see Ramaswamy 2007:199). The route and order of precedence for the *diṇḍīs* on pilgrimage was, according to my informant Mr Nene, fixed by the British and there was a great deal of conflict over which *diṇḍī* had priority. The Cāmbhār’s *pālkhī* used to be placed in a denigrated position in front of the riderless horse representing Jñāneśvar. A group of Cāmbhārs came to the Mahātma Phule Samatā Pratiṣṭhān (Equality Foundation) in Pune for help over the issue of segregation. The Foundation adopted the slogan ‘Horses in front, *diṇḍīs* behind’ in support of the Cāmbhārs and after a long dispute and a legal case it was agreed that the Cāmbhārs could walk behind the horses. While the Cāmbhārs are now the lead *diṇḍī* they are still segregated from the Brahman *diṇḍī* who travel at the rear of the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī*. However, it appears that the Cāmbhārs are satisfied with the arrangement (Nene, Personal communication, 18th June 2006; see also Zelliot and Mokashi-Punekar 2005:40–41; Mokashi-Punekar 2005:136).

The *diṇḍīs* provide for the needs of their members (for a fee) en route to Paṇḍharpūr and provide a daily programme to engage the Vārkarī in *bhakti* (Karve 1988:145ff; Engblom 1987:20, 25; Mokashi 1987:97–98, 108–09; see Plates 24–25). Vimalabai said that she pays about ₹ 1000 for the whole trip

⁴³ There were also those who maintained that the deity’s state of purity was *ovaḷe* rather than *sovaḷe* as all (non-Dalit) devotees could embrace the Viṭthal-*mūrti* until 1873, when a man threw a rock at the *mūrti* and broke one of its legs, after which devotees could put their heads on the deity’s feet (Dhere 2011:113, 222). Furthermore, there are those who regard the image as broken and therefore unfit for worship (Dhere 2011:113).

which covers food, a man to cook and the truck to transport luggage (personal communication, 20th December 2004). One of my informants, a former *diṇḍī* leader and *kīrtankār* from Karnataka, describes a *diṇḍī* thus:

The first thing is that there should be *vīṇā*, with four strings, and one who takes the *vīṇā* on his shoulders is called the *vīṇākarī*, so first of all there should be a *vīṇākarī* and then there should be a *ṭāḷkarī* and those who sing *abhaṅgas* and other people to call ‘Puṇḍalik Hari Viṭṭhal ... Tukā’. When they sing *abhaṅga* they should be accompanied with *mṛdaṅga*, in the group of *ṭāḷkarī* they should be accompanied by *mṛdaṅga*. At the very beginning, at the start of the *diṇḍī* there should be a *jheṇekārī* and the flag has to be in the red or maroon colour. That is the symbol that the *diṇḍī* is coming... and all the ladies and kids and all are following the *vīṇākarī* not in the queue, but it is like the military, they have discipline. When they walk they have slogans to call Pāṇḍuraṅga, they sing *abhaṅgas* and all that the *diṇḍī* is formed in this way. In all the *diṇḍīs* there need not be a *pālkhī*, when they carry a *pālkhī*—with a photo of the guru or some *moṭī* of Viṭṭhal—the *pālkhī* is secondary, if you have a tradition you can carry a *pālkhī* but if you carry a *pālkhī* there should be at least forty people to look after that. It is heavy and after every 100–200 steps they should change the people [carrying the *pālkhī*]. It is not compulsory [to have a *pālkhī*] but the group together is called a *diṇḍī*.

(Anand Joshi, personal communication, 28th December 2004)

The *diṇḍīs* have a strict schedule for their departure, halts and arrival (see Plates 22–23 for the schedule of the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* and Plate 28 for both the Tukārām and Jñāneśvar *pālkhī*). Moreover, the *pālkhīs* and *diṇḍīs* tend to follow a traditional route—as I observed during the *āṣāḍhī vārī* in June 2006—and villagers know when to expect them. It was explained to me that ‘There is one who keeps on going ahead of you, informing people of that particular place where the *diṇḍī* is going to stay and he goes on informing that...people are coming so prepare the tea’ (Anand Joshi, personal communication, 28th December 2004). Traditionally, the Vārkarīs ate what was offered to them (Nemade 1981:122) but these days tend to cook meals for themselves (Karve 1988; Engblom 1987:21–22). At night the *diṇḍī* holds *kīrtans*, *bhajans* or *gāruḍas*, which the villagers or townspeople also attend and which impart the spiritual message of the *vārī*. As the *diṇḍī* traverses the country-side people join the procession (Nemade 1981:122; Deleury 1994:86ff) or just take *darśan* of the *pādukās* (Deleury 1994:85).

The *pālkhīs* all gather at Warkhari on the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Āṣāḍh and then at about noon on the tenth day the *pālkhīs* start towards Pandharpur so as to arrive on the eve of the *śukla ekādaśī*. The *vārī* culminates when the final *pālkhī*, the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī*, has entered Pandharpur (Deleury 1994:87; Engblom 1987:19). The *pālkhīs* usually go to the temple consecrated to their *sant* and the Vārkarīs try to have *darśan* of Puṇḍalik (Engblom 1987:21) before finding lodging with friends, on the forecourt of a shop or an empty lot (personal observation, 21st November 2004) or in a *dharmaśālā* or *maṭh*. Muktabai Maharaj told me that she has two ashrams in Pandharpur ‘one on the outskirts for the *diṇḍī* and one near the *mandir*. The *maṭh* close to the temple [is where] the old people can stay as they don’t have the stamina to walk from the other *maṭh* [to town]’ (Personal communication, 18th June 2006).

The Vārkarīs are now left to their own devices as the *pālkhī* organisation only applies to the journey to Pandharpur (Engblom 1987:21). Typically, on the *ekādaśīs* of Āṣāḍh and Kārttik a Vārkarī will fast and try to have *darśan* of Viṭṭhal in the temple (Deleury 1994:87; 71)⁴⁴ but there are long queues so many pilgrims are satisfied if they just have *kaḷasa-darśan* once they have bathed in the river (Bandeekar 2010; Vimalabai, personal communication, 20th December 2004). The Vārkarīs stay in Pandharpur for up to five days—during which time the regular temple routine ceases in order to enable the pilgrims to have *darśan* of Viṭṭhal day and night (Deleury 1994:71)—until *pūrṇimā* and they then return home individually. The Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* travels back to Alandi, accompanied by a core group of Vārkarīs, in half the time so as to be back in Alandi for the dark *ekādaśī* when the Jñāneśvar *pādukās* are reinstalled in the temple (Engblom 1987:21–22; Muktabai Belgaonkar, Personal communication, 18th June 2006). Stanley notes that the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* is the only one for which there is a ‘ritual return’ and that this may be due to Jñāneśvar being regarded as an *avatāra* of Viṭhobā by some Vārkarīs. It seems that other Vārkarīs regard the return of the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* to Alandi as ‘representative of the return of all the *sants* to their respective places’ and that a small number of Vārkarīs may perform the return of Tukārām to Dehu or Eknāth to Paithan (1992:87n.33). The Vārkarī has thus fulfilled his or her vow and accomplished his or her *sādhana* (Engblom 1987:24–25) but as Nemade argues the *vārī* has also provides the labouring classes with an opportunity to travel and have a change of scene, and allows women a respite from housework (1981:122). Nemade’s view ties in with that of Vimalabai who said she went on the *vārī* because, ‘it made me happy, made my mind happy. We’ve been doing the menial jobs of the house for a whole year and then you can’t go anywhere so then one wants to go for the *vārī* and then you get away from your family, your children and you forget about the family for those twenty days and chant the name of *māulī*’ (Vimalabai, personal communication, 20th December 2004). Vimalabai’s view of the *vārī* as a holiday from domestic service and a break from *sansār* may go some way to explaining why there are more women travelling with *vārī* than ever before (Sabnis 2011).

4. *Contemporary perspectives: caste, class and social vision*

In the contemporary period the majority of Vārkarīs are ordinary householders who are farmers (*kuṇbī-Marāṭhā*), Brahman landlords, petty officers, craftsmen or traders. Those Vārkarīs that come from towns tend to be shopkeepers and traders and are fewer in number than the rural Vārkarīs with the urban middle

⁴⁴ Fasting on the eleventh day of both fortnights of every month is regarded as a *kulācāra* in a Vārkarī family (More 1998:210).

classes constituting the minority of Vārkarīs.⁴⁵ However, the number of Vārkarīs from the urban centres such as Mumbai and Pune is growing. This may be due to the influence of *kīrtankārs* like Baba Maharaj Satarkar (a Brahman) whose *kīrtans* and *bhajans* have been recorded and distributed widely (Jones 2009:151). Many urbanites join the *vārī* for one or two days, walking from Alandi to Pune or even further (Sawant 2009; TNN 2011). One woman from Pune whom I interviewed did the *vārī* from Alandi to Pandharpur by doing it in stages each Āṣāḍh over a twelve year period (Mrs D., Personal communication, 14th October 2004). However, the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is by and large rural and non-Brahman (Zelliot and Berntsen 1988: xvii; Lele 1981:104; see Schultz 2013:81, 83). Vimala, a Lingāyat from Umarga with five acres of farmland told me she did the *vārī* ‘for God, for the body and for the god within our body’; Mrs Salunkhe, a Maratha, said they had ‘farmland at home in Satara’ and Subhadra Jadhve (from near Satara) was a Maratha (Personal communications, Alandi, 10th December 2004).

The tradition is considered ‘liberal and inclusive’ by Nemade as it has respected Brahmans, Muslims and ‘untouchables’ (1981:114)⁴⁶ while Kosambi argues that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* has spiritually transcended Brahmanical caste and gender hierarchies (2000:2). However, neither Maharashtra society nor the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is really socially equal according to Engblom (1987:7),⁴⁷ as the cases of the Mahārs, Cāmbhārs and ‘god in a copper pot’ outlined above indicate. One might imagine that the *abhangas* attributed to ‘untouchable’ *sants* like Cokhāmeļā would have a profound effect on the Dalit movement but Zelliot argues that while this was the case in the past Cokhāmeļā has been rejected by contemporary Mahārs and Dalits in Maharashtra for three particular reasons. Firstly, Cokhāmeļā accepted his ‘untouchable’ status as a consequence of sin in a previous birth, a karmic reasoning for ‘untouchability’ which is rejected by contemporary Dalits. Secondly, the Vārkarī *sampradāya* maintains that it is committed to religious equality but neither religious nor social equality are practiced in reality, as the *diṇḍīs* of ‘untouchables’ and the *dharmasālās* or *maṭhs* where pilgrims stay in Pandharpur tend to operate on a caste basis. Thirdly, Cokhāmeļā has been rejected because the Vārkarī *sampradāya* lacked ‘social vision’ and has failed to advocate equality (2000a:187–188). There seems to be a feeling that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* and the deity Viṭṭhal are blind to the Dalits and that they, just like Cokhāmeļā in his lifetime, remain unaccepted (Zelliot 2000a:191; see Rege 2006:61, 181; Bhagwat

⁴⁵ Morje 1992:165; Deleury 1994:5; Engblom 1987:22; see also Zelliot 1999b:424.

⁴⁶ See also Ayyappanikkar 1997:351; Sardar 1969:145 and Zelliot 1987:33.

⁴⁷ See also Zelliot 1981:140ff; Rege 2006:181; Chakravarti 2003:98ff and Bayly 2001:47–8.

2005:177). Consequently, the meaning that the Vārkarī *sants* and *sampradāya* have in the lives of contemporary Dalits must not be assumed to be operational.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to say that there is a total lack of ‘social vision’ among contemporary Vārkarīs as *diṇḍīs* in 2012 promoted the fight against corruption, advocated ‘saving the girl child’ and curtailing child labour (‘Warkari Wave in town’). Furthermore, the tiffin delivery network of Mumbai *dabbawallas*— the Nutan Mumbai Tiffin Box Suppliers Charity Trust (NMTBSCT)—is supported by a moral code and a vision of shared values that Roncaglia traces back to the Vārkarī *sampradāya* (2013:37, 88, 91). Additionally, according to Zelliott (1987b:50), one significant change to the *sampradāya* during the twentieth century was ‘the presence of the genuinely radical saint from within the tradition’. Gadge Mahārāj (1876–1956) was from a poor *parīṭ* family in the Vidarbha region and became a *sannyāsī* when he was about thirty to travel across Maharashtra for the next fifty years preaching a message of devotion *and* social reform. Gadge Mahārāj used the metaphors and idioms that were familiar and stirring to rural Maharashtrians in his *kīrtans* to preach abstention from alcohol, anti-untouchability and brotherhood. Gadge Mahārāj—whose name derives from his single possession, the *gāḍge*—is regarded by many as a *sant* who possessed the spirit of Nāmdev and Tukārām and who assured people that Maharashtra will continue to produce *sants* in keeping with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* (Zelliott 1987b:48–50; Dandekar 1988:223–250; Schultz 2013:83). The examples of Gadge Mahārāj, the Mumbai *dabbawallas* and some Vārkarī *diṇḍīs* demonstrate that there is a degree of social vision among many associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* but that this has not adequately dealt with the inequities of caste which continue to this day. The limited social vision of the *sampradāya* highlights that its message is one of spiritual rather than social egalitarianism and appears to support Lele’s view that the *sampradāya* sought to reform orthodoxy without destroying tradition (1987:124).

From the brief survey I have provided here of the *sampradāya*, it appears that the reasons proposed by Zelliott for the householder character of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* are credible. The majority of the women remembered by the Vārkarī tradition were *grhiṇī* who are regarded as having struggled with *sansār*, which is indicative of the householder life. Jñāneśvar and his siblings were probably outcaste Brahmans living as *sannyāsīs* even if they could not take formal vows of renunciation. The siblings and Eknāth, with his unconventional attitudes towards low-caste persons, can be taken to represent the ‘unorthodox Brahmin’ leadership. Nāmdev, Cokhāmēlā, Tukārām and numerous other *sants* fit with Zelliott’s notion of ‘*śūdra* leadership’. However, further assessment of whether the ‘leadership from

either Śūdra or unorthodox Brahmins may be most responsible for Maharashtra's householder bhaktas' is necessary and I will undertake this in terms of my discussion in Chapter Three of the discursive construction of the tradition. There are also several possible explanations for the rural nature of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* (Zelliot 1999b:423–24): Viṭṭhal's connection to pastoralists and shepherds (Dhere 2011; Sontheimer 1989) and the fact that most Vārkarīs are agriculturalists (Nemade 1981); the low-caste status and practice of traditional occupations by most *sants* (Lele 1981; Bhagwat 2005); the route of the *vārī* across the *deś* (Eaton 2005; 137ff) to converge on Paṇḍharpūr, a rural town connected with the local agrarian society and economy, which was earlier supervised by Brahmans (Deleury 1994:23ff). While the tradition of the Nāth *yogis* was influential in Maharashtra (see Vaudeville 1987; Zelliot 1987; White 1996) it is really the only example of a *sannyāsī* tradition in the region that influenced the early Vārkarī *sants*. Jñāneśvar clearly had connections with the Nāths and it is probable that Nāmdev and Eknāth had some association with the tradition (see Chapter Three below). However, both Nāmdev and Eknāth were householders, however reluctantly, which suggests that the argument for a householder path triumphed. The Nāth connection will be explored further in Chapter Three in relation to the discursive formation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. However, my ethnographic research will be presented first in order to explore the position of the *santakaviyatrīs* in the contemporary tradition and ascertain whether the successful construction of the *sampradāya* as a householder path means that female figures now have a diminished presence.

CHAPTER TWO

ETHNOGRAPHY AMONG CONTEMPORARY VĀRKARĪS

In September 2004 I went to India to undertake several months of fieldwork in Maharashtra so as to experience and observe the important religious sites and practices of the Vārkarīs first-hand, and to explore the role of the *santakaviyatrīs* in the contemporary tradition. This chapter therefore relates my observations and experiences of key sites like Alandi and Pandharpur, practices like the *vārī*, as well as some of my encounters and interviews with men and women in order to begin investigating the role and status of the medieval *santakaviyatrīs* in the contemporary Vārkarī tradition inasmuch as these relate to the function and purpose of gender attribution in the discursive formation of the *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

My first formal interview was with Acarya Vyas (now Swami Govind Giriji Maharaj), who described himself as an ‘ardent Jñāneśvar devotee’ and said: ‘people don’t know much about these women *sants*. In the Vārkarī tradition men and women [were/are] treated equally and people honour female and male *sants* equally’. The connection between the householder nature of the *sampradāya* and the number of women *sants* within the Vārkarī context was also brought to my attention by Vyas as he said, ‘equality is one reason [why there are so many women *sants*] while the other reason was that the *sants* were householders and therefore there were families, which accounts for the mix of women and men *sants*’. Vyas mentioned ‘Janābāi in Nāmdev’s family’ to exemplify his point (personal communication, 16th October 2004). Likewise, Sumantai Tade, an ascetic who had done the *vārī* for years, suggested that ‘there was no difference between men and women’ in the homes of *sants* as ‘they were on the same level’. However, Sumantai suggested that the reason that not many women *sants* were recognised was due to the ‘limitations at home’ (Personal communication, 6th December 2004).

The second official interview was with Vidyut Bhagwat, the sociologist and director of the Women’s Studies’ Centre at the University of Pune. Bhagwat’s view was that all the ‘big shots’ in the Vārkarī tradition are male (personal communication, 27th October 2004) and that scholars like Sadanand More and Dilip Chitre also have a patriarchal approach as they examine the male *sants* in detail but ignore female disciples and *sants* (personal communication, 29th January 2005). Bhagwat was keen that we discover the caste of the practitioners we interviewed as she thought that Brahman women have a very

different outlook from Dalit women. Bhagwat said that the ‘heritage of Vārkarī’ gives dignity to a community and that one is upgraded by being a Vārkarī. For Bhagwat Brahman women are rebelling by being Vārkarīs whether they choose the tradition individually or whether it is a family tradition.

Bhagwat’s response to my question about whether the *santakaviyatrīs* are emulated was an unequivocal ‘no’. According to Bhagwat, there is no emulation of the *santakaviyatrīs* because ‘resistant voices and/or women are written out’ rather the focus is on performing *bhakti* within a household context:

Household/spirituality is the only message and Brahmanism underscores it because Brahmanism is still dominant. The balance between the household and other worldliness is what is being advocated because this is the perception of what the women sants did. The only ‘emulation’ that exists is that of behaving as a proper wife, a pure and chaste women, and doing ‘other worldly’ things in the context of caste [and home].

(Vidyut Bhagwat, personal communication, 27th October 2004)

Bhagwat continued that Janābāī is not really read by Brahman women, who [if they read about the Vārkarī women at all] only read about Muktabāī because they like the mystical element of her work. They talk about Muktabāī as a mystic, who was trained [and] denied womanly pleasures....The fact that she had male disciples and was a *mahāyoginī* means Muktabāī is now ‘pure’ (personal communication, 27th October 2004).

The first time I went to any of the religious sites associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* I went to Alandi with my research assistant Kasturi Dadhe, her mother, and a friend by car. The temple in Alandi consecrates the *samādhi* of *sant* Jñāneśvar, one of the most important figures in the *sampradāya*. We left our shoes behind in the car and walked barefoot towards the temple stopping off to purchase offerings of garlands, marigold flower heads, several bags of small round white sweets and some *tulasī* leaves. We entered the temple through the main entrance by passing over a brass-covered step with silver inlay in the centre, commemorating Haibatrao Baba (Haibatbaba), which people touched in a gesture of respect. We carried on through a narrow corridor and entranceway into the main temple complex, which we circumnavigated in a clockwise direction (Plate 1).



Plate 1: The temple complex at Alandi (29th October 2004)

First we saw the tree around which Jñāneśvar’s mother Rukmiṇī is said to have walked one thousand times while waiting for her husband to return from being a *sannyāsī*. There is a tradition of women walking around the tree with a ball of string asking for their husbands to be blessed with longevity as Rukmiṇī’s act is considered a kind of vow that women try to emulate. This act appears to counter Bhagwat’s view that there is no emulation of women *sants* but Rukmiṇī, Jñāneśvar’s mother, is not considered a *sant* so it is possible that she offers a means by which women can be encouraged to perform domestic votive rites (see McGee 1991). Nonetheless, this act signals the *sampradāya*’s advocacy of the householder path.

We then visited the area dedicated to *sant* Eknāth where *pādukās* are set into a wall. The story I was told that day related that Eknāth came to the site of Jñāneśvar’s *samādhi* at Alandi as he had had a ‘message’ from Jñāneśvar which said that Jñāneśvar needed Eknāth to help people understand the *Jñāneśvarī* as there had been a great deal of confusion and misinterpretation of the text since Jñāneśvar had completed the work (c. 1296). However, Mahīpati recounts that Eknāth had a dream while he was visiting Alandi in which Jñāneśvar told him that ‘the roots of the *ajñāna* tree have reached my neck. Dig into my tomb and push the root aside’. Mahīpati asserts that Eknāth did as instructed, made his *namaskāra* to Jñāneśvar, moved the root aside and resealed the tomb (BLM 19.100–105; Abbott 1927:135).

The entrance to the *garbhagr̥ha* was through a chamber with something similar to an airport security line. We squeezed through two narrow doorways and entered the outer chamber. Around the edge of the chamber was a queue of people waiting to enter the *garbhagr̥ha* as well as people kneeling and prostrating in front of the doorway. We entered the *garbhagr̥ha* containing images of the deity Viṭṭhal and his wife Rukmiṇī (Plate 10) and a small black stone edifice marking Jñāneśvar's *sañjīvan samādhi* under which devotees believe that Jñāneśvar is still sitting (Plate 11). We gave our tray containing the offerings to the priest on our left; we each knelt and placed our foreheads on the stone. The priests were performing *abhiṣek* of the stone with water and milk so I ended up with a rather damp forehead. We took our *prasāda* and, having consumed our own portions, distributed the rest among the crowd outside.

After we left the *garbhagr̥ha* I stood at the back of the antechamber and looked around while my companions performed *namaskāra*. A large number of children and elderly people entered the *garbhagr̥ha* and nearby an older lady was sitting cross-legged reading what appeared to be a booklet with large print text, which was probably the *Jñāneśvarī*. Next door was a room where mainly older people were studying and reading the *Jñāneśvarī* while sitting on mats. The impression was of saffron-coloured turbans, bags and texts, as saffron is considered to be the colour of fire and is therefore auspicious (see Plate 5). The chamber had a hammered silver frame around the doorway to the *garbhagr̥ha* including a Gaṇeśa at the top which many people touched as they entered or exited the sanctum. Even though it was not a festival day there was a steady stream of people. Leaving the antechamber we moved to the next area which houses the Nandī bull that is revered as the place where Jñāneśvar is said to have entered his tomb (Plate 2). The story of Jñāneśvar and his *samādhi* are presented on a stone plaque outside the Nandī shrine, while adjacent to the Nandī is the enclosed shrine of *sant* Muktābāi (Plate 3) at which a woman was making an offering (Plate 4).



Plate 2: Nandi bull, Alandi



Plate 3: Muktabāi shrine, Alandi



Plate 4: Woman making an offering at the Muktabāi shrine, Alandi

We continued round the complex visiting a meditation room and a tree that is thought to have been at the site since the time of Jñāneśvar's *samādhi*. Next to the tree was an area where individuals were praying and reading from the *Jñāneśvarī* that was inscribed on marble tablets on the wall (Plate 5), which highlights the *Jñāneśvarī*'s importance for the Vārkarī *sampradāya* (see below).



Plate 5: Vārkarīs reading the *Jñāneśvarī*, Alandi

After leaving the temple we visited the Vedic school run by Acarya Vyas and met those who prepare and distribute food for fifty students at the Vārkarī School. We met the senior man at the school and observed the examination of some the students who hoped to become *kīrtankārs* (Plate 6). The turbaned man facing the audience was being examined on his ability to give the discourse, his use of *abhaṅgas*, the relevance of the *abhaṅgas* to the topic of the discourse and his use of music. I was informed that the idea was that he did not sing too many *abhaṅgas* but focussed on the discourse. The rest of the group is largely formed of *ṭāḷakarīs* and the *vīṇā* player on the right of the group.



Plate 6: Examination of Vārkarī *kīrtankārs*, the Vārkarī school, Alandi (29th October 2004)

The Vārkarī Śikṣaṇa Saṁsthān (‘Vārkarī Teaching Institution’) was started by Jog Maharaj in 1917 and now has an entrance exam for students willing to undertake four years of training to be *kīrtankārs*.¹ The school is regarded by Lele as a place where lower caste males are ‘trained to return to the villages in order to propagate Brahmanic interpretations of saint poetry’ (1989:44). The school only admits male students, which fits with the Dñyoba Utpat’s explanation that the reason there is a lack of female Vārkarī *kīrtankārs* and *sants* is that women have not been given the freedom to study (personal communication, 21st November 2004). Sumantai Tade said ‘from the times of *śāstras* and *purāṇas* women always had a secondary position in society and a woman had to keep her limits...What is also true is that the importance that is given to a male has not been given to a female and that cannot be denied’ (personal communication, 28th February 2005). Muktabai Maharaj Belgaonkar said something almost identical: ‘from ancient times women have been proving themselves but men don’t want to acknowledge it because women are looked up to when they have proved themselves and they don’t want that...A woman who is considered to be of a weaker strength and who is on a progressive path is definitely something to appreciate. We [women] should never stand back’. Muktabai Maharaj, a disciple of Gayabai Manmadkar and Dada Maharaj Manmadkar, also related how she challenges gender discrimination:

When I do *kīrtan* and they say that ‘you, a woman, is not supposed to do *kīrtan*, sing *bhajans*.’ I say ‘you are here because of a woman, who gave birth to you, who are you to deny her? Has a man ever become pregnant?’...I keep fighting with these men [saying] you don’t have any right to tell me ‘don’t do *parāvācā*, don’t do *kīrtan*’. I will do what I want to. I always ask them which authorities

¹ Ashwin 2011; Dighe 2011; see Mokashi 1987:208 and Dadhe 2012:10–11ff.

have said women should not perform *kīrtans*. Even Vyas did not say that women should not perform *kīrtans*.

(Personal communications, Muktabai Maharaj Belgaonkar, 7th and 25th March 2005)

Tade and Belgaonkar's views support Bhagwat's idea that resistant voices and/or women are obscured in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

The first time that I visited Pandharpur was for the *kārttikī ekādaśī*. We headed out of Pune on the Solapur road following the route of the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* from Alandi. We drove up the five mile Dive *ghāt*, which the Vārkarīs walk as part of the Pune-Saswad stretch of the route. We stopped for breakfast at the Cāngadev *mandir* at Saswad (Plate 7) before continuing our journey to Pandharpur through Jejuri with its hilltop Kānhobā temple (see King 2011).



Plate 7: Nandī, Cāngadev temple, Saswad

About thirty miles out from Pandharpur we began to see more and more Vārkarīs on the road, identifiable by their white clothing: turbaned men walking, men on bicycles, groups of men and women with *īāl* and *vīṇās* singing. We drove through Warkhari, where all the *diṇḍīs* gather before entering Pandharpur during the *āṣāḍhī vārī* and drove into town. I was told that the crowd was nothing compared to the *āṣāḍhī vārī* as the Vārkarīs are not obliged to walk to Pandharpur for the *kārttikī vārī*. After making various arrangements for the next day via our hotel room phone we met with Dnyanoba Utpat—an expert on *lāvaṇī* and a Rukmiṇī temple trustee—for an interview (21st November 2004).

That evening we went down to the river, which was running through a small central channel. The exposed riverbed provides a site for the Vārkarīs to camp and to erect pavilions in which to hold *kīrtans*. The area is like a small town fair as there are ice-cream carts and snack sellers lining the main route through the pavilions. There were people lying on tarpaulins, plastic sheets or mats and bodies wrapped from head to foot all trying to sleep. There were members of different *diṇḍīs* eating their evening meals and I commented on men serving a group of women as this seemed unusual. My friends told me that normally the women of the group would do the cooking, serve the men and then eat themselves. However, I later discovered some *diṇḍīs* employ a cook for the whole group so that the Vārkarīs can just concentrate on the walking.

The official publication of the biography of a well-known Vārkarī *kīrtankār*, Baba Maharaj Satarkar, was taking place. The Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra was speaking on the dais, while the police tried to make the large crowd sit down. The Rāmadāsīs and Kabīr-*panthīs* were both performing *kīrtans* nearby. The fact that the Rāmadāsīs were present is interesting because there is generally considered to be a rift between the Rāmadāsīs and the Vārkarīs. Marutibua Ramdasi, the head of the Samartha Seva Mandir Trust at Sajjangad (Satara), asserted that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is largely made up of low-caste people who lack education while the Samartha *sampradāya* is predominantly formed of high-caste, educated people who can cope with revolutionary ideas, like women in positions of authority. Marutibua Ramdasi said that the Samartha and the Vārkarī *sampradāyas* both had the goal of spiritual development in common but despite this the two communities are moving further apart (personal communication, 22nd November 2004).

The day of the *kārttikī ekādaśī* began with a bath and breakfast of *sābūdāṇā vaḍās* so that we followed the ‘fast’. One of our hosts for the day, Suresh Utpat—a trustee of the Rukmiṇī temple—came to the hotel with our passes for the temple so that we could avoid the long queues to have Viṭṭhal-*darśan* that afternoon. When our rickshaws could go no further, we walked along holding hands so we would not get separated in the crowd (Plates 8 and 9) then squeezed between two corrugated iron stalls and up a flight of metal stairs in order to meet V.N. Utpat, a senior trustee of the Rukmiṇī temple, at his house on the south side of the temple. Utpat said that the main female *sants* are Sakhūbāī, Muktabāī, Janābāī, Bahiṇābāī and Kānhopātrā as these women achieved complexities and a proper form of poetry that were not just sporadic compositions. Utpat suggested that Bahiṇābāī’s compositions are to be revered due to their quantity while Muktabāī’s few *abhaṅgas* are to be revered due to ‘the level she explored’. Utpat also

implied that women *sants* like Goṇāī and Lāḍāī are less important because they were not as revolutionary as the others. We asked why the compositions of Muktabāī and Bahiṇābāī are not acknowledged and Utpat replied: ‘Some sects within the *sampradāya* are so caste rigid that they won’t use any other *abhaṅga* apart from Tukārām in the *kīrtan*; not even other male saints, forget women saints’. This raised the issue of caste so Utpat continued ‘There are some *diṇḍīs* that have the rule of *soḷā* [where no one touches anyone else] and this is not in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* but it’s still practised by some groups during the *vārī*...The Brahman-Maratha war is still going on, even politically...despite all this the principles/philosophy of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is really revolutionary’ (N. Utpat, personal communication, 22nd November 2004).



Plate 8: Vārkarīs in Paṇḍharpūr for *kārttikī ekādaśī*

In the crowd outside Utpat’s house there were Vārkarīs performing a *pradakṣiṇā* of the temple, including a woman performing *lōṭāṅgaṇa*, which they conducted in a clock-wise direction around the temple beginning from the main eastern entrance of the temple (Plate 17). The pilgrims then passed under the bridge that connects the ‘queue’ building, with its spiral walkway, to the temple (see Plate 8). Dñyānoba Utpat told us that ‘now almost 30,000 people a day want to touch the feet [of Viṭṭhal], therefore it takes about thirty-six hours for *darśan*’ during Kārttik, which is why the queue building had to be built (personal communication, 21st November 2004). One female informant told us the queue for *darśan* can take three to four days during Āṣāḍh and related how offerings of *tulasīmālās* were

immediately thrown into a heap in the corner by the priests and how the police tried to push people away: ‘I spoke to the police guy saying “You dare not touch me. I will just touch the feet of Pāṇḍuraṅga for just a second but don’t touch me at all”. He said “OK I won’t touch you just take *darśan*” and afterwards he asked if the *darśan* was good. You don’t feel good when you’ve walked for days and then you want to take *darśan* [and you see how the devotees are treated]. I don’t like it”’ (personal communication, 3rd January 2005).

Pressing through the crowd we went up a small lane to the northwest of the temple and entered a house, through a low carved wooden door, where we left our shoes and bags. Barefoot and hand-in-hand we walked down the lane with our heads covered, escorted by Suresh Utpat, and entered the ticket-holders entranceway, thus circumventing the queue. On entering the temple we climbed a steep flight of wooden stairs with a rather wobbly iron railing, turned left, went across a piece of flat roof, and descended a flight of stairs holding onto the railing on our right as we were all packed tightly in the stairwell. At the bottom of the stairs, on the southern side of the temple, we passed the *taraṭī* tree associated with Kānhopātrā and a niche with her icon. The stream of people kept pushing us forward in the one-way system as we passed icons of *sants* and deities. We entered the outer hall of the Viṭṭhal shrine with its carved pillars of dark stone but there was hardly time to take it all in as we jostled our way round the sides of the hall. We entered the *garbhagrha* on the right-hand side passing through two doorways decorated with silver. I just managed to touch the feet of Viṭṭhal and handed over my donation to the priest on the left of the deity before moving out: *darśan* was over rapidly.

Leaving the Viṭṭhal shrine we joined the queue to have *darśan* of Rukmiṇī, passing up some marble stairs and entering the *garbhagrha*, touching the goddess’ feet and giving our money. We were given a blessing by the priest and *prasāda*—a coconut and garland in my case—by an official whom Utpat had asked to escort us around and who met us at various strategic locations. The priests and police were all very curious that there was a foreigner in their midst and kept asking questions. We all kept performing *namaskāra*: putting our hands together and bowing before touching their feet with our hands. We left the temple by the rear exit (Plate 18) before making our way to the front of the temple, where we squeezed through the crowd, to see the steps dedicated to Nāmdev and the Cokhāmelā shrine. All this was done with bare feet and my friends saying ‘just don’t look down’!

Back at Suresh Utpat’s house we washed our feet before climbing the narrow walled-in stairs to the first floor. Later, I learnt that the old *vādā* had been sub-divided so that members of the Utpat family

could all have their own homes. Our hosts fed us *sābūdānā*, yoghurt with fruit and fresh grated coconut—what was laughingly referred to as ‘fast’ food—before we once again joined the crowd and went on our way. Among the Vārkarīs were women carrying *tulasīvr̥ndāvana* on their heads, or something that symbolises the *tulasī*, as the *tulasī* is said to act as a means of purification. Vimalabai said there are a number of women who travel with the Jñāneśvar *pāḷkhī* carrying the *tulasīvr̥ndāvana* during the *āṣādhī vr̥rī* because ‘it is required to walk with Māulī’s *pāḷkhī* [and that] when the *pādukā* are given a wash the water mustn’t be thrown away so you give it to the *tulasī* and the *tulasī* is offered to the *pādukās*’ (personal communication 20th December 2004). The *kārttikī ekādaśī* is also the day of the *tulasī vivāha*—the marriage of Tulasī and Viṭṭhal—that marks the beginning of the marriage season. The purchase of a Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī brass statuette concluded my first visit to Pandharpur.



Plate 9: Vārkarīs in Pandharpur for the *kārttikī ekādaśī*

The *kārttikī vr̥rī* was celebrated in Alandi over three days and my research assistant, her mother, and I travelled by car from Pune arriving just after dusk had fallen on the final day. We crawled into town as the roads were full of people, passed the big wheel of a fun fair as well as all kinds of stalls, and then across the new bridge. We picked our way down a dingy lane and entered an uncompleted building that turned out to be the *maṭh* of Baba Maharaj Satarkar, the *kīrtankār* and *diṇḍī* leader.

Satarkar said that the *sants* are those who are ‘aloof from all the vices’ for this is how being a *sant* begins while *sant*-hood concludes with *sākṣātkār* (personal communication, 10th December 2004). I said, ‘earlier you talked about how the *sants* were in families, most of the saints from the past had family lives’. Satarkar replied:

Yes, yes, family or without family, that is not an important question. Tukārām Mahārāj was a family man, Nāmdev Mahārāj was a family man; Jñāneśvar Mahārāj, though not married, was a family man [as] he had brothers and sisters, so nobody is without family. A person may not marry but all his *śiṣya* and *sampradāya* are his family. Family does not mean kith and kin, it is all the people who come to gather, appreciate the goodness of each other that is family....

(personal communication, Baba Maharaj Satarkar, 10th December 2004)

I then asked ‘Is it acceptable to say that Muktabāī was the “founder” woman in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*?’ and he replied ‘She was the beginning...Janābāī was also there...’. ‘What would you say about the idea that Muktabāī was a *mahāyoginī*?’ ‘Of course, she was *citkalā*; she was also a *bhakta* more than a *yoginī*...’ (Personal communication, 10th December 2004). This statement made me wonder if Satarkar wanted to diminish Muktabāī’s Śaivite associations and stress her connections with the householder Vārkarīs.

‘Do you think that Janābāī suffered distress in Nāmdev’s family?’ I asked. Baba Maharaj replied: ‘That is not distress...she talks to almighty God. She uses bad words to him...Other people think that there is no God but when she gives him bad words...her bad words are more important than our scriptures because He is listening to her...He used to come to her house daily, she had very good relation [with Him]...’ (Personal communication, 10th December 2004). Later, in an interview with Bhagwat, we raised the issue of why certain men were of the view that there was no distress in the lives of women when the *abhaṅgas* attributed to *sants* like Janābāī suggest otherwise. Bhagwat declared:

...the very fact that they are visible or given credit of writing [these men] feel that it proves that there was no injustice. They feel that if there was any cruelty then they [female *sant*-poets] would have been invisible-ised or erased but if they are not erased and are applauded in certain ways then that is justice, what else does a woman want? ..Similarly we have a universal truth making capacity through Janābāī, Muktabāī and Bahiṇābāī, and we...have to separate them from mainstreamers who are glossing over the struggle of these women and deifying them.

(Vidyut Bhagwat, personal communication, 29th January 2005)

After the interview with Baba Maharaj we joined some of the women who made up Baba Maharaj’s *diṇḍī* and I asked them about the *vārī*. The first woman we spoke to was called Vimala, an agriculturalist from Umarga. Vimala had been going on the *kārttikī vārī* for eighteen years, although she did sometimes go on the *āṣāḍhī vārī*. Vimala explained that she went on the *vārī* ‘for God, for the body and for the god within our body’. When asked if there had been any opposition to her going on the *vārī* we discovered that Vimala was a Lingāyat and that her family had opposed her going on pilgrimage. Vimala said that she was ‘almost addicted’ to going on the *vārī* because ‘*paramārtha* is very appealing’. Vimala said that she knew some *abhaṅgas* by heart and could recite some of the well-known *ślokas* from the *Jñāneśvarī* but that mainly she learnt through listening. Vimala, like other low class women we interviewed, had little or no education and thus learnt the songs, spiritual texts and the spiritual and

philosophical teachings of the *sampradāya* aurally: Salunkhe said ‘why do you need to read and write, you do not need it for anything’. When asked whether Vimala saw a change in herself after going on the *vārī* she said that the sorrow she had felt in her material life had lessened by going on the *vārī*: ‘When you live at home you have to do this or that, all the menial jobs but after joining the *vārī* this [attachment] becomes a little less. Nobody complains anymore’ (personal communications, 10th December 2004). Another woman later expressed a similar idea: ‘when we go on the *pāyāvārī*...we don’t think of home, we’re contented. We never get bored. However much one walks one feels fresh, rejuvenated for fifteen days...’ (Personal communication, 3rd January 2005).

One elderly lady, Subhadra Jadhav, told us that she cooked for the Baba Mahārāj *diṇḍī* although her own *diṇḍī* was the Veṅṅāsvāmī *diṇḍī* that was established at the turn of the millennium. The *diṇḍī* goes from Theur, near Pune, and follows the Tukārām *pālkhī* with about five hundred people. ‘Is it easy for you to leave your family, home and children?’ we asked. ‘Yes, they take care of everything now...once you leave you do not look back. You should not worry about anything, get up in the morning; take [a] bath in the river and start walking’. Another woman continued saying, ‘we start at six in the morning, have a small break for breakfast and then reach [Dehu] at eight thirty and then we all wait for the *vārī*, there are so many people who wait the whole year for the *vārī* [to come]’ (personal communications, 10th December 2004).

There were two young women in the *diṇḍī*: Satarkar’s granddaughter and her friend Bhagirathi both of whom who had only been going on the *vārī* for three years. Bhagirathi said that she had previously walked from Warkhari to Pandharpur. We asked her if she ‘stood behind Bhagavati [Satarkar’s daughter] during a *kīrtan* and Bhagirathi replied ‘Yes I do and I sing [in the chorus] too’. Satarkar’s granddaughter said that she walked all the way from Alandi to Pandharpur for both the *āṣāḍhī* and *kārttikī* *vārīs*: ‘We bunk college, we do not mind, there is nothing more important than God. We enjoy it actually...because for [the last] two years many youngsters are coming into this...actually in our place there are more youngsters than old people. It is not only enjoyment; it is spiritual enjoyment’. When asked what was attracting the youngsters to the *vārī* she replied, ‘It is the bhajans, the rhythm, the energy, [and] the dances: so everyone enjoys it’. Satarkar’s granddaughter also said that due to the *vārī* she was thinking about things in a different way ‘whenever we think of something we think of God first...’ ‘How do you find the experience of walking?’ we asked Satarkar’s granddaughter. ‘I was very worried that I would not be able to walk so much, twenty-five kilometres per day...tomorrow we are going to walk to

Dehu, three...no eight kilometres'. 'Do you always go with the same *diṇḍī*?' 'Yes, yes...everyone has the same group, and we follow Baba Maharaj'. Satarkar's granddaughter told us that about two thousand people travel in Baba Maharaj's *diṇḍī* and 'the speciality of our *diṇḍī* is that everyone walks together, women do not walk behind. [There's] no discrimination in our *diṇḍī*; in most other *diṇḍīs* you see women walking behind but that does not happen in our *diṇḍī*...' (personal communication, 10th December 2004). Vimalabai later told us that in her *diṇḍī* the women do walk behind the men but that they might mingle while walking (personal communication, 20th December 2004).

Later we headed into the street where we spoke at random to passers-by and stallholders. One of the women, Hansabai, said that although her husband went to Pandharpur for the monthly pilgrimage she stayed in Alandi and ran their food stool (personal communication, 10th December 2004). There are about fifty thousand Vārkarīs who go to Pandharpur every month from places like Alandi or Dehu and about five percent are thought to be women. Dñyānoba Utpat said that the reason so few women undertake the monthly pilgrimage is that only women without family responsibilities can go on the regular pilgrimage so those that do go tend to be old or widows (Personal communication, 12th November 2004). Several of my informants had done the monthly pilgrimage but told me that many people took public transport to Pandharpur rather than walking there (Personal communications: Vimalabai, 20th December 2004; Dattatreya Rasne, 3rd January 2005).

A shopkeeper, Padmani Bamne, said that they took their business and family, consisting of twenty-five members, with them wherever they went and that they travelled continually all year. 'This is the *vārī* for us, because there is a problem of sustenance for us. Through this we can sustain ourselves as well as gaining spiritually, so it works both ways, materially and spiritually (*dharmārtha* and *paramārtha*)'. Padmani told us she was from Mangalvedha and mentioned Kānhopātrā saying she 'became one with God and God made her one with him despite her caste. God made love immortal for her. So what about us, are we going to become one with God? We go to the river-bed...I eat and sleep well. I'll never miss it...I am not bothered by anybody or what they do, [we] live our lives for ourselves....' (personal communication, 10th December 2004).

Finally, we entered the temple leaving our sandals with one of the stallholders who sold offertory items. Luckily I was allowed to take a photo of the Jñāneśvar *samādhi* and the Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī *mūrtis* in the *garbhagrha* (Plates 10–11). The taking of photographs is usually prohibited in

temples but as it was late on the final day and as the crowd had lessened the police officers were agreeable.



Plate 10: Viṭṭhal and Rakhumāi, Ālandī



Plate 11: Jñāneśvar *sañjīvan samādhi*, Alandi

On our way out we passed a *bhajan* session that was being held beside the *garbhagrha* (Plate 12). *Bhajan* as one of the fundamental Vārkarī practices and many Vārkarīs go to *bhajan* classes regularly (personal communication: Vimalabai, 20th December 2004; Dattatreya Rasne, 3rd January 2005). *Bhajan* often occurs in temples and pilgrimage sites and while this session may appear to be dominated by male participants, *bhajan* tends to lack formal organisation as anyone can lead a song or suggest the next song to be sung. However, some accomplished singers and/or musicians are usually present to hold the proceedings together (Jones 2009:142, 153 *passim*; see Kiehnle 1983), as indicated by the drummer and the man at the microphone.



Plate 12: Vārkarī bhajan session at Alandi

The Vārkarīs were gathering in Alandi to take the Jñāneśvar *pāḷkhī* to Pandharpur. The roads were full of buses and trucks belching smoke and honking. There were women in saris, men in white caps and coloured turbans, saffron-robed *sadhus* with matted hair and staffs, bodies resting in the shade beneath stationary trucks, saris strung along the side of trucks and buses to increase the shade or perhaps to dry. There were groups of Vārkarīs gathering outside houses, on porches, and on empty plots of land, every available space was being taken by the arriving Vārkarīs.



Plate 13: Pilgrims crossing the Indrayani River at Ālandī before the start of the *āṣāḍhī vārī*

The real reason I had come to Alandi with my research assistant Gayatri (Gurjar) Gajabhiye was to see Muktabai Maharaj: a woman who was the head of a *maṭh* in Alandi, a *kīrtankār* (since 1960) who discusses Jñāneśvar and Tukārām, and the leader of *diṇḍī* number fifty-nine in the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* (Personal communications, 6th and 7th March 2005).² The hope was that Muktabai would allow us to join her *diṇḍī* for part of the *āṣāḍhī vārī*. The various possibilities were discussed over tea and, having examined her *diṇḍī*'s schedule for the *vārī*, we decided that we would join the Muktabai Maharaj Belgaonkar *diṇḍī* five days before the *āṣāḍhī ekādaśī*. That evening the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* would be stopping overnight at Malasiras, thirty-one miles from Pandharpur, where Muktabai would be giving a *kīrtan*. We planned to travel with Muktabai Maharaj's *diṇḍī* to Pandharpur and so witness *bhajan*, *kīrtan* and *raṅgaṇ* as well as interviewing Vārkarīs. The practical arrangements were of some concern to me, especially as a woman and a foreigner, for a number of female Vārkarīs had described how they had to sit, sleep, eat, bathe or get dressed wherever they found themselves (personal communications, 3rd January 2005). However, Muktabai declared that the Vārkarīs of today could not be compared with those of the past as nowadays facilities are provided en route. 'Are you sure we won't inconvenience you' we said. 'What do you mean "you"?' It is *us*, we are together, we are one' replied Muktabai Maharaj. 'Even if

² Mathurabai was about seventy, unmarried and had been a Vārkarī from childhood. Mathurabai said she performed *sant-seva* by being responsible for Muktabai's *dharmasālā* (personal communication, 6th March 2005).

there is some trouble’, she continued, ‘I believe in one thing [that] if it brings happiness to the other person, one should do it’ (personal communication, 18th June 2006).

Whose *abhaṅgas* were sung on the road I wondered. ‘The *abhaṅgas* of Jñāneśvar Mahārāj and Tukārām Mahārāj are used prominently’, replied one of the group, ‘though those of *sant* Nāmdev, Muktabāi, Janābāi and Mīrābāi are also sung. Muktabāi, Janābāi and Mīrābāi are all women *sants* because they remained unmarried and pursued the spiritual path. The Bhāgavata *panth*—the Vārkarī *sampradāya*—allows one to stay in the world (*prapañca*) and have a family while pursuing *paramārtha*. A *sant* is someone who has lived a life of devotion’ (personal communication, 18th June 2006).

‘What about other women associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*’, I asked, ‘what about Kānhopātrā and Bahiṇābāi?’ ‘Bahiṇābāi was Tukārām’s disciple. She has written a few things that have spiritual meaning but we don’t call them *abhaṅgas*’. ‘Do you mean Bahiṇābāi Chaudhari is the same as Tukārām’s Bahiṇābāi?’ ‘Bahiṇābāi Chaudhari is not regarded as a *sant*...she never really preached, she only wrote [poems]’. This confusion about *sant* Bahiṇābāi Pāṭhak (c.1628–1700), the disciple of *sant* Tukārām, and Bahinabai Chaudhari (1880–1951) the Marathi poetess was one I often met. The conflation may have occurred due to the transmission process and/or the non-importance of the individual author, as I discuss in Chapter Three, but it is more likely that *sant* Bahiṇābāi ceased to be significant once the Vārkarī *sampradāya* had established itself as a householder tradition.

‘What about women like Kānhopātrā’ I enquired, ‘was she a *sant*?’ ‘Kānhopātrā is a *sant*; she’s the daughter of a prostitute’. ‘What about Soyārābāi and Nirmaḷā?’ ‘Goṇāi was Nāmdev’s mother’ replied Muktabai Maharaj and then added (incorrectly) ‘Soyārābāi was Nāmdev’s wife’. ‘So besides the well-known names are there any names of women *sants* that we have never heard?’ She responded, ‘The women who are well known as *sants* are known because they made a significant contribution and achieved a height. Maybe the other women who wrote were not given the status of *sant* as their contribution was minimal’ (personal communication, 18th June 2006). Muktabai thus expressed a view similar to that of V.N Utpat above, suggesting that the quality or quantity of attributed compositions are a factor in characterising a woman as a *sant*.

The first day of the *āṣāḍhī vārī* began with the Jñāneśvar *pāḷkhī* travelling the sixteen miles from Alandi to Pune. When I had asked about what happened en route with the Jñāneśvar *pāḷkhī* Muktabai Belgaonkar had told me:

During the *vārī* every morning at six a horse goes to where the *pādukā* are kept, bows and greets them before walking away backwards. Even the horse realises that [one should keep faith with God] and it

[the bowing] happens daily. There [are] two horses with Jñāneśvar's *pāḷkhī* and one with Tukārām's *pāḷkhī*. It is believed that Jñāneśvar Mahārāj is sitting on one horse. On one horse there is a person and on the second horse no one sits. Even at the time of the *ringaṇ* the horse goes to where the *pāḷkhī* is and bows. This tradition has been going on for more than four hundred and fifty years.

(Muktabai Belgaonkar, personal communication, 18th June 2006)

However, I did not witness this event as it occurred before the Vārkarīs entered Pune. Many of the main roads had been closed to allow for the Jñāneśvar *pāḷkhī* and the Tukārām *pāḷkhī* to enter the city. Consequently, traffic in the city was worse than usual and by eleven in the morning the areas lining the route were crowded. There were already lots of Vārkarīs walking into the city by the time we got to the Alandi road. We walked against the flow of people to try and find a good spot from which to see the *pāḷkhī*. We navigated our way between the parked trucks, with people resting underneath, and the open drain at the side of the road. The people just kept coming until the crowd was so thick it was impossible to move at all. One could hear the crowd murmur 'the *pāḷkhī* is coming, the *pāḷkhī* was coming'. My back was pressed up against the side of a truck as the *pāḷkhī* came past (Plate 14). The flag bearers, horses and musicians must have gone by but I had hardly noticed them. The press of people was so great that it was impossible to get near the *pāḷkhī* and see the Jñāneśvar *pāḍukās*. The chants of 'Māulī, māulī' continued as the *pāḷkhī* passed.



Plate 14: The Jñāneśvar *pāḷkhī* en route from Alandi to Pune (20th June 2006)

Desperate to sit down out of the sun we walked away from the road but most of the shady places were already filled with Vārkarīs as many of the *dinḍīs* that form the procession have traditional stopping

places. Nonetheless, we were offered a place to sit among members of a *diṇḍī*. The *diṇḍī* (number 593) came from the Parbhani-Nanded area and its seven hundred members, the majority of whom were Maratha agriculturalists, are all from different villages. One of the *diṇḍī* leaders told us that they have one truck to transport food, one truck for luggage and those who are unable to walk, and another small truck for water. The *diṇḍī* members walk to Pandharpur but it seemed that most of them return home by truck at the end of the pilgrimage. There were several women who knew an *abhaṅga* attributed to Sakhūbāi or more accurately referring to Sakhūbāi, which they sang for us and which we recorded (see Appendix B). We were then invited to eat lunch with the *diṇḍī*.

The meal began with everyone taking out their metal plates, bowls and cups before sitting down in rows (Plate 15). Then Ganga Maharaj led the *diṇḍī* in singing ‘Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Hari’ as well as another song, to which the Vārkarīs all clapped along. The food was then served while the sponsor of the meal walked among the group. After everyone had finished eating—*pōḷīs*, rice, vegetable-dhal and a kind of hard sweet—the utensils were washed and put away in the Vārkarīs’ own bags. Ganga Maharaj and the servers only sat down to eat once all the *diṇḍī* members had eaten. It was only after he had finished his meal that we were able to meet Ganga Maharaj. He told us that he had been the *diṇḍī* leader for at least sixteen years and that he mainly gives *kīrtans* based on Tukārām. Ganga Maharaj gave us his blessing and presented me with a coconut—we later gave a donation to sponsor a meal for the *diṇḍī*—and then the *diṇḍī* members continued following the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* into Pune.



Plate 15: The Ganga Maharaj *diṇḍī* (593) eating lunch (20th June 2006)

While the Jñāneśvar-*pālkhī* was in Pune I attended a ceremony in the old city organised by Muktabai Maharaj (see Appendix H, Plate 26) during which I was presented to the assembled crowd and after which I was interviewed for the local paper (see Appendix H, Plate 27). I had not wanted to be interviewed and bring unnecessary attention to myself but found the reporter unrelenting. However, I managed to avoid being pictured with *īāl* as I felt that would be unethical. After we had eaten with the *diṇḍī*, sitting in rows (*paṅgatī*), we were able to talk with Muktabai Maharaj briefly who told us that she was not happy with people sitting in the *pālkhī* next to the *pādukās* (see Plate 14) as it is disrespectful (personal communication, 21st June 2006).

A couple of days later we went to help with the free medical camp organised by the Sahyadri Manav Seva Manch. The camp was set up on the Dive Ghat as the Vārkarīs travelling with the Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* would be going up to Saswad (Plate 16). The volunteers included a mixture of medical and non-medical personnel and spent the day administering saline and injections, pills for stomach ailments, treating minor injuries, and in my case administering embrocation for sore limbs (see Naik 1998; Mandpe 2009). One of the organisers told me that about thirty percent of the pilgrims who travel with the *pālkhī* suffer from typhoid and cholera and that as soon the monsoon begins disease spreads rapidly (personal

communication, 22nd June 2006). Unfortunately, I was to discover this for myself, so much so that I was unable to join the Muktabai Belgaonkar *dinḍī* as arranged.



Plate 16: Vārkarīs on the Dive Ghāṭ with the medical camp under the awnings (22nd June 2006)

However, the afternoon drew on and as the heat grew so did the number of Vārkarīs. There were flag bearers, then groups of men at the front of the *dinḍīs* playing the *ṭāl* and *vīṇā*, younger men bouncing and dancing enthusiastically while other men clapped and sang. One *dinḍī* had a *vāsudeva* who was singing. The joy of the Vārkarīs was clearly visible in their singing and dancing, despite the long pull up the *ghāṭ*. A woman carrying *ṭāl* rushed out of the crowd and bounded up to me saying that doing the pilgrimage was an act of faith. By about 4.30 p.m. we began packing up as all the medicines had gone. The sky was darkening and the clouds were rolling in just as the crowd thickened and the shouts of ‘māulī’ began. The Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* approached but it was impossible to get near it for the crowd, although several of the volunteers did manage to have *darśan* of the secondary *pālkhī* as it passed. The *pālkhī* gone we rushed to the bus as the monsoon had arrived.

Due to a severe bout of monsoon fever I was only able to go to Pandharpur for a few days at the end of the *āṣāḍhī vārī* after the *ekādaśī*. We arrived late in the afternoon and then met Dada Maharaj Manmadkar at his *maṭh* for an interview. Dada Maharaj is the son of the *kīrtankārī* Gayabai Manmadkar

mentioned above, which may account for his positive attitude towards women (see Schultz 2013:125). Dada Maharaj discussed *bhāgavata-dharma* and then said that people of the medieval period like Jñāneśvar ‘were quite keen on the issue of giving freedom to women. Jñāneśvar’s own sister, Muktabāī, and her contemporary Janābāī were not just saying it [that they were given this status they really were given it]’. Dada Maharaj continued, ‘Janābāī was a great person, someone with *krāntīkārak* and *bhrāntīnārak* [i.e. she said what was on her mind in a straightforward way]...Her destiny was to be a *devadāsī*...but she was lucky [she became Nāmdev’s *dāsī*]’. Dada Maharaj related his version of Janābāī’s biography and concluded talking about Janābāī by saying: ‘in her case she should be respected for her virgin spirit, despite being unmarried she was content...’ Dada Maharaj then mentioned Mīrābāī and Sakhūbāī, and related the stories of Kānhopātrā and Bahiṇābāī. He said ‘there are lots of arguments and criticisms between us followers of Mādhva saying that Niḷobā is the main disciple of Tukārām. Leaving aside all arguments, Bahiṇābāī was the one who really got the instruction she wanted (*pratīkṣā anugraha*) from Tukārām. The *anugraha* Niḷobā got was after Tukārām had gone to Vaiḅṇṭh...Bahiṇābāī was the only one [disciple] who got direct *anugraha*’ (personal communication 10th July 2006). Later the same evening we went to see Muktabai Maharaj at her *maṭh* on the outskirts of town to apologise for not joining her on the *vārī*. Muktabai Maharaj told us they would be leaving early the next morning to return the *pālkhī* to Alandi so we then said goodbye.

Dada Maharaj arranged for us to have *darśan*, via a police inspector who was staying at his *maṭh*, so the next morning our driver Gajanan, Gayatri and I were guided by a boy from the *maṭh* to park near the temple before walking, bare-foot, to find the inspector. We saw Rukmiṇī, had *darśan* of Viṭṭhal, saw the *taraṭī* tree associated with Kānhopātrā to which devotees tie pieces from blouses and saris, before seeing Rukmiṇī again. All this involved navigating the one-way system, squeezing through gates and doorways, and giving donations in each temple. While we were waiting to meet Dhanve Maharaj, one of the Viṭṭhal temple committee members, we took *darśan* of the Tukārām *pālkhī* as it left the temple to return to Dehu. The procession included the *tutārī*, *ṭāl* and *viṇā* players as well as the *pādukās* and *abadāgirī*. Our visit to the temple concluded with Dhanve Maharaj’s presentation of *prasāda* and an authorised photo of the Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī *mūrtis*.

Later we visited Gopalpur about a mile south-east of Pandharpur. We were obliged to give a few rupees to feed the cows at the bottom of the steps leading up to the temple, where we took *darśan* of the Gopāl-Kṛṣṇa icon. We saw the underground cell said to have been occupied by Janābāī and the *guṇja* in

the grinding wheel said to be that of Janābāi. Dada Maharaj later told us that Janī used to work in Gopalpur, making *govarī* and *gōdaḍī*, for some extra income as it seems that Nāmdev’s family lived in Gopalpur.³



Plate 17: Main (eastern) entrance to the Viṭṭhal temple in Pandharpur with Cokhāmeḷā’s *samādhi*

³ See Buck and Yocum 1974:149; Sontheimer 1995:109; Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:69; Vanita 2005:95; see also Mokashi 1987:243; Dhere 2011:3, *passim* and Deleury 1994:57, 102–03.



Plate 18: Rear (western) exit of the Viṭṭhal temple in Pandharpur and the cupola

Various interviewees were asked which female *sants* they knew and the names that usually came up were Muktabāi, Janābāi, Kānhopātrā, Bahiṇābāi, Sakhūbāi or Mīrābāi. Satarkar's granddaughter replied: 'Not so many, I've just been doing the *vārī* for three years, before that I was in school...' 'If I asked you to name some of the *santakaviyatrīs* whom would you be able to name?' 'Janābāi, Muktabāi [and when prompted] Bahiṇābāi, Kānhopātrā...Mīrābāi' (personal communication, 10th December 2004). Vimalabai replied: 'Janābāi, Mīrābāi and Muktabāi'. We then asked if she knew Kānhopātrā and she said 'hah' but it did not sound convincing so we asked if she sang anything by Mīrābāi and she said 'Yes but we mainly sing *abhaṅgas* by Māulī or...by Tukārām Mahārāj or *gavaḷaṇī* [by Eknāth]'. 'This probably means you don't sing many *abhaṅgas* by women?' 'No mainly *abhaṅgas* that Tukārām wrote on Jñāneśvar...we don't sing *abhaṅgas* by Bahiṇābāi' (personal communication, 20th December 2004). We asked the Ganga Maharaj *diṇḍī* from Narsinhe Pokhari if the women sung *abhaṅgas* by women *sants* and the general response was that not even men sing songs attributed to women *sants* (personal communications, 20th June 2006). Sumantai Tade said: 'Janābāi, Bahiṇābāi and Mīrābāi are given respect and are studied...Some [*santakaviyatrīs*] have a lot of literature [attributed to them] so they are studied particularly. Women whose gurus were famous became more known but there are many unknown

[women] who are lost in history’ (personal communication, 6th December 2004). The sociologist Suma Chitnis mentioned Kānhopātrā and said Muktabāī, Janābāī and Bahiṇābāī ‘draw attention to the inadequacies of the *bhaktimarga* [and] have insights into the social situation and the cultural traditions of Maharashtra’ (personal communication, 24th February 2005). Hema Rairkar, the social-scientist, referred to Bahiṇābāī, Kānhopātrā, Janī (personal communication, 3rd March 2004). Muktabai Maharaj said, ‘Janābāī...was a saint of high stature. Sakhūbāī didn’t sway into the *sampradāya* in the way that other sants like Janābāī, Kānhopātrā or Muktabāī did’ (Personal communication, 7th March 2005). Muktabai Maharaj discussed Muktabāī and Janābāī in detail and just mentioned Bahiṇābāī in passing (personal communication, 25th March 2005).

Mīrābāī was included as a *santakaviyatrī* by Vimalabai (20th December 2004), Dattatreya Rasne (3rd January 2005), Suma Chitnis (25th February 2005), Sumantai Tade (28th February 2005), Muktabai Belgaonkar (25th March 2005) and Baba Maharaj Satarkar, who said: ‘If you are talking about philosophy, about *paramārtha*, about *advaita*...Mīrābāī, her deity is Kṛṣṇa and Vārkarīs talk about Pāṇḍuraṅga, it is the same thing. It is not a problem and if some person says ‘no’ [she has no connection with the Vārkarīs]...many of the *kīrtankārs* quote Mīrābāī’ (personal communication, 10th December 2004). However, V.N. Utpat said that Mīrābāī ‘is not part of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as she never came to Maharashtra’ and that the debate that there were two (or more) Muktabāīs and Mīrābāīs has no basis (personal communication, 22nd November 2004). In response to my statement that Mīrābāī is included the SSG Swami Nischal Anand declared: ‘it is not the question of the *Sakala Santa Gāthā*...The basic comparison between the Vārkarī and the other *bhakti* sects...is basically dualism and non-dualism. [The] Vārkarī sect is the only *bhakti* sect [that is non-dual]...it is the same *advaita* that comes from the Upaniṣads, *Bhagavadgītā* and afterwards from Śāṅkarācārya’ (personal communication, 28th January 2005). Clearly Anand, like Utpat, did not believe that Mīrābāī should be connected with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. However, many Vārkarīs clearly do connect Mīrābāī with the *sampradāya* as a female *sant* and poet even though Mīrā rejected the householder life.

It is worth noting that almost no one with whom we spoke referred to Goṇāī, Rājāī Āubāī, Limbāī, Lāḍāī, Soyarābāī, Nirmaḷābāī, Bhāgū Mahārīṇ, Gaṅgabāī, Bhāgūbāī or Viṭhābāī. V.N. Utpat mentioned Mata Goṇāī and Lāḍāī as less revolutionary than other women *sants* (personal communication, 22nd November 2004); Muktabai Maharaj stated that Janī was treated as a *dāsī* by Nāmdev’s mother (personal communication, 25th March 2005); Sumantai Tade said ‘God came to the women [like]

Soyarābāī when husbands were involved in meditation/renunciation’ (personal communication, 28th February 2005), and Vidyut Bhagwat mentioned Soyarābāī as a ‘non-prominent’ *sant* (personal communication, 29th January 2005). The absence of these names suggests that there may be some veracity to the idea raised above that the quality or quantity of attributed compositions are a factor in characterising Muktabāī, Janābāī, Kānhopātrā or Bahiṇābāī as a *sants*. However, as Sakhūbāī has only one or two compositions in her name it seems more likely that her biography, and its depiction in film, is responsible for her being remembered as a *sant*.

From the conversations I had during my fieldwork, it became very apparent that most of the women *sants* are absent from public memory and current devotional practice apart from Muktabāī (with her shrine at Alandi and her *samādhi* and *pālkhī* emanating in the Jalgaon district), Janābāī (with the memorial of a cell and grindstone at Gopalpur), Kānhopātrā (with the *tarāṭī* tree commemorating her in the Viṭhobā temple complex at Pandharpur) and Bahiṇābāī (whose *samādhi* is in Dehu, see Plate 20). Nonetheless, compositions attributed to Mīrābāī, and possibly those attributed to other *santakaviyatrīs*, are quoted by some *kīrtankārs* and this might suggest that the women are not totally elided from devotional practice or public memory. Nonetheless the position of the compositions attributed to women is ambiguous as they are not formally part of *kīrtan* discussion (see Dadhe 2012). It is my contention that the contemporary absence of acknowledgement of women *sants* in the tradition indicates the successful construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path as women no longer need to be cited as figures of exemplary religiosity while fulfilling their duties as householders. The role and function of gender attribution should thus perhaps be understood in relation to the construction of the tradition as a householder path and it is to this issue that the next chapter turns: the discursive formation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VĀRKARĪ SAMPRADĀYA AS A HOUSEHOLDER PATH

1. *Introduction*

This chapter considers the discursive formation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path and what constitutes the Vārkarī corpus or ‘canon’ so as to later establish the role of the *santakaviyatrīs* and the compositions attributed to them within the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. The discussion begins with an exploration of the term ‘canon’ in relation to the Indian context so as to situate the specific contours of the Vārkarī ‘canon’ and its formation.

A religious canon is defined by von Stietencron as ‘the result of a deliberate attempt to collect, arrange and preserve the original message of a religious community, and to protect it against all corruption. It transforms haphazard individual recollection into authoritative tradition or sacred scripture. As such, it itself becomes endowed with an aura of sacredness...’ (2003:14).¹ Canon is thus a means of defining and fixing a particular religious identity ‘by representing the ultimate truth and the means of attaining it’ to adherents and the religious community as a whole (*ibid.* see Pechilis 2001:4). J.Z. Smith argues that canon is a list that is ‘held to be complete’ and canon is therefore fixed and closed (1982:48; see Christof 2003:63; Pechilis 2001:4). Consequently, particular expression can also become fixed and a canon may therefore become a record of a cultural and socio-religious moment; a moment out of time. This can lead to a gap between a canon and its receivers and in this context an important role can be played by personal charisma (see Graham 1993:xi).

Charisma represents innovation according to von Stietencron as it is through charisma that the original message is ‘made meaningful’ again (2003:15–16). This is because charisma provides the authority to introduce changes and as Dalmia argues ‘set new standards, values and norms of action’ while also legitimizing ‘new sacred scripture and fresh commentaries on older canonical works’ (2003:3). Charismatic innovation certainly seems apparent in the *Jñāneśvarī* and the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata*, commentaries on the *Bhagavadgītā* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in Marathi, which I will discuss below. Expanding Weber’s notion of charisma Von Stietencron argues that canon and charisma ‘form a chain of

¹ For more on the etymology of the term ‘canon’ see Graham 1993:52–3, 2010:142, 211 and Timm 1992:24.

religious legitimization’ as charisma can renew meaning and authority when an extensive gap opens up between the initial message and the spiritual requirements of a ‘changed society’. The recurring presence of charisma is important for religious movements as ‘primary legitimacy’ is derived from charisma. Von Stietencron maintains there is a vertical and horizontal aspect to the relationship between charisma and canon. Charisma is connected to the ‘legitimizing impact’ of the sacred while canon is connected to systematisation or the historical processes by which the sacred is realised and modified (2003:16–17; see Dalmia 2003:3; Weber 1958b:245; 1978:24–6). This process of systematisation through which canon is formed appears similar to Hawley’s notion of ‘programmatic intent’ or Lincoln’s concept of ‘ideological persuasion’ discussed in the Introduction and which operates in the formation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder *bhakti* tradition.

The formation of a religious community occurs due to the agency of at least one charismatic leader but successors are required to maintain the community. A canon provides a religious community with a set of doctrines and religious practices based on the charisma of founder(s) but these doctrines and practices have to be revitalised regularly so as to avoid stagnation and even the eventual demise of the community. The yearly festival calendar is one of the main ways by which this revitalisation occurs—the *vārī* undertaken by the Vārkarīs is one example—but it can also be accomplished by establishing a lineage (*guru paramparā*) from one charismatic person to another (von Stietencron 2003:31–32).

However, Brian Smith argues that a religious tradition is *constituted* through the formation of a canon, which he describes as ‘a finite set of “texts” that are regarded as foundational and absolutely authoritative’, constructing a method of transmission for the canon, and ‘establishing the means for its infinite interpretability’ (1992:105). Furthermore, Smith argues that canon must be perceived as such by a community or tradition in order to exist (1992:105 n.8). In this view Smith follows Graham who states that the sacredness of a text occurs when a community responds to the text as sacred:

A text becomes ‘scripture’ in active, subjective relationship to persons, and as part of a cumulative communal tradition. No text, written or oral or both, is sacred or authoritative in isolation from a community...there is no absolute ‘meaning’ in a scriptural text apart from the interpreting community that finds it meaningful.

(Graham 1993:5)

Consequently, the meaning of a text can only be comprehended when it is ‘expounded in a special context’, the context of the interpreting community that finds the text meaningful (1993:5). The interpreting community in the context of this thesis is the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

Jonathan Z. Smith raises a further issue of interpretation in relation to canon and religious traditions arguing that ‘where there is a canon we can predict the *necessary* occurrence of a hermeneute, of an interpreter whose task it is to continually extend the domain of the closed canon over everything that is known or everything that exists *without* altering the canon in the process’ (1982:48, emphasis in original). For J.Z. Smith canon ‘is best seen as one form of a basic cultural process of limitation and of overcoming that limitation by ingenuity’ (1982:52). One form of ingenuity that may overcome limitation is the notion of charismatic innovation put forward by von Stietencron although scholars like J.Z. Smith, Brian Smith and Christof argue that canon is fixed and closed (2003:63)

‘Canon’ and ‘scripture’ have generally been accepted as ‘text’ or as having a physical form, particularly by Western scholarship, and are regarded as ‘a tangible document that fixes the fluid sacred word and gives it substance and permanence’ (Graham 1993:ix, 4). However, in many religious traditions, the central place is often given to oral tradition and composition as spiritual Truth is connected to the *spoken* word (Graham 1993:67). The spoken word and truth are connected because persons and their utterances are regarded as the *loci* of truth and authority rather than texts. Thus, within many Indian contexts the written word is valueless without a *guru* to explicate, interpret and transmit the tradition of learning with which a text is associated. We might note here that the need for an interpreter of the spoken word accords with J.Z. Smith’s assertion regarding the hermeneute connecting both oral and written ‘texts’. The Vedas, which have been transmitted orally for over three millennia and only written down comparatively recently, are an exemplar of sacred ‘text’ as spoken word according to Graham (1993:4, 68–69, 74; see Coburn 1989:111, 1984:444 and Carpenter 1994). However, David Carpenter argues that the canonicity of the Veda appears ‘to reside more in its form as oral performance than in its content as a well-delimited corpus’ (1994:20). The question of who preserves the Veda and the manner in which the Veda is employed cannot be separated from its status as a ‘canon’ for the Veda is tied to forms of ritual action that have legitimated the Brahmanical social order. However, Carpenter suggests while canons ‘may function as instruments for the creation of identity and the establishment of authority’ there are differences in the way these are achieved (1994:31–32; see Graham 1993:72). Similarly, Brian Smith concurs that the Vedas were preserved orally until recently but he states that ‘nonliterate groups’ also have sets of myths, origins stories, legends and so on that are ‘the oral equivalent of a written canon’ (1992:105n.6). This issue of orality is significant for the discursive construction of the Vārkaṛī

sampradāya as there is interplay between orality, literacy and textuality as well as a core practice of attribution that serves to authorise particular themes and emphases within the Vārkarī corpus.

2. *The Vārkarī ‘canon’*

An *abhaṅga* attributed to Bahiṅbāī describes the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* through discourse by likening the *sampradāya* to a temple whose key components are the compositions of four male *sants* (Ramanujan 1973:19; Dhare 2011:274–76):

संतकृपा झाली | इमारत फळा आली |१| *Santakṛpā jhālī / imārata phaḷā ālī /1/*

The *sants* bestowed their favour [and] the building came to fruition.
Jñānadev laid the foundations and erected God’s house.
Nāmā, your servant, he formed the enclosure.
Janārdan’s Eknāth erected its pillar through his Bhāgavata.
Tukā became the pinnacle. Sing the bhajan slowly.
Bahiṅī says, the flag flutters; this is an honest account.

(Bahiṅbāī *abhaṅga* 32, SSG 2:1157, my translation)²

The works of the four *sants* mentioned in the *abhaṅga* above—Jñāneśvar, Nāmdev, Eknāth and Tukārām—may be regarded as forming the basis of the Vārkarī ‘canon’ through a chain of religious legitimization (see von Stietencron 2003:16; Jones 2009:131ff). However, the Vārkarī ‘canon’ was also formed discursively through the compositions attributed to all the *sants* associated with the *sampradāya* between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. These *sants* were male and female *bhaktas* who composed poems and/or texts as expressions of *bhakti*. The different *bhaktas* came to embody *bhakti* for later *bhaktas*, interpreters and anthologizers who detailed the lives of the celebrated *bhaktas* in biographical literatures (*caritra*) and thus represented the *bhakti* poets as *sants* (Pechilis 1999:5, 7, 26).

The *Jñāneśvarī*, the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* and the *Tukārām Gāthā* are regarded as the Marathi *prasthānatrayī* of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.³ The *Jñāneśvarī* and *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* are both commentaries and interpretations on the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* respectively; texts that are regarded as the two most influential Sanskrit texts for *bhakti* traditions and as the *loci* for *bhakti*.⁴ The commentary (*bhāṣya*, *ṭīkā*) is the principal way that thinkers contributed to the received texts and ideas of their traditions as the hermeneutic process allowed for new interpretations although these interpretations had to show knowledge of and engagement with the original text (Frazier 2011:36). Christof argues that

² Paṇaśīkar (1968) suggests that this *abhaṅga* (4488) may be by Tukārām (see Zelliott 1987:92 n.4; Rigopoulos 1998:159 n.17; Omvedt and Patankar 2012: 49n.1). However, Tulpule (1979:393) and the SSG regard the *abhaṅga* as Bahiṅbāī’s composition.

³ See Joshi 2009:371; Datta 2005:1144; Deshpande 2007:151, 173; Tagare 1993:13; Morje 1992:163; Zelliott 1987:93n.7; Grewal 2006:155; Mitchell 1849:7, and Dātār 2008.

⁴ See Pechilis 1999:5; Deleury 1994:110; Lorenzen 1995:1; Brockington 2005:40; Malinar 2007:7,13ff; Bryant 2007; Fowler 2012, and Brockington 1996.

the canonic commentary, which was composed by a male Brahman, is an attempt to overcome limitation by ingenuity. Furthermore, the commentary ‘serves as the legitimising basis for innovation’, making sacred texts like the *Bhagavadgītā* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* accessible and meaningful for the present (2003:63–64, 65; see also J.Z. Smith 1982:52). The innovative elements of *Jñāneśvarī* and *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* are considered below but as the Vārkarī ‘canon’ also includes a number of other texts and the compositions attributed to the *sants* the works significant to the Vārkarī *sampradāya* are considered below in three sections—the texts of Jñāneśvar, the texts of Eknāth, and the compositions of the Vārkarī *sants*—beginning with the *sant* regarded as laying the foundations for the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

2.1. *Jñāneśvar and the Jñāneśvarī*

Jñāneśvar⁵ is credited with composing several ‘great works’ in Marathi: the *Jñāneśvarī*, the *Amṛtānubhava*, the *Cāṅgadeva Pāsaṣṭī* and about nine hundred *abhaṅgas* including the *Haripāṭh*, which have all been described as the ‘sacred texts’ of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* (Chitre 1991:xxv; Ranade 2003:35). However, Jñāneśvar is probably regarded as a foundational figure for the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, as the Bahiṅābāi *abhaṅga* above indicates, due to the composition of one of the most highly revered texts in the *sampradāya*.

The *Bhāvārthadīpikā* ‘The Light of the Meaning of Faith’, popularly known as the *Jñāneśvarī*,⁶ is a commentary on and extensive interpretation of the *Bhagavadgītā* in Marathi. Jñāneśvar declares that he ‘will present you your native language as it makes the world of literature come alive and its sweetness makes one find fault with even the elixir of immortals’ (Jñśv 13:1151; Lele 1981:109).⁷ Jñāneśvar thus apparently challenged the hegemony of Sanskrit as a means to express religio-philosophical ideas. According to Lele Marathi was ‘rejected as vulgar and unsuitable for spiritual knowledge by Brahmins’ as it was spoken by the ‘productive classes’ but Jñāneśvar chose to use a living everyday language, rather than the liturgical language of Sanskrit, because he was aware of the relationship between language and community (1981:108–109; see Pollock 2001:393; Devy 1998:50). Lele thus interprets Jñāneśvar’s use of Marathi as promulgating new and contemporary meanings of the *Bhagavadgītā* for the community of

⁵ The various forms of this name—Jñānadev, Jñāneśvar and Jñānobā—are based on the word *jñāna* ‘knowledge’, *Īśvar* ‘lord’ and *deva* ‘god’ (Pradhan and Lambert 1987:xv, n.1). For more on Jñāneśvar see Tulpule (1979; 1994), Lele (1980; 1981), Pradhan (1987), Inamdār (1993), Kiehnle (1997), Abhayananda (2000), Ranade (2003), and BVJ 8–12 (Abbott and Godbole 1996).

⁶ According to Bahirat the titles *Jñāneśvarī* or *Jñānadevī* were used by Nāmdev and the title *Bhāvārthadīpikā* was suggested by Janābāi (1998:15–16).

⁷ तैसें जी होतसे देवा। तया अवधानाचिया लवलवा। पाहतां व्याख्यान चढले थांवा। चैगुणें वरी ॥ ११५१॥ *Taisē jī hotase deva / tayā avadhānāciyā lavalavā / pāhatāṅ vyaṅgyāna caḍhalē thāṅvā / caugūṅē vārī //1151//*

Marathi speakers (1981:109). Furthermore, Lele argues that Jñāneśvar's 'consciousness of the community' guided his choice of poetic medium (1981:107).

The poetic medium in which the *Jñāneśvarī* is composed is the *ovī* metre (Jñśv 13.1149, 18.1720–21).⁸ The *ovī* is a genre that has been defined as 'a chanting folk song passed down orally throughout generations' by Sellergren (1996:220) and as songs sung by women in a work context by Junghare (1983:273–74; see Tulpule 1979:314; Kiehnle 1997a:34; Molesworth 1857:122). The literary *ovī* arose from the folk *ovī* according to Vaudeville (1969) and Tulpule (1979:452) but Raeside argues that it is 'far from evident that the popular *ovī*...preceded the literary form' (1971:612). However, the folk or popular *ovī* is usually set to music while the literary *ovī* is 'mainly read rhythmically with the intonation of prose' states Tulpule (1979:452). The distinction between the oral/folk *ovī* and the literary *ovī* is also made by Junghare who argues that the folk *ovī* is sung by women while the literary *ovī* tends to be employed by men in the composition of religious poetry in old Marathi (1983:273). Junghare's contention seems to apply to the *Jñāneśvarī* as it is a literary *ovī* that consists of three and half feet (Tulpule 1999:119, 1979:451–452; see also Pradhan 1987:xix).⁹

The *Jñāneśvarī* can be described as both a *ṭīkā* and a *dharmakīrtan* as it combines philosophical exposition with a *kīrtan* given to an audience (Pradhan 1987:xviii–xix; Joshi 2009:372). According to Devy, one of Jñāneśvar's aims was to integrate the *yoga* of the Nāths and *bhakti* and that Jñāneśvar therefore worked within the traditional framework of a commentary so as to 'transform the tradition by adding a complex inter-textuality to the established discourse' (1998:46).¹⁰ The discourse in the *Bhagavadgītā* occurs on two levels—Sanjaya's narration of the happenings on the field of battle to the blind prince Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the religio-philosophical dialogue of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa—to which Jñāneśvar adds his discourse with his *guru* Nivṛtti and the discourse with his audience. Śaivite interpretations of the *Bhagavadgītā* presented the dialogue as one between *jīva* and *śiva* but as Devy argues Jñāneśvar also interpreted the dialogue as one between a *bhakta* and God thus combining Nāth and *bhakti* perspectives (1998:46–47; see Brockington 1996:56, 1997).

The audience or interpreting community with whom Jñāneśvar entered into an intersubjective dialogue through his use of Marathi and the literate *ovī* was a 'community of active producers' and a

⁸ तो लोभाचा बंधु ओवी । केली मियां Jñśv 18.1720; तेणें आबाळसुबोधें । ओवीयेचेनि बंधें Jñśv. 18.1721.

⁹ For more on the *ovī* see Tulpule (1979:451–52), Kiehnle (1997a and 1997b) and Deming (1928).

¹⁰ The *paramparā* of Nāth *siddhas* traces its origin to Ādināth (Śiva) and Matsyendranāth. Jñāneśvar's lineage goes back to Ādināth and claims that Nivṛtti, his brother, was his *guru* and Gahināth was his grand-*guru* (Jñśv. 18.1806; Kiehnle 1997a:6; Vaudeville 1987b:217n.7, 218, 220; White 1998:95, 113ff; Ranade 2003:29ff; see Kulkarni 2006:135; Gold 1984).

‘community of the oppressed’ according to Lele (1981:107, 111; see Graham 1993). A Marathi-speaking community primarily formed of low-caste persons practicing traditional occupations, as I outlined in Chapter One, who form the ‘popular’ or ‘social base’ for the expression of *bhakti* compositions according to Mukta (1994:32–33, 37, and 78). Lele argues that the unity of the community ‘rests on the productive social activity of human beings’ and that Jñāneśvar urged the community to remain socially active (1981:110). The *Jñāneśvarī* expands on the notion of performing *svakarma* and disinterested action (*karma yoga*) that is expressed in the *Bhagavadgītā* (BhG 2.47–50, 18.2; see Patton 2008:xx, 29, 184; Malinar 2007:5ff; Jñśv 2.264–272, 18.85ff, see Yardi 2011):

तू योगयुक्त होऊनी | फळाचा संगु टाकुनी | मग अर्जुना चित्त देउनी | करीं कर्म ॥२६७॥

Tū yogayukta hoūnī / phalācā sangū ṭākunī / maga arjunā citta deunī / karī karmā //267//

Steadfast in yoga, renouncing attachment to the fruit of action, perform all actions with an attentive mind, O Arjunā.

(Jñśv 2. 267; Pradhan and Lambert 1987:45)

न पेरितां सैघ तृणै | उठती तैसै साळीचें होणें | नाही गा राबाउणें | जियापरी ॥९५॥

Na peritā saiṅgha tṛṇē / uṭhatī sāḷicē hoṅē / nāhī gā rābāuṅē jiyāparī //95//

Grass grows freely without being sown; on the other hand rice will not grow without cultivation.

(Jñśv 18.95; Pradhan and Lambert 1987:536 v.94)

आपणचि होऊनि ब्रह्म | सारिजे कृत्याकृत्यांचें काम | मग कीजे का निःसीम | सेवा

जयाची ॥१५७१॥ गंगा सिंधू सेवूं गेली | पावतांचि समुद्र जाली | तेवीं भक्तां सेल दिधली

| निजपदाची ॥१५७२॥

Āpaṅaci hoūni brahma / sārīje kṛtyākṛtāncē kāma / maga kīje kā niḥsīma / sevā jyācī //

Gaṅgā sindhū sevūṅ gelī / pāvataīci samudra jāḷī / tevī bhakta sela didhalī / nijapadācī //

After becoming one with Brahma, having completed right or wrong actions, I will worship Him with boundless devotion.

The river Ganges goes to serve the ocean but becomes the ocean. Similarly you give the devotee a share of Yourself.

(Jñśv. 18.1571–2; my translation)

Consequently, the ‘householder’ audience is urged to accept that one can practice *yoga* without renouncing a life of social activity but that all actions, like growing rice, must be performed disinterestedly. The *Jñāneśvarī*, following the *Bhagavadgītā*, thus reinterprets the Vedic understanding of *karman* to emphasise that one can perform action disinterestedly but with devotion and still attain the goal of union with Brahman (see Malinar 2007:88, 104, 228–230). The significance of this message for the Vārkaṛī *sampradāya* is emphasised by Pande who states that it is now a precept of the *sampradāya* that all householder duties are to be performed with non-attachment (2008:507).

While the *Jñāneśvarī* may have been transmitted to a burgeoning *bhakti* community of socially active Marathi-speakers, Devy observes that the *Jñāneśvarī* had a specific audience at its time of composition in the form of the scribe Saccidānanda (1998:47; see Abhayananda 1994:51ff). The final verse of the *Jñāneśvarī* and an *abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāī record Saccidānanda as Jñāneśvar’s scribe:

‘in *śake* 1212 [1290 C.E.] Jñāneśvar composed this commentary and Saccidānandabābā was his reverent scribe’ (Jñśv 18.1899)¹¹ and ‘Jñāneśvar’s *abhaṅgas* were verbalised, Cidānanda Bābā wrote them down’ (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 271.1, SSG 1:743).¹² This version of the *Jñāneśvarī* is however not available.¹³ The closest redaction was produced by *sant* Eknāth who collected and collated all the available versions to create a ‘corrected’ edition of the *Jñāneśvarī* in about 1584 C.E., which is regarded as the most authoritative edition of the text.¹⁴

The initial version of the *Jñāneśvarī* was probably a palm-leaf manuscript known as a *pothī*. The *pothī*, a term derived from the Sanskrit *pustaka*, was employed for ritual purposes and to preserve Sanskrit religious texts.¹⁵ Novetzke argues that a *pothī* ‘marks a text with superior cultural capital in the world of “higher learning” in Marathi’ that serves ““private” or elite memory, the literate, perhaps courtly archive, as against public memory, an open, lightly mediated, and often nonliterate archive—the domain of the *bada*’ (2008:101). According to Novetzke (2008:101) the *Jñāneśvarī* is considered a *pothī* and is honoured in the manner of Sanskrit and ‘classical’ manuscripts.¹⁶ Significantly, this veneration occurs despite the fact that Jñāneśvar rejects Sanskrit in favour of Marathi throughout the *Jñāneśvarī*.¹⁷

Consonant with J.Z. Smith’s argument that canon is a cultural process overcoming limitation by ingenuity (1982:52), Devy argues that ‘the procedure of sect-formation involves a self-limiting act’ as sects are formed around totems that symbolise the questions being raised. Thus, Devy argues that the *Jñāneśvarī* was adopted by the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as ‘the most sacred totem’ of the radical stance posed by Jñāneśvar and later *sants* but that subsequently the *Jñāneśvarī* ‘ceased to appeal to the rational side of the Vārkarīs’ (1998:53). Devy’s argument therefore suggests that communal dissension, like gender attribution as I will argue, became relatively unimportant once the *sampradāya* had been discursively constructed in opposition to Sanskrit and Brahmanical orthodoxy through texts like the *Jñāneśvarī*.

The *Jñāneśvarī* is generally considered to contain no specific mention of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, Viṭṭhal or Viṭṭhal-*bhakti* (see Ranade 2003:40–42; Bhagwat 1989:xxii; Kiehnle

¹¹ शके बाराशतें बररोत्तरें। तें टीका केली ज्ञानेश्वरें। सच्चिदानंदबाबा आदरें। लेखकु जाहला ॥१८९९॥ *Śake bārāśatē bararottarē / tāi ṭīkā kelī jñāneśvarē / saccidānandabābā ādarē / lekhaku jāhalā //1899//*

¹² ज्ञानेश्वर अभंग बोलिले ज्या शब्दां । चिदानंद बाबा लिहि त्यांस ॥ *Jñāneśvara abhaṅga bolile jyā śabda / cidānanda bābā lihī tyāmsa.*

¹³ The oldest printed text of the *Jñāneśvarī* is probably that of V.K. Rājavade (1909), which has been reprinted by the Government of Maharashtra on several occasions (see Tulpule 1979:330n.108; Devy 1998:174.7.n.1) but there are also later editions by Bhide (1928), Daṇḍekar (1953) and Godbole (1977).

¹⁴ See Ranade 2003:37–38, 126–27; Novetzke 2008: 142; Tagare 1993:43; Yardi 2011, and Dubashi 2011.

¹⁵ See Tulpule 1999: 459; Kiehnle 1997b:21 and Williams 1996:44.

¹⁶ Plate 5 (above) shows copies of the *Jñāneśvarī* wrapped in saffron.

¹⁷ Jñśv. 6.14, 17–19; 7.201–204; 9.26–29; 10.42, 43, 45, 46; 12.12–16, 13.1149–1155; See Lele 1981:109, 1989:28–9; Devy 1998:48–50; see Edwards 1941:12–13; Kiehnle 1997b:7.

1997b:4n18). However, a connection between the *Jñāneśvarī* and the Vārkarī *sampradāya* exists due to the fact that the *Jñāneśvarī* is a Marathi commentary upon the *Bhagavadgītā*, a text that is considered to be a *locus* of *bhakti*. Moreover, the *Jñāneśvarī* has an important role in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a sacred text:

It is a holy scripture...a holy book...that people follow. The *Jñāneśvarī* is intuition and intuition is godly... The words are appealing and because the words are appealing *lākhs* of people read it and follow it. If it was not appealing, if they had [not] found happiness in it they would have kept it aside...but they get something from it...So this *Jñāneśvarī*, we feel that *guru* Māulī is talking to us and...through such songs we sometimes get the answer to our questions. It is not a story, it is not history, it is what he felt about God, the world, what change he passed through and that is more important. In looking at the words of the saints we feel they are talking to us as a letter from a mother or father...

(Baba Maharaj Satarkar, personal communication, 10th December 2004)

Several of my informants told me that they ‘read’ the *Jñāneśvarī* every day. Baba Maharaj’s granddaughter told me that she read some verses daily and said that if one read three pages a day one could finish reading the *Jñāneśvarī* in a year beginning and ending on *Jñāneśvar jayantī* (personal communication, 10th December 2004).¹⁸ Kayalabai Satpune told me her brother Dattatreya Rasne had read the *Jñāneśvarī* from childhood, and a lady in the group with Satpune and Rasne told me: ‘First you say the *Haripāṭh*, then you water the *tulasī*, then you say the *Jñāneśvarī* and then you eat’ (Personal communications, 3rd January 2005). This daily recitation of *Jñāneśvarī* is known as *svādhyāya* and forms part of the daily *sādhana* of Vārkarīs (Pande 2008:507; Bhavé 1994; Klostermaier 1994:14). There is also a *pārāyaṇa* of the *Jñāneśvarī* before the *āṣāḍhī vārī*:

Pārāyaṇa...goes on for seven days and every day the *Jñāneśvarī* is read for three hours in the morning and three hours in the evening. During the evening some part of it is recited for about an hour and though in this village, called Abhehpuri [near Wai, Satara district], it was children in the age group of seven to twelve, in other villages it could also be adults [who recited the *Jñāneśvarī*].

(J. Rao, Personal communication, 29th July 2011)

The philosophical texts and *abhaṅgas* attributed to *Jñāneśvar* also play a role in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as they form part of the Vārkarī ‘liturgy’ (see Deleury 1994: 89–90, 94, 97–98, 145; Jones 2009:10ff). The *Amṛtānubhava* is the subject of controversy regarding its date, authorship and content but is nonetheless considered ‘the epitome of Marathi philosophic discourse’ according to Garg (1992:396).¹⁹ Primarily the *Amṛtānubhava* advocates *advaita bhakti* and presents the author’s theory of *cidvilāsa* ‘the

¹⁸ *Jñāneśvar*’s 743rd birthday was celebrated on the 1st June 2014.

¹⁹ Also see Datta 2005:154–55, 1848; Ranade 2003:35, 140; Deshpande 2007:16–17; Bahirat 1998:18; For Marathi editions see Āthavale (c.1929), Gokhale (1967), Dhuḷe (1976), Paṇḍit (c.1977), Bahirat (1996), Miśra (2001), Pāṇḍhare (2007) and Bhide (2010). For English translations see Bahirat (1956, 1963), Bhagvat (1991), Chitre (1996), Mahārāj (1997) and Abhayananda (2000:111–218).

complete absence of duality and the absolute oneness of the creator and creation’ (Datta 2005:1849).²⁰ The *Cāṅgadeva Pāsaṣṭī* is regarded as a distillation of the *Amṛtānubhava* and the quintessence of Jñāneśvar’s philosophy (Bahirat 1993:114).²¹ The letter is formed of sixty-five (*pāsaṣṭa*) verses that deliver *advaita* philosophical advice to the Haṭha *yogi* Cāṅgadev (Bahirat 1996:18; Ranade 2003:45; Datta 2005:154–55).²² Mokashi describes how four Vārkarīs—who met in a shop every Wednesday afternoon and ‘read’ works like the *Jñāneśvarī*, *Amṛtānubhava* or *Cāṅgadev Pāsaṣṭī* over a period of twenty years—did not really comprehend the *Amṛtānubhava* but lost themselves in the melody and in murmuring the words (1982:6, 11–17). Similarly many Vārkarīs learn the *Haripāṭh* by heart even if they do not fully comprehend its meaning due to its use of old Marathi (Jones 2009:108; Nemade 1981; Paniker 1997:351).

The *Haripāṭh* is a group of about twenty-nine popular *abhaṅgas* extolling *nāmasmaraṇa* and *satsaṅg* that is sometimes regarded as the Vārkarī ‘creed’ (Kiehnle 2005:201, 1992:128, 1997b:10).²³ The recitation of the *Haripāṭh* occurs during the *vārī* and communal *bhajan* sessions but, as I have already mentioned, it also forms part of many Vārkarīs’ daily *sādhana* (Kiehnle 1997b:10, 52; Jones 2009:107, 129; Deleury 1994:97–99). The *Amṛtānubhava*, *Cāṅgadev Pāsaṣṭī* and *Haripāṭh* all contain quotidian imagery and suggestions of the householder life but they say nothing specific about leading a life of disinterested action. It is therefore likely that their position in the *sampradāya* is due to their connection with the author of the *Jñāneśvarī*, the fact that the *Amṛtānubhava* and *Cāṅgadev Pāsaṣṭī* relate *advaita bhakti* and that the *Haripāṭh* extols *nāmasmaraṇa*, a theme that I will discuss further in Chapter Five.

Significantly, while all the texts mentioned above exist in textual form they operate in an oral and performative medium (see Jones 2009:136–7). Devy maintains that for Jñāneśvar literature was performative and that literature was ‘the simultaneity of speech and writing, Sanskrit and Prakrit, orality and textuality’ (1998:50–51). Furthermore, both Devy and Lele concur that such literature is inseparable from the community within which it circulates. The *Jñāneśvarī* can therefore be viewed as transmitting the *Bhagavadgītā* to a community of socially active, ‘householder’, Marathi-speakers and discursively

²⁰ See Bahirat 1998: xiii, 18ff; Pande 2008:553–554 and Abhayananda 2000:111–218. Like the *Jñāneśvarī* the *Amṛtānubhava* and *Cāṅgadev Pasastī* are in the *ovī* metre of three and half feet (see Janābāi *abhaṅga* 195, Appendix B).

²¹ See CP, Pāṅgārkar (1912), P.Y Deśapāṇḍe (1973) and H.B.P.D Deśapāṇḍe (1988). For an English translation see Abhayananda (2000:237–245).

²² For the Cāṅgadev story see BVJ 22.140ff, Abbott 1996:369ff, Inamdar 1999:31–33, Abhayananda 2000:72ff, Ranade 2003:45–46, Pai 2006 and Dallmayr 2007.

²³ See also SJH; Abhayananda 1994:221; Tulpule 1979:332–333, 1999:789; Malik 2005:20; Jones 2009:108, and Vaudeville 1969.

constructing that community over a period of seven hundred years. Jñāneśvar's use of Marathi, the *ovī* metre, and his integration of speech and writing may be regarded as ingenuity or charismatic innovation for the reasons sketched above. The *Jñāneśvarī* can certainly be considered 'canonical' because it is a Marathi text, transmitted and recalled in an oral medium, expounding *karma yoga* and *bhakti*, which has become a 'sacred totem' that plays a significant role in the *sampradāya* as one of the *prasthānatraya*. However, other texts operate in a similar manner within the *sampradāya*.

2.2. *Eknāth and the Eknāthī Bhāgavata*

The legacy of Eknāth is predominantly a literary one as he is remembered as a 'conduit for the [Sanskrit] epics into Marathi' and as 'an editor and preserver of important textual sources' according to Novetzke (2008: 123,142). Eknāth created a corrected edition of the *Jñāneśvarī* in about 1584 C.E., as mentioned above, which Tulpule maintains is the most authoritative edition of the text (1979:359). Novetzke emphasises that Eknāth's 'text-critical endeavour is unique among the Maharashtrian Vārkarī *sants* and...among *bhakti* figures in general' (2008:143). Novetzke's observation ties in with Devy's statement that Eknāth's edition of the *Jñāneśvarī* 'which forbade any interpolation in the text as taboo, is the high watermark of the formation of the sect' (1998:55). It is probably due to this discursive endeavour, which re-established Jñāneśvar's public remembrance, that Eknāth gained prominence in public memory. Eknāth re-established Jñāneśvar's public memory by rediscovering the site of Jñāneśvar's *samādhi* in Alandi and renovating the tomb,²⁴ and thus initiating the yearly commemoration of Jñāneśvar's *samādhi* during the *kārttikī vārī*. Consequently, Eknāth regenerated the Vārkarī *sampradāya* due to the 'initiation of a physical site and text as loci of public memory' argues Novetzke (2008:144; see Zelliott 1987a:91).

Like Jñāneśvar, Eknāth insisted on using Marathi rather than Sanskrit for his compositions even though he was a Brahman scholar (Tulpule 1979:358; Zelliott 1987a:91) and asked, 'If Sanskrit was created by God, was Prakrit [Marathi] born of thieves?' (EB 1.129, Pāṅgārkar 1925:6; Tulpule 1979:358; Tagare 1993:11).²⁵ In his first work, the *Cauṭhślokī Bhāgavata*, Eknāth said that his *guru* Janārdan had told him to put the mystic teachings into the common language (*deśabhāṣa*) of the people (CB 1021; see Abbott 1927:242) and that he had woven a *ghoṅgaḍī* (rough blanket) in Marathi against the fine shawl of

²⁴ An *abhaṅga*—*Śrīdnyānadevē yeūnī svapnāt*; 'Jñāneśvar appeared in a dream' (SSG 2:469, v.3524)—relates how Eknāth located the Jñāneśvar *samādhi*, see Ranade (2003:37) and Novetzke (2008:143–44).

²⁵ सस्कृत-वाणी देवें केली। तरी प्राकृत काय चोरापासोनि झाली। असोतु या अभिमानभुली। वृथा वोली काय काज॥१२९॥

Saskṛt-vāṇī devē kelī / tarī prākṛta kā corāpāsoni jhālī / asotu yā abhimānabhulī / vṛthā volī kāya kāja //129//

Sanskrit (Tulpule 1979:354; Abbott 1927:xviii; Deshpande 2007; Jog 1911 nos.1018–24).²⁶ Eknāth, again like Jñāneśvar, thus acted as a bridge between elite Sanskrit and the vernacular by rendering Sanskrit devotional texts into Marathi, popularising Vedānta and composing songs intended for the masses.²⁷ He is also credited with reviving *bhakti*—Maharashtra had been under Muslim rule for over two-hundred years—and providing a simple, new interpretation of *bhakti* for ordinary people.²⁸

Eknāth’s most important work is considered to be his Marathi commentary on the eleventh book of the *Bhāgavata Purāna* (Zelliot 1987:95; Tagare 1993:12; Christof 2003:62). This book contains a philosophical discourse of over twenty chapters spoken by Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava known as the *Uddhava Gītā*. The twenty-ninth chapter presents Kṛṣṇa’s ultimate and final instructions to Uddhava: to speak Kṛṣṇa’s teachings on *bhakti* to all who are devoted ‘even if they be from the *śūdra* caste, or women’ (BhP 11.29.31; Bryant 2003:lxxxix n.9, 410). Eknāth’s text, begun in Paithan c. 1570 and completed in Varanasi in 1573 C.E, consists of over eighteen thousand *ovīs* (Deshpande 2007:173; Rigopoulos 1993:267).²⁹ The *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* is regarded as one of the philosophical foundations for the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, like the *Jñāneśvarī* and *Amṛtānubhava*, as it outlines both *advaita* and *bhakti*. The text accepts Brahman as the only existent and the world, a manifestation of *māyā*, as unreal. *Jīva* and *śiva*/Brahman are undifferentiated (EB 11.164–205, 22.111–113) and therefore the bondage of the soul is an illusion (EB 11.29–32). The *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* also explains *navadhā bhakti* and outlines the means for attaining spiritual realisation (Tagare 1993:12–16; Ranade 2003:232; Abbott 1927:xxi–xxii; Rigopoulos 1993:267).³⁰

However, in contrast to the Sanskrit text, the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* is regarded as a work of ‘stern morality’ (Zelliot 1981:145). Skyhawk argues that Eknāth’s writings are about the methodical practice of

²⁶ The *mudrikā* employed in the compositions attributed to Eknāth—‘Ekā Janārdan’—combines Eknāth’s name with Janārdan, the name of his *guru* and of God (Zelliot 1987:96; Rigopoulos 1998:141). Eknāth may have been connected to Dattātreyā and the Śūfīs through his *guru* Janārdan (Rigopoulos 1998:135–168; see Skyhawk 1992) as Janārdan may have been part of the Sijrā-i-kādrī Śūfī order (Tulpule 1979:353) but this is disputed (Novetzke 2008:76, 259n.2). Eknāth is credited with composing over four thousand *abhaṅgas* in Marathi and Hindi (Tagare 1993:39) as well as some verses in Kannada and Telegu (Deshpande 2007:172–173). Eknāth is also credited with composing at least three hundred *bhārūds* in which non-orthodox and low-status characters are used to carry the *bhakti* message (Zelliot 1981:145, 1987:91, 97; Deshpande 2007:171; Tulpule 1979:356–7), which suggests that Eknāth wanted to endorse the lowly and/or persuade them to follow the *bhakti-marga* (Tagare 1993:45). For more on the *bhārūds* see Zelliot (1981, 1982 and 1987a). The *bhārūḍ* continues to be one of the most popular forms of folk art in rural Maharashtra, as I saw when I attended a *bhārūḍ* performance (September 2005) at Baner near Pune, and is an important part of annual fairs and festivals, *Jñāneśvarī pārāyaṇa* or *Tukārāma gāthā pārāyaṇa* (‘Bharud’ 2009; Sangeetha 2011).

²⁷ See Zelliot 1987a:91; Novetzke 2008:123, 143; Schomer 1987:4 and Ranade 2003:256.

²⁸ See Zelliot 1987a:91; Tulpule 1979:358; Novetzke 2008:144; Joshi 2009:373; Deshpande 2007:174; Gupta 2006:86 and Datta 2005:1144.

²⁹ See Eknāth (1971), Sapaṛā (2005) and Abbott (1928).

³⁰ For an outline of the chapters and themes of the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* in English see Tagare (1993:14–16) and Ranade (2003:231–255).

bhakti-yoga and that he therefore attempts to ‘create a feeling of disgust with sensual enjoyments...[and] to intensify the feeling of *bhakti* for and intense contemplation of the divine’ (1983:343–44). Consequently, Eknāth developed the notion of disinterested action (*karma yoga*) to include asceticism-in-marriage so as to deter the *grhastha-sādhaka* from attachment to sexual stimulation,³¹ encourage *vairāgya* and direct the *grhastha-sādhaka* toward liberation via means like *harikīrtan* (EB.7.646; Skyhawk 1983:344, 346ff; see Morwanchikar 1985:63).³² In this context, Eknāth, like Tukārām, presented women as temptresses and distractions from the path of *vairāgya* (EB 7. 119–122, 126, 130–31, 241–244.).³³ This negative portrayal of women may be interpreted as representing patriarchal and orthodox views but it also highlights what is an important feature of the historical construction of the Vārkaī *sampradāya* as a whole, which is the necessity of negotiating the tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha*. By promoting asceticism-in-marriage Eknāth proposed an operational median between a radical form of *vairāgya* and the kind of *vairāgya* which allows for worldly demands to be fulfilled (see Horstmann 2001:235–236). Moreover, Eknāth’s promotion of asceticism-in-marriage demonstrates Laine’s assertion that *bhakti* is mixed up with renunciation (1999:130). Nonetheless, Eknāth was clearly propagating a householder life, he himself was married and the father of children, and as Kiehnle observes the Vārkaī *sampradāya* has advocated the householder life ever since the time of Eknāth (1997a:25).

Eknāth, like Jñāneśvar before him, acted as a hermeneute and interpreted a significant Sanskrit *bhakti* text into Marathi, which has played an important role in forming the *sampradāya* discursively. Skyhawk indicates that the language of the text appears to follow archaic Marathi as it has few Arabic, Persian or Hindustani words (1992:68). Skyhawk suggests that the absence of such words might be due to Eknāth responding to the complaint, supposedly by the *paṇḍits* at Varanasi, that he was polluting a sacred text like the *Bhāgavata* with a Marathi commentary (1992:74). This would mean that Eknāth used a ‘pure’ or Sanskrit form of Marathi to comply with the *paṇḍits* request. However, *caritra* suggests that in the end the text was honoured by the *paṇḍits* (BLM 21.37–22.44; Abbott 1927:173–193),³⁴ which implies that Mahīpati wanted the text to be regarded as authorised by Brahmanical orthodoxy in the manner of a Sanskrit text. The composition of the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* in old Marathi may also be connected to the

³¹ Literally *nirlajja* ‘shameless or immodest’ behaviour.

³² कलियुगीं सुगम साधना। न लगे योग त्याग दान। करिता निर्लज्ज हरिकीर्तन। चारी मुक्ता चरण वंदितो॥६४६॥
kaliyugī sugama sādhanā / na lage yoga tyāga dāna / karitā nirlajja harikīrtana / cārī muktā vanditō //

³³ See Ranade 2003:241ff; Kant 2003:9; see Morwanchikar 1985:83; Brockington 1996:152; Desai 1977:40; Tulpule 1984:65; Flood 1996:143–4, and Glushkova 1996.

³⁴ For discussion on the story see Tagare (1993:10), Tulpule (1979: 354–355), Deshpande (2007:172–173), Zelliott (1987:94) and Skyhawk (1992:74, 78–79n.31).

revival of *bhakti* in Maharashtra. Eknāth, like Jñāneśvar, provided a new interpretation of an important *bhakti* text but Eknāth also re-established a connection with the beginnings of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* by using old Marathi. It is this use of Marathi, the literate *ovī* and the exposition on *bhakti* that probably accounts for the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata*'s position as *prasthānatraya*. However, there are other works by Eknāth that are more accessible and more popular than the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata*.

2.2.i. *The Rukmiṇī Svayaṃvara and Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa*

The *Rukmiṇī Svayaṃvara* 'Rukmiṇī's self-choice' (c.1571) describes a 'romantic episode' in the life of Kṛṣṇa (Tagare 1993:20). It relates Rukmiṇī being attracted to Kṛṣṇa, the abduction of Rukmiṇī by Kṛṣṇa and their subsequent marriage (Abbott 1927:xxiv–xxv). Like the *Amṛtānubhava*, the narrative poem is interpreted as an allegory for the union of *jīva* and *śiva* with Rukmiṇī as a *bhakta* and Kṛṣṇa the Ultimate Reality (RS 18.73).³⁵ The text is said, by Tulpule to be more popular than Eknāth's *Bhāgavata* (1979:355),³⁶ which may be due to the Maharashtrian, Brahman and sixteenth-century flavour of Eknāth's story. Although Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa were *kṣatriyas* the marriage-ceremony presented is a *deśastha* Brahman one; the marriage-feast is a vegetarian one, thus supporting the Vārkarī precept; the food prepared is Maharashtrian, and Rukmiṇī is advised to perform menial housework like the newly married girls of the period (Tagare 1993:23–24; Abbott 1927:xxiv–xxv). It may be tempting to think that the Brahman character of the marriage ceremony indicates an attempt Brahmanise the *sampradāya* and while this is a distinct possibility it seems more likely that Eknāth was attempting to give Kṛṣṇa, as the deity, the highest social status possible. It seems plausible to me that the enduring popularity of the text is due to the householder nature of the story, as it is said that reading the text can solve marriage related problems ('Marriage getting delayed') and help girls of marriageable age in Maharashtra get a good husband (TNN 2001). However, the popularity of the *Rukmiṇī Svayaṃvara* may also be due to the fact that it is a feature of Vārkarī *kīrtan* as it is regarded as having been composed for performance like Eknāth's final and incomplete work (see Novetzke 2005a:131n.4).

The *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa* is considered Eknāth's second most meritorious work after the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* according to Ranade (2003:217). Eknāth is thought to have composed 25,000 *ovīs* before his death (c.1599) and his disciple Gāvabā to have completed the work with the addition of about

³⁵ Tulpule 1979: 355, 1991:141; Abbott 1927: xvi; Deshpande 2007 and Tagare 1993:20.

³⁶ See also Abbott 1927:xvi; Deshpande 2007:172 and Tagare 1993:20.

15,000 *ovīs*.³⁷ Eknāth's rendition of the story of Rāma is largely based on two Sanskrit texts, the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki (c. 100 BCE–100 CE) and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* (c.1300–1600 CE), although it also contains material from other texts (Abbott 1927:xxvi; Tulpule 1991:141). Tagare states the work was composed as a *purāṇa*, which would have meant that it was delivered as a *kathā* or *pravacana*, to encourage the semi-literate or illiterate to follow the *bhaktimarga*. Tagare submits that Eknāth was concerned with presenting the inherent meaning (*bhāvārtha*) of the Rāma story and offering moral and spiritual guidance through his discursive narration (1993:28, 30). However, Tulpule finds there is more to the text. Firstly, it is composed in Marathi, which gives the Sanskrit story a regional dimension and allows the text to be broadly disseminated—a criterion that also applies to the *Jñāneśvarī* and *Eknāthī Bhāgavata*. Secondly, it references contemporary history as the *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa* narrates the conflict between Rāma and Rāvaṇa from a sixteenth-century perspective; thirdly, the story of Rāma is augmented with philosophical and political metaphors, and fourthly it employs a socio-political approach (1979: 356; 1991). The *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa* was written 'to inspire hope in a demoralised society' because the socio-political situation in the region had worsened after the fall of the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar in 1565 C.E. according to Tagare (1993:25). Pollock agrees that in the text Rama represents righteousness and divine kingship while Rāvaṇa, the outsider and invader, is represented as tyrannical and 'deviant' due to his polygyny. Consequently, Rāvaṇa represents 'a fully demonized Other' who is be condemned (1993: 282–84, 286). Rāvaṇa may therefore be interpreted as the Muslim or as one who leads people away from righteousness, particularly as the fall of Vijayanagar may have instituted a period of 'defensive polemics' towards Muslims according to Talbot (1995:705, 716). The *Rāmāyaṇa* 'with its demonizing imaginary' therefore offers 'a conceptual instrument for the utter dichotomization of the enemy' (Pollock 1993:283). The purpose of the incarnation of Rāma was to liberate those enslaved by Rāvaṇa and to establish *rāma-rājya* according to Tulpule (1991:144–46).³⁸ Consequently, Eknāth may have been portraying 'a hero capable of setting the subject[ed] people free' as Tagare suggests but whether Eknāth was suggesting freedom from Muslim rule remains open to interpretation (1993:25). Eknāth may however be viewed as renewing the meaning of the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa* in response to the spiritual requirements of a 'changed society' (see von Stietencron 2003:16–17). The *Bhāvārtha*

³⁷ See Tulpule 1991:140, 1979:356; Deshpande 2007:172; Abbott 1927: xxvi; Ranade 2003:217; Ajaonkar 1924; Joshi 1933 and Paṇaśīkar 1966.

³⁸ Tulpule suggests that the *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa* was a forerunner to the two *Rāmāyaṇas* by Smartha Ramdas (1991:151). Ramdas promoted *mahārāṣṭra dharmā*, which Laine describes as 'a sort of religious complement to the political-military activism of Shivaji' (2003:10, 108n.7; see Tulpule 1979:395). Laine suggests that Shivaji was regarded as a hero comparable to Rāma by killing Afzal Khan in 1659 (2003:20).

Rāmāyaṇa is certainly a popular text, which Tulpule believes is due to its combination of ‘literary beauty, spiritual depth and socio-political consciousness’ (1979:356; see Deshpande 2007:172; Sontheimer 1991:116). However, Novetzke argues that its popularity may be due to its delivery in performance (2008:143). This performative aspect suggests that the *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa* fits the *rāmālīlā* genre that is prevalent across much of India and south-east Asia. However, as the popularity of the *Rukmiṇī Svayaṃvara* also seems connected to its delivery in performance this suggests that the oral dissemination of literary works among the Vārkarīs did not cease once the works were textualised, thus highlighting the importance of orality and performance for the Vārkarī *sampradāya* (see Jones 2009:132).

The texts I have discussed were primarily composed in the literary *ovī* metre and like the *Jñāneśvarī*, the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* and *Bhāvārtha Ramayana* are regarded as *pothīs* and thus honoured in the manner of Sanskrit and classical texts (see Kamath 1991:254, 276). However, the Vārkarī *sampradāya* also has a non-literate archive which was originally transmitted through oral performance before becoming textualised. This archive, primarily consisting of *abhaṅgas* attributed to the Vārkarī *sants*, underpins the Vārkarī tradition and forms an essential part of the Vārkarī corpus (see Jones 2009:131–32) but unlike the *Jñāneśvarī* and *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* most of these compositions are not classified as *prasthānatrayī*.

2.3. *The abhaṅgas of the Vārkarī sants*

The *abhaṅga* is an elongation of the folk *ovī*, as mentioned above, and is the form in which the poet-*sants* of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* chose to compose most of their songs (Kiehnle 1997a:8, 41ff; Jones 2009:123).³⁹ The author of an *abhaṅga* is usually identified by the *mudra*, *mudrikā* or *nāmamudrā* that tends to employ the third person and usually appears in the last line of the *abhaṅga* (see Appendix B). The *mudrikā* operates as a form of oral copyright and is intended to put a seal of authorship and authority on the composition.⁴⁰ At the end of the thirteenth century the term *abhaṅga* was used in Marathi for the *mudrikā* and eventually came to apply to the whole composition. An *abhaṅga* attributed to Nāmdev suggests that the term *abhaṅga* might refer to a ‘signature’ because ‘there is no break/difference (*bhaṅga*) between metre and musical rhythm’ (*abhaṅga* 2085.1–2, SSG 1:600; Kiehnle 199b:36, 43; Tulpule

³⁹ For the other forms of oral expression employed by the Vārkarīs see Nemade (1981:120–121)

⁴⁰ See Nemade 1981:120, 123n.21; Poitevin 1996:257; see Kiehnle 1997b:36; Novetzke 2008:135ff, and Hawley 1988.

1970:6–8).⁴¹ Tulpule, on the other hand, suggests that an *abhaṅga* is inviolable because it has been sealed with an (unbreakable) *mudrikā* (1966:13, 1967:20, 1969:52–3).⁴² However, as I outlined in the Introduction, a composition with a name or *mudrikā* cannot be understood as the work of a specific individual and must therefore be regarded as attributed words or speech that were written and codified sometime after initial composition. The attribution of a name ascribes gender and sometimes caste so this designation must be viewed with suspicion. Moreover, it is my contention that the utilisation of gender attribution, through a *mudrikā*, is one of the primary means through which the Vārkarī *sampradāya* has been discursively constructed as a householder tradition.

Although the *nāmamudrā* may symbolise (*mudrā*) a composer’s name (*nāma*) it also symbolises a genre of corporate authorship.⁴³ There are several possible reasons why a poet ‘signed’ his or her compositions with the *nāmamudrā* of another as Novetzke, Hawley, and Kiehnle propose: s/he wanted to signal s/he was composing a song in the style of a particular poet (Novetzke 2008:136); s/he ‘wanted to be perceived as singing compositions of some importance and pedigree’; s/he wanted to pay homage to a particular poet and/or *sant* ‘by affixing to a poem the name of the poet who inspired it’; s/he wanted to evoke a devotional mood or theme associated with a particular poet or s/he felt a lack of authority so imbedded their composition with their poetic preceptor (Hawley 1988:274–75, 287). Furthermore, a poet may just have been quoting another poet, for example Nāmdev may have said ‘Jñānadeva says’, and this was later understood as a composition by Jñāneśvar (Kiehnle 1992:127).

The multiplicity of authorship and the matter of attribution is an issue associated with many *bhakti* figures. For example, the author of the *Jñāneśvarī*, *Cāṅgadeva Pāsaṣṭī* and *Amṛtānubhava* is held to be different from the author of the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Jñānadev/Jñāneśvar by Bhāradvāj (1931), W.B. Patwardhan (1924) and Vaudeville (1969) but this view is refuted by Bhiṅgārkar (1900), Ranade (1993), Gajendraḡar (1934), P.N. Joshi (1977), Tulpule (1979) and the Vārkarī community (Kiehnle 1997b:3). There are held to be at least four Nāmas by Novetzke (2008:136ff),⁴⁴ while Tagare states that there were seven authors who used the *mudrikā* ‘Ekā-Janārdan’ (1993:4; see Tulpule 1979:359).

For Novetzke composing in another’s name suggests ‘a system of continuity that rests with processes of approximation and mimesis, diverging from a direct correspondence between name and

⁴¹ मख्य मातृकांची संख्या। सोळा अक्षरें नेटक्या ।१। समचरणी अभंग। नव्हे ताळ छंदोभंग।२। *Mukhya mātrkānci saṅkhyā / soḷā akṣarē neṭakya //1// samacaraṅī abhaṅga / navhe tāḷa chāṅdobhaṅga//2//*

⁴² For another interpretation see Kiehnle 1997b:36 and Joshi 1955:135–136.

⁴³ See Novetzke 2008:135–136; Hawley 1988:274; Dharwadker 2003:60 and Mukta 1994:33ff.

⁴⁴ See also see Callewaert 1989:12 and Tulpule 1979:335.

authorship' (2008:136). Subsequently, Novetzke suggests that there are two ideas of authorship at work in the practice of attribution. Firstly, there is that of the sole author who composes in his or her own name and whose biography establishes the veracity of the text (2008:153). This view of biography is problematic, as I will discuss below, as a biography is usually a representation of the life of a *bhakta* attributed with compositions by a later biographer rather than a historically accurate text. Secondly, Novetzke argues that authorship is a process with 'several kinds of authors operating at once in a chain of anamnesis, of remembering through imitation with variation' (2008:137). Novetzke's contention about remembering through imitation bears a resemblance to J.Z. Smith's notion of overcoming limitation through ingenuity that I discussed earlier but it also ties in with Hawley's argument that upholding authorial difference is considered unimportant within the context of *bhakti* poetry as a name indicates more than an author.

In devotional Hindi poetry, to give an author's name is not so much to denote who said what as to indicate the proper force of an utterance and the context in which it is to be appreciated. The author's name is no mere footnote. It anchors a poem to a life, a personality, even a divinity that gives the poem its proper weight and tone; and it connects it to a network of associations that makes the poem not just a fleeting flash of truth—not just new and lovely—but something that has been heard before and respected, something familiar and beloved. By providing this tie, the signatures in *bhakti* poems communicate much more than authorship. They lend these poems authority and conviction, and they establish an aura in which the act of listening can be as intense as the speech.

(Hawley 1988:287–88)

There is however another important factor in relation to attribution: the role of the performers and editors in mediating the process of transmitting an authorial tradition. The *abhangas* would have been composed orally and transmitted by oral recitation, *bhajan* and *kīrtan*. The songs would have been sung by *kīrtankārs* or travelling singers, who picked up songs, shared them with their audience and passed them down from father to son or through the *guru-śiṣya paramparā*. New songs would have been added to the repertoire until the number of songs grew too large to memorise and so notebooks (*bāḍa*, *vahī*) were employed to aid recollection.⁴⁵ The earliest manuscripts probably had the *bāḍas* as their source and the extant Hindi manuscripts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century are copies of these early manuscripts according to Callewaert (1989:4). It was handwritten copies like these that were used to compile the editions of the compositions attributed to the Vārkarī *bhaktas* and *sants* when the literary recording of songs began in the seventeenth century.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See Hawley 1988:274; Callewaert 1989:3–4, 55–58ff, 1992a:29–30, 34; Novetzke 2008:41, 100ff; Kiehnle 1997b:21; Dharwadker 2003:25–30, 48 and Nemade 1981:121.

⁴⁶ See Callewaert 1989:4, Chitre 1991:viii and Novetzke 2008:101–108ff.

The Marathi *bāḍas* appear to have organised on the basis of attributed author and the compiler of an edition would then include as many songs as possible attributed to a particular poet from numerous different sources (Novetzke 2008:107, 109; see also Hawley 1988:274). Consequently, Chitre finds the available versions of Tukārām’s collected poems unsatisfactory because they are ‘a massive jumbled collection of randomly scattered poems of which only a few are clearly linked sequences and thematic units. There is no chronological sequence among them. Nor...is there any attempt to seek thematic coherence beyond the obvious and broad traditional divisions made by each anonymous “editor” of the traditional texts’ (1991:viii). The fact the collections are compiled from the oral tradition of the Vārkarīs and/or copies made from other copies leads Chitre to declare ‘there is no canonical text of Tukaram’s collected works’ only a ‘collated and critically edited’ version (1991:xxiii).

The *abhaṅgas* attributed to the Vārkarī *sants* can be found in various *abhaṅga gāthās* and the *Śrīsakalasantagāthā* ‘The Glorious Compendium of All the *Sants*’ (SSG). These anthologies are rooted in the *bāḍas* of *kīrtankārs* and thus Novetzke argues that modern printed editions must be viewed as ‘the products of premodern performance traditions’ (2008:109). The SSG seems to follow closely the conventions of thematic grouping of songs present in manuscripts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (see Chapter Five). Novetzke suggests that Mahīpati and Āvaṭe may have used the same sources as the chronology of the songs in the Āvaṭe edition seem to follow Mahīpati’s chronology in his first section on Nāmdev in the BVJ (2008:54 n.53). One of the most influential anthologies of Nāmdev compositions was produced by the Vārkarī *kīrtankār* V. Jog (1925) who was one of several eminent *kīrtankārs* who edited *gāthās* of Marathi *sants*. The modern printed *gāthās* can thus be regarded as inheriting the tradition of the *kīrtankār*’s handwritten *bāḍa* and as transmitting ‘the structure of oral, live performance...through the replication of the contents of old notebooks’ as Novetzke suggests (2008:109–110).

The first version of the *Sakaḷā Santa Gāthā* was edited by Āvaṭe (1908) and was based on a collection of manuscripts, the *Santagāthā*, by Nānāmahārāj Sākhare.⁴⁷ There is scant information regarding the compilation of the SSG under Āvaṭe as neither Āvaṭe or subsequent editors of the SSG have provided information about the selection of songs although it does seem that a convention for grouping the songs by author and then theme was followed. Āvaṭe may have referred to the same sources as the biographer Mahīpati as the chronology of the songs in the SSG appears to correspond to that of Mahīpati

⁴⁷ The main *gāthā* printing is owned by the Āvaṭe/Āvṭe family (Kiehnle 1997b:23).

according to Novetzke (2008:54, 258n53; see Aklujkar 1992:114; 1999:13). The SSG was later edited by Joṣī (1923), Dhere (1983), Sākhare (1990a) and Gosāvī (2000, 2005). The SSG is considered the “‘real’ scriptures’ of the Vārkarīs by Vaudeville (1996:215), as ‘near a canon of Marathi sant literature’ by Zelliott and Puneekar (2005:48n.6), as ‘almost canonical’ to the Vārkarī tradition by Novetzke (2008:54, 196, 259n.83) and Aklujkar (1999:12), and as lying ‘at the heart of the Varkari tradition’ according to Chitre (quoted in Novetzke 2008:270, n.6) because it contains the compositions attributed to all the *sants* associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

There are numerous reasons why the compositions attributed to the *sants* might be important to the *sampradāya*. Firstly, as Pechilis observes ‘their poetry tends to be observational, with images of everyday life and their responses to it, including folklore, as well as the more institutionalized religious images such as God, temple and ritual’ (1999:27). Secondly, as Hawley suggests the words of the poets assess human nature, provide access to God and teach the path to salvation (1987:201, 209) and thirdly, by reading or uttering their compositions the reader or speaker takes part in *satsaṅg* for as one informant told me ‘In looking at the words of the saints we feel they are talking to us as a letter from a mother or father’. However, anthologies like the SSG are not classified as *prasthānatraya* by the Vārkarī *sampradāya* and neither are the compositions of Nāmdev, one of the most important Vārkarī *sants*.

2.3.i. Nāmdev and Tukārām

Nāmdev, like Jñāneśvar, is considered a foundational figure for the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, as the Bahiṇābāī *abhaṅga* expresses.⁴⁸ Tukārām, described as the ‘pinnacle’ of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* in the Bahiṇābāī *abhaṅga*, is one of the most popular and well-known *santakavis*.⁴⁹ Considering their status as cornerstones of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* it is important to consider why the compositions attributed to Tukārām and not those attributed to Nāmdev are considered *prasthānatrayā*.

Both Nāmdev and Tukārām are accepted as having been born in Maharashtra and composing songs in Marathi although there are thousands of songs in various north Indian languages ascribed to Nāmdev as he is also remembered as spreading *bhakti* in north India (Novetzke 2008:4; Callewaert 1989). Nāmdev and Tukārām are both deemed *sūdras*—Nāmdev was a *śimpī* and Tukārām a Kuṇbī and *vāṇī*—and both are accepted as struggling against caste prejudice and being at odds with Brahmanical

⁴⁸ See Deleury 1994:5, 11; Novetzke 2008:1; Paniker 1997:344; Ranade 2003:183, and Nemade 1981:116. Kulkarni asserts that Jñāneśvar called Nāmdev *Bhaktaśiromaṇi* ‘Leader of *bhaktas*’ or *Bhaktirājā* ‘King of *bhaktas*’ (2006:179).

⁴⁹ See Deshpande 2007:614; Novetzke 2008:90; Mitchell 1849:1; Zelliott 1987:91; Dabre 1998:102; Omvedt 2003b:277, and Chitre 1991:xv, xx.

orthodoxy.⁵⁰ Furthermore, Nāmdev and Tukārām are both accepted as popularising *bhakti* particularly through their performance of *kīrtans*.⁵¹ However, Nāmdev is remembered as the first Marathi *kīrtankār* while Tukārām is primarily remembered as a poet (Jones 2009:132; Novetzke 2008:75, 90, 123, 261n41; Chitre 1991:xviii).⁵² Novetzke argues that it is within *kīrtan*, ‘in speech and performance, not in literate practices, that Nāmdev’s songs endure’ (2008:79ff; see Deleury 1994:11; Ranade 2003:184; see Nemade 1981:120). Tukārām is remembered as writing his own compositions and as having been compelled to drown them all on the order of his Brahman detractors but miraculously the notebook book is said to have re-emerged after thirteen days. The manuscript is regarded as being in Tukārām’s writing and is referred to as the *bhijki vahī* or ‘soaked notebook’ (Chitre 1991:xxiii; see Plate 19).⁵³

The visual depictions of Jñāneśvar, Eknāth and Tukārām almost always represent them in conjunction with the texts with which they are associated while Nāmdev is usually depicted holding only a *vīṇā* as Novetzke argues (2008:76). However, the images in the SSG only support Novetzke’s argument up to the point that Tukārām is depicted with a *vīṇā* in his right hand *and* a text before him (see Plate 19). Nāmdev may primarily be remembered as a *kīrtankār* but on the basis of visual depiction Tukārām is remembered as both a poet and *kīrtankār*.

⁵⁰ See Novetzke 2008:1, 4ff; Chitre 1991:viii–ix; Omvedt 2012:17, 22; Kulkarni 2008: 179, 187, and Eaton 2005:8, 130ff.

⁵¹ See Kulkarni 2006:180; McGregor 1984:41; Novetzke 2008:6, 90 and 2003:206; Deshpande 2007:174, Chitre 1991:viii and Jones 2009:9.

⁵² Muktabai Belgaonkar told me that Nāmdev was a pioneer and the first *kīrtankār* to forward the message [of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*] through *kīrtan* (personal communication, 21st June 2006).

⁵³ See BLM 35:29ff; Abbott 1996:202ff; Omvedt 2003b:278, 2012:22–23; Ranade 2003:275–76, Chitre 1991:ix, 204; Machwe 1977:5; Eaton 2005:135, 151; Novetzke 2008:76, and Nemade 1981:120.



Plate 19: The Tukārām *pothī* at Dehu⁵⁴

Jñāneśvar, Eknāth and Tukārām are all said to have written down their own compositions but Jñāneśvar and Tukārām are also deemed to have had scribes. Although, Jagaṇāḍe’s role was to produce a ‘back-up copy’ of Tukārām’s work according to Novetzke (2008:76). According to Novetzke, Nāmdev is not mentioned as writing or as in partnership with a human scribe (2008:76–79). However, there is an *abhaṅga* that suggests that Nāmdev’s songs were recorded in *vahīs*. *Nāmā mhaṇe hātī bāṇḍhoniṅā vāhyā / baise lihāvayā pāṇḍuraṅga*, ‘Nama says, “Pāṇḍuraṅga sits down to write, stitching the notebooks [*vāhyā*] with his own hands”’ (*abhaṅga* 1405.5, SSG 1:506; Novetzke 2008:103).⁵⁵ The *abhaṅga* also depicts Nāmdev as a medium for divine speech. Novetzke argues that Nāmdev is inspired by Sarasvatī and articulates the words she gives him, which are then written down by Pāṇḍuraṅga/Viṭṭhal. Sarasvatī is the goddess of speech, which includes orality and the recitation of sacred texts. Sarasvatī therefore

⁵⁴ There are various collections of Tukārām’s compositions—Paṇḍit and Paṇḍit (1869), Tāya (1889), Jog (1925), Bhāve (1919) and Patwardhan (1977–78)—but the standard edition is regarded as the one published for the Government of Maharashtra (Paṇḍit 1869; Lad 1950). The *Śrī Tukārāmāñcāgāthā* contains 4607 poems (the SSG contains about 4092) and is a collation of the various recensions of the *Tukārām Gāthā* based on manuscripts at Dehū, Talegaon, Kadusa and Pandharpur (Ranade 2003:269; Chitre 1999:vii–viii; Aklujkar 1999:12). There are also numerous works that discuss the life and works of Tukārām in Marathi and English: Fraser (1909–1915), Abbott (1926), Kolatkar (1966), Machwe (1977), Engblom (1982b), Chitre (1991) and Omvedt (2003b, 2012).

⁵⁵ The title of this verse is निश्चय पाहूनि उपजली दया। *niścaya pāhūni upajalī dayā/*

amalgamates orality and literacy via performance. Novetzke argues that these functions are transferred to Nāmdev in the *abhaṅga* and may explain why the compositions of a non-literate *sant* are included in the literate corpus (2008:103–104). This amalgamation of orality, literacy and performance has similarities to Devy’s argument, discussed above in relation to Jñāneśvar, that the *Jñāneśvarī* represents a simultaneity of speech and writing, and orality and textuality but the difference between Jñāneśvar and Nāmdev is that Nāmdev’s attributed compositions were not written down at the time of composition.

However, the inclusion of Nāmdev and other non-literate poets within the written and printed corpus may also be due to their compositions being exemplary expressions of *bhakti* and the fact that the poets came to embody *bhakti* for later interpreters and anthologizers (Pechilis 1999:5–7). Nonetheless, Novetzke’s argument that Nāmdev is distanced from literacy due to his primary connection with oral composition and performance is compelling. If Novetzke is right then Nāmdev and the majority of other Vārkarī *santakavis* and *santakaviyatrīs* could be distinguished from the ‘literate’ *sants*. Consequently, the connection with orality and performance may account for why the compositions attributed to Nāmdev and other Vārkarī non-literate *sants* are not classified as *prasthānatraya*.

There are, of course, a number of possible reasons why the compositions attributed to the poet who signed himself ‘Tukā’ are classed as *prasthānatraya*. Firstly, Tukārām is regarded as the ‘culmination’ of the tradition that began with Jñāneśvar and as the last of the great *bhakti* poets.⁵⁶ This position may be due to Tukārām being a charismatic figure who like Eknāth before him renewed the message of *bhakti* for a changed society. Secondly, Tukārām’s poems are held as having a ‘modern’ quality not seen with the earlier Vārkarī poets due to ‘their subjectivity, their expression of a variety of mixed feelings and experiences, [and] their very individuality’ as Omvedt notes (2012:14–15, 27, and 36).⁵⁷ Thirdly, the story of the ‘ordeal by water’ (*jala divya*) can be viewed as vindicating Tukārām’s production of a written text in Marathi and thus contributing to his legendary status. Fourthly, Tukārām expressed the socio-religious aspirations of non-Brahmins and so transformed the Vārkarī tradition into an inclusive social movement (see Eaton 2005:136). Fifthly, Tukārām’s use of colloquial speech and his caustic language may have had a wider appeal than the refined language and ideas of *sants* like Jñāneśvar.⁵⁸ Finally, Tukārām is said to embody the *vīṇā* bearer who is the only figure of spiritual

⁵⁶ See Tulpule 1979:386; Chitre 1991:xx; Jones 2009:132, and Omvedt 2012:7, 17.

⁵⁷ Also see Chitre 1991:xx; Paniker 1997:364–365, and Ranade 2003:355.

⁵⁸ One of my informants described Tukārām’s *vīryāñīs* as ‘blunt’ (Sumantai Tade, Personal communication, 28th February 2005). See Omvedt 2003b:279; 2003a:205, 2012:47; Paniker 1997:366; Chitre 1991:xx–xxi; Lele 1989:47 and Mitchell 1849:1.

authority at Vārkarī *bhajan* sessions (Jones 2009:153, 156). It is therefore probable that the compositions attributed to Tukārām are considered *prasthānatraya* for numerous reasons including his combination of orality and literacy.

Tukārām’s compositions are regarded as concluding the Vārkarī corpus of devotional poetry, as I mentioned in Chapter One. However, it seems that new songs are still being added to the wider corpus of compositions attributed to the Vārkarī *sants*. Novetzke relates that the director of the Nāmdev Sevak Mandir in Pandharpur told him that new songs or new versions of Nāmdev songs were recorded and added to their manuscript collection (2008:108–109). This leads Novetzke to declare that ‘there is no sense in which the collection now on hand has been frozen or restricted to the past or that Nāmdev songs do not themselves travel, change, and return anew’ (2008:109). Consequently, one can understand the Nāmdev *abhaṅga gāthā*, and probably other *abhaṅga gāthās*, as not fully canonical as it is open to addition and interpretation (see Christof 2003:63). This openness or fluidity might be one reason that the *abhaṅga gāthās* are not regarded as *prasthānatrayī*.

The fluid nature of the Nāmdev *abhaṅga gāthā* may also be related to social memory, the discursive strategy of collective or historical memory I outlined in the Introduction. Novetzke argues that Nāmdev’s public memory ‘travels through time in the media of performance’ (2008:39, 26ff). Moreover, Mukta argues that it is the popular social base which has kept *sants* like Mīrā alive in social memory because ‘the power of the symbol of Mira’ operates among the social base who form a subordinated community who enunciate their feelings through *bhajans*. Thus, Mukta suggests that if one wants to explore what *sants* like Mīrā symbolise to a community one needs to consider the compositions of the *sant*, in *bhajan* and *kīrtan*, within the context of the social base (1994). Consequently, Mukta takes issue with the use of published anthologies by scholars because it disassociates the compositions of poet-*sants* from ‘the context of an expression which had a popular base’ (1994:32–33, 37–40, 78, 115; see Harlan 1992:214n.15).

While I fully accept Mukta’s assertion that the use of anthologies distances the compositions of the *sants* from their context of expression, the compositions attributed to *sants* are now contained within anthologies that inhabit a central position in the Vārkarī literary canon. Jones observes that the compositions, as ‘texts’, are consumed, studied and disseminated by scholars, recording artists and those without official connection to the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Moreover, the ‘texts’ are taught in Maharashtrian schools, included in pan-Indian anthologies and distributed nationally. The compositions have thus been

divorced from their performative context and are now viewed as poems rather than songs (2009:133–34). Jones also observes that the treatment of the *abhaṅga* repertoire as literature has influenced the ways in which the Vārkarīs and in particular *kīrtankārs* understand and represent themselves. Annotated anthologies are used as sources for songs during rituals and are studied and read by devotees partly because they clarify the old Marathi used in the compositions. Jones argues that the modes that place and re-place the *abhaṅgas* into the canon are distanced from Vārkarī gatherings and rituals that are accessed by insiders. In these gatherings ‘virtuosity and improvisation act to reinvigorate or even transform basic text and musical structure, and the charisma called upon by singers and drummers during these performances replaces the ‘lost’ personal charisma of the sants’. Thus, according to Jones, the Vārkarī liturgy ‘is only fixed in terms of its text’ as the manner in which it can be performed is ‘variable’ (2009:135–6). It is therefore probable that the flexibility and the fluidity of the *abhaṅga gāthās* account for their non-categorisation as *prasthānatrayī* and why scholars have referred to them as ‘almost canonical’. However, the *abhaṅga gāthās* form an important part of the Vārkarī corpus, particularly in textualised form, and this corpus includes compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs*.

2.3.ii. *The attribution of compositions to the santakaviyatrīs*

The compositions attributed to the Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs* are primarily found in the *abhaṅga gāthās* of the male *sants* with whom they are associated and the SSG. The *nāmamudrās* employed in the compositions ascribed to the *santakaviyatrīs* highlight the issue of attribution and multiplicity of authorship that applies to all *bhakti* poets but also draws attention to the inclusion and exclusion of particular poets identified as women within the corpus.

The first *santakaviyatrī* included in the SSG is Muktābāī, whose attributed compositions are also found in the *Jñānadev Gāthā*. The SSG also presents *Sant Muktābāīce aprasiddha abhaṅga* ‘Sant Muktābāī’s un-established *abhaṅga*’ in the addendum; with the addendum suggesting the openness and fluidity of *gāthās*. The Muktābāī compositions in the SSG use the *mudrikā* “Muktāī” for forty of the forty-two verses with ‘Mukta’ being used in the other two. “Muktāī” is a conjunction of *mukta* and *āī* and implies that a spiritually ‘liberated woman’ is speaking. Kiehnle suggests that the name Muktā may refer to three different figures connected with the Nāth *panth* or the sister of Nivr̥tti, Sopān and Jñāneśvar (1997b:5; 1997a). However, the name was probably an unusual one as a Nāmdev *abhaṅga* indicates: *nivr̥tti jñāneśvara sopāna muktābāī / hāṃsatī sakaḷahī aikūni nāmva* ‘the names Nivr̥tti, Jñāneśvar, Sopān

and Muktabāi made everyone laugh (Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 900.5, SSG 1:396).⁵⁹ According to Ranade, the names may have been a cause of mirth because they are ‘allegorical representations of the stages of an advancing mystic’ (2003:31; see Kiehnle 1997b:148n.536). The name or term *mukta* may be understood as ‘the liberated one’ or ‘a pearl’ according to Tulpule (1999:558). However, Kiehnle argues that this does not mean that Mukta was not a real name as within *siddha* circles ‘adepts were often dubbed in memory of some incident or other characteristic features of their lives’ (1997b:148–149). The *tāṭice abhaṅga* that are attributed to Muktabāi are not included in the SSG, possibly as they are identified by the signature *tāṭi ughaḍā jhāneśvara* ‘open the door Jhāneśvar’, but they are found in manuscripts and in the *Vārkarī Bhajan Saṅgraha* (Daṇḍekar 1980; 130–32, nos.334–344).⁶⁰

The compositions attributed to Goṇāi (Nāmdev’s mother), Rājāi (Nāmdev’s wife), Āubāi (Nāmdev’s elder sister), Limbāi (Nāmdev’s daughter), Lādāi (Nāmdev’s daughter-in-law) and Janābāi (the maid) appear in the SSG and in various editions of the *Nāmdev Gāthā*.⁶¹ The compositions attributed to Janābāi have two other sources: *Sant Janābāi: caritra va kavya* published in Gaṅgākheḍ (supposedly Janābāi’s birthplace) and *Gāthāpañcak* edited by Āvaṭe (1908) and Dhere (1983). There is a separate edition of Janābāi compositions (Janābāi 1983) and a few works on her biography and poetry by Dhere (1960), Ajgaonkar (1967), Irlekar (1981) and Bhiṅgārkar (1989). Bhiṅgārkar includes forty-two compositions which he collected from libraries in Maharashtra and Thanjavur that are not found elsewhere (see Pandharipande 2000:150).

The forty-four compositions grouped together as ‘*Sant Goṇāi’s abhaṅgas*’ in the SSG use a number of *mudrikās*. The name ‘Goṇāi’ appears in the *mudrikās* but so does the name ‘Nāma’—*Nāma mhaṇe māte* ‘Nāma says “Mother” (3) and *Nāma mhaṇe* ‘Nāma says’ (8)—thereby reflecting the conversational nature of these *abhaṅgas* but also raising the issue of ascription. The most frequent *mudrikā* is *Goṇāi mhaṇe* ‘Goṇāi says’, which appears twenty-one times but the name ‘Goṇāi’ also appears in a *mudrikā* a further six times. The compositions attributed to Rājāi are, like those of Goṇāi, conversational so the group includes verses with the *mudrikā* ‘Nāma mhaṇe’ (3). However, the name ‘Rājāi’ appears in six compositions; once in *Rājāi mhaṇe* ‘Rājāi says’ and once in *nāmyācī Rājāi* ‘Nāma’s Rājāi’. The connection to Nāmdev is also found in the *mudrikā* of the compositions attributed to Āubāi

⁵⁹ The verse begins चैतन्यश्रम संन्यासी झाले गृहवासी। *caitanyaśrama sanyāsī jhāle grhavasī*.

⁶⁰ See TA 1999; Muktabāi 1978; Gokhale n.d., and Dhere 1995.

⁶¹ For editions of the *Nāmdev Gāthā* see Gondhḷekar (1896), Gharat (1894), Bhave (1919), Āvaṭe (1908; 1953), Jog (1957), Subandha (1960), Babar (1970) and Sākhare (1990a). For a detailed list of all the works pertaining to Nāmdev up until 1987 see Callewaert (1989).

and Limbāī: *nāmayācī bahiṇa āūbāī* ‘Nāma’s sister Āūbāī’ and *nāmayācī lekī limāī mhaṇe* ‘says Nāmdev’s daughter Limbāī’. However, the *mudrikā* for Nāmdev’s supposed daughter-in-law just reads *Lāḍāī mhaṇe* ‘Lāḍāī says’, which may be due to the description of the *samādhi* of Nāmdev and his family in the Lāḍāī *abhaṅga*. The eight *abhaṅgas* attributed to Nāgarī, Nāmdev’s niece, use the *mudra* ‘Nāgī’ (Dhere 1977:15; Shrotriya 1992).

The Janābāī compositions have the largest number of *mudrikās* of all the *santakaviyatrīs*, which is unsurprising considering the size of the Janābāī corpus. The SSG has 347 compositions with an additional forty-three compositions in the addendum under the title *Sant Janābāīce aprakāśita abhaṅga samhitā* (‘the collection of *sant* Janābāī’s unpublished *abhaṅgas*’).⁶² The *mudrikās* that appear most frequently are *janī mhaṇe* ‘Janī says’ (154), *dāsī janī* ‘servant Janī’ (86) and *nāmyācī janī* ‘Nāma’s Janī’ (76). However, there is some crossover between these *mudrikās* such as *mhaṇe nāmyācī dāsī* ‘says Nāma’s servant’ (36, 123, 158, 253 and 311); *mhaṇe nāmyācī janī* ‘says Nāma’s Janī’ (152, 204, 312); *janī nāmyācī dāsī* ‘Janī, Nāma’s servant’ (182); *mhaṇe dāsī janī nāmyācī* ‘says Nāma’s servant Janī’ (219) or *mhaṇe janī dāsī nāmyācī* ‘says Janī, Nāmdev’s servant’ (161). Although authors like Ramaswamy (2007:216), Vanita (2005:95) and Aklujkar (1999:25) suggest the Janābāī compositions use a *mudrikā* that references Nāmdev this is by no means the case. Most of the other *mudrikās* in the Janābāī corpus employ the name ‘Janī’—a few refer to Puṇḍalīk (18), Cakrapāṇī (22), *deva* (62, 73) or other figures—but do not specifically connect Janī and Nāmdev. The name Janī may derive from the Sanskrit term *janī* connoting ‘woman’ or ‘wife’ (Monier Williams 2008) or the Marathi term *jāṇī* connoting a ‘knowledgeable woman’ (Tulpule 1999:256). Consequently, the *mudrikā* ‘Janī’ could be taken to refer to any woman or any person, which implies there may have been multiple ‘Janīs’ composing songs that have been ascribed to Janābāī the servant of Nāmdev.⁶³ The size of the Janābāī corpus and the enormous variety of *mudrikās*, in comparison to the corpus and *mudrikās* attributed to other *santakaviyatrīs* clearly suggests attribution.⁶⁴

The *abhaṅgas* ascribed to Soyārābāī—like those of Goṇāī, Rājāī and Janābāī—reference a man. The most frequently employed *mudrikās* in the sixty-two compositions found in the SSG are *mhaṇatase mahārī cokhyācī* (26) and *mhaṇe cokhyācī mahārī* (16) both of which translate as ‘says Cokhā’s mahārī’.

⁶² These *abhaṅgas* come from Satara (v.1–10), Dhule (v.11–23), and Tanjāvar (v.24–42) as well as from a Hindi collection (v.43).

⁶³ There was a poet sixteenth-century poet called Janī Janārdan, who named himself after his mother and his *guru* Janārdan according to Tulpule (1979:359, 413; see Dhere 1972)

⁶⁴ Kiehnle (1997b:5) makes the [inadvertent] suggestion that Janī was male: ‘Janā is said to have been the maid servant of the Nāmdev family’.

These *mudrikās* both connect the author/Soyarābāi with her husband Cokhāmeļā but they also efface the identity of the author because *mahārī* can mean ‘a Mahār woman’ or ‘the wife of a Mahār’. These *mudrikās* can be interpreted as the author honouring the husband as a *pativratā* but they can also be interpreted as a form of muteness or even resistance to the *bhakti* teachings that the author/Soyarā hears. The *mudrikā* ‘says the Mahārī of Cokhā’ is the only one to which Zelliott really refers in her work on Soyarābāi (2005:158–160, 164–65; 1999:421). This *mudrikā* is the ‘suffix’ applicable to the Soyarā compositions according to Ramaswamy (2007:216). However, there are also fifteen *abhaṅgas* with the signature *Soyarā mhaṇe* ‘Soyarā says’ and six with the name ‘Soyarā’. This could suggest that either different persons composed the songs in the name of Soyarā or that Cokhāmeļā’s wife ‘signed’ her compositions in different ways, perhaps depending on their content or her mood. However, asserting ‘Soyarā says’ could also signal the author/Soyarā’s desire for autonomy and agency and/or be an expression of that agency. In contrast, twenty of the twenty-four *abhaṅgas* ascribed to Nirmaļā—supposedly Soyarā’s sister-in-law—in the SSG are signed *Nirmaļā mhaṇe* ‘Nirmaļā says’. The Nirmaļā compositions, unlike those attributed to Soyarā, never refer to her supposed husband Banka (who is thought to have been Soyarā’s brother) but they do refer to her brother Cokhāmeļā in two *nāmamudrās*: *mhaṇatase bahiṇa cokhiyācī* ‘says Cokhā’s sister’ (18) and *mahādvārī cokhā tyācī bahiṇa, ghāla loṭāṅgaṇa ubhayatā* ‘Cokhā’s sister rolls over and over in prostration to the door [of the temple]’ (24). The gender attribution through the use of the *nāmamudrās* ‘Soyarā says’ or ‘Nirmaļā says’ could be functioning to signal the presence of women as part of the discursive strategy to secure the householder credentials of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

All the women mentioned so far are connected with a male *sant* in some form. However, Kānhopātrā was not part of a family group or in a relationship with a *guru* as far as one can guess. The Kānhopātrā compositions use a variety of *nāmamudrās* but the name ‘Kānhopātrā’ appears in all twenty-three *abhaṅgas* found in the SSG. However, three verses also use the word *dāsī* in connection with Kānhopātrā—for example *tujhī kānhopātrā dāsī* ‘your servant Kānhopātrā’—and two compositions also include the word *mhaṇe* ‘says’. The term *kānho* connotes ‘Kṛṣṇa’ (Tulpule 1999:149) while *pātra* connotes ‘a vessel’,⁶⁵ ‘actor’ (Tulpule 1999:431; Monier Williams 2008), ‘a respectable person’ (Tulpule 1999:431), a ‘competent person; an adept in, a master of’ (Monier Williams 2008) or ‘a sexual partner’ (Tulpule 1999:432; see Molesworth 1857:506). However, Date indicates that the Marathi term *pātrā*

⁶⁵ See Molesworth 1857:506; Tulpule 1999:431; Berntsen 1982:82 and Monier Williams 2008.

derives from the Sanskrit term *pātra* and denotes *strī* (1932/2012). The name Kānhopātrā therefore suggests designations for a woman that could be interpreted spiritually as well as sexually: ‘Kṛṣṇa’s vessel’, ‘Kṛṣṇa’s adept’, ‘Kṛṣṇa’s singer’ or ‘Kṛṣṇa’s courtesan’.

There are five *abhaṅgas* attributed to Bhāgū Mahārīṇ (the female *mahār*) in the SSG but one of these is also attributed to Bhāgūbāī (possibly Tukārām’s daughter). The two *abhaṅgas* attributed to Bhāgūbāī appear in the SSG addendum. However, the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Bhāgū Mahārīṇ all have a second line *dhrupad* and use the signature *bhāgu mhaṇe* ‘Bhāgū says’ while the other *abhaṅga* attributed to Bhāgūbāī does not include a *dhrupad* or the word *mhaṇe* in the *mudrikā* (see Appendix B). It is therefore possible that the twice attributed *abhaṅga* belongs to the author identified as Bhāgū Mahārīṇ. However, the SSG appears to conflate Bhāgū Mahārīṇ and Tukārām’s daughter Bhāgū and thus highlighting the issue of attribution and the impossibility of establishing gendered authorship.

There are thirty-two *abhaṅgas* ascribed to Bahiṇābāī in main body of the second volume SSG and 704 additional *abhaṅgas* in the addendum.⁶⁶ The *abhaṅgas* use the *mudrikā* ‘Bahiṇī says’ (*bahiṇī mhaṇe*) except in a few cases. The compositions attributed to Bahiṇābāī have been edited by Umārkhāne (1913), Kolhārkar (1926; 1956) and Jāvaḍekar (1979). There are 740 compositions in Kolhārkar’s edition of the *Bahiṇābāī Gāthā* and of these only about thirty employ a different *nāmamudrā* and even some of these *mudrikās* refer to Bahiṇābāī in some form (nos. 113, 114, 234, 455, 456, 466, 562, 563, 564). The Jāvaḍekar edition covers the earlier editions by Umārkhāne and Kolhārkar, refers to manuscripts made available by Bahiṇābāī’s descendants and contains 732 poems, ten of which are previously unpublished compositions (Shrotriya 1992; see Tulpule 1979:393). There are also English translations of the Bahiṇābāī *abhaṅgas* by Abbott (1929) and Bahadur (1998).⁶⁷ The term *bahīṇa* connotes ‘sister’ or ‘everywoman’ according to Feldhaus (1985:vi–vii), which strongly suggests gender attribution may be a factor in the corpus of Bahiṇābāī, the Brahman ‘disciple’ of Tukārām.⁶⁸ Like other *nāmamudrās* mentioned above, the use of the generic term ‘sister’ suggests that gender attribution may function as a

⁶⁶ Many of these compositions can be found in the Kolhārkar (1926) edition but do not follow Kolhārkar’s order/numbering.

⁶⁷ Abbott seems to have used Kolhārkar’s 1926 edition for his translations.

⁶⁸ *Sant* Bahiṇābāī is not to be confused with Bahiṇābāī Caudharī (c.1879–1951) an illiterate woman who composed *ovīs*—in the Khāndeśī-Varhāḍī dialect—while undertaking her daily tasks. Her poems were written down by her son Sopāndev (who became a well-known Marathi poet) and were published in 1952 under the title *Bahiṇāīcī gāṇī* ‘Bahiṇābāī’s Songs’ for which the writer and journalist P.K. Atré wrote the introduction. Her songs were also popularised through the Marathi film *Mānani* ‘Proverb’. There are a number of translations into English of her poems, see Dharwadker (1994:107), Tharu and Lalita (1991:352–355) and Engblom *et al* (1982). For Marathi renditions see gazalrang (2010) and dīpiaarmarathi (2008).

discursive means to include women in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* and construct the tradition as a householder path.

The Sakhūbāī *pad* in the SSG addendum mentions the name ‘Sakhū’ in the final line, while the song I heard attributed to Sakhūbāī only mentions Sakhū once and not in the context of the *nāmamudrā* (see Appendix B).⁶⁹ The SSG does not include any compositions attributed to Gaṅgabāī or Viṭhābāī, the reasons for which will be detailed in Chapter Five but which appear to relate to the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition. The *nāmamudrās* employed in the compositions attributed to women draw attention to the issue of ascription and possible corporate authorship but also indicate on what basis a song or poem may have been included and codified (see Jones 2009:132). However, the inclusion of compositions attributed to a female *bhakta* may also have occurred due to the interplay between anthologies and the genre of *caritra*.

3. *The literary genre of caritra*

Carita, or *caritra* as it is known in Marathi, began in India during the post-Gupta period (c.500 C.E.) as a complement to the *vaṃśāvalī*. The earliest *caritras* date to between the eighth and twelfth centuries C.E. and have been described by Thapar as ‘the eulogy of the patron’ or as a tribute to those with ‘special status and function in the ruling family’ (2002:144–5, 153n.46; 1997:571).⁷⁰ However, the genre gradually grew to encompass the lives of heroic and religious figures such as those found in the ‘Lives of the Āḷvārs’ (see Hardy 1983:558, Hess 1983:183 and Thapar 2000:144).⁷¹ The central role given to *caritra* in *bhakti* traditions was one of innovation, like the use of vernacular languages, that set *bhakti* apart from Vedic Hinduism. Vedism rejected the notion that the history of specific individuals was relevant to spiritual Truth as its concern was *śruti* while *caritra* is more concerned with *smṛti* (see Lorenzen 2005:17–18, 181).

Caritra plays an important role in the discursive formation of a religious community like the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as the personages of the *sants* and their religious authority are largely established by biographical texts with a biographer creating and consolidating the public memory of a poet, *bhakta* or charismatic figure. A biographer identifies an individual as a poet and interacts with the content of the poetry attributed them. Consequently, the biographer may reproduce the self-representation of a poet but

⁶⁹ The song was sung by Caturabai Naravate (40) and Vatsalabai Sakhare (65) who were part of the Sant Ganga Maharaj *dinḍī* (no. 5/93) from Pokharnī (Parbhani district) on 20th June 2006.

⁷⁰ See Basham 2003:68, 120, 424, 447, 451.

⁷¹ The *Divyasūricaritam* by Garuḍavāhana (c.12th century) was the first major work on the ‘lives’ of the Āḷvārs (Hardy 1983:243).

may also present the poet in ways that do not correspond to their attributed poetry as the concerns of the biographer tend to differ from those of the poet as Pechilis suggests (2012:2, 14, 82, 83; see also Hardy 1983:248, Lorenzen 1995:181, Malinar 2003:91 and Novetzke 2008:35ff). While *bhaktas* or poets are usually adamant that the individual is subservient to the Divine and are ‘modest, indifferent or disinterested...in respect of their own life-stories’ it is the later tradition that is interested in and demands details of a *bhakta*’s life (Snell 1994:3). Biographical texts thus provide an interpretation of a *bhakta*’s life and seek to portray the figure in question as the one who discloses the way to liberation. The sacred biography is thus a means of concentrating the attention of the hearer or reader on the personality of the *bhakta*(s) under discussion in order to propagate an interpretation of the *bhakta* that encourages those who desire liberation to follow the example of the *bhakta* (McLeod 1994:19). *Caritra* as religious biography is therefore characterised by reverence as it aims to record the ‘spiritual triumphs of well-known practitioners of bhakti’ according to Mukta (1994:20; see Snell 1994:2; Hawley 1984:244). However, as Snell argues, *caritra* also encourages *satsaṅga* to ‘erode the distinction between the puranic [the ancient] and the contemporary’ so that contemporary devotees associate with the *sants* of the past (1994:2–3; see Tulpule 1994b). Furthermore, like Christian hagiographies that are concerned with the life of a saint, *caritras* tend not to focus on historical or biographical facts as they are more concerned with orientating the followers of a specific tradition and thus Mukta argues that *caritras* are constructions ‘of particular conjecture’ (1994:23).⁷² Sacred biographies can therefore be interpreted as endeavouring to establish the pre-eminence of a tradition, lineage or teaching as I outlined in the literature review of the Introduction.

According to Hawley (1988:279), the first anthologies of *bhakti* poetry and of sacred biography were both assembled around the turn of the seventeenth century. The oldest surviving collection of sacred biographies in Hindi is probably the *Bhaktamāla* by Nābhāji/Nābhādās and its primary commentary the *Bhaktirasabodhinī* of Priyā Dās (1712 C.E.), both referred to as the *Bhaktamāla*, and many of the poets whom the *Bhaktamāla* features also figure in the contemporary anthologies. The interplay between *caritra* and poetry is visible in the structure of the sacred biographies as they usually occur around the poetic compositions attributed to the figures being portrayed while entries in poetic anthologies are often inspired by motifs connected with the lives of poets (Hawley 1984:251, 1988:279; see Pechilis 1999:7). For example, the *Caurāsī vaiṣṇavam kī vārtā* (‘Accounts of the Eighty Four Vaiṣṇavas’) provides biographical features of Sūrdās, like his blindness and conversion to the Puṣṭimārga, as well as weaving

⁷² For a discussion of the term ‘hagiography’ see Reynolds & Capps 1976, Keyes 1982, Head 2001 and Ashton 2002.

his compositions into the narrative. The interdependency between the poetic corpus attributed to Sūrdās and the *vārtā* texts of the Vallabha *sampradāya* is therefore demonstrated by this interplay (see Barz 1994; Snell 1994:2–5).

However, there is also an interplay between biographical images or forms of ‘prototypic behaviour’ that act as the indicators of saintliness—such as a fantastic birth or the performance of miracles—and the historical dimension. It is important to note that between the life of the *bhakta* and the composition of a sacred biography there is usually an interval of time, which relates to the distance between the probable life of the *bhakta* and the compilation of biographical material. In his discussion on the sources used for the biographies of Dādū (c.1544–1603) Callewaert indicates that the initial biography—the *Dādū janmalīlā* (c.1610–1620) by Janagopāl—was altered by the addition of miracles and passages of praise. Later biographies, under the influence of the oral tradition, added more details of the performance of miracles thus conforming to the use of biographical images prevalent in the *carita* genre (1987:182–189). Moreover, the addition of material to the sacred biography of Dādū suggests that the genre of *caritra* is not closed but open, particularly within an oral or performative context, in the manner that *abhaṅga gāthās* are not fully canonical works as they are open to addition and interpretation (Christof 2003:63).

The interplay between biographical images and the historical dimension is also visible in the elevation of *bhaktas* to divine status (see Muktābāi and Janābāi in Chapter Four). The desire for biographical details by lay-followers and biographers is intensified by the tendency to present *bhaktas* or poets as utterly transcending the concerns of mortal and material lives. The elevation to divine status thus occurs when a *bhakta* or poet is regarded as an *avatāra* of a particular deity or mythic figure. This practice is common to sacred biographies and particularly those associated with traditions that perform *mūrti* worship like the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.⁷³ Malinar argues that a community is able to extend itself back into the past by constructing its origins in relation to a charismatic or founding figure. Furthermore, ‘the process of writing and transmitting sacred biographies mirrors the debates of a community in the making’ and this process offers a temporal frame to the religious community as the subject(s) of *caritra* are viewed as intersections between different times and spheres (2007:61ff). The designation of historical figures as *avatāra* thus supplies an ‘interpretive pattern’ for the emergence of charismatic figures and religious leaders as the status is regarded as an essential and recurring event to restore an original teaching

⁷³ Snell 1994:3; Schomer 1987:12; Dalmia 2001:131; Barz 1994:53; Lorenzen 1995:16–17 and Doniger 1987:48.

and respond to ‘crisis, disorder and decadence’ of the *kaliyuga* (Malinar 2003:97; see Lorenzen 1995:16–17). For example, Mahīpati ascribes the status of *avatāra* to the Vārkarī *sants* Nāmdev, Jñāneśvar, Sopān, Nivr̥tti and Muktabāi for salvific purposes (BVJ 1.87–105) during the age of Kali (BVJ 1.46–86).

Caritra in Marathi probably began with the *Līlācaritra* (c.1278 CE), a collection of anecdotes about Cakradhar the founder of the Mahānubhāvas, which also describes the origin of Viṭṭhobā unfavourably (Tulpule 1979:429; Sontheimer 1989:70–71n.10). However, the first biographical work within the Vārkarī *sampradāya* was a *caritra* of *sant* Jñāneśvar that is attributed to *sant* Nāmdev and which appears in the *Nāmdev Gāthā*, although Novetzke suggests it may have been composed by Jñāneśvar (2005:120).⁷⁴ The biography is divided into three parts: *Ādi*, *Tīrthāvalī* and *Samādhi*.⁷⁵ The account of the pilgrimage begins with Jñāneśvar inviting Nāmdev—the famous *kīrtankār* and renowned Viṭṭhal-*bhakta*—to go on a *tīrthayātrā* with him.⁷⁶ Nāmdev responds hesitantly until Viṭṭhal permits him to go, on the condition that he returns to Paṇḍharpūr afterwards as Viṭṭhal fears that he will be forgotten by Nāmdev (Novetzke 2005; Tulpule 1994:159–160). The final episode recounts the return to Pandharpur, Nāmdev’s reunion with Viṭṭhal and the ritual celebration of the journey, directed by Viṭṭhal, to which the Pandharpur Brahmans are invited and to whom the teachings of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* are disclosed (Tulpule 1994:159–160; More 1994:170–171; Novetzke 2005). Novetzke emphasises that the *Tīrthāvalī* dramatizes the separation anxiety (*viyoga*, *udvega*) and the co-dependence of both the deity and the *bhakta*, Viṭṭhal and Nāmdev, and that it should not therefore be understood as a spiritual travelogue (2005:114, 121–122). While the *Tīrthāvalī* recognizes the connection between the Vārkarī *sampradāya* and the broader Kṛṣṇa tradition it advocates devotion to Viṭṭhal of Pandharpur and therefore reinforces the importance of Pandharpur argues Novetzke (2005:127–128). The *Tīrthāvalī* is often sung during *bhajan* sessions and cited during *kīrtans* as it holds an important position with the *sampradāya* as it expresses Vārkarī philosophy, even though it is regarded as implausible by scholars (More 1994:170; Tulpule 1994:159; Ranade 2003:185; Novetzke 2005:120).⁷⁷ This biography attributed to Nāmdev demonstrates that poet-*sants* were the primary sacred biographers and eulogists of other *sants*. For example, there are

⁷⁴ The *Nāmdev Gāthā* has been published by R.S. Gondhalekar (Pune 1892), T.H. Avate (Pune 1923), V.N. Jog (Pune c. 1931) and edited by Sarojini Barbar and others for the Government of Maharashtra (Bombay 1970).

⁷⁵ *Nāmdev Gāthā* v.884–1105, SSG 2005:393–451.

⁷⁶ This journey and meeting is symbolically re-enacted each year during the *āṣāḍhī-vārī* when Jñāneśvar’s *pādukās* are met and greeted outside Pandharpur by Nāmdev’s *pādukās* and his followers before the Jñāneśvar *pādukās* are escorted into Pandharpur. In return Nāmdev visits Jñāneśvar in Alandi for the *kārttikī ekādaśī* and commemorates Jñāneśvar’s *mahāsamādhi* (Novetzke 2005:134, n.40).

⁷⁷ Biographies of Jñāneśvar were also composed during the seventeenth century by Uddhava-Cidghana and Nirañjan Mādhav (Tulpule 1979:430, 1994:161; Abbott 1996:xxiv; see Kelkar 1902).

poems ‘on the *sants*’ (*santapara*) attributed to Muktabāi and poems ‘in praise of *sants*’ (*santastuti*) and ‘in praise of Jñāneśvar’ (*jñāneśvarstuti*) attributed to Janābāi in the SSG (see Chapter Five).

Mahīpati (1715–1790) is the most renowned Marathi biographer and the primary source of sacred biographies relating to the Vārkarī *sants* (Novetzke 2008: xii, 40, 53; Tulpule 1994:161). However, Mahīpati was not the only biographer of the *bhaktas* and poets associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as Keune demonstrates in his discussion of the biographies of Eknāth (2011).⁷⁸ Mahīpati was a *ṛgvedī vaśiṣṭha gotrī deśastha* Brahman and the village accountant at Tāharābād (Ahmednagar district) but he later relinquished this position to become a *kīrtankār* and biographer (Abbott 1927:viii–xxviii, 1996:xxiii–xxiv; Tulpule 1994:161). Mahīpati is credited with composing a number of sacred biographies: the *Bhaktavijaya* ‘Victory of the *Bhaktas*’ (1762),⁷⁹ the *Pāṇḍuraṅga-stotra* ‘Praise for Pāṇḍuraṅga’ (1766), the *Santalīlāmṛta* ‘Sport of the Immortal *Sants*’ (1757), the *Bhaktalīlāmṛta* ‘Sport of the Immortal *Bhaktas*’ (1774) and the *Santavijaya* the ‘Victory of the *Sants*’, which was incomplete at the time of Mahīpati’s death and which Keune, following Dhare, suggests may not have been composed by Mahīpati (2011:15n.36, Dhare 1967:77; see Tulpule 1979:431, 1994:163).⁸⁰

The early narratives Mahīpati composed were based on those of Uddhav-Cidghana and the *Bhaktamāla* of Nābhādās and his commentator Priyādās. Tulpule suggests that although Mahīpati appears to have been familiar with Hindi he probably used an interpreter for these texts as Priyādās’ *Bhaktirasabodhinī* was in *braj bhāṣa* (1979:430n. 651; see Lutgendorf 1994:69, 74; Abbott 1927:xviii; Callewaert 1987:185). Fortunately Mahīpati only followed Nābhādās and Priyādās for information on the northern *sants* as it seems that neither of them were familiar with any Deccan *bhaktas* and they therefore described Jñāneśvar as a follower of the Viṣṇuvāmīs and portrayed Nāmdev as the son of the widowed daughter of ṛṣi Vāmdev (Tulpule 1994:165).⁸¹ Mahīpati also borrowed heavily from other sources but does not reference the verses attributed to Nāmdev as a source according to Novetzke (2008:52, 54). There are several stories in the *Bhaktavijaya* obtained from the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Nāmdev such as

⁷⁸ The only extant biography of Tukārām was composed by his grandson Gopal (c.1768) and has been partially published in the *Janatā-Janārdana* periodical of the Gāḍgebābā Prakāśan Samitā (1955–1956). The only other biographical work relating to Tukārām was composed by his posthumous disciple Niḷobā and Tulpule asserts that it is panegyric poem rather than a biography (1979:430 n.647).

⁷⁹ Abbott and Godbole state that there are four printed texts of the *Bhaktavijaya* as well as an unpublished manuscript (c.1851) belonging to the descendants of Mahīpati’s brother (1996:465).

⁸⁰ *Bhaktavijaya* (1883), *Pāṇḍuraṅga-stotra* (c.1835), *Santalīlāmṛta* (1886), *Bhaktalīlāmṛta* (1908), *Santavijaya* (c.1927) all printed in Bombay.

⁸¹ The Viṣṇuvāmīs were a sect of Kṛṣṇa-*bhaktas* founded in the twelfth century (Flood 1996:142).

the biographies of Jñāneśvar and Gorā Kumbhār (Abbott 1996:xxvii; Aklujkar 1999:14).⁸² Mahīpati also seems to have gathered information from Tukārām’s descendants and collected material from the *abhaṅgas* of Tukārām’s brother Kānhobā, the *abhaṅgas* of Tukārām’s disciple Rāmeśvar Bhaṭ and Tukārām’s posthumous disciple Niḷobā (Abbott 1927:xxv; Tulpule 1994:166). Moreover, in the *Bhaktalīlāmṛta* Mahīpati broadened his biography of Eknāth from the *Bhaktavijaya* by adding to it from Keśava’s life of Eknāth (see Tulpule 1994:166). It is therefore apparent that the majority of Mahīpati’s sources were drawn from religious works composed primarily by *bhaktas*. Although Mahīpati presents himself as merely the instrument through which God speaks—*jaisā vājaviṅāra phuṅkī vārē / taiṣī vājantarē vājaī //109//* ‘Like the puff of breath blown by a musician I am the wind that sounds the flute’ (BVJ 57.109, Mahīpati 1850; Novetzke 2008:121)⁸³—Mahīpati makes it clear that he recorded what he believed to be true and did not draw on his imagination (BVJ 1.37, SLM 1.67–69; Abbott and Godbole 1996:xxvi–xxvii).

Significantly, Mahīpati often refers to ‘hearers’ or ‘listeners’ in the *Bhaktavijaya*⁸⁴ and concludes the text saying:

स्वस्ति श्रीभक्तविजय ग्रंथ। ऐकतांतुष्टलाजगन्नाथ। प्रेमळ ऐकाभावीक भक्त। सत्तावन्नावा अध्या रसाळहा
 १२२०।
Svasti śrībhaktavijaya granthā / aikātān tuṣṭalā jagannātha / premaḷa aikābhāvika bhakta / sattāvannāvā adhyā rasāḷahā//220//
 Peace. This book is the Bhaktavijaya. Listening to it the Lord of the World is pleased. Listen all you loving and faithful devotees to the stimulating fifty-seventh chapter.

(Mahīpati 1850; my translation)

Consequently, as Novetzke suggests (2008:121), the *Bhaktavijaya* can be understood as a form of written *kīrtan* or ‘a textual commentary that emerges from the performance tradition of elaboration on the verses of a famous *sanī*’. Mahīpati inserts his own flourishes and embellishments, between the material garnered from other sources, just as a *kīrtankār* does in a live performance (see Appendix C). Novetzke argues that Mahīpati therefore ‘bridges a gap between oral performance and literacy with what appears to be a transcribed *kīrtan*...’ (2008:121–22). This connection between orality and literacy has similarities to the interplay in the *Jñāneśvarī*, as discussed above, and emphasises the discursive nature of transmission within the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. However, Mahīpati lived at a time when oral literatures were being

⁸² The fact that Nāmdev later became the subject of sacred biographies demonstrates that hagiographers become ‘ideal subjects of hagiology’ asserts Snell (1994:10).

⁸³ For other examples of Mahīpati describing himself as an instrument of God see BVJ 8:190–191, BLM 30.180–183; 33.181–182 (Abbott 1927).

⁸⁴ For example, BVJ 1.7, 8.187ff, 9.1ff and BVJ 21.29, 70, 256; 31.1 in Appendix C.

written down and beginning to be replicated on printing presses (Novetzke 2008:122). Consequently, Mahīpati and the sacred biographies he composed may represent the confluence of orality, literacy and textuality. Mahīpati's biographies also characterise the interplay between the compositions attributed to the *sants* in anthologies and the genre of *caritra*, as well as the use of gender attribution to construct the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path, as the following chapter will demonstrate.

4. Summary

The discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as an householder path is primarily due to the use of Marathi, the literate *ovī* and *abhaṅga*, and a combination of oral, literate, textual and performative means of dissemination. The *Jñāneśvarī* and *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* are texts that transmit the message of *bhakti* and *karma yoga* to a community of socially-active, Marathi-speakers by employing Marathi and the literate *ovī* metre. This use of Marathi and the *ovī* metre, as well as Jñāneśvar's integration of orality and literacy and Eknāth's addition of asceticism-in-marriage, fits with the concepts of ingenuity or charismatic innovation. Moreover, the *Jñāneśvarī* and *Eknāthī Bhāgavata*, may be understood as making an original message meaningful for a changed society as they are both commentaries that disseminate Sanskrit works that are regarded as the *loci* of *bhakti*. The veneration of these texts as *pothī* suggests that they are regarded as closed and permanent, and thus as canonical, by the *sampradāya*. Contrastingly, the reason that most of the *abhaṅgas* attributed to the *sants*, including Nāmdev, are categorised as 'almost canonical' and not as *prasthānatrayī* is probably due orality, and the openness and fluidity of the *abhaṅga gāthās*. However, it is feasible that the compositions attributed to Tukārām are considered *prasthānatraya* because he combined orality and literacy. It is therefore possible to see a chain of religious legitimisation and discursive construction running from Jñāneśvar to Tukārām which includes both canonical and sacred texts, and oral and performative mediums of transmission. Yet, the position of the compositions attributed to women is ambiguous as they are not formally part of *kīrtan* discussion (Dadhe 2012). Furthermore, biographers like Mahīpati added meaning to the textual and oral compositions of the *bhaktas* and *sants* and helped to maintain and revitalise the Vārkarī *sampradāya* reproducing and enhancing the ethos of the tradition. Significantly, it is not the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* that are most remembered today but their biographies. Consequently, the next chapter explores the presentation of women as exemplars of *bhakti* and as householders within the biographies of *santakaviyatrīs* to consider the role and function of gender attribution in the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE SACRED BIOGRAPHIES OF THE VĀRKARĪ SANTAKAVIYATRIS

1. Introduction

Today the sacred biographies of women *sants* and *bhaktas* are remembered more than their attributed compositions, as suggested by the number of films about Sakhūbāi mentioned in chapters one and three. Moreover, contemporary people seem to understand the poems attributed to the poet-*sants* through their biographies but as Pechilis argues the introduction of poet-*sants* via their *caritras* is ahistorical as the attributed songs or poems precede the *caritras*. Nonetheless, the identity of the women *sants* is largely mediated by their *caritras* rather than the compositions attributed to them (see Pechilis 1997:7; 2012:82) and thus one cannot treat these as historical sources; rather they have to be read discursively to the degree that they contribute to the construction and/or creation of a tradition. The *caritras* of the women *sants* and some female *bhaktas* associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* are considered below in order to address what these portrayals reveal about the purpose of gender attribution in the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

2. The *caritras* of the *santakaviyatrīs* and some female *bhaktas* associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*

The primary sources I have used for the *caritras* of the Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs* are: *Vārkarī Santāncā Bhaktiyoga* ('The Devotion of the Vārkarī *Sants*') (Abhyankar 1992); *Prācīna Vārkarī Santakaviyatrī: Ek paricāyaka abhyāsa*, ('The Early Vārkarī Female Poet-*Sants*: A detailed study') (Shrotriya 1993), which references *Junē Vāñmaya: Navē Saṃsodhana*, ('Ancient Literature: New Research') (Āvaḷīkar 1964); *Kalyāṇ Sant-Aḍaka* ('The Kalyan *Sant*-Tales') (Poddar *et al* 1994); *Sakala Santa Caritra Gāthā* ('The Collected Deeds of All the *Sants*') (Bhat 1998); *Śrīsakalasanta-gāthā* (SSG) ('The Collected Poems of All the *Sants*') (Gosāvī 2005); the *Stories of Indian Saints: translation of Mahipati's Marathi Bhaktavijaya* (Abbott and Godbole 1996) and *Life of Tukaram, Mahipati's Bhaktalilamrita Chapters 25 to 40* (Abbott 1996). I have translated two chapters from Mahīpati's *Bhaktavijaya* (BVJ) relating to Janābāi and Kānhopātrā (see Appendix C) and examined sections of the BVJ pertaining to Muktabāi from an 1806 manuscript. My footnotes in Appendix C clarify my points of departure from Abbott and Godbole (1933/1996), whose translation of the *Bhaktavijaya* I consider in the main to be fairly accurate. While

Mahīpati's *Bhaktavijaya* is the basis for many of the *caritras* of the *santakaviyatrīs* not all the women attributed with poetry or all the women recognised as *sants* are mentioned or detailed in the *Bhaktavijaya*. Consequently, I have combined elements from a number of sources to provide the most comprehensive *caritra* of the *sant* or *bhakta*. The attributed compositions that relate biographical details about a *sant* or *bhakta*, particularly the spiritual autobiography attributed to Bahiṇābāī, are discussed in Chapter Five but this chapter utilises details from *abhaṅgas* attributed to various *sants* for elucidatory purposes. The *caritras* of the women *sants* and *bhaktas* are presented and discussed below sequentially following Mahīpati and other *caritra* biographers.

2.1. *Muktābāī*

Muktābāī is described in the *Bhaktavijaya* as an *avatāra* of Ādimāyā on at least six occasions, for example: *brahmā hoī sopāna / sadā śiva nivṛtti purṇa / ādīmāyā muktā rūpē jñāna / āvatare la bhūmaṇḍaḷī* // 'Brahma will become Sopān, Śiva will become Nivṛtti, Ādimāyā will become Muktā and descend to earth as *avatārs*' (BVJ 1.98; see BVJ 8.186; 9.6, 71, 102).¹ Significantly, whenever her *avatāra* status is mentioned Muktābāī is always described in association with her alleged brothers by Mahīpati. This indicates the connection between the descents of the four siblings, which places Muktābāī in a sphere of spiritual efficacy but also relates the stages of spiritual progression as I mentioned in the previous chapter. However, one could also interpret this to suggest that Mahīpati fails to see Muktābāī as distinct. Like her brothers Muktābāī is also considered 'undefilable' (BVJ 9.71), a 'noble Brahman' (BVJ 9.73), the child of a *sannyāsī* (BVJ 9.80), 'a world *guru*; uninfluenced by her body', as *jīvan-mukti* 'liberated while still alive' (BVJ 9.103), and as a 'blessed *bhakta*' (BVJ 9.76; Abbott and Godbole 1996). These definitions, her status as an *avatāra* and her name as the final stage of spiritual development as 'the liberated one' or the '(blue) pearl' mark Muktābāī out as a figure of particular spiritual status and ability (see Kiehnle 1997a:148; Monier Williams 2008; Molesworth 1857:653). Moreover, Muktābāī's designation as an *avatār* of Ādimāyā can be interpreted as providing a female charismatic figure or

¹ ब्रह्महोईसोपान॥ सदासीवनीवृत्तीपुर्ण॥ आदीमायांमुक्तरूपेजाण॥ आवतरेलभूमंडळी ॥९८॥ *brahmāhoīsopāna/ sadāsīvanivṛtīpurṇa/ ādīmāyāmuktārūpējñāna/āvatarelabhūmaṇḍaḷī* // The handwritten manuscript (*pothī*) of the *Bhakta-Vijaya* (1806) that I read in the British Library was a beautiful text written in black ink with a red ink page border and an end border with a floral design that differed at the end of each chapter (where the chapter information was provided as the final verse). However, the manuscript had numerous crossings out, transcribing errors and ink spots, and was clearly the product of more than one hand which made it difficult to decipher. Consequently, I have provided the Marathi and transliteration of this verse to demonstrate the variations in a handwritten work. The transliteration in the main body of the chapter differs from that in this footnote to reflect more standardised Marathi spelling.

counter balance to the male charismatic figure or religious leader in Mahīpati's attempt to sanction the Vārkarī *sampradāya* by extending its origins back into the past (BVJ 1.93; see Malinar 2003:97).

The traditional account of Mukṭābāī's life states that her father Viṭṭhalpant became a *sannyāsī* sometime after his marriage to Rukmiṇībāī.² However, Viṭṭhalpant's *guru* discovered that Viṭṭhalpant was married so sent him back to Rukmiṇī to fulfil his obligations as a householder.³ Nivṛtti, Jñāneśvar, Sopān and Mukṭābāī were then born to Rukmiṇī and Viṭṭhalpant at Ālandī near Pune (see Kiehnle 1997a:2).⁴ However, the family was ostracised due to Viṭṭhalpant's deviation from orthodox religio-social norms and the boys were denied *upanayana*. The story goes that Viṭṭhalpant eventually drowned himself in the river: either because he had been condemned to death by the village leaders (Inamdar 1999:11), had been advised to atone for his actions (Deleury 1994:8) or because he felt he was depriving his children of happiness (Abhayananda 2000:32). According to Shrotriya (1993) Rukmiṇī joined Viṭṭhalpant in the suicide by also drowning. Thus Mukṭābāī possibly aged about four or five, was orphaned and had to endure much hostility and numerous privations (Inamdar 1999:11–12; Ranade 2000:33; Deleury 1994:8; Kiehnle 1997:2; Shrotriya 1993). The story suggests that before Viṭṭhalpant died Nivṛtti had been initiated into the Nāth *paramparā* by Gahinināth and was therefore able to care for his younger siblings (Shrotriya 1993:13–15; personal communication Baba Maharaj Manmadkar, 11th July 2006; see Gold 1992:47).

The siblings are then said to have gone to Paiṭhaṇ—a centre of Brahmanical authority and learning—to get a *śuddhipatra* so as to reinstate their socio-religious status.⁵ There is a story that Jñāneśvar caused a buffalo to recite the Veda—'mocking the notion that only Brahmins had access to scripture' according to Eaton (2005:132; see also Kulkarnee 1989:205)—and gained the respect of the judges by this miracle. Mahīpati suggests that the siblings gained the *śuddhipatra* and were accepted by the Brahmans in Alandī, which means that Mukṭābāī's caste status is represented as Brahman by Mahīpati

² Mukṭābāī's parents were called Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī according to the *Nāmdev Gāthā*, for example SSG 1.394, v.888–889. These names may be popular names for mythical rather than real parents according to Kiehnle (1997a:37, 40).

³ Viṭṭhalpant's *guru* in Vārāṇasī was Śrīpād Svāmī according to Inamdar and Deshpande (1999:11) or Rāmānand Svāmī according to Abhayananda (2000:21).

⁴ There is some debate as to whether the siblings were born in Ālandī (Inamdar and Deshpande 1999:11) or Āpegāon/Āpegāv in the Godāvarī valley (Ranade 2000:31; Abhayananda 2000:23; Deleury 1994:8). The dates of the siblings vary as there are two different dating traditions (Ranade 2000:31). The first and more accepted tradition asserts: Nivṛtti, 1273–1297; Jñāneśvar, 1275–1296; Sopān, 1277–1296 and Mukṭābāī, 1279–1297 (Ranade 2000:31; Inamdar and Deshpande 1999:12). The Janābāī tradition asserts that Nivṛtti was born in 1268, Jñāneśvar in 1271, Sopān in 1274 and Mukṭābāī in 1277 (Ranade 2000:31–32). The dates given by Deleury (1994) seem to correspond to the Janābāī tradition: Nivṛtti (c.1268–1294), Jñāneśvar (1275–1296), Sopān (1274–1293) and Mukṭābāī (1279–1297). However, the dates Abhayananda (2000:23) suggests—Nivṛtti (1269), Jñāneśvar (1271), Mukṭābāī (1272) and Sopān (1273)—do not seem to correspond to either tradition.

⁵ Most accounts suggest that the visit to Paiṭhaṇ occurred after Viṭṭhalpant's death although Abhayananda (2000:32) suggests otherwise.

(BVJ 9.134–36; see Ranade 2000:33; Deleury 1994:8; Abhayananda 2000:32). Muktabāi and her brothers are thought to have stayed in Nevāse—where Jñāneśvar is believed to have composed the *Jñāneśvarī* and the *Amṛtānubhava*—before returning to Alandi. Muktabāi is depicted going from Paithan to Nevase with her brothers, walking with joy, singing God’s praises and composing verses (BVJ 9:115–117). Muktabāi is portrayed interacting with her siblings, telling Nivṛtti that they must visit Alandi in order to see where they were born, and performing *kīrtans* (BVJ 9.126, 132, 142).

There are three stories in the *Bhaktavijaya* that relate to Muktabāi specifically. The first story recounts that Nivṛtti asked Muktabāi to prepare a special dish to celebrate *dasarā-divālī*. Muktabāi agrees to do this, which necessitates her going to the potter (*kullāla*) for a dish (*khāpara*, *bhāṇḍē*). While on the way to the potter Muktabāi hides from Visobā Chatī (later Khecar) who is persecuting the siblings.⁶ However, Visobā finds her and demands Muktabāi tells him where she is going. Trembling with fear Muktabāi answers his question only to be struck by Visobā. Nonetheless, Muktabāi continues to the potter and asks him for the necessary dish but the potter, having been warned off by Visobā, declines to provide her with a pan. Muktabāi returns home weeping and empty-handed. Muktabāi’s cries are heard by Jñāneśvar who comforts his sister. Jñāneśvar asks Muktabāi what is troubling her and Muktabāi tells him what has happened. Jñāneśvar then asks her to cook *māṇḍe* on his back, which he heats through his *ajñī* or yogic powers. Muktabāi cooks the *māṇḍe* on his back and serves them to her brothers before joining them to eat. The story concludes with Visobā, who has been spying on the siblings, realising the saintliness of the siblings and taking initiation from Jñāneśvar (BVJ 9.143–200, Mahīpati 1806).⁷ This account refers to Muktabāi while still a young girl and shows her as responsible for the domestic arrangements of the family. Moreover, it suggests that Muktabāi fulfils the convention of ‘bitter persecution and miraculous escape’ put forward by Sangari. Interestingly, the miracle (a motif common in *caritra*) combines both elements of *sannyāsa* and *gṛhastha* with Jñāneśvar fulfilling the *yogic/sannyāsa* role and Muktabāi, who is portrayed as a participant in the miracle, performing a domestic rather than ascetic role. Additionally, Muktabāi performs another domestic role as she serves her brothers first as custom demanded but then Muktabāi sits and eats with them suggesting that the siblings, as a kind of religious community, practiced commensality or that Mahīpati is advocating that the Vārkarī community practice commensality.

⁶ Visobā was named ‘Khecar’ when he became Jñāneśvar’s disciple after which he then became Nāmdev’s *guru* according to Mahīpati (BVJ 9.192–200, 18.55ff; see Kiehnle 1997a:5, 188).

⁷ Tulpule notes that a Jñāneśvar *abhaṅga* refers to *māṇḍe* (1999:543): मांडे पुरणपोळ्या मिळे अन्न (31).

The second account of Muktabāi in the *Bhaktavijaya* shows her interaction with the *yogi* Cāṅgadev. Mahīpati relates this encounter after he has outlined Nivṛtti and Jñāneśvar's position in the Nāth *paramparā* (BVJ 22.20–137). Cāṅgadev, in order to challenge Jñāneśvar, sends him a blank letter to which Jñāneśvar replies with sixty-five *ovīs*: the *Cāṅgadev Pāsaṣī* mentioned in Chapter Three (BVJ 22.169–195). Later, Jñāneśvar brings Cāṅgadev to the house where Muktabāi is having a bath (*maṅgaḷasnāna*) but Cāṅgadev retreats when he realises Muktabāi is bathing. Muktabāi then scolds Cāṅgadev for running away and suggests that if he had the favour of a *guru* he would not be troubled by embarrassment or shame. Muktabāi chastises Cāṅgadev for having years of experience but still being ignorant. Cāṅgadev amazed at Muktabāi's knowledge, pays his respects to her and then goes to Jñāneśvar and becomes his disciple (BVJ 22.205–211).

Mahīpati's narrative does not however present the traditional ending to this story in which Cāṅgadev becomes Muktabāi's disciple (see Khanolkar 1978:20; Babras 1996:76–77; personal communications: Swami Govind Giriji Maharaj, 16th October 2004 and Muktabai Maharaj, 25th March 2005), which raises questions about the *guru paramparā* and the Muktabāi figure. It is possible that because Mahīpati presents Muktabāi as performing a ritual bath when Cāṅgadev encounters her Mahīpati is portraying Muktabāi as performing a 'domestic' task or presenting her as a nominal householder who is unsuitable as a *guru*. Nonetheless, Mahīpati does not connect Muktabāi and Cāṅgadev by *paramparā* which may be one way by which Mahīpati downplays the notion that a woman could act as a preceptor. The authority of *bhaktas*, charismatic figures and religious leaders is usually defined by *paramparā* and *caritra* plays a role in presenting the lineage of transmission (Brzezinski 1992:472; Snell 1994:3–4). The *guru paramparā* is important in a *sampradāya* because the transmission from teacher to disciple authenticates and preserves both teachings and *sampradāya* and *paramparā* thus plays a role in the discursive construction of tradition.⁸

Babras, following Gosāvī and Gosāvī (1986), thinks Jñāneśvar asked Muktabāi to explain the *Cāṅgadev Pāsaṣī* to Cāṅgadev and that this 'proved her great intelligence'. Thus, Cāṅgadev became Muktabāi's disciple and addressed her as 'Yogini Muktabai' (1996:125). However, I can find no mention of the term *yoginī* in the Cāṅgadev *abhaṅgas* in the SSG. The Cāṅgadev *abhaṅgas* refer to *Muktāi mātā* or 'Mother Muktabāi' (see *abhaṅga* 11; SSG 1:246) and the SSG *abhaṅgas* suggest Muktabāi was advising Cāṅgadev as the verbs *bolāṇe* 'to speak' and *mhaṇāṇe* 'to say' appear in a number of *abhaṅgas*.

⁸ See Rigopoulos 2005:238, n.2; Malinar 2003:103–104; Flood 1996:134, and personal communication Baba Maharaj Manmadkar, 11th July 2006.

Khanolkar regards Muktabāi as Cāṅgadev’s *guru* and says that she ‘taught him true renunciation and how to rise above the differentiations of name and form’ (1978:20). Moreover, a number of different Mukta’s have been identified by Kiehnle: firstly, there is a Mukta who was a pupil of Gorakhnāth according to Cāṅgadev’s *Tattvasār* and Visobā Khecar’s *Ṣaṣṭhal*; secondly, there is a Mukta who called herself the disciple of Nivr̥tti, composed songs and instructed the *yogī* Cāṅgadev; and thirdly, there is a Mukta who was a *tapasvinī* known to Cakradhar (d.1272 or 1274), the founder of the Mahānubhāvas (1997b:5). According to Dhere the Muktabāi known to Cakradhar was a Nāth *yogini* and a disciple of Bhartr̥hari (Bhartr̥hari) who came from Kadalīvana (2001:2).⁹ All three of these Muktas are connected with the Nāth *panth*, which raises the issue of Muktabāi’s *guru paramparā*.

Mahīpati states that the Nāth lineage in Maharashtra is: Matsyendranāth – Gorakṣa – Śāmbhava – Advayanand – Prabhava – Gahini – Nivr̥tti – Jñānadev – Visoba – Nāmdev – Janī (BVJ 22.133–37). However, White asserts that the Maharashtrian lineage of nine semi-historical Nāths is: Matsyendranāth – Jālandharanāth (Jvalendra) – Gorakhnāth – Carpaṭi – Revaṇa – Kariṇa-pā (Karnārī-pā) – Bhartr̥hari – Gopīcand – Gahaṇināth (1999:93). The Nivr̥tti *abhaṅgas* indicate that he was initiated by Gahinināth: *nivr̥tti gayanī kṛpā kelī ase pūrṇa / kūḷa hē pāvana kṛṣṇanāmē //6//* ‘Gayanī bestowed his full compassion on Nivr̥tti: [his] family [became] pure by the name of Kṛṣṇa’ (SSG 1:50, v.172.6; Kiehnle 1997a:144). Nivr̥tti probably initiated Jñāneśvar: *Jñānadev nivr̥tti guruśiṣyarupa / lakṣītā cidupa sarva jāle //4//* ‘Jñānadev and Nivr̥tti, in the form of teacher and pupil, putting their attention on the nature of consciousness, have become everything’ (Kiehnle 1997a:257, 19.0.2, S2).¹⁰ An Eknāth *abhaṅga* suggests that Jñāneśvar advised Sopān and Muktabāi, that Muktabāi then instructed Visobā Khecar, and that Visobā Khecar awakened Nāmdev, Nāmdev’s family and Cāṅgā Vateśvar (1893; SSG 2:269).¹¹ A Cāṅgadev *abhaṅga* suggests that Muktaī instructed [Visobā] Khecar with a *mantra* ‘*muktāi khecarā upadeśa mantra*’ (10.4; SSG 1:246). The Visobā who composed the *Ṣaṣṭhal* in the fourteenth century is said to consider himself a member of the Muktabāi line, which would connect Nāmdev with Muktabāi, but the *Bhaktavijaya* indicates that Jñāneśvar was Visobā’s teacher (BVJ 22.9–133; Kiehnle 1997a:5;

⁹ Kadalīvana is said to be at Srisaila[m] in Andhra Pradesh. It is a centre of Vīraśaivism—Akkamahadevi is said to have attained *samādhi* there—but also of the Nāth Siddhas and others. White states that the ‘term is either: (1) *kadalī vana*, “plantain forest,” a place identified with sensual life (as in the legends of Matsyendranāth), but also with a grove of yogic realization and immortality (in the *Padmāvat*); (2) *kajalī van*, “forest of black mercuric sulphide,” of the mineral hierophany of the sexual essences of Śiva and the Goddess, which does in fact constitute an elixir of immortality; or (3) *kajarī van*, identified with Zulmāt, the name of the land of death and darkness (*kajjīalī* also means “lampblack”) to which Iskander (Alexander the Great) travelled, according to Muslim legend’ (1996:238).

¹⁰ See Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 1344, SSG 1:496; Ranade 2003:33, and Kiehnle 1997a:145, 148.

¹¹ *Jñānadeva upadeśa karuniyā pāhī / sopāna muktāi bodhiyelī /1/ Muktāinē bodha khecarāsī kelā / teṅē nāmīyālā bodhiyelē /2/ Nāmīyāce kuṭumba cāṅgā vaṭeśvara / ekā janārdanī vistār muktāicā /3/*

Callewaert 1989:35). Dhre connects a *śivayoginī* called Mukṭāī with Nāmdev through the Nāth *paramparā* but asserts that this Mukṭāī was probably not Jñāneśvar’s sister. Dhre also suggests that Mukṭābāī, Jñāneśvar’s sister, might have been Cāṅga’s *guru* after the death of his first guru, the *śivayoginī* Mukṭāī (1997c; see Vaudeville 1987:225, n.27; Babras 1996:149). Kiehnle suggests that Mukṭābāī’s *guru* may have been Gorakhanāth or her brother Nivṛtti (1997b:5). Babras regards Nivṛtti as Mukṭābāī’s *guru* but suggests that she ‘received the knowledge of yoga from Jnaneshvara’ (1996:124).¹² There is a possibility that Mukṭābāī was initiated by Nivṛtti as several verses seem to refer to him in the role of a *guru*, for example: ‘Good for Cāṅgadev he’s benefited from this principle, which was given to us by Nivṛtti’ (16.2, SSG 1:240). However, there are several compositions which suggest Mukṭāī advised Nivṛtti, for example: ‘Mukṭāī counsels Nivṛtti: ‘there is no further rebirth for us’ (21, SSG:240) and ‘Mukṭāī informs Nivṛttirāj about the emergence of the single principle of love for Hari’ (19.4, SSG 1:240). If Mukṭābāī had been initiated by Nivṛtti then the lineage would run from Matsyendranāth to Goraksanāth to Gahinināth to Nivṛttināth to Mukṭābāī (Shrotriya 1992). Consequently, it is impossible to establish categorically Mukṭābāī’s identity as a *guru* or *śiṣya*. Nonetheless, Mukṭābāī operates as Cāṅgadev’s *guru* in public memory, which fits with Dhre’s contention that both men and women were accepted as disciples in the Nāth *panth* and could also act as preceptors (2001:6; see White 1996).

The third story in the *Bhaktavijaya* which features Mukṭābāī is one in which a gathering of *sants* occurs at Gorā Kumbhār’s place in Tarḍokī near Pandharpur. Nivṛtti, Jñāneśvar, Sopān, Nāmdev, Sāvātā Mālī and other *bhaktas* are all in attendance when Jñāneśvar asks Gorā to test which pots (that is ‘heads’) are unbaked. After tapping all the heads of the *sants* with his *thāpaṭaṇe* (potter’s paddle) Gorā finds Nāmdev’s head to be raw and unbaked. Then Mukṭābāī says ‘Gorā, how did you know? You are a skilled judge, of that I am certain’ (BVJ 18.19; Mahīpati 1860).¹³ It is probable that Mahīpati referred to the Nāmdev compositions to glean his information as a Nāmdev *abhaṅga* describes Mukṭābāī challenging Nāmdev’s ego: *mhaṇe muktābāī candanācē jhāḍa / ahamatā sarpa veḍe guṇḍāḷile //5//* ‘Mukṭābāī says, egoism is like a mad serpent that winds around a sandalwood tree’ (Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 1342, SSG 1:496; Bhat 1998; BVJ 18.14ff; see Novetzke 2008:64–5, 226–7). Mahīpati then relates that the *sants* all enjoy a

¹² Babras bases this idea on a Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 1344 (SSG 1:496) that begins *caudāsē varūṣē śarīra keḷe jatana/bodhaviṇa śīna bāḍhaviḷā/1/* The *abhaṅga* suggests that Gahinināth gave Nivṛtti a secret (*guja*) [i.e. initiated him] which Nivṛtti gave to Jñānadev and that Jñānadev developed the seed (*bīja*) [probably the mystical syllable which forms the essential part of the mantra of any deity] in people (4–5). The *abhaṅga* then suggests that either Nāmdev and/or Mukṭābāī acquired as three people were imprinted (5–6).

¹³ तंव मुक्ताबाई म्हणें त्यांसी गोरिया केसैकळलें तुजसी भला परीक्षक तुंजाण होसी जाणवले भजंसी नीश्चीत।१९।

good laugh except Nāmdev who decides he must seek out a *guru* (BVJ 18:14ff).¹⁴ This narrative depicts the *bhaktas* engaged in *satsaṅga* and enjoying each other’s company but more importantly it shows the degree to which Muktabāī’s peers respected her as it is her words that are quoted, albeit alongside those of Jñāneśvar, and which are given prominence (see Babras 1996:125; Khanolkar 1978:40). Thus Mahīpati presents Muktabāī as capable as acting as an adviser, if not a *guru*, in a *bhakti* context.

Muktabāī is said to have disappeared in a flash of lightning while performing a *kīrtan*. Ranade (2003:44–45) and Kiehnle (1997a:38, 170) believe this idea may be based on an *abhaṅga* attributed to Jñāneśvar, but transmitted in the Nāmdev *gāthā*, which describes enlightenment and final emancipation.

मोतियांचा चुर फेंकिला अंबरीं । विजूचिया परी कीळ झालें ।।
Motiyācā cura phakilā ambarī / vijūciyā parī kīḷa jhālē /1/
Jarī pītāambarē nesavilē nabhā / caitanyācā gābhā nīlabindū /2/
Taḷī varī pasare śūnyākara jhālē / sarpācīhi pilē nācū lāge /3/
Kaḍakaḍoni vīja nimāī thāyīce thāyī / bheṭalī muktāī gorobālā /4/
Jñānadeva mhaṇe kaisī jhālī bheṭa / oḷākhilē aṭa āpulēpaṇa /5/

Fragments of pearls were thrown into the sky. There was a brilliant flash of lightning.
 The sky was clothed in yellow fire.¹⁵ Consciousness inside the blue dot.
 Below ground the void extended; a serpent’s young one began to dance.
 With a crack the lightning disappeared in its place. Muktaī met Gorobā.
 Jñānadev says, ‘In that meeting self-knowledge was experienced’.

(Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 1349, SSG 1:497; my translation)

According to Kiehnle, terms like ‘sky’ or ‘space’ among the Nāths designate the upper part of the head. The reference to pearls thrown in the sky may indicate a specific meditative experience but the term ‘pearl’ could also be a specific reference to Mukta. The term *nīlabindū* (blue dot) refers to a state of consciousness or ‘vision’ that is absorbed into the dot and connotes ‘the Ātman experienced as a lustrous point’ according to Tulpule (1999: 492; Kiehnle 1997a:119, 123, 148). There are a number of *abhaṅgas* in the Nāmdev *gāthā* relating to Muktabāī’s *samādhi*. One Nāmdev *abhaṅga* describes how Muktabāī disappeared in a flash of lightning and says that when she reached Vaikuṅṭh bells started ringing (Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 1187.1, SSG 1:466).¹⁶ These *abhaṅgas* have similarities with the account of the death of the Kashmiri Śaivite *yoginī* Lāl Ded or Lallā (c.1317–1391) who is said to have disappeared ‘like a flame of light in the air’ (Handoo 1955:45; see Voss Roberts 2010:9ff), which suggests that the passing of *yogic* figures were often related in symbolic terms.

¹⁴ This story was also related to me by Baba Maharaj Manmadkar (11th July 2006).

¹⁵ Molesworth states that the term *pītāmbara* connotes ‘silk cloth...[that] may be red or of other colour than yellow’ while *pītāmbara* connotes ‘a garment or cloth of yellow silk’ (1857:516). The verb *nesaviṇē* means ‘to dress or clothe...to clothe with fire; to invest with blazing materials...’ (Molesworth 1857:476).

¹⁶ *Rṣī mhanātī hari pātalesē vigha/ātā kaise prāṇa vāncatīla//1//*

Muktābāī is said to have ‘disappeared’ or attained emancipation at Edalābād in about 1297 C.E., which means she may have been aged between eighteen or twenty according to Ranade (2003:31). The exact location of Edalābād is debated. One view suggests Muktābāī disappeared at Mehun near Edalābād (Tulpule) or near Edalābād, Māngāon (Bhave). There is a temple to Muktābāī, the Sant Muktābāī *mandir*, in the village of Mehun (earlier known as Edalābād) Muktāīnagar Tālukā, Jalgāon district, Maharashtra. This is one of the places that Muktābāī is said to have taken *samādhi*. It has been suggested that because *mēhūna* means ‘couple’ it may imply that Muktābāī became one with Śiva when she was struck by lightning (Shrotriya 1992:16–18). However, Kher suggests that Muktābāī’s *samādhi* took place at Managāon near Verūl (1979:61) and Bhat suggests Muktābāī’s *samādhi* is in Khandesh near the Tapi River (Bhat 1998:68). The location of Muktābāī’s *samādhi* is of concern to later interpreters and the Vārkarī *sampradāya* probably due to issues such as prestige and revenue for the sites. It is however interesting to note the connection between the occurrence of lightning, signalling liberation in *yogic* terms, and the place name. This connection suggests that in public memory Muktābāī’s disappearance/death is connected with lightning/liberation.

Mahīpati presents Muktābāī very much in a female domestic role—going to the potter, cooking *māṇḍe* and serving her brothers—but he adds the element of renunciation through Jñāneśvar’s *yogic* ‘heat’ (*ajñī, tapas*) that cooks the *māṇḍe*. By describing Muktābāī performing domestic tasks Mahīpati aligns her with the Vaiṣṇava household tradition of the Vārkarīs despite the fact that the three Muktā’s referred to above are connected with the Śaivite Nāths. The Nāths, like most ascetic traditions, highlight the importance of the *guru* which may have some bearing on why the *guru paramparā* is of such significance in relation to Muktābāī (see Hawley 1995:311ff, 2005; Harlan 1992:215). Denton argues that three things mark out initiation into asceticism: ‘the rejection of...householdership; a commitment to a particular path towards salvation; and the entry into a community of fellow aspirants’ (1991:214).

The Mahīpati *caritra* may not explicitly demonstrate Muktābāī’s rejection of householdership but Mahīpati alludes to it by presenting Muktābāī and her brothers as peripatetic but more significantly by representing Muktābāī as an *avatāra*. When I interviewed Vidyut Bhagwat she suggested that Muktābāī is thus ‘deified’ and ‘iconized’ in traditional memory (personal communication, 29th January 2005). However, while the elevation to divine status usually signifies an individual’s transcendence of mortal and material concerns Mahīpati represents Muktābāī as persecuted by and afraid of Visobā Chatī and performing domestic tasks. Nonetheless, Muktābāī may be understood as a renouncer but not in the

manner of her brothers who were renouncing the performance of male duty (*varnāśramadharmā*). A female ascetic (*sannyāsinī*, *yoginī*) renounces the female duties (*strīdharmā*) of marriage, family, bearing children and domestic responsibilities (see Gupta 1991b:195; Harlan 1992:216–7; Khandelwal 2004:1; Teskey-Denton 1991:211). Vidyut Bhagwat suggested that Muktabāi demonstrated that it was not compulsory for a woman to get married and become a biological mother (personal communication, 29th January 2005). Thus, by not representing Muktabāi as married and with children Mahīpati signals Muktabāi’s deviance from the prescribed norm of *strīdharmā*. Nevertheless, while Muktabāi is clearly not a householder she exemplifies living a family and community-centred life: one may regard her family as operating like a mini community of renouncers while Muktabāi’s later participation in the gathering of *bhaktas* at Gora Kumbhār’s place signals her inclusion in a *bhakti* community. Muktabāi’s commitment to a particular path towards liberation is indicated by Mahīpati’s portrayal of Muktabāi as a spiritual advisor to both the Śaivite *yogi* Cāngadev and the Vaiṣṇava *bhakta* Nāmdev, which fits with Sangari’s notion of women *sants* displaying logic and wit but also with the *upadeśa* theme discussed in the following chapter. However, while Muktabāi is presented as a woman who performs domestic tasks and lives a family/community-centred life, the women associated with *sant* Nāmdev are largely represented as concerned with *sansār* and the effects of Nāmdev’s *vairāgya*.

2.2. *The women in Nāmdev’s family*

An *abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāi relates that the Nāmdev household had fifteen members:

Goṇāi and Rājāi are mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; Dāmā and Nāmā are father and son.
Nārā, Viṭhā, Gondā and Mahādā are the four sons; a gift born into the holy family.
Lāḍāi, Goḍāi, Yesāi and Sākharāi are the four daughters-in-law who look after Nāmdev.
Limbāi is the daughter, Āūbāi is the sister and Nāmā’s Janī is the empty-headed dolt.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 279, SSG 1, p. 744)

The *caritras* of Goṇāi, Rājāi, Limbāi and Janābāi are discussed below but nothing seems to be known about Goḍāi, Yesāi and Sākharāi. Āūbāi is thought to have been Nāmdev’s elder sister but nothing further is known about her life. Āūbāi is portrayed in the SSG as having a high level of spiritual knowledge as she is credited with composing an enigmatic *abhaṅga* which describes the positive vacuum that exists in the cosmic principle (Gosāvī 2000:713; Āūbāi *abhaṅga*, SSG 1:775; Shrotriya 1992:74). Lāḍāi was Nāmdev’s daughter-in-law (*sūna*) and married to Nāmdev’s eldest son Nārā (Shrotriya 1992:74). Lāḍāi was patient and forbearing according to Gosāvī (2000:713) but the *caritras* say nothing more about her. However, an *abhaṅga* attributed to Lāḍāi relates how the whole family, apart from her, entered *samādhi* or died in 1350 C.E. (see Appendix B). There is also another possible member of the family, Nāmdev’s

niece or servant/disciple Nāgarī, who is presented below but whose apparently autobiographical compositions are discussed in Chapter Five.

2.2.i. *Goṇāī*

Goṇāī is remembered as the mother of *sant* Nāmdev, which is why she is often referred to as *Mātā Goṇāī*. Goṇāī is regarded as the daughter of Govind Śeṭ Sadāvarte—a tailor from Kalyāṇ—who married Dāmāśeṭī Reḷekar, the son of Hari Śeṭ Reḷekar, who was a Viṭṭhal devotee (Āvaṭe 1908; Callewaert 1989:15, 33; Shrotriya 1992).¹⁷ There is a line that states *goṇāī dāmāśeṭhī jhāle pāṇigrahaṇa / sansārī asona narasī gāvī* ‘Goṇāī and Dāmāśeṭī got married and spent [their] married life in Narsi’ (Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 1245.3; SSG 1:474).¹⁸ It therefore appears that before Goṇāī and Dāmāśeṭī settled in Paṇḍhapūr they lived in Narsi or Narsī Brāhmanī (Callewaert 1989:16), which is in the Nanded district of eastern Maharashtra. It was probably while the couple were in Narsī that ‘Āūbāī a girl was given to Goṇāī’ (Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 1245.5; SSG 1:474) and that Nāmdev was born (Callewaert 1989:30).

An *abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāī relates how Goṇāī asked Viṭṭhal for a son:

Goṇāī made a vow: ‘God give me a son.
Give a son to your devotee who likes Paṇḍharināth’.
Her unalloyed faith observed: from her womb Nāmdev was born.
Dāmāśeṭī was delighted; dāsī Janī waves the tray of lamps.

(Janābāī *abhaṅga* 278, SSG 1:744; my translation)

The narrator/speaker of this *abhaṅga* states that Goṇāī made a vow to God in order to be granted a son. The term *navas* refers to ‘a vow to a god often involving the promise of an offering in return for a request granted’ states Bermtsen (1975:75; see McGee 1991:71.n1). McGee argues that *vratas* are regarded by women in Maharashtra as ‘necessary in order to fulfil their duties as women, their *strīdharmā*’ (1991:74, 78). McGee also notes that Maharashtrian women often fast on Kṛṣṇa’s birthday for the birth of a child and observe a votive rite prescribed in the *Agni Purāṇa* (1999:75). Consequently, one may interpret the author/Janābāī presenting Goṇāī as desiring to fulfil her *strīdharmā* and her *pativratā dharmā* by presenting her husband with a son.

The *abhaṅga* above suggests that Goṇāī asked God for His devotee—possibly Dāmāśeṭī—be blessed with a son. The *abhaṅga* makes clear that it is Goṇāī’s *bhāva* that allows Nāmdev to be born through her. The birth of a son for Goṇāī and Dāmāśeṭī was clearly regarded a joyous occasion, as the performance of *ovāḷaṇē* (waving a tray of lamps) by Janī depicts. However, Mahīpati’s account of how

¹⁷ For detailed list of the sources for the Nāmdev biography see Callewaert and Lath (1989:11ff).

¹⁸ The *abhaṅga* begins *kalyāṇīcā śimpī haribhakta gomā*.

Nāmdev came to be born differs from that of the Janābāi *abhaṅga* as Mahīpati asserts that Nāmdev was the *avatāra* of Uddhava (Kṛṣṇa’s friend and counsellor) who was miraculously born from a shell (BVJ 4.9–12; Abbott and Godbole 1996). The reference to a shell may have been the means by which Mahīpati avoided the contentious issue of Nāmdev’s caste according to Novetzke (2008:54–5). Goṇāi was the daughter of a *śimpī* (Callewaert 1989:15; see also Āvaṭe 1908 and Deshmukh 1970) and thus Nāmdev belonged to the *śimpī* caste in Maharashtra or the *cimpī* (calico-printer) caste in northern India. However, at issue is the position of these caste designations within the Brahmanical *varṇa* theory. Novetzke states that outside the caste community the *śimpī* or *cimpī* castes are considered *śūdra* and only just above ‘untouchables’. However, followers of Nāmdev within this caste bracket remember their status as *kṣatriya* rather than *śūdra*. Thus, by ascribing Nāmdev a miraculous birth Mahīpati may have been avoiding communal disagreements (2008:55).

Mahīpati characterises Goṇāi and Dāmāśeṭī as virtuous *bhaktas* and Goṇāi as a dutiful wife (BVJ 4.15). Mahīpati states that Goṇāi asked her husband to ‘Go to Pāṇḍuraṅga and ask for a son’ (BVJ 4.13–16). This may relate to the vow mentioned in the Janābāi *abhaṅga* but Mahīpati makes no mention of this. Instead Mahīpati relates how Dāmāśeṭī tells Goṇāi ‘You are an ignorant woman. We are both now aged. Why should we expect God to give us a child?’ (BVJ 4.17; Abbott and Godbole 1996:58) Goṇāi replies to Dāmāśeṭī’s rebuke ‘Lord of my life, you blame me for being unreasonable but God’s power is supreme...What difficulty has He in giving us a child although we are aged?’ (BVJ 4.22–24; Abbott and Godbole 1996:59). Dāmāśeṭī then goes to the temple and prays for a son, after which he falls asleep. Viṭṭhal appears to Dāmāśeṭī in a dream telling him that when he goes to bathe in the Bhima river the next morning he will find a baby floating downstream and that he is to take the child—the *avatāra* of Uddhava—home with him. Dāmāśeṭī tells Goṇāi about his dream and events miraculously unfold as predicted. Dāmāśeṭī finds the baby floating in a shell—there is a play on words between *śimpa* ‘shell’ and *śimpī* ‘tailor’ (Novetzke 2008:55)—takes the baby home with him and presents him to Goṇāi as their son. Amazingly Goṇāi’s breasts immediately fill with milk and she is able to feed the baby whom they call Nāmdev to honour God (BVJ 4.25–37).

What is significant about Mahīpati’s account, apart from its miraculous content, is that Goṇāi and Dāmāśeṭī are presented as aged householders without a son—the ‘fact’ that they already have a daughter is not mentioned. Goṇāi yearns for a son, as the Janābāi *abhaṅga* indicates, and is presented as a non-mother due to her lack of sons because every Hindu woman is expected to have as many children as

possible and in particular sons (see Leslie 1991:5; Menski 1991:54, 58). However, where Mahīpati’s account and the Janābāi *abhaṅga* differ noticeably is that it is Dāmāśeṭī who prays to God in the temple, sees God in a dream and finds the baby. While Goṇāi may have urged Dāmāśeṭī to ask God for a son it is Dāmāśeṭī who is the protagonist and Goṇāi who plays the minor role. Mahīpati does not seem to regard Goṇāi’s faith as a significant factor in Nāmdev’s arrival into the couple’s life. Goṇāi is just the ‘dutiful wife’ and an ‘ignorant woman’ whose role is to feed and care for the baby. Goṇāi is not even represented as the woman whose womb bore Nāmdev (see Irigary 1985:18, 127). In Mahīpati’s account Goṇāi does not bear Nāmdev, her agency in his birth and her fertility—miraculous or otherwise—are denied. Moreover, Goṇāi is deprived of her religiously sanctioned duty of bearing a son. It is only because she is miraculously able to feed him that Goṇāi can fulfil the role of Nāmdev’s mother. However, the manner of Nāmdev’s birth/arrival is something that Mahīpati presents as unsettling Goṇāi: she later tells Dāmāśeṭī that ‘God had mercy upon *you*, and gave *you* a son, though born in an unnatural way’ (BVJ 4.61; Abbott 1996:61, my emphasis). Thus in Mahīpati’s account, with its focus on the miraculous, Dāmāśeṭī rather than Goṇāi appears to be the central character. In contrast, the Janābāi *abhaṅga* has Goṇāi as the protagonist. It is Goṇāi who undertakes the vow in the expectation God will respond (Olson 2007:259). It is due to Goṇāi’s *bhāva*—her faith, her state of mind, her behaviour, her disposition and feelings—that God responds and Nāmdev is brought into being.

The subsequent stories including Goṇāi in the BVJ are all about her relationship with her son Nāmdev. The first of these accounts describes how Goṇāi sends the youthful Nāmdev to the temple with an offering for Viṭṭhal instructing Nāmdev to return home with the offering once it has been blessed. However, convinced that God actually consumes the offerings presented to him, Nāmdev refuses to leave the temple until his offering is consumed. Finally, out of love for Nāma, Viṭṭhal consumes the offering commanding Nāma to tell no one what has happened. Nāmdev returns home and when Goṇāi asks him to whom he has given the offering, Nāma replies that God has consumed it. Ultimately, both Dāmāji and Goṇāi recognise their son as a *bhakta* (BVJ 4:38–62). This miraculous story indicates that Nāmdev was inclined towards *bhakti* from an early age, a feature of *caritra*, and depicts Goṇāi as a witness to Nāmdev’s devotion within a domestic setting. The story was clearly a popular episode in the life of *sant* Nāmdev as it also features in the biographies of Hiriram Vyās (1580), Anantadās (1588), Nābhādās (1600), the *Guru Granth Sahib* (1604) and Caturdās (early nineteenth century). The story also appears in

various compositions in Marathi and Hindi, as well as dramatic performances and films relating Nāmdev’s life (Novetzke 2008:56; Callewaert 1989:12, 17).

The ensuing accounts of Goṇāī describe how her relationship with Nāmdev becomes more turbulent as his focus on *bhakti* grows and his interest in supporting his family lessens. Drawing attention to the tension within *bhakti* regarding his duties as a householder Goṇāī tells Nāma:

There are many *Vaiṣṇavas* who carry on at the same time their domestic affairs and their religious life. It seems to me that your condition is quite different from theirs. In your domestic life you have children, but you have little food and few garments. The evil-minded laugh at you, what are we to do?

(BVJ 4.72–73, Abbott and Godbole 1996, Vol. 1:62)

However, all this chastising does is send Nāmdev off to the temple in search of succour and advice from Viṭṭhal on how to resolve the situation (BVJ 4.74–98). Meanwhile Goṇāī, who had gone out to gather grain, returns home and decides to find Nāmdev, console him and take him home (BVJ 4.138ff). Entering the temple Goṇāī sees Viṭṭhal and Nāmdev together and angrily addresses God, telling him that due to his association with Viṭṭhal he has neglected his family and his business, and that as Viṭṭhal is destroying her life she will no longer revere Him (BVJ 4.142–148, see Abbott and Godbole 1996:67–68). In response to Goṇāī’s tirade Viṭṭhal tells her she has no need to be angry and the heated conversation between the two continues. Goṇāī even calls on Viṭṭhal’s wives to support her point of view. Viṭṭhal realises that despite his arguments for *bhakti* Goṇāī is still set on having Nāmdev involved in worldly affairs. Finally, Mahīpati describes how Viṭṭhal tells Goṇāī to take her son and lead him home (BVJ 4.155–214). The account of Goṇāī engaging in a lengthy and heated conversation with God draws attention to the anguish suffered by women connected with male *bhaktas* who abandon *sansār* in favour of *vairāgya*. Moreover, the conversation exemplifies the negotiation of the tension between household/*sansār* and *bhakti* in the narrative tradition of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

Mahīpati appears to be relating some of the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Goṇāī (see Appendix B) showing her concerns about Nāmdev’s *vairāgya* and his neglect of everyday responsibilities (Novetzke 2005:132n8). The conversations (*saṁvāda*) are recorded in a number of *abhaṅgas* in both Goṇāī and Nāmdev’s names (*abhaṅgas* 1264–1307; SSG 1:477–487). These are the only compositions in Goṇāī’s name although they may in fact be Nāmdev reiterating what his mother said to him but the *abhaṅgas* propose ‘Goṇāī’s’ concerns.¹⁹ Once again attribution appears to be functioning here and so indicates the tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya*. Goṇāī therefore acts as an exemplar of the possibility in that one

¹⁹ Apparently a handwritten *ārati* and some verses attributed to Goṇāī can be found in Tanjāvar Sarasvatī Mahal Library and in the Śrī Samartha Vāgadevatā Mandir in Dhule (Shrotriya 1992:72).

may pursue a spiritual vocation on the householder path. Goṇāi calls Viṭhobā a *gharaghenā* ‘demolisher of families (*abhaṅga* 1266.10, 1267.7, 1268.7) and Mahīpati also relates how Goṇāi says that Viṭṭhal ‘stands on the brick and destroys the domestic life of others (BVJ 4.202; Abbott and Godbole 1996:72). This statement refers to Viṭṭhal standing on a brick because Puṇḍalik was absorbed in ministering to his parents, a story that is regarded as indicative of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*’s value of family and filial obligations (Laine 1998:134). The fact that the deity is denounced as a home-wrecker is therefore significant as it highlights the importance of family and the obligations of *sansār*. The Goṇāi *abhaṅgas* are regarded as exhibiting *virodha bhakti* (see Gosāvī 2000:256) and part of Mahīpati’s *caritra* depicts Goṇāi’s opposition to *vairāgya* and to Viṭṭhal as the cause of Nāmdev’s disinterest in *sansār*. The conflict between Nāmdev and his family continues with his wife Rājāi who also expresses opposition to Nāmdev’s withdrawal from the world.

2.2.ii. Rājāi

Rājāi is remembered as the wife of *sant* Nāmdev if she is remembered at all. It has been suggested that Rājāi and Nāmdev were married when Nāmdev was nine years old (Callewaert 1989:17). Rājāi and Nāmdev are thought to have had four sons (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 279; Callewaert 1989:17)—although Mahīpati only refers to Nārāyaṇa (BVJ 4.64)—and a daughter called Limbāi although Mahīpati does not refer to Limbāi by name (BVJ 17.59ff). The SSG states that Rājāi suffered as Nāmdev’s wife and that the affecting story of her troubled life is related in thirteen *abhaṅgas*, which are presented within the compendium. The SSG presents Rājāi as expressing her feelings towards Nāmdev while realising his spiritual status. The SSG also states that Rājāi expresses the real rage and distress (*sāttvik santāp*) of a *grhiṇī* in her dialogue with the goddess Rukmiṇī and with her husband. The SSG says nothing more about Rājāi, presumably leaving the *abhaṅgas* to speak for themselves, except to say that Rājāi composed 50 *abhaṅgas* in total (Gosāvī 2005). Dattātreyā’s biography of Nāmdev, *Nāmdevācī Ādi Samādhi* ‘The Beginning [and] the Threnody of Nāmdev’ (1723) describes Rājāi complaining about Nāmdev neglecting his household duties, a story of riches given to Rājāi but disposed of by Nāmdev exemplifying the struggle between economic prosperity and the life of a *bhakta* (Novetzke 2008:71).

The distress felt by Goṇāi is also apparent in the life of Rājāi who describes her predicament to her mother-in-law: ‘For me you have given birth to a pure crystal. But now my garments are torn and exceedingly old. I have not enough to eat. I have, therefore, come to your house to live my poverty-stricken life. He whom I serve with devotion has been persecuting me. I see no way of bettering our

domestic state' (BVJ 4.100–101, Abbott and Godbole 1996:64–65). These verses are interesting because they not only portray Rājāī's scorn for Nāmdev but also describe her as 'serving her husband with devotion' as a *pativrata*. The story continues with Viṭṭhal, disguised as a merchant called Keśava, coming to Rājāī's aid because she had complained about her state of poverty. Viṭṭhal-Keśava goes to Nāmdev's house with a bag of gold coins and en route he asks for directions from the townspeople, who laugh at the thought of a guest going to a house with no food. Rājāī tries to dismiss her guest by informing Keśava that the master of the house is away. Rājāī complains to her neighbours that she is inundated by guests whom Nāmdev has instructed her to feed but whom she cannot serve as she has no food in the house: 'Innumerable *sadhus* have come into my house. They carry cymbals and *vīṇās* and dance in their love. They put aside all thought of shame and public praise. They put aside all thoughts of caste difference. They hold the Chief of Yadavas [Kṛṣṇa] in their heart and dance in delight' (BVJ 4.110–114, Abbott and Godbole 1996, Vol. 1, p. 65–66). Mahīpati thus emphasises that the guests are *bhaktas* and that *bhaktas* in general should disregard public praise and caste difference. Keśava then tells Rājāī that He is a friend of Nāma who has brought Nāmdev some gold coins, so Rājāī comes out of the house and offers Keśava a seat. Keśava seems amused by Rājāī's volte-face and tells Rājāī that one should not go anywhere empty-handed: an example of didactic instruction from Mahīpati. Keśava tells Rājāī she is not to bother Nāmdev but just accept His gift and call on Him for more when it is required. Rājāī as any hostess should, offers Keśava food but he declines telling her he will not eat without Nāmdev—a possible reference to the miraculous story of the offering mentioned above—and Keśava then leaves (BVJ 4.115–132). This story suggests that one can live as a householder and as a *bhakta* because God is present in even the most difficult domestic situations.

With her new found wealth Rājāī joyfully prepares 'delicious food' but when Nāmdev returns he views the scene with displeasure. Rājāī tells him to bathe so that they can eat the food but Nāmdev is made uncomfortable with Rājāī's apparent comfort in wealth. Nāmdev questions Rājāī but in the hope he will not give everything away she says nothing. However, Janābāī tells Nāmdev about Keśava Śeṭ, the Lingāyat banker from Karnataka, who brought the money (BVJ 4.215–242).²⁰ Nāmdev praises God in gratitude (BVJ 4.243–244) and then distributes the wealth to the Brahmans of Pandharpur (BVJ 4.250–251). Mahīpati does not refer to how Rājāī felt about this distribution of wealth, although one can imagine

²⁰ An *abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāī tells story of Viṭṭhal the banker (v.131, SSG 1:728): शेट्य झाला हरी। *śeṭya jhālā harī*/

she might be very unhappy, rather Mahīpati describes how ‘those desiring wealth and wives will not enjoy these stories’ (BVJ 4.253). The important factor for Mahīpati is to show Nāmdev as a good *bhakta* who is not interested in or constrained by the concerns of the material world. In this manner both Rājāī and Goṇāī—depicted as women deeply concerned with worldly matters—draw attention to Nāmdev and his performance of disinterested action (*karmayoga*) which destabilises the householder path.

There is another story in the *Bhaktavijaya* that depicts Rājāī’s desire for material comfort as well as an interaction between female *bhaktas* (BVJ 18.126ff). Mahīpati relates how Kamalajā, Parīsa Bhāgvat’s wife and Rājāī meet and chat while fetching water from the river. Rājāī tells her friend Kamalajā that Nāmdev has devoted himself to Viṭṭhal completely and that as a result he has no concern for the welfare of the family: ‘At home we have the very least of food and raiments and yet we have a very large family. Tell me at once what I am to do? (BVJ 18.130–134, Abbott and Godbole 1996:305). Kamalajā then asks Rājāī how Nāmdev can continue to worship a god who does not give him anything in return. Kamalajā then tells Rājāī that her husband, Parīsa Bhāgvat, has made Rukmiṇī pleased with him and so She has given them a touchstone. This touchstone turns ordinary iron objects into gold and as a result Kamalajā and Parīsa are eating well (BVJ 18.135–143, Abbott and Godbole 1996:306). The two women go to Kamalajā’s house and Kamalajā allows Rājāī to borrow the touchstone so she can turn things into gold. However, Kamalajā warns Rājāī not to tell Nāmdev anything about the matter. Rājāī goes home, applies the touchstone to various household items, takes the golden objects to the bazaar and exchanges them for cash. Rājāī then purchases garments, ornaments (possibly a means of attaining cash at a later date), cooking vessels and large quantities of food (BVJ 18.144–150). When Nāmdev returns home he notices all the new things and questions Rājāī. In an attempt to distract him Rājāī tells Nāmdev to eat his meal but he refuses to do so until Rājāī has explained herself. Aware that trouble is brewing, Rājāī tells Nāmdev about Kamalajā lending her the touchstone. Nāmdev asks Rājāī to bring him the touchstone and then takes it from her he throws it into the river all the while repeating the names of God. Rājāī then sits down and cries in anguish (BVJ 18.151–160).

Meanwhile, Parīsa Bhāgvat returns home and finds the touchstone missing. Mahīpati describes Parīsa scolding Kamalajā for losing the touchstone and Kamalajā replying she had lent it to Rājāī. Parīsa Bhāgvat sends Kamalajā to get the touchstone from Rājāī. On learning that Nāmdev has thrown it into the river both women became incensed and start shouting (BVJ 18.161–173). A confrontation between Parīsa Bhāgvat and Nāmdev thus ensues. Nāmdev asks Parīsa Bhāgvat why he would want a

touchstone when he professes indifference to worldly things and tells him if he wants the touchstone he should look for it in the river. The assembled crowd laugh at this and ask who could recognise the touchstone in the sand. Nāmdev then takes a handful of sand from the water and declares that it contains numerous touchstones; an assertion that was found to be true when tested. The crowd rejoice at the miracle but Parīsa Bhāgavat repents and becomes Nāmdev’s disciple (BVJ 18:173–193). Mahīpati represents Rājāī and Kamalajā as women concerned with material wealth and comfort rather than *bhakti*. Although aware that Rājāī is responsible for feeding and clothing a large family Mahīpati highlights Nāmdev performing a miracle and Parīsa Bhāgavat’s capitulation rather than Rājāī’s anguish.

The stories relating to both Rājāī and Goṇāī depict the women as primarily concerned with *sansār* and thus highlight the tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya*. Aklujkar argues that Goṇāī and Rājāī are remembered for their ‘nuisance value’ to Nāmdev or as his ‘stepping stones towards his world-weariness’ (Aklujkar 2005:105). Nāmdev went on pilgrimage with Jñāneśvar according to Mahīpati (BVJ 10) so clearly Mahīpati does not view Goṇāī or Rājāī prevailing on the *grhastha*/domestic front. However, it is possible that Mahīpati represented Goṇāī and Rājāī as the antithesis of Nāmdev. In other words, Mahīpati may have used Goṇāī, Rājāī and Kamalajā to denote the most undesirable aspects of *grhastha* and used Nāmdev to exemplify the negative elements of an extreme form of *vairāgya*. Consequently, one could construe Mahīpati’s portrayal of Goṇāī and Rājāī as drawing the hearer/reader towards a happy median between *grhastha* and *vairāgya* and suggesting that it is possible to live as a *bhakta* and a householder. Nonetheless, the tension between householdership and renunciation is not resolved fully in Mahīpati’s accounts of Goṇāī and Rājāī, and neither is it resolved in the story relating to Rājāī and Nāmdev’s daughter.

2.2.iii. *Limbāī: Nāmdev’s daughter*

Limbāī was Rājāī and Nāmdev’s youngest child, who is described by the SSG as a *kanyā*. The SSG states that Limbāī gained spiritual knowledge through living with her father, which is why the single *abhaṅga* attributed to her is contained in the *Nāmdev Gāthā* (Gosāvī 2003:713). Mahīpati relates a story about Nāmdev’s daughter in the BVJ but nowhere does Mahīpati refer to her as Limbāī. Nonetheless, Mahīpati’s story about Limbāī indicates Nāmdev’s relationship with his daughter but also relates an incident between the daughters of two Pandharpur *bhaktas* (BVJ 17.59–68).

The story states that Nāmdev’s daughter was washing clothes in the Bhima River and that while beating the clothes on a stone she sprayed Vāṅka, the beautiful daughter of Rākā Kumbhār (BVJ 17.9).

Vānka tells Nāmdev’s daughter to beat the clothes gently as she has just bathed and sat down to perform *manas puja*. Nāmdev’s daughter replies that Vānka seems very particular for someone from the potter caste that has abandoned the domestic life and wanders from house to house begging (BVJ 17.60–62, Abbott and Godbole 1996:283). Vānka responds scornfully: ‘The sobbing of Nama is well known amongst men. Although the holder of the disk [Kṛṣṇa] is in the form of Buddha [mute] he forced Him to speak by breaking his own head’ (BVJ 17.63, Abbott and Godbole 1996:283). After the quarrel both girls return home and Nāmdev’s daughter tells her father what had happened and that Vānka had criticized him. She tells Nāmdev that Vānka had described her father, Rākā Kumbhār, as a desireless man and one who gathered faggots and sold them in the market to support his family. This perplexes Nāmdev who decides to find out about the potter (BVJ 17.64–69). The story concludes with Nāmdev, accompanied by Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī, going out into the forest to test Rākā Kumbhār and his family (BVJ 17.70–85). Rākā finds the gold bracelet Rukmiṇī had put under some sticks and tells his wife Bānka, ‘Look at this, the root of disaster’. Bānka replies that a gold bracelet is useless as it hinders the worship of God. The couple leave the bracelet and the firewood where they found it and go away. Consequently, Nāmdev recognises Rākā’s *bhakti* and at his request Viṭṭhal reveals himself to Rākā and Bānka and embraces his *bhaktas* (BVJ 17.86–98).

It is noticeable that in this story the daughter of the prominent and well-known Nāmdev is unnamed while the daughter of a less well-known *bhakta* is clearly identified. The term *laḍāi* in Konkani connotes ‘battle’, ‘collision’, ‘conflict’, ‘contend’, ‘contentious’, ‘quarrelsome’, ‘row’, ‘fight’, ‘quarrel’ and so on (Maffei 1883) while in Marathi *laḍhāi* denotes ‘a battle or fight’ (Tulpule 1999:262) and ‘fighting; warfare or war’ (Molesworth 1857:704). This argumentative definition might have a bearing on Mahīpati’s story of the quarrel between the daughters of Nāmdev and Rākā Kumbhār (BVJ 17.59ff). The story highlights the fact that the girls were living in a town, as part of the community of *bhaktas*, where people were aware of each other’s family situations. The girls insult each other and try to outdo each other but it is probably Limbāi who ends up telling tales to her father Nāmdev. Mahīpati says nothing further about the girls’ relationship as he is more concerned with the spiritual understanding Nāmdev gains and the recognition of Rākā and Bānka as *bhaktas*. Nāmdev’s daughter appears to support a happy family life, a life as a householder, as she criticises Vānka’s father and family for abandoning domesticity in favour of begging for alms. However, the story of Rākā and Bānka highlights the importance of indifference to worldly things and suggests that such indifference is rewarded by God (BVJ 17.86–98).

This story again draws attention to the tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya* but does not completely resolve the conflict although disinterested action (*karma yoga*) seems to be emphasised.

2.2.iv. *Nāgarī: sant Nāmdev's dāsī and/or dhvādī*

The first reference to Nāgarī comes in the *abhaṅgas* of Nāmdev's son Gondā: 'Nāma's *dāsī* Nāgarī, another Janī, hypnotised God through her service' (*Śāsakīya Nāmdev Gāthā: Gondāce abhaṅga* 1; Shrotriya 1992:62).²¹ Significantly, Gondā refers to both Nāgarī and Janābāī as Nāmdev's *dāsīs* (Shrotriya 1992:75–76). The term *dāsī* is usually translated as 'servant' or 'slave' but can also be interpreted as 'devotee' (see Tulpule 1999:327). The use of the term *dāsī* in relation to Nāgrī suggests that Nāgrī might have been Nāmdev's student rather than servant (Shrotriya 1992:64; see Dhare 1977a). Nāgrī is the first woman credited with composing autobiographical compositions by R.C. Dhare and consequently a summary of Nāgarī's biography is presented in Chapter Five. However, the most famous *dāsī* connected with Nāmdev is Janābāī whom Mahīpati portrays and whose *caritra* is discussed below. The inclusion of Nāgarī signals the importance of *kul* for the Vārkarī tradition and that gender attribution is being utilised to discursively construct the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

2.3. *Janābāī*

An account of Janābāī's life is found in the *Bhaktavijaya* (see Appendix C.1).²² Mahīpati describes several miraculous incidences from Janī's life, which seem to derive from the compositions attributed to Nāmdev and Janābāī. Novetzke observes that Mahīpati extracts miracles from Nāmdev's life and intertwines them with those of Janī to highlight their interconnectedness and the correspondence of their miraculous experience (2008:68). The story begins with seven-year-old Janī on a visit to Paṇḍharpūr, during Kārtik, with her parents refusing to leave the city (BVJ 21.9–10). Janī's parents agree to let her stay and Janī then is adopted by Nāmdev or Nāmdev's father Dāmāśeṭī according to other accounts so that Janī is almost Nāmdev's sibling. V.N. Utpat said that Janī's parents died of cholera, which is why she was adopted by Nāmdev (personal communication, 22nd November 2004). Janī's status as an orphan and her parents' death due to cholera has similarities to the Sakhūbāī *caritra* discussed below. However, a Vārkarī scholar and *kīrtankār* suggested that Janī's destiny was to be a *devadāsī*.

The story goes that her parents, who were innocent simple people, did not have a child for a long time. So they took a vow that they would offer the first child to Viṭṭhal and Janābāī was their first child. They were worried about where they would leave her [in the temple]. They went to the temple and Nāmdev was giving *kīrtan* and he impressed them so they touched his feet and left the girl at his

²¹ *Nāmāyācī dāsī nāgī dusrī janī; tyānī sevā karūnī [vaśa] kelā deva.*

²² See Āvate 1908, Ajgaonkar 1976, Dhare 1960, Bhingarkar 1989 and Irlekar 1981 for other Janābāī *caritras*.

feet [i.e. offered her to him]. They told him that they came from Gangakhed, were a simple family and that they had made a *saṅkalpa* to offer their first child to Viṭṭhal. They said that they had therefore offered her...that she was five years old, that she can wash her own clothes, take a bath by herself and so on, and was being offered at God's feet. Nāmdev was in a fix because he could not say yes or no. He had a big family and it is a big responsibility to take on a child. He decided to keep her as a *dāsī*.

(Dada Maharaj Manmadkar, personal communication, 10th July 2006)

There was a tradition of consecrating young girls into the service of God at temples in Maharashtra, Orissa and across South India (Mishra 2011:241). So Manmadkar's suggestion that Janī's parents intended to place her in the service of God may relate to this practice and to a reference by Mahīpati in his biography of Janābāi.²³ Janī's biography thus seems to fulfil one of Sangari's typical conventions in the lives of women *sants*: the association with a holy place, namely Pandharpur. Additionally, Janī's *caritra* appears to demonstrate early dedication to God, one of the phases the lives of women *sants* display according to Ramanujan (1982:317).

Mahīpati states *kṛṣṇa avatārī kubjā dāsī / tyājavīna māyabāpa nase majasī / mī nāmayācī ananya dāsī / nase āṅika maja kāhī /19/* 'During Kṛṣṇa's descent (*avatāra*) there was a maid, Kubjā. Without him there is no other parent for me. Similarly, I am Nāma's only *dāsī*. There is nothing more for me' (19).²⁴ Abbott and Godbole translate the verse as: 'At the time of Krishna's avatar-ship he had a maid by the name of Kubja (the cripple). She had now appeared as an avatar in this Kali Yuga. So she has come on pilgrimage to Paṇḍharī, and is absorbed in the worship of Hari' (1996:339). The name Kubjā relates to the story of Kṛṣṇa and the hunchbacked (*kubja*) woman Trivakrā.²⁵ It is unclear why Mahīpati connects Janī with Kubjā but it is probably because they were both maidservants who had an intimate relationship with God (see Pauwels 2008:332; Novetzke 2008:69). Moreover, they are both regarded as having been liberated—Kubjā by association with Kṛṣṇa and Janī by association Nāmdev—and they are both venerated. Janī is remembered by the Vārkarīs at the temple in Gopalpur (see Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:69, Ill 11–17) while Kubjā is remembered in the Braj region (Pauwels 2008:317–18). Furthermore, both Kubjā and Janī are unattached and unprotected, and might therefore be considered sexually 'available' like Kānhopātrā whom Mahīpati also connects with *kubja* (BVJ 39.15). However, it is probable that Mahīpati regarded Janī as the ultimate servant. Mahīpati later relates that Jñāneśvar asks

²³ For more on *devadāsīs* see Marglin 1985 and V.S. Kadam 1998.

²⁴ The verse reads: कृष्णावतारीकुब्जादासी॥ त्याजवीणमायबापनसेमजसी॥ मीनामयाचीअनन्यदासी॥ नसेआणीकमजकाही ॥१९॥ My thanks to Kasturi Dadhe for her help with interpreting this verse (Personal communication, 16th April 2013).

²⁵ The story of Kṛṣṇa and Trivakrā is told in the *Harivaṃśa* 71.22–35 (Masson 1980), *Brahma Purāṇa* 193.1–12, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 5.20.1–12, *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* 4.72.15–36, *Padma Purāṇa* 6.272.339–341, and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 10.42.1–12, 10.48.1–11 (Bryant 2003:174–5, 203–3). For studies on Kubjā see Sheth (1983) and Pauwels (2008).

Janī ‘How many births have you had through worshipping God?’ (199) and that Janī replies that she accompanied God through various *avatāras* (BVJ 21.200–203). Abbott and Godbole’s interpretation that Janī is an *avatāra* of Kubjā seems inaccurate as Janī appears to be represented as an *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa who descended to serve Viṭṭhal (see Novetzke 2008:70).

Mahīpati makes it clear that Janī’s role in the family is as a domestic servant but makes no more mention of Janī as a servant although he does refer to Janī performing household tasks (22), grinding (85, 103–6, 113; 23.92). However, by putting the words ‘I am Nāma’s only *dāsī*’ (19) into Janī’s mouth Mahīpati signals that Janī views Nāmdev as her spiritual teacher. Mahīpati either had no idea about Nāgrī as Nāmdev’s *dāsī* or considered Nāgrī considerably less important than Janī. The account presented by Mahīpati portrays the developing relationship between Janī and Viṭṭhal, and highlights how Janī’s memory is interwoven with that of Nāmdev the householder (see Novetzke 2008:69).

Mahīpati describes how Viṭṭhal, having repaired Nāmdev’s hut after a terrible storm, dines with Nāma and has his back massaged by Janī (44). When Viṭṭhal does not sit next to Janī she protests (52–3). Viṭṭhal wonders why he has lost his appetite and Nāmdev explains that it is because Janī is standing outside crying (55). Viṭṭhal then stops eating and Goṇāi gives Janī Viṭṭhal’s leftovers. Once Nāmdev had fallen asleep Viṭṭhal comes to Janī’s hut and asks to eat the food that He had left. Despite Janī’s uncertainty Viṭṭhal tells her not to worry and serve Him that which is His own. Mahīpati explains that Viṭṭhal left the food on his plate so that Janī would have food to offer Him as she had no food in her hut. Viṭṭhal eats the food, indicating that He favours food sharing across caste boundaries, and then lies down beside Nāma to sleep. Mahīpati closes this story saying that Janī was honoured by Viṭṭhal due to her association with Nāmdev (BVJ 21.61).

This story presents the conventional social practice of women and servants eating after the male members of the household. However, the story also combines giving left-over food to servants and devotees eating food that has first been offered or sacrificed to God (*prasāda*), which are still common practices today, but very much in a domestic setting. However, Vanita suggests that Janī is given the left-overs because she is ‘despised’, that is, because of her low social status. Significantly, due to her association with Nāmdev, Janī is given the leavings but God comes to eat with Janī in her hut away from all the others including Nāmdev. Vanita regards this private interaction as indicating that ‘normal social practice falls short by divine standards’ (2005:102–03). While the interaction may well imply a lack in social practice it also highlights that Janī is being honoured much in the way Nāmdev was honoured when

Viṭṭhal consumed the offering in his presence. Aklujkar refers to Nāmdev sharing his food with Viṭṭhal as an expression of *sakhya-bhakti* and suggests that food becomes a symbol of *bhakti* as the deity and devotee share a meal together. Only the devotee consumes the leftovers as *prasāda* as normally an individual's leftovers are considered too polluted for anyone else to eat. Thus, because the devotee and the deity are in a reciprocal relationship they share food without following the normal conventions (1992:101–103). The themes of sharing and friendship are also visible in other interactions between Janī and Viṭṭhal in Mahīpati's *caritra*.

Mahīpati relates how Janī is awoken in the early morning by Viṭṭhal who tells her to get up and do the grinding. Viṭṭhal tells Janī he has prepared the mill for her and that He is waiting to help her (84–89). Mahīpati, following the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Janī, describes how Viṭṭhal plaits Janī's hair and listens to her while He helps her with the grinding. Viṭṭhal thus helps Janī perform her daily tasks and listens to her revering the *sants*. The story of Janī grinding continues with the appearance of Goṇāī who is roused by Janī's singing. Goṇāī quizzes Janī about whether she has hired a woman to help her with the grinding but Janī remains silent. Infuriated Goṇāī takes a stick, enters Janī's hut and chastises Janī (106). Goṇāī then strikes Janī but the blow falls on Viṭṭhal who tells Goṇāī his name is Viṭhāī—the feminized form of the deity's name meaning 'mother Viṭṭhal'— and that he has come to help Janī grind (107). (The themes of *sakhya-bhakti* and grinding are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five below). Nāmdev hears about what happened from Goṇāī and tells her that she struck God and not Janī and subsequently Goṇāī repents (108–111). This story highlights friendship and sharing but also the 'less than ideal nature of human social relations' according to Vanita (2005:102–03). The biographies of some nineteenth-century Marathi women describe the tyranny of a mother-in-law who exercised complete authority and even the physical punishment received from a mother (Kosambi 1998:90–91). Goṇāī seems to fit the image of the authoritarian matriarch who represents the antithesis of the *bhakti* ethos. However, if one considers the incident in relation to Goṇāī's *caritra* outlined above one can imagine that Goṇāī is motivated by financial concerns due to Nāmdev's abandonment of *sansār* in favour of *vairāgya* and is thus driven to the depths of despair which sadly results in violence. Moreover, this and other narrative accounts function in the discursive construction of the *sampradāya* by arguing for the householder path. The stories suggest that doing one's duties within the household is compatible with being a *bhakta* because God/Viṭṭhal will meet one within the domestic setting.

Mahīpati then describes how Viṭṭhal falls asleep at Janī’s place after the grinding has been completed (116–7). Viṭṭhal is woken at dawn by Janī who tells Him He must return to the temple in time for morning worship. Viṭṭhal rushes off but in His haste forgets his jewellery and takes Janī’s blanket instead of His own woollen garment. Consequently, the attendees at morning worship discover Viṭṭhal covered by Janī’s blanket and without His jewels. The Brahman priests accuse Janī of stealing and demand she returns the jewels. Janī declares her innocence but the priests find the jewels while searching her hut and announce Janī must be punished. Janī is taken to the river bank where she is to be impaled on an iron stake. However, Janī cries out to God (145–6) and the iron spike miraculously turns into water (147). The story concludes with the crowd clapping their hands and saying that God saves His servants when they are in trouble (149). This account emphasises Janī’s vulnerability to public condemnation due to her gender and low social status (see Vanita 1989:56; Sellergren 1996:218), a theme that appears in some of the compositions attributed to Janābāī. This Janī story fits Sangari’s typical convention for women *sants* of bitter persecution and miraculous escape but it also suggests that even women of low status are loved and protected by god so they should perform their household duties faithfully with devotion.

Janābāī’s status as an important *bhakta* is depicted by Mahīpati when Viṭṭhal, hearing Janī compose verses in her head, begins to write down her compositions (150–156). However, Viṭṭhal is caught out by Jñāneśvar and eventually tells Jñāneśvar He is writing down Janī’s verses, which makes Jñāneśvar laugh (162). Thus, Mahīpati validates the textual recording of the compositions attributed to Janī through the actions and presence of both Viṭṭhal and Jñāneśvar. Mahīpati then narrates how Viṭṭhal and Jñāneśvar go to Nāmdev’s house to tell him how much God loves Janī but finding a gathering of *sants* they decide to introduce Janī to the community. Goṇāī sends Rājāī to fetch Janī from making dung cakes and after washing her hands Janī joins the gathering. Jñāneśvar describes how he witnessed Viṭṭhal writing down Janī’s compositions and Viṭṭhal replies:

‘writing down Janī’s verses has not diminished me at all (188). I take an oath, witnessed upon your feet, that Janī’s Prakrit [Marathi] speech must be known as charming (*svāda*) and delightful (*rasa*)’ (189). I, Govind, take the paper of pure being and write of my own delights: inner happiness and the realisation of knowledge (190). Whoever reads Janī’s words, I will await them in the courtyard’, he so mouthed. From Nāma’s house the Discus-Holder said (191): ‘He who continually sings Janī’s verses will have no difficulties in their domestic life (*sansār*). At the end I will certainly lead him to absorption in the Divine (*sāyujyā*)’ (192).

(BVJ 21.189–193, my translation)

Thus Mahīpati establishes Janī’s compositions in Marathi as sanctioned by God and as spiritually efficacious. Janī is then accepted into the community of *sants* that includes other householders: Kabīr,²⁶ Cokhāmeḷā, Rohidās, Sajjan the Paṭhān [Muslim], Bayā the butcher, the leatherworker and Bhil tribeswoman,²⁷ Mukundarāj the door-opener, Goṇāī, Rājāī and Nāma (194–197). The final part of Janī’s biography affirms her status as an *avatāra* and member of the community of *sants*. Jñāneśvar questions Janī and she discloses that in each descent she had come to serve Viṭṭhal as Kṛṣṇa (198–203; see Novetzke 2008:70). In the concluding segment Viṭṭhal assigns a scribe for each *sant* apart from Nāmdev (205ff) saying: ‘Rukmiṇī’s Husband will write down the words of Nāma’s Janī’ (209). Thus, having allocated the scribes the Discus-Holder said to Jñānadev, ‘Now, you should have no inhibition in listening to Janī’s *abhaṅgas*’ (210).²⁸ Janī is here presented as a poet and *sant* rather than just a *dāsī* (213) within the domestic setting of Nāmdev’s home, the suggestion seeming to be that she can be both. Novetzke suggests that the metaphor of all the *sants* residing together indicates the interaction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ in *bhakti* (2008:70) but it also highlights *satsaṅg*, which is an important element in *bhakta* and in *caritra*, and Janābāī’s place within the community of *sants* who are worthy of reverence. It is worth reiterating that Mahīpati places Janī in a *paramparā* that portrays her as Nāmdev’s disciple, and connects her with Jñāneśvar and the Nāth *panth*: Matsyendranāth – Gorakṣa – Śāmbhava – Advayanand – Prabhava – Gahini – Nivr̥tti – Jñānadev – Visoba – Nāmdev – Janī (BVJ 22.133–37). Thus, Janī appears to fit the phase of ‘initiation’ that Ramanujan argues the lives of women *sants* display.

Mahīpati’s biography seems to present Janī as a woman for whom domestic work is unavoidable rather than one who is a domestic servant according to Novetzke (2008:69). Conversely, I think that Mahīpati’s *caritra* highlights Janī’s position of domestic servitude: at the outset Janī is accepted by Nāmdev as a *dāsī*; Janī fulfils a service role even as an *avatāra*; Janī is a marginalised figure in the

²⁶ Kabīr (c.1398/1440–1518) is presented by Mahīpati in the *Bhaktavijaya* (5, 6, 7, 11). It is unlikely that the lifetimes or dates of Kabīr and Janī coincide as Nāmdev’s family is accepted as having taken *samādhi* in 1350 C.E. However, Novetzke notes that the connection between Kabīr and Nāmdev is important in northern India, which may be why Mahīpati connects Janī to Kabīr (2008:59). See Lorenzen 1991 for more on Mahīpati’s interpretation of the Kabīr legends.

²⁷ Abbott and Godbole do not mention the *cāmbhār* (leatherworker) or *bhillaṭī* (Bhil tribeswoman)—who was probably Śabarī/Shabari—but refer instead to ‘Kamal the gardener’ (1996:355), which may be a reference to Janābāī *abhaṅga* 172 (see Appendix B) or *abhaṅga* 9.1–3 in *Santa janābāīce aprakāśita abhaṅga samhitā* ‘The collection of *sant* Janābāī’s unpublished *abhaṅgas*’ (SSG 2:1397, 9.1–13): वैष्णव कबीर चोखा मेळा महार । निज तो चांभार रोहिदास ।१। सजन पठाणबच्चा तो कसाब । वैष्णव ते शुद्ध एकनिष्ट ।२। कमाल फुल्लारी मुकुंद झारेकारी । जिहीं देवद्वारी वस्ती केलि ।३। *vaiṣṇava kabīr cokhāmeḷā mahār/ nija to cāmbhār rohidāsa /1/ sajan paṭhāṇabaccā to kasāba/ vaiṣṇava te siddha ekaṇiṣṭa /2/ kamāl phullārī mukunda jhārekārī / jihī devadvārī vastī kelī /3/* Kabīr the Vaiṣṇava, Cokhāmeḷā the *mahār*; His own shoemaker Rohidās (1). Sajjan the young Paṭhān and butcher: they were pure and whole-hearted Vaiṣṇavas (2). Kamāl the florist, Mukund the sifter of goldsmith’s ashes who remained at the great door [of the temple] (3).

²⁸ The allocation of scribes appears to replicate Janābāī *abhaṅga* 271 (see Novetzke 2008:70, 259n.8, 78, 260n.9).

household until Viṭṭhal grants her favour; Goṇāī's harsh treatment of Janī, and Janī's performance of numerous domestic tasks within the domestic setting of Nāmdev's home highlights Janī's position as a *dāsī*. Interestingly, Mahīpati later adds a few verses relating how Viṭṭhal is exhausted by helping all his *bhaktas* with their tasks and outlines all the jobs Viṭṭhal has performed for Janī including grinding, fetching water, sweeping, washing clothes and pounding (BVJ 23.92–95).²⁹ Janī's marital status is not specified by Mahīpati but, as with Muktabāī, the lack of reference to husband and children may be taken to suggest that Janī was unmarried. However, Janī is portrayed as living a domestic life so she is clearly not a renouncer. Mahīpati's account presents no tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya* unlike the accounts relating to Nāmdev's female relatives. Significantly, Mahīpati marks Janī out as an *avatāra* like Muktabāī. However, Janī is presented as in service to Viṭṭhal as well as to the household where she was employed while Muktabāī is identified as Ādimāyā, the primeval female power. Nonetheless, Mahīpati clearly regards both these female figures as worthy of divine status which is possibly due to their connection with male *sants* who are regarded as the cornerstones of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, possibly due to their attributed compositions and possibly because they both represent 'unmarried' women within a householder context. Janābāī is a more typical Vārkarī *sant* than Muktabāī according to Vanita because Janī 'falls into the category of those *sants* whose low social status distanced them from the religious establishment, but whom god is believed to have favoured more highly...' (1989:55). Thus Janābāī's *caritra* intertwines low social status, the domestic setting and *bhakti* by portraying Viṭṭhal saving Janī from execution and by the metaphor of food sharing. However, Muktabai Maharaj suggested that nobody wants to narrate the incident of Viṭṭhal eating food with Janī because 'no one wants to acknowledge the greatness of these women *sants*. A woman can take care of everything but a man can't, a woman carries the burden of the whole of *sansār*. I don't say this because I am a woman but because I see it' (personal communication, 23rd March 2005). The lives of Goṇāī and Rājāī and Janī to a lesser extent clearly depict the burden of *sansār* as do the lives of other Vārkarī women *sants*. The lives of these figures imply the possibility of balancing domestic duties with devotion to god, stressing that, like the path of the renouncer, *sansār* might be full of difficulties and suffering but that one must nonetheless persist in dutiful and spiritual action.

2.4. *Soyarābāī and Nirmaḷābāī*

²⁹ See Janī *abhaṅgas* 80, 83, 85, 86, 87, 122, 124, 125, and 130 for a description of household tasks and Viṭṭhal helping her to bear her burdens (Appendix B).

It is generally accepted that Soyarābāi was Cokhāmeḷā's wife and that her brother Banka (the diminutive of Venkatesh) was married to Cokhāmeḷā's sister Nirmaḷā, and that these marriages probably came about due to Nāmdev's influence (Mokashi-Punekar 2005b:144).³⁰ Soyarābāi and Cokhāmeḷā are accepted as having lived in Mangalvedha (near Pandharpur) during the late-thirteenth to early-fourteenth century and as having had a son called Karmameḷā, while Nirmaḷā and Banka are associated with Mehunpur/Mehunpūrī, near Buldhānā (Zelliot 2005:157, 172, 2000a:190).³¹ Mahīpati makes no mention of Nirmaḷā and her husband in the *Bhaktavijaya* but does however refer to Cokhāmeḷā living in Pandharpur with his family (23.8); Cokhāmeḷā telling his wife that they are to go and live on the other side of the river (23.60) as the Brahmans of Pandharpur have banished Cokhā for entering the temple, and Cokhāmeḷā scolding his wife for spilling curds on Viṭṭhal (23.67; see Abbott and Godbole 1996:377ff).

Mahīpati states that Cokhāmeḷā 'lived indifferent all earthly things' and that one day while Cokhāmeḷā was eating God joined him and shared his meal. Cokhāmeḷā's wife spilled some curds on Vanamāḷī (Kṛṣṇa) while serving Him and Cokhāmeḷā rebukes his wife for soiling His *pītāmbara*. A priest who was passing thinks Cokhāmeḷā is taunting him as God would not eat with a Mahār so he slaps Cokhāmeḷā over the mouth. The priest then bathes in the river and enters the temple in Paṇḍharpūr where he sees that the Viṭṭhal-*mūrti*'s *pītāmbara* is soiled with curds and that the deity's cheek is swollen. The Brahman realises he has falsely persecuted Cokhāmeḷā and brings Cokhā into the temple to worship Viṭṭhal, and thus Cokhāmeḷā gained admittance to the temple always (BVJ 23.61–86). The incident of Cokhā's wife spilling curds on Kṛṣṇa/Viṭṭhal while serving Him appears to be a reversal of the stories in which Kṛṣṇa spills the *gopīs*' curds or butter, for which He has a great fondness, that appear in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10.9) and in the *Sūr Sagar* (see Hawley 1983). However, the story with its theme of food-sharing highlights the issue of caste commensality and caste discrimination which meant that Mahārs were barred from entering temples (see Chapter One). Mahīpati makes the point that God accepts everyone whatever their caste and thus Cokhāmeḷā is deemed a *sant* because Kṛṣṇa/Viṭṭhal shares his food and feels his sufferings as His own. Cokhāmeḷā's wife appears in a supporting, service role in Mahīpati's account but the effects of her actions are visible on the Viṭṭhal-*mūrti*, which suggests that God bears her sufferings too and reinforces Mahīpati's point about God accepting persons of any caste.

³⁰ See also Kadam 1998:77; Bhat 1998:88, and Zelliot 2005:154ff; 2010:76, 79.

³¹ For more on Karmameḷā see Kadam 1969; Gokhale-Turner 1981; Zelliot 1995:214–15, 2005a:149–156, 2010:81–85; Mokashi-Punekar 2005b:143–148;

Bhat states that Soyarābāi and Bankā's father was Kṛṣṇa and their mother was Bhima (1998:88). The names Kṛṣṇa and Bhima, like those of Muktabāi's parents Viṭṭhalpant and Rukmiṇī, may however be popular names for mythical rather than real parents (see Kiehnle 1997:40). Bhat and Gosāvī present Soyarābāi as Cokhāmeḷā's *mahārī* (wife). Bhat then says that while there is little reference to Soyarā's life-story she is known for serving her husband with exertion (*pati-sevā-prayatna*) and being a spiritual-seeker (*pāramārthika*). Gosāvī states that Soyarā had one son called Karmameḷā, that she lived on after Cokhāmeḷā's *samādhi* (as a widow) and that she wrote sixty-two famous *abhaṅgas* including one that says 'come give me *darśan* and I'll worship you along with the brick'.³² Bhat, Gosāvī and Abhyankar then go on to discuss the compositions attributed to Soyarābāi before concluding that Soyarābāi and Cokhāmeḷā overcame the difficulties [of being Mahārs] by praying to and worshipping Viṭṭhal. Gosāvī says Nirmaḷā came from Mehunpur near Mangalvedha and, like Bhat, refers to the importance of chanting the Name of God (see Chapter Five) that appears in Nirmaḷā's attributed compositions. Gosāvī states that Nirmaḷā composed twenty-four *abhaṅgas*, that her language is full of devotion which blesses the hearer or reader so one should read her *abhaṅgas* (Bhat 1998:88; Gosāvī 2000:811–13 and Abhyankar 1992:153–56ff). Bhat concludes that the two couples, Nirmaḷā and Bankā, and Soyarābāi and Cokhāmeḷā, as well as Soyarābāi's son Karmameḷā all produced *abhaṅgas* (1998). Zelliott picks up on this point as part of her discussion on the compositions relating to the story of Karmameḷā's birth as it is notable that a whole family is recorded as composing *abhaṅgas* (2005:149–155; 1999a:93–98). It is clear from this brief life-sketch that Soyarā and Nirmaḷā were low-caste, married women and therefore householders: Mahīpati and Bhat both depict Cokhāmeḷā's wife serving her husband. However, the *caritras* provide almost no biographical details about Soyarā and Nirmaḷā suggesting that these women are of little concern to the biographers even though some biographical details, like the story of Karmameḷā's birth, are depicted in compositions attributed to Soyarā and Nirmaḷā. It is possible that although there are compositions attributed to Soyarā and Nirmaḷā the lack of *caritra* for these figures played a role in their relative absence from the tradition. Mahīpati's stories about Cokhāmeḷā allude to his indifference (*vairāgya*) but do not explicitly draw attention to the tension between *vairāgya* and *grhastha* as the Cokhāmeḷā family is depicted living a householder life and therefore fit with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*'s successful construction as a householder path. However, the topic of *vairāgya* appears in other accounts by Mahīpati, like those relating to Banka and Vānka.

³² *Yeī yeī garuḍadhvajā* (Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 1, SSG 1:998) translated by Zelliott (2005:158).

2.5. *Banka and Vānka*

Mahīpati tells stories about Banka and Vānka but as the women have no compositions attributed to them it is probably best to understand them as *bhaktas* rather than *santakaviyatrīs*. Banka was the wife and Vānka the daughter of a Gujarati potter name Rākā Kumbhār, as mentioned above in relation to Nāmdev’s daughter Limbāī. The first story tells how the family’s cat and its kittens were miraculously saved from the potter’s oven. The whole family prayed for Viṭṭhal to save the kittens and fulfilled their promise that they would give everything away and go to Pandharpur to live in the company of the *sants* if the kittens came out alive. The second story relates how Vānka was splashed with water by Nāmdev’s daughter (probably Limbāī) while washing clothes in the river, which resulted in an argument between the girls that is discussed above. Limbāī said ‘you’re just a potter’s daughter ...’ and then both girls say, ‘My father...’. Limbāī goes home and tells Nāmdev what has happened and asks about Vānka. Nāmdev then asks Viṭṭhal about Vānka and Viṭṭhal tells him how the potter family have given up everything for the sake of three cats. Nāmdev, Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī go to inspect the family and see them collecting firewood but not taking the wood others have already set aside. Rukmiṇī puts down her gold bracelet but none of the family pick it up as they have given up such temptation. Consequently, Nāmdev, Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī appear to them (BVJ 17.7–98). Thus, this Gujarati family gained a place in the list of *sants* (Bhat 1998:93). However, Banka and Vānka are not widely remembered although the stories about them do suggest the importance of *kuṭumb* in the Vārkarī tradition. There are a number of other women mentioned by Mahīpati—for example the *kuṇbī* Hānsī (BVJ 54.18–35, 67–121; Abbott and Godbole 1996:314–322)—but like Banka and Vānka these women are not widely remembered. Significantly, this story depicts *vairāgya* but performed in a family group, which highlights two key features of Vārkarī *bhakti*: family and disinterested action.

2.6. *Bhāgū Mahārīṇ*

The *caritra* of Bhāgū Mahārīṇ in SSG states she was born in the *mahār* community, found her life enriched by devotion to the Lord and flourished as a poet, that her dates and life story are unknown, and that only two of her *abhaṅgas* are included in N.G. Joshi’s *Prācīna Gītabhāṇḍāra* ‘Treasury of Ancient Songs’ (Gosāvī 2005:816). There are five *abhaṅgas* attributed to Bhāgū Mahārīṇ in the SSG, which are discussed in the following chapter, but nothing more is related about Bhāgū Mahārīṇ. However, the inclusion of compositions attributed to Bhāgū Mahārīṇ in the Vārkarī corpus draws attention to the

inclusion of low-caste women among the community of *sants* and once again highlights the role of gender attribution in discursively forming the *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

2.7. *Kānhopātrā*

The story of Kānhopātrā's life appears in Mahīpati's *Bhaktavijaya* (BVJ 39.1–78, see Appendix C.2).³³ However, there are a few differences between Mahīpati's account and those of later biographers so a composite version of her *caritra* is presented below before discussing some issues raised by her biography.

Kānhopātrā was born in Maṅgaḷveḍha—a town fourteen miles south-east of Pandharpur—and was the daughter of Śāmā (BVJ 39.2) or Śyāma (Bhat 1998:56). Śyāma was 'a famous singer and dancer' (Bhat 1998) and a *veśya* 'prostitute' (Abhyankar 1992).³⁴ Mahīpati describes Kānhopātrā's youth and beauty saying that she was 'a beautiful gem (2). In looking at her beauty the heavenly attendants were ashamed. The creator had created none her equal in the three worlds (3). In her youth she learnt the art of singing and dancing. In looking at her Rambhā, Tilottamā and Menakā were all ashamed (4)'. These *apsarās* are celestial singers and dancers who are renowned for their everlasting beauty and eternal youth (Garg 1992:565–67). However, the *apsarās* also symbolise free or unattached women as their sexual services were employed by Indra to interrupt the concentration of ascetics who were attempting to weaken Indra's power (see Sheth 1992:14, 19, 20). Mahīpati is clearly likening Kānhopātrā to the *apsarās* due to her beauty, and her proficiency at singing and dancing.

The story goes that Śyāma insisted Kānhopātrā continue her profession and that Śyāma wanted Kānhopātrā to go to the palace of the Bādaśāhā 'Great King' (Bhat 1998). Mahīpati suggests that this was in the hope that Kānhopātrā's beauty would be rewarded with ornaments (BVJ 39.6–7, Abbott 1996:78), thus implying that Kānhopātrā would have performed as a courtesan.³⁵ However, Kānhopātrā did not fulfil this role or go to Bādaśāhā's court but instead became a *Viṭṭhal-bhakta*. In one version of the story

³³ For an alternative telling of the Kānhopātrā story see Kalpita (2009).

³⁴ Śyāma's exact status is unclear because if she was a singer and dancer of repute it is likely that she was in fact a *ganikā* 'courtesan' rather than a *veśya* 'prostitute' (Gupta 1987:272ff). Doniger calls a *veśya* 'a courtesan' and a *ganikā* 'a courtesan deluxe' and suggests that both terms suggest multiple sexual partners (2009:187n.1.3.17). The difference between the two is one between 'the earth and the sky' as only the most beautiful, talented and virtuous courtesans were called *ganikā*. A *ganikā* was regarded as 'the wealth and glory of the entire kingdom' for she was not only beautiful but educated. It is important to note that despite a *ganikā*'s extraordinary education and upbringing not all social conventions or 'customary modes of conduct' were discarded. Furthermore, the daughter of a *ganikā* had the right to study (Doniger 2003: xxix, 16). See Appendix C.2 n.8 for more on this topic.

³⁵ Kānhopātrā is regarded as a 'dancing girl' by Ranade (2003:190), Tulpule (1979:337) and Ramaswamy (2007:217); 'the daughter of a courtesan' by Zelliott (1999: 418, 424), Bhavalkar (1996:252n.4) and Khanolkar (1978:90); a 'courtesan' by Sellergren (1996:214, 226) and a 'prostitute' by Aklujkar (1999:31) and Abbott and Godbole (1996:78).

this is because Kānhopātrā was so in love with a man that she focussed on him rather than her singing. When Kānhopātrā discovered he had deceived her—for he was married—their relationship ended and Kānhopātrā lost interest in everything (Bhat 1998). However, the traditional account of Kānhopātrā’s life does not include this amorous ‘householder’ prelude. Baba Maharaj Manmadkar told me that Kānhopātrā was keen to escape the sheltered life she had led and to sing for pleasure not financial reward:

Kānhopātrā had never been let out on the streets or allowed to have contact with new people. One day her mother had gone to the Bijapur court to dance and sing. This was during the time of the *kārttikī vārī* and there were a lot of Vārkarīs going from Mangalvedha to Pandharpur. Kānhopātrā wondered what the noise/singing and [the shouts of] ‘Viṭṭhal-Rakhumāī’ were, she looked out of the window and the servants taking care of her told her not to look and to close the window. Kānhopātrā asked ‘if the whole world can sing why can’t I? Have I done something wrong?’ The servants could not really stop her and said she could go and see [what was happening].

(Personal communication, 10th July 2006)

Kānhopātrā saw a group of Vārkarīs on their way to Paṇḍharpūr and asked the Vārkarīs (BVJ 39.11), or an old man from the *diṇḍī* (Bhat 1998), where they were going. The Vārkarīs explained they were going to Paṇḍharpūr to see the Viṭṭhal (BVJ 39.8–11). Kānhopātrā enquired if Viṭṭhal would accept her and was told that he would for he had accepted the *mahār* Cokhāmeḷā and the sinner Ajāmīl. Consequently, Kānhopātrā decided to go to Paṇḍharpūr (BVJ 39; Bhat 1998). Kānhopātrā sang *abhaṅgas*, accompanying herself on the *vīṇā*, as she travelled with the *diṇḍī* to Paṇḍharpūr (BVJ 39.18, Abbott and Godbole 1996:79) and people came to listen to her as she had a good singing voice and so respect for Kānhopātrā grew (Bhat 1998). Interestingly, most of the depictions of Kānhopātrā show her holding a *vīṇā* near an image of Viṭṭhal. Once in Pandharpur, Kānhopātrā prostrated herself before the temple door, where she is said to have uttered these words:

‘Hearing of your fame I have come as a supplicant to you Viṭṭhal’ (19). ‘You are generous, patient, handsome, perfect and possess the six attributes of divinity, [so I have come to] stay at your place as a supplicant to you O Viṭṭhal’ (20). ‘Ajāmeḷa and Gaṇikā came and you accepted them in a moment.’³⁶ The *sants* have told of this in writing, so I come to you as a supplicant (21). My customary occupation was bodily sexual pleasure and my place was known. I have abandoned all on your account and supplicate myself to you O Generous One (22). Now accept me as your supplicant O Lord’ ... (23).

(BVJ 39.19–23; Mahīpati 1850; my translation)

Mahīpati seems to be drawing from compositions attributed to Kānhopātrā in referring to Ajāmeḷa and the *gaṇikā* (*abhaṅga* 12), Kānhopātrā’s occupation and seeking protection (*abhaṅga* 7) but the rest of the statement does not appear to correspond with the poetry attributed to Kānhopātrā (see Appendix B).

The story continues with an evil man (BVJ 39.25ff) or ‘people’ (Bhat 1998) going to the Bādaśāhā and telling him that Kānhopātrā had become a *bhakta* and was in Paṇḍharpūr. The Bādaśāhā

³⁶ Mahīpati seems to be drawing from *abhaṅga* 12 in referring to Ajāmeḷa and the *gaṇikā* but the rest of the statement attributed to Kānhopātrā (v.21–23) does not correspond with the poetry attributed to Kānhopātrā, see Appendix B.

then sent men to get Kānhopātrā, suggesting she may have been promised to him in some way as well as being a beautiful, talented and desirable woman. The men tell Kānhopātrā she is to go to the Bādaśāhā and that failure to comply will mean forcible removal. Kānhopātrā tells God she ‘felt like a deer caught by a tiger’ (Bhat 1998).³⁷ Kānhopātrā then tells the men she will leave with them after she has performed *namaskāra* (BVJ 39.25–33). Kānhopātrā prays to Viṭṭhal and asks him to absorb her into his *svarūpa*, as an attributed Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* suggests (22). Kānhopātrā asks the men for another day and in the morning goes to the temple, accompanied by the men. Kānhopātrā prays at Viṭṭhal’s feet and asks him to take her within his *svarūpa*. The request is granted and Kānhopātrā is absorbed into Viṭṭhal’s *mūrti* (BVJ 39.44), *prāṇotkramaṇa* occurs (Baba Maharaj Manmadkar, personal communication 10th July 2006) or Viṭṭhal takes Kānhopātrā to *vaikuṅṭha* (Bhat 1998).

Bhat’s version of the story has an alternative ending in which the Bādaśāhā’s men from Bīdar tell him that Kānhopātrā had died at Viṭṭhal’s feet.³⁸ The Bādaśāhā then goes to the temple and sees the deceased Kānhopātrā after which he looks at Viṭṭhal. The Bādaśāhā is so touched that he becomes a Viṭṭhal-devotee and goes on the *vārī* every year. The story concludes with the Vārkarīs ‘giving Kānhopātrā *agni*’ or performing her funeral rites rather than burying her (Bhat 1998:56–58). Both Mahīpati’s and Bhat’s account show the transformation of the Bādaśāhā, which may suggest the use of Kānhopātrā’s memory as a device of history to serve subaltern resistance (see Novetzke 2008:163, 247). Novetzke argues that there is a direct connection between devotional efficacy and temporal power in seventeenth-to nineteenth-century narratives pertaining to Nāmdev (2008:180, 182ff). Thus it is possible that such a motif, which is also present in the sacred biographies of other *sants* (see W. Smith 2000), not only signals ‘an upturned power relationship’ (Novetzke 2008:190) but the transformative power of *bhakti* for non-Hindus.

Mahīpati relates that rather than dying Kānhopātrā united or merged with Viṭṭhal at Pandharpur:

...the Compassionate One took Kānhopātrā within (45). Kānho was absorbed through his lap and the evidence [of this] continues to the present day. Those who go to Paṇḍharī in veneration see this for themselves (46). Her corpse was taken at that time and interred by the southern door. Immediately a *taraṇī* tree sprang up there (47).

(BVJ 39.45–47, Mahīpati 1850; my translation)

This mergence implies that Kānhopātrā fits Ramanujan’s fifth phase in the life of a woman *sant*: ‘marrying the Lord’ or merging with God in a temple (1982:322). However, Sellergren points out that

³⁷ This is line two of the famous verse ‘*nako devarāyā anta pāhū ātā*’, see Appendix B.

³⁸ Tulpule also suggests the Bādaśāhā was ruler of Bedar (1979:347)

Kānhopātrā may have ‘auspiciously merged into the image of Viṭhobā in a marriage with the Lord, committed suicide, or as one scholar [Mundalay] has suggested, even been murdered for her lifelong rebelliousness’ (1992:226, 236 n.20; see Ranade 2003:10). The theme of merging with the deity is also present in the Mīrābāi biography as Mīrā is said to have merged with the Kṛṣṇa *mūrti* at Dvarka. Mukta suggests two stark alternatives to this transcendental end attributed to Mīrā: self-destruction or destruction at the hands of the Rana (1994:225–6). In the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* the ‘merging’ trope suggests that one may follow the *bhakti* path while fulfilling one’s duties as God will save anyone in need.

There are striking similarities in the story of Kānho and Mīrā: the Rana and Bādaśāhā both send emissaries to bring Mīrā/Kānho to them (BVJ 39.31, 34), both women sought refuge in the temple (BVJ 39.34) and are said to have merged with the *mūrti* (BVJ 39.44). However, the biographies differ in that Mīrā’s merging was not witnessed and *sants* and priests are said to have witnessed Kānho’s ultimate salvation (BVJ 39.45). Mīrābāi’s body was not discovered, suggesting she was eliminated by the Rana’s men according to Mukta or suggesting that Mīrā slipped away from the temple to live anonymously in southern or eastern India (1994:226–227; see Goetz 1966:33–40). Kānho’s body was discovered and buried according to Mahīpati (BVJ 39.47).

Harlan proposes that Mīrā’s death validates her character and confirms her claim of divine marriage for when Mīrā’s body dissolves into stone she miraculously unites with her beloved thus connoting *sati* immolation (1992:211–12; see Mukta 1994:16). According to Mukta, the story of Mīrā’s absorption into the *mūrti* indicates the ‘ultimate negation of worldly relations’ and the ‘annihilation of self’, which are key tenets of *bhakti* but merging with the deity is not advocated by *bhakti*:

Bhakti demands a social relationship. This requires that the two within the relationship remain separate beings in order to experience the presence of the other. Bhakti does not require the bhakta blots herself out in the other...The bhakta seeks opportunities to demonstrate a love through bhakti. A flight from this—to a mergence with the Ultimate—is a flight away from acting out this relationship.

(Mukta 1994:227)

Mukta’s argument that mergence is contrary to *bhakti* raises an interesting issue with regard to the interment of Kānho’s body. Traditionally only *sannyāsīs* (and babies) are buried as part of the initiation ritual for *sannyāsīs* involves the performance of their own death rites in which they symbolically die to the world. Furthermore, with *samādhi*, ‘union, the ultimate state of mystical practice, all dualities collapse and the bounded individual self merges with the divine Self’ declares Narayan (1997:184; see Khandelwal 2004:1). Consequently, Kānho’s interment might indicate her non-compliance with the tenets

of *bhakti* as suggested by Mukta and the interpretation of her ‘death’ as the *samādhi* of a *sannyāsinī*. However, Kānhopātrā’s interment might also signal her compliance with the tenets of *bhakti* and signify that the spiritual life is equal to *sannyāsa* and that such a life is to be found in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

However, the story of Kānhopātrā does not end with her interment in the manner of an ascetic as there is the matter of the *taraṭī* tree (BVJ 39.47). Mahīpati states ‘the Brahmans told the king that the sacred city of Paṇḍharī was ancient and that all the gods became trees and remained there’ (BVJ 39.77), which may be an idea taken from the Jñāneśvar *abhaṅgas* (see Dhare 2011:18). There is a possibility that Kānhopātrā is being honoured as a *vrkṣadevatā* ‘tree goddess’, which may have a connection to the Diṇḍīrvan forest/sacred grove that surrounds Paṇḍharpūr and the auspicious power of nature. Furthermore, the tree may be a motif of nature worship or Kānhopātrā as a semi-divine being, with the tree marking a transition from worldly to sacred space (see Foulston 2002:31, 56, 61). The *vrkṣadevatā* is not an object of worship but one of veneration as the *vrkṣadevatā* is invoked due to an association with fertility so women invoke her in order to find a husband or conceive a child (see Fowler-Smith 2009). It is possible that Kānhopātrā, despite being unmarried and childless, is so invoked as Vārkarīs tie ribbons and so on to the tree in the hope of having their wishes fulfilled.

Mahīpati’s account can be read as censoring *kāma* and advocating *bhakti* as he appears to be concerned with the notion that God can transform and redeem the lowest of the low: Kānhopātrā representing the *gaṇikā* and the Bādaśāhā as the embodiment of sin (see Chapter Five for more on this theme). It is therefore possible that Mahīpati was offering a message of *bhakti* and hope for a changed society. In Mahīpati’s account Kānhopātrā is obviously not a householder but neither is she clearly depicted as a renouncer, despite the interment of her body, as Mahīpati makes it plain from the start that Kānhopātrā was destined to be a *veśyā* and *kalāvantiṇa* (BVJ 39.2). Kānhopātrā’s *caritra* relates a story about the sexualised female body and illustrates a woman’s vulnerability to male desire (*kāma*). Kānhopātrā rejects a life of worldly relations based on desire to live as a *bhakta*, which is one reason Mahīpati might connect her with *sannyāsa*, but her acceptance of *bhakti* did not allow Kānhopātrā to live without concern for her physical safety. Kānhopātrā is pursued and persecuted due to her youth and beauty, which highlights the threat that female sexuality poses to non-*grhastha* women. Kānhopātrā’s mērgence, as the ultimate annihilation of the self, may be interpreted as a means of denying and transcending sexuality but also as a means of escaping violation (see Chakravarti 1999:26–27). The issue of physical safety and mērgence also appear in the Sakhūbāī *caritra* suggesting that unification or death

may be the only option for women undergoing bodily suffering. However, a different form of suffering occurred to the child-widow who was humiliated by having her hair shaved off, her marriage bangles removed, and wearing a *sari* that identified her widowed status (Kosambi 1998:95).

2.8. Gaṅgabāī

Gaṅgabāī (c.1599–1665 C.E.) is thought to have been born in Rashin to a Deśastha *ṛgvedic* Brahman family. She is said to have been widowed at the age of sixteen after which she spent her time at *bhajan-kīrtan* and singing discourses of Jñāneśvar’s works at night to large audiences. Gaṅgabāī is said to have undertaken a pilgrimage towards Varanasi on which she met Gaibināth, a disciple of Satyāmalnāth, who initiated her into the Nāth *panth* and gave her the name Guptanāth.³⁹ The compositions attributed to Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth use the *mudrikā* ‘Gupta’ (see Appendix B). Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth is said to have initiated Uddhav—the son of Malhar Naik Thipse—who became known as Udbodhnāth and who accompanied her to Varanasi (Shrotriya 1992:46–48). The *Jñānakaivalya* (1761) by Cintāmaṇināth provides Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth’s *guru paramparā*: Ādināth – Matsyendranāth – Gorakhanāth – Gahinīnāth – Nivṛttināth – Dīyānanāth (Jñāneśvar) – Satyāmalnāth – Gaibināth – Guptanāth (Gaṅgabāī) – Udbodhnāth – Keśarīnāth – Śivādīnāth – Cintāmaṇināth (Dhere 2001:9). The *Jñānakaivalya* also suggests that Guptanāth and Udbodhanāth bathed at Toke (Toka Pravara Sangam), the confluence of the Godavari river and its tributary the Pravara, in the Ahmednagar district (Dhere 2001:9; Molesworth 1857:538). The *samādhis* of Guptanāth and Udbodhnāth are at Rashin. Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth is believed to have considered Jñāneśvar as her *guru* and it is this tenuous connection that links Gaṅgabāī with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* (Shrotriya 1992:46–48). Consequently, Gaṅgabāī may be better regarded as a Nāth, which may be why she is largely ignored by Vārkarīs.

Gaṅgabāī’s biography raises several interesting issues such as her child-marriage and her asceticism being due to her widowhood. Widow remarriage was forbidden for Brahman women like Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth and widows were required to lead an existence of poverty and austerity without the status of renouncer so one can easily imagine that widows would choose to become ascetics as renunciation provided a culturally sanctioned path (see Khandelwal 2004:11, 192; Pechilis 2004:8). Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth’s *caritra* also draws attention to the possibility that during the seventeenth century

³⁹ Satyāmalnāth’s birth was believed to be due to Jñāneśvar’s blessing and to have occurred about two hundred years after Jñāneśvar’s *samādhi* (Dhere 2001:9). Satyāmalnāth is thought to have received initiation from Jñāneśvar in a dream. Satyāmalnāth composed the *Siddhāntarahasya*, known as the *Lalitaprabandha* (c. 1600), and *Navaratnamālā* (Tulpule 1979:347, 420).

women in the Nāth *panth* were able to perform as *kīrtankārīs* and act as *gurus* to male disciples in contrast to the image of women presented in Vārkarī *caritras* like those of Sakhübāī. The reason that Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth's *caritra* and a few attributed compositions are included in this thesis is to draw attention to the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition. Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth is a woman who is connected to the Vārkarīs via her *guru paramparā* but who is probably not accepted or included by the Vārkarīs due to her overt connection to the Nāth *panth* rather than the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. The epitome of the good wife who also suffered due to marriage is depicted in the story of Sakhübāī who suffers from domestic abuse but is miraculously saved by God.

2.9. Sakhübāī

The story of Sakhübāī's life is recounted in the *Santa Lilāmṛta* (1757) by Mahīpati (Gupte 1994:45–47), the *Kalyāṇ Sant-Aḍaka* (Poddar 1994:501–503), the *Sakala Sant Caritra Gāthā* (Bhat 1998:91–92) and online (Anon 'Sakhubai').⁴⁰ Additionally, Bhavalkar presents a sketch and a women's folk song about Sakhū's life, which she memorised having heard the song from her mother (1996:241–42; 252, n.7).⁴¹ The story states that Sakhū's parents were poor Vārkarīs who went to Paṇḍharpūr [for Āṣādhī *ekādaśī*] every year (Bhat 1998:91ff). One year at Karāḍ (Poddar 1994),⁴² Mhālsā⁴³ the wife of Viśvambhar Bhaṭ—a Brahman moneylender—saw Sakhū [with her parents on the *vārī*] and decided she wanted Sakhū to marry her son Digambar. Mhālsā asked Sakhū's father whether a marriage had been planned for Sakhū and he told Mhālsā that he did not have the means to marry Sakhū. Mhālsā thus arranged for Sakhū and Digambar to marry. Sakhū's father advised her to remember God and continue to pray and worship Him even though she was joining an affluent family. [After the wedding] Sakhū's parents returned to their own place even though she did not want them to leave. Sakhū was [later] told by a passing Vārkarī—presumably on his/her return from Paṇḍharpūr—that her parents had died, due to cholera, on their return home. Consequently, Sakhū told Viṭṭhal that he was now her *māher* and *sāsar* (Bhat 1998).

Sakhū was skilful in the house and so she got on with her mother-in-law at first. However, this situation changed due to local gossip (Bhat 1998) and/or because her husband and in-laws were cruel,

⁴⁰ Unfortunately, I have not managed to locate and examine a copy of Mahīpati's *Santa Lilāmṛta*. There are also other versions of the story online (for example: The Hindu Universe 2009–2014; Explore Maharashtra 2012).

⁴¹ 'On the bank of the Kṛṣṇa, in the town of Karhāḍ there was a holy settlement called Brahmaṇpurī. An evil Brāhmaṇ lived there; What great fortune for his daughter-in-law, Sakhū! Leaving her waterpot at the river, Sakhū went to Paṇḍharpur. Beating her and hitting her, he brought Sakhū back. He locked her in a room' (Bhavalkar 1996:241).

⁴² Karāḍ is a town in the Sātārā district of Maharashtra that lies on the confluence of the Koyna and Krishna rivers.

⁴³ 'Mhālsā' is the name of the wife of the Maharashtrian deity Khaṇḍobā and refers to a 'huge, burly, termagant woman' (Molesworth 1857:673).

cunning and egotistical (Poddar 1994). [While working] Sakhū chanted the names of God (*nāmasmaraṇa*, *nāmasaṅkīrtan*)⁴⁴ and thus some of the other women said she was like a beggar always saying something—in other words she was irritating. Consequently, Mhālsā told Sakhū to stop chanting the Name and began to harass her (Bhat 1998; see Gupte 1994:45–7). It appears that Mhālsā did not give Sakhū enough to eat (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998) and physically abused her even though Sakhū continued to perform her household duties (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998). Mhālsā was a powerful figure so even though Sakhū’s father-in-law and husband sympathised with her neither of them were able to do anything to stop her being harassed (Bhat 1998). Sakhū never retaliated and swallowed her blood as she considered this treatment as the fruit of her own behaviour and as God’s blessing (Poddar 1994; see Gupte 1994:45–7).

Once Sakhū went to the river to wash clothes (Bhat 1998) or fill water jars (Poddar 1994) and saw a group of Vārkarīs passing (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998). This incident has similarities to the Kānhopātrā *caritra* and Swami Radhika Anand suggested that the *vārī*, as ‘singing, chanting [and] free movement’, appealed to both these *sants* (personal communication, 7th March 2005) in much the same way that Vimala and Vimalabai said the *vārī* was a holiday from their everyday lives (see Chapter Two). Sakhū ‘felt drawn to Paṇḍharpūr’ on the eleventh day of Āṣāḍh (Bhavalkar 1996:241, 252n.8) because she met an old couple who had been friends of her parents (Gupte 1994:45–7). Sakhū recalled all the times she had been on the *vārī*, began singing *abhaṅgas* and left her washing behind (Bhat 1998) in order to join the pilgrims and take *darśan* of Viṭṭhal (Poddar 1994). However, a neighbour (Poddar 1994) and/or local lady (Bhat 1998) told Sakhū’s mother-in-law [that Sakhū had joined the *vārī*] and she sent her son—Digambar—to bring Sakhū back home (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998) and beat Sakhū (Poddar 1994) or the *diṇḍī*’s *vīṇā*-player (Bhat 1998). Sakhū was then tied up (Bhat 1998) in a room or in an underground cellar (Gupte 1994:45–7) so she could not escape (Poddar 1994) and denied food and drink (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998). Sakhū prayed (Poddar 1994; Gupte 1994) internally asking God if he could hear her and if she could visit Paṇḍharpūr again (Bhat 1998):

O God if my eyes could look upon feet just once and have *darśan* it would be easier for me to leave my body. You are the only one I have and however I am, I am yours. O God, please listen to my small request.

(Poddar 1994)

Viṭṭhal asked Rukmiṇī to lend him her clothes and went to Karāḍ (Gupte 1994). Thus Sakhū’s prayers were answered and Viṭṭhal took Sakhū’s form so she could go to Paṇḍharpūr (Poddar 1994; Bhat

⁴⁴ Apparently Sakhū sang ‘Mother is dead, father is dead; please take care of my Viṭṭhal’ (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 58, Appendix B).

1998). Bhat states that Viṭṭhal cured Sakhū [of starvation] by feeding her *amṛta* while Poddar declares that while Sakhū was freed from her ties of rope all her bonds were released and she was liberated (see Bhavalkar 1996:242). Gupte states that Viṭṭhal broke the ropes tying Sakhū and told her that her father's old friend was waiting for her and that a guide called Garuḍa would take her to him by the shortest route. Viṭṭhal transformed into a coolie and carried Sakhū on his back to Pandharpur to meet her father's old friend on the outskirts of the city (1994:45–7).

The story continues with Viṭṭhal standing in for Sakhū. Bhavalkar suggests that this part of the story is 'a miracle narrative' made up later to glorify Sakhū (1996:241). Viṭṭhal performs Sakhū's daily tasks and her recitation of the Viṭṭhal's name ceased, making Sakhū's mother-in-law think Sakhū was 'normal' (Bhat 1998). Although Sakhū's in-laws and her husband used foul language Sakhū-Viṭṭhal, like a good wife, tolerated everything for fifteen days (Poddar 1994), which was presumably the length of the *vārī*. Sakhū's husband realised that Sakhū-Viṭṭhal had not eaten or drunk for fifteen days so he went and removed her bonds and allowed her to wash before feeding her. Viṭṭhal stayed until Sakhū returned so that she would not get into trouble and he acted as a proper *pativrata*, which made everyone favour her (Poddar 1994; see Gupte 1994).

Meanwhile, Sakhū was in Paṇḍharpūr—having forgotten that she was really tied up (Poddar 1994)—where she bathed in the Candrabhāga (Gupte 1994; Bhat 1998), participated in *bhajan* and *kīrtan* (Bhat 1998) and took *darśan* of Pāṇḍuraṅga/Viṭṭhal (Poddar 1994; Gupte 1994). It appears that Sakhū's spirit/soul left her body (Bhat 1998) or she died (Gupte 1994) while she was at the deity's feet (Bhat 1998) meditating on the Name and that she became one with Him (Poddar 1994). This unitive element bears an uncanny resemblance to the Kānhopātrā and Mīrābāī *caritras* suggesting that mergence is the only option for women undergoing bodily suffering. There were some people—residents (Poddar 1994) or Vārkarīs (Bhat 1998)—who recognised Sakhū and took care of the body (Bhat 1998) and cremated Sakhū (Poddar 1994; Gupte 1994).

However, Rukmiṇī went to the cremation ground (Poddar 1994) and—with her *māyā* 'creative energy' (Bhat 1998)—raised Sakhū from the dead (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998). It seems that Rukmiṇī brought Sakhū back to life because she [Rukmiṇī] was in an awkward position as her husband [Viṭṭhal] had become a daughter-in-law (Poddar 1994) and that because Viṭṭhal was serving in Sakhū's place he was not in the *mūrti* when Sakhū took *darśan* (Bhat 1998) and thus Sakhū could not have really merged with Viṭṭhal. Rukmiṇī tells Sakhū that her wish to die in Pandharpur has been fulfilled and that Sakhū

should now return home (Poddar 1994). Sakhū returned to Karāḍ (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998) with other Vārkarīs in two days (Poddar 1994), suggesting that Sakhū had travelled to and returned from Pandharpur with a particular *diṇḍī*. Sakhū then went to the river—the place she had departed from—and encountered Viṭṭhal-Sakhū (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998). Sakhū touched Viṭṭhal’s feet and expressed her gratitude to him (Bhat 1998). Viṭṭhal spoke to Sakhū sweetly, gave her the water pot and vanished (Poddar 1994). Sakhū brought the water home and continued her domestic chores and was astounded by the transformation in the family (Poddar 1994).

A villager who had seen Sakhūbāī die (Poddar 1994)—Govind Bhaṭ [the *brahman*] who had cremated Sakhū (Bhat 1998; see Gupte 1994)—went to the family and told them what had happened to Sakhūbāī (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998). The in-laws told him that Sakhūbāī had not been to Paṇḍharpūr and called Sakhūbāī to ask her what had happened (Poddar 1994). Sakhū was questioned (Poddar 1994; Bhat 1998) by Govind Bhaṭ (Bhat 1998) and she recounted what had happened (Poddar 1994). The family put Sakhū back in the cellar and mistreated her for being a witch (Gupte 1994), which suggests Sakhū was regarded as threatening in some way (see Bynum 1988:23). The family said that if what had happened was true Viṭṭhal should give them *darśan*. Viṭṭhal appeared in response to Sakhū’s prayers and the family all prostrated themselves [at his feet] (Bhat 1998; see Gupte 1994). The family thus repented, affirmed God had come in the form of Sakhūbāī and that they had been cruel to tie God up (Poddar 1994). Interestingly, there is no mention in either version of the story that the family might have regretted tying up Sakhū. However, Poddar states that the family began treating Sakhū with respect and started singing God’s praises. It was thus that Sakhūbāī got her husband and in-laws to be favourable towards her (Poddar 1994). This suggests that one way a young, married woman could avoid harsh treatment at the hands of her in-laws is through divine intervention elicited through piety and devotion. The message of Sakhū’s *caritra*, like that of figures such as Janī, is that divine intervention is possible within the domestic setting and that women do not need to leave an oppressive domestic situation. Consequently, the Sakhū *caritra* seems to correspond with Sangari’s typical convention of persecution and miraculous escape. The story of Sakhūbāī’s life concludes saying that she continued to work for the family throughout her life (Poddar 1994)—Sakhū thus remained a *pativrata* who performed her *strīdharmā*—and that she spent her time chanting the Name (Bhat 1998; Poddar 1994), meditating and singing *bhajans* like any good Vārkarī.

Sakhū’s story raises some interesting issues. Mhāḷsā is represented as the harsh mother-in-law and powerful matriarch. Many of the nineteenth-century autobiographies of Marathi women highlight the

cruelty high-caste child-brides suffered at the hands of their mothers-in-law and Sakhū seems to suffer in a similar manner (see Kosambi 1998). Sakhū has no status or authority in the household, is subservient to her mother-in-law and fulfils a service role, much like Janī, but also has no means of alleviation as she has no *māher* to visit (see Junghare 1998:113). Traditionally Sakhū and Digambar's wedding would have been in the bride's village but for some reason Sakhū, like Janī, loses her connection with her natal place and maternal family (see Raheja and Gold 1996:94). Thus Viṭṭhal is portrayed as Sakhū's *māher* and *sāsar*, her maternal home and refuge as well as her marital home. While Viṭṭhal is often represented as mother, father or parent His designation as Sakhū's *māher* and *sāsar* draws attention to Sakhū's status as an orphan and her subsequent isolation.

Sakhū is represented as a woman who, despite not being attracted to worldly life, performs her domestic role perfectly (Bhavalkar 1996:241). The Sakhū *caritra* clearly relates to *grhastha* as it does not make any mention or reference to *sannyāsa*. At the start of the story Sakhū is identified as a poor Vārkarī who marries a wealthy Brahman. Sakhū is therefore represented as fulfilling the social requirements of marriage and householdership as well as the religious path (*strīdharmā*) of being a good wife (*pativrata*). Sakhū is not represented as desiring to live a non-householder life but rather to be able to fulfil her duties in combination with *bhakti*. Sakhūbāi is therefore presented as an exemplar of a *grhiṇī* living out *bhakti*. However, her marital family and in particular her mother-in-law are averse to Sakhū's commitment to *bhakti* and oppose her participation in the *vārī*. Consequently, Sakhū is forcibly restrained and left to starve but Sakhū is miraculously saved by Viṭṭhal. The story highlights the fact that Sakhū is not a happily married woman and that for her *sansār* is a life of domestic toil and domestic abuse that is only made bearable by *bhakti*. The fact that her unswerving devotion may have cost Sakhū her life is evaded in the *caritra* by the miracle narrative which draws attention to the power of *bhakti* to convert sinners. This theme is apparent in Mahīpati's Kānhopātrā *caritra* but is also present in the compositions attributed to the *sants* and will be discussed in Chapter Five. This *caritra* seems to demonstrate that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* had resolved the *sannyāsa-grhastha* tension to such a degree that it advocated a completely householder life for women by the time Mahīpati's *Santa Lilāmṛta* was composed in the mid-eighteenth century.

2.10. *Āvalī/Jijabai*

There are several stories in the *Bhaktavijaya* pertaining to Tukārām's relationship with his, unnamed, second wife. Only Mahīpati names her as Āvalī or Jijāi in the *Bhaktalīlāmṛta* (1774) where he expands

upon Tukārām’s life (28.31).⁴⁵ The first time that one encounters Āvalī in the *Bhaktavijaya* is when Tukārām advises her not to keep all the grain, purportedly, given to him by Sivaji. Mahīpati narrates how Tukārām tells his wife only to keep provisions for one day and to distribute the rest to the Brahmans. (This bears similarities to Nāmdev’s distribution of the wealth Rājāi had received from Keśava). The account states that Āvalī became enraged saying: ‘I am unfortunate. A sack of grain came to our house without anyone’s asking for it. But he won’t let the children eat it. If it is distributed to the Brahmans, what am I to do? How shall I conduct the family affairs’ (BVJ 48.180–181, Abbott and Godbole 1996:215)? Tukārām replies philosophically, ‘How can we have a bigger share than what is stored up for us in our fate?’ (BVJ 48.182). Once again the wife of a *sant* is presented as concerned with material comfort while the male *sant* is portrayed as indifferent, highlighting the tension between *gr̥hastha* and *vairāgya* that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is attempting to resolve.

This exchange between husband and wife is taken from a series of Tukārām compositions entitled *strī upadeśa* or ‘Advice to Wife’, in which Tukārām comments on Āvalī as she talks and relates how he advised her to change (Aklujkar 1999:21). Tukārām refers to *strī* ‘woman’, *pisī* ‘madwoman’, *lānsī* ‘slut’ or *rāṇḍa* ‘bitch’ in these verses but never calls his wife by name (Aklujkar 1999:13, 2005:117ff; see Chitre 1991:42–49; Fraser 2000:41–43; BVJ 48.178–182). According to Aklujkar, these *abhaṅgas* portray Āvalī as a ‘sharp-tongued nag’ and the verses in which one hears Āvalī’s attributed speech are emotional and full of drama. The speeches attributed by Tukārām to his wife give a view of the *sant* from his wife’s perspective and reveal the tensions that existed between the couple, and between the domestic and spiritual spheres (1999:21–22). The *abhaṅgas* all begin with the woman’s speech and conclude with a remark by Tukārām. The bitterness of Tukārām’s wife and her reproach to him are clearly expressed as are Tukārām’s crude admonishment:

‘The sack (of grain) has arrived (at our) home, and still he won’t let my children eat the grains. He has to fill other people’s bellies. Damn the rouge, the robber, the sucker’. ‘The madwoman is outraged and drags me by my arms like a witch’. Tukā says, ‘The bitch is bankrupt in merit from the past.

(Aklujkar 1999:22)

“A sackful of grain is delivered at our door. But this bastard won’t let his own children eat. “He distributes it to the whole town. I suspect he himself eats it too.” Says Tuka, you stupid bitch! Don’t you understand that the deeds of the past can never be stored.

(Chitre 1991:43)

⁴⁵ Mahīpati states that Tukārām’s eldest son Santobā died in the famine with his mother and Tukārām’s first wife Rakhumābāi. Mahīpati also states that Tukārām had three daughters: Kāśībāi, Bhāgīrathī (Bhāgūbāi) and Gaṅgābāi (BLM 34.140–149), as well as two sons Mahādev and Viṭhobā (BLM 40.215).

The second account in the *Bhaktavijaya* pertaining to Āvalī states that Tukārām was so absorbed in contemplation that he did not go home for two months. Consequently, Āvalī went from house to house complaining about her husband:

Hear, O my friends, my fate is adverse. My husband does not care for me but goes and sits in the forest. He has given up his business and dances in the *kirtan* with love. He constantly thinks of Purushottam and as a rule sings His praises. He has been in the town for the last two months but all that time he has never come home. O friends, I am worn out by anxiety day and night. If you ever see him, teach him the morals of religion. He has abandoned his wife, and therefore his life has become disreputable among the people.

(BVJ 49.32–35, Abbott and Godbole 1996:220–221)

However, one day Āvalī meets Tukārām on her way back from fetching water and she grabs his *dhotar* and reprimands him saying he has spends all his time praising God but never comes home and that she wants to know what he is going to do (BVJ 49.39–40, Abbott and Godbole 1996:221). Tukārām replies saying that her parents married her to him without considering his circumstances—in other words no one took his wishes into account—so why should he worry about feeding or clothing her. The argument intensifies until Āvalī says his parents are dead so where should she go to find them. This question gives Tukārām an opportunity to offer his wife spiritual advice. He says his parents are the deities Pāṇḍuraṅga and Rukmiṇī, who do not grow old or perish, and that Āvalī should contemplate them as they will provide all she needs (BVJ 49.41–47). Mahīpati states that Āvalī begs Tukārām to come home and says she will worship the feet of Lord Hari believing that food and clothing will be provided. Tukārām declares that if she promises to listen to his advice he will return home, she gives her word and takes Tukārām home (BVJ 49.48–51). Mahīpati concludes that Tukārām’s acceptance of his wife ‘is a matter of satisfaction to us. [For] many go and sit in the caves of mountains, but which of them has attained Vaikunth’ (BVJ 49.53–54; Abbott and Godbole 1996). Mahīpati makes it clear in this account that as a wife Āvalī was honour bound to acquiesce to her husband’s demands but that Tukārām is also meant to accept Āvalī’s requests. It is interesting that Mahīpati felt the need to state that Tukārām accepted his wife. The story also draws attention to the dichotomy between the ascetic life—sitting in a cave meditating—and the life of a householder. This choice was largely unavailable to women but inconceivable for married women who were bound up in *sansār* so it suggests that the householder path is valuable and worth pursuing as it secures spiritual rather than material benefits.

Mahīpati relates Tukārām giving Āvalī advice (BVJ 49.56–114; 50:15–24) saying he has expanded upon Tukārām’s eleven *abhaṅgas* to clarify their meaning. Mahīpati then describes how Āvalī resolved to free her mind from desire and bathed in the Indrayani River before inviting the Brahmans to

plunder her house. All the household items were carried away and a *sannyāsī* even smeared his body with the ashes from the fire. Tukārām then went out leaving Āvalī alone in the house and worried about feeding the family again (BVJ 49.115–129). Tukārām’s indifference to the material life is shown when he gives a piece of his wife’s clothing away to Rukmiṇī who has come in the form of a *mahārī* to test him. When Āvalī discovers what her husband has done she angrily complains to her friends and neighbours (BVJ 49.136–148). Mahīpati states that Viṭṭhal began to tremble when he heard that Āvalī was en route to smash His feet [in the temple]. Viṭṭhal discussed with Rukmiṇī what action to take saying that He cannot run away because He stands still on the command of his *bhakta* [Puṇḍalik] and that He cannot abandon Tukārām. Meanwhile Tukārām encounters Āvalī on her way to the temple and discovering what she intends to do is greatly distressed. However, Tukārām goes to the temple with Āvalī thinking that he could take the blow for Viṭṭhal but in order to protect Tukārām Rukmiṇī closes the temple door to bar his entrance. Just as Āvalī was about to dash the stone against Viṭṭhal’s feet Rukmiṇī interrupts Āvalī asking her what wrong Viṭṭhal has done. Āvalī tells Rukmiṇī that there are no provisions in her house so she has come to break the feet that have ruined her family. Rukmiṇī solves the issue by providing Āvalī with clothes and some silver coins so that she puts down the stone and leaves the temple (BVJ 49.231–203; BLM 34.10–74). However, Mahīpati’s account in the *Bhaktavijaya* leaves out Tukārām distributing the coins his wife had been given to the Brahmans of the town (BLM 34.72). This story shows that despite her promise to listen to her husband’s advice Āvalī remains concerned about feeding and clothing the family. While Āvalī has no direct communication with the Viṭṭhal she does have contact with Rukmiṇī (Aklujkar 1999:23). It is Rukmiṇī, as the mother-in-law fixing things, who resolves the domestic situation and as a consequence protects her husband. Interestingly, the compositions attributed to Rājā depict Rājā’s conversations with Rukmiṇī and her call for Rukmiṇī to intercede on her behalf with Viṭṭhal as Nāmdev has abandoned *sansār* (see Appendix B). Once again this story suggests that the householder path is valuable and worth pursuing as the difficulties and suffering of *sansār* can be alleviated by *bhakti*.

The final account of Āvalī in the *Bhaktavijaya* describes an incident in which Āvalī is so enraged by the loss of sugarcane given to Tukārām—he had distributed it to the children of the town—that she takes the remaining cane and beats him with it. However, the cane breaks into three parts causing Tukārām to comment that the sugarcane has been divided equally due to God’s help. Āvalī is astonished at her husband’s serenity despite her beating but she once again laments the fact he has ‘given up all thought of family life’ (50.75–101). Aklujkar observes that Āvalī appears as a ‘disenchanted, bitter,

essentially helpless woman’ who is confronted by a husband she finds ‘unsympathetic, unproviding, and adamant’ and whose obsession with God she cannot comprehend (1999:23). Āvalī is portrayed by Mahīpati as bad-tempered and argumentative but more significantly as a woman with a limited outlook who is unable to grasp the message of *bhakti*.

It is interesting that Mahīpati presents the adversarial relationship between Tukārām and his wife as Mahīpati regarded Tukārām as his *guru*. It is said that Tukārām gave Mahīpati initiation in a dream and instructed Mahīpati to compose *caritras* (Abbott and Godbole 1996:xxiv). Bhagwat suggested that one cannot just say Tukārām was a chauvinist when he talks of his wife and children as a hindrance [to his spiritual life]. The question of why they were always fighting needs to be explored so one does not just say Āvalī was trapped (personal communication, 27th October 2004). The tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya* seems to account for the adversarial relationship between Tukārām and his wife. Āvalī, like Goṇāi and Rājāi, exemplifies a woman who is expected to fulfil the social requirements of marriage and householdership as well as the religious path (*strīdharma*) of being a good wife (*pativrata*). These duties appear as obstacles in the path of a male householder who is primarily concerned with disinterested action which is why Āvalī is represented and remembered as a nuisance and cause of shame to Tukārām (see Aklujkar 1992:105, 119). However, Āvalī appears to operate as a device by which Mahīpati can show that things go badly wrong when *vairāgya* or *sannyāsa* is pursued by a householder. Mahīpati’s message therefore suggests that the householder should fulfil his or her duties as a householder *and* as a *bhakta*.

2.11. *Bhāgūbāi*

Bhāgūbāi may refer to Tukārām’s daughter Bhāgīvathī by his second wife Āvalī /Jijābāi, who Mahīpati recounts Tukārām married to ‘boys of his own caste’ who were playing outside the house (BLM 34.140–149; Abbott 1996:193). Bhāgūbāi’s life story states that when Tukārām ‘flew to heaven’ his children were young so they did not know how unique their father was. The children lived with their grandparents for twenty-five years and only heard of their father’s fame. It is possible that Bhāgūbāi composed some *abhaṅgas*, which can be inferred from the *Śrī tukobārāma bābānce bandhū kānhobā, mulgī bhāgūbāi āṇi śiṣya niḷobā yāncyā abhaṅgancī gāthā* ‘The Abhaṅga Gāthā of Tukārām’s brother Kānhobā, daughter Bhāgūbāi and [posthumous] disciple Niḷobā (SSG 2.1389; Shrotriya 1992:49–50). However, it is possible that the single verse attributed to her was composed by Bhāgū Mahārīṇ or some other ‘Bhāgū’. Sontheimer notes that in the Dhangars’ stories Bhāgūbāi—also known as Bhāgulek—is the daughter of Viṭṭhal and the forest goddess Padubāi (Padmīṇī), who comes from the Gavḷī caste, and that ‘Padubāi dies

because of Viṭṭhal's curse, and Bhāgubāi does not forgive her father for this, even though Viṭṭhal grants her the first right to the pilgrimage festival (*jatṛā*) at Paṭṭan Kuḍolī' (1989:72 n.15, 47, 120; see Bhagwat 1974:116ff). This anecdote highlights the issue of attribution. However, the editors of the SSG clearly regard Bhāgū as a poet even though she is confined to the addendum. The few biographical details relating to Bhāgū suggest she was married, which connects her with householdership and it is possible that compositions attributed to Bhāgūbāi were drawn into the corpus as Tukārām was an important figure and there was a desire to include his family members, like those of Nāmdev's family, as authors in the *sampradāya* (see Hawley 1979:69–70). The inclusion of Bhāgūbāi within the Vārkarī literary corpus therefore signals the discursive construction of the *sampradāya* as a householder path that includes women.

2.12. Viṭhābāi

Viṭhābāi is thought to have been born in Paṇḍharpūr on a Tuesday, the fourteenth day of Āṣāḍh (Shrotriya 1992:53) in 1792 C.E. (Bhat 1998:556; Bhavalkar 1996:240; Shrotriya 1992:53).⁴⁶ Her father is thought to have been Rāmappā (Bhat 1998:558) or Rāmpyā Nāyak (Shrotriya 1992:53) and her mother Santubāi (Bhat 1998:558; Shrotriya 1992:53) and it is said that as they were Viṭṭhal devotees they named their only child in his honour.

It seems that when Viṭhābāi 'came of age' (Shrotriya 1992:54), aged fourteen (Bhat 1998:558), she was obliged to marry and as she was disinclined towards marriage she suffered at the hands of her in-laws. A verse attributed to Viṭhābāi portrays the experience of a young girl obliged to have intercourse with a man who was probably much older:

My husband pulls me into a secluded place in order to have sex with me. When he has pulled me there, he beats me badly in the middle of the night.

(Bhavalkar 1996:240; Āvalīkar 1964:220)⁴⁷

Bhavalkar points out that the candid description of a sexual encounter attributed to an Indian woman is uncommon and finds that the frankness of the verse lends it veracity and points to some of the sufferings, inflicted by men, borne by figures like Viṭhābāi, Sakhūbāi and Bahiṇābāi (1996:240ff) who are regarded as contemporaneous. However, the reference to a sexual encounter or to domestic abuse may also act as a

⁴⁶ For further information on Viṭhābāi see A.N. Deshpande (1968–84) and J.R. Ajgaonkar (1907, 1957).

⁴⁷ *Bhratār ho majasī voḍhatī yekāntī, bhogāve mujasī mhaṇūniya. Oḍhoniya hut mārito majasī, mahayatātrī jāṇā samyāsī* (Bhat 1998:558).

device through which to indicate the householder nature of the Vārkarī tradition. The accounts relate the difficulties of the spiritual path but also suggest that such a path is possible and worthwhile.

Viṭhābāī is then said to have taken her image of Viṭṭhal and abandoned her husband in favour of wandering the forests (Shrotriya 1992:54). It is said that she had a dream in which Viṭṭhal told her ‘I live in Kudgoḷ with the name Cidambar, you will meet my disciple Rājārām and go with him to Kudgoḷ’.⁴⁸ Miraculously, the next morning Viṭhābāī is said to have seen Rājārām’s *diṇḍī*, which she then joined. Viṭhābāī then travelled with the *diṇḍī* for the next two months before she was able to see Cidambarsvāmī (Shrotriya 1992:54; Bhat 1998:556). There is an interesting anecdote, which suggests Viṭhābāī might have had *darśan* of Cidambarsvāmī after fasting for seven days and nights:

The disciples [sic] also thought of the darshana of Shri Chidambar Maha Swamiji and requested to Rajarama. Shri Rajaram told them that if you do seva for seven day and nights with out food Shri Chidambar Maha Swamiji will give darshana. The disciples have done accordingly and all of them got darshana on seventh day midnight. They are 14 members who got the darshana on that day.

(‘Holy Places of Mahaswamiji’: n.d.)

Viṭhābāī seems to have had an out-of-body experience which led her to identify herself with Janābāī (Shrotriya 1992:54) or more specifically to regarding herself as an *avatār* of Janābāī (Bhat 1998:556, 558). Bhat believes that this experience came about because Viṭhābāī was so caught up in *bhakti* that she burned her hand on the torch she was carrying and was rendered unconscious. Moreover, Viṭhābāī identified Rājārām as an incarnation of Nāmdev (Shrotriya 1992:54; Bhat 1998:556) and Cidambarsvāmī as an *avatāra* of Viṭṭhal or Pāṇḍuraṅga on her return to consciousness (Bhat 1998:556).

The idea that Cidambarsvāmī was an incarnation of Viṭṭhal or Śrī Pāṇḍuraṅga Mahārāj is not specific to Viṭhābāī but seems to be part of the Cidambarsvāmī tradition (‘Panduranga Maharaj’). Cidambarsvāmī or Cidambar Dīkṣit was born in Murgod, Karnataka. It seems that Rājārām of Bubhulgaon in Maharashtra met Cidambarsvāmī in Kundgoḷ (c.1805) and became his greatest devotee. Cidambar is said to embody both Śaivite and Vaisnavite traditions as he is regarded as an *avatāra* of Śiva in northern Karnataka and as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu—specifically Viṭṭhal/Viṭhobā in his form as Pāṇḍuraṅga—by Rājārām and others (Chitnis 2000:218–222; see Dhanpalvār 1981:30; Dhere 2011:44, 51ff).

When her parents learnt where Viṭhābāī was they came, with her husband, and argued with her—presumably in an attempt to get her to return to her husband and perform her *strīdharma* as a

⁴⁸ There is a place called Kundgoḷ in the Dhārvāḍ district of Karnataka, which is the home of the Shambuliṅga temple honouring Śiva and Pārvatī.

pativratā. Viṭhābāi said that they only had rights over her body but not over her and she then fell motionless at Cidambar’s feet. Taking her for dead Viṭhābāi’s parents and husband returned to Paṇḍharpūr and thus Viṭhābāi gained her freedom (Bhat 1998:558). Viṭhābāi is said to have spent her life in service to Cidambarsvāmī and her *guru* Rājārām (Shrotriya 1992:54), as well as composing songs about her experiences and about Cidambarsvāmī (Bhat 1998:558). There is however no information on where Viṭhābāi lived—although she may have stayed at the Rājārām *maṭh* in Gurlhosur (‘Holy Places of Mahaswamiji’),⁴⁹ which is the site of Cidambarsvāmī’s *samādhi*—or when she died. There are 4,000 *abhaṅgas* attributed to Viṭhābāi and 600 of these *abhaṅgas* were located by Āvalīkar (1964; Shrotriya 1992: 53–57; see Appendix B).

There is probably one major reason that Viṭhābāi is not included in the SSG or remembered as a Vārkarī *santakaviyatrī*—despite her family being presented as Viṭṭhal-*bhaktas* and as being an *avatāra* of Janābāi—her abandonment of husband and home. Viṭhābāi thus accords with one of Ramanujan’s criteria by rejecting marriage in favour of *bhakti* (1986; see Kinsley 1980). Viṭhābāi emulates Sumantai Tade’s view that the reason some women might not be recognised as *sants* is that ‘men had freedom to wander around, which women could not do [because of the limitations of the home] because if she did do it people would say “her house situation is not good that’s why she’s gone off”’ (personal communication, 6th December 2004). Here we have an example of the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as householder tradition and Viṭhābāi does not fit the model. This has similarities to the Vallabhite rejection of Mīrābāi that I mentioned in the Introduction (see Mukta 1994:24–5; Martin 1999:12, 34; Harlan 1992:205ff). However, there is also the possibility that the conflation of Viṭṭhal, Pāṇḍuraṅga and Cidambar did not fit with the programmatic intent of the editors of the SSG or the biographers associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* because their concern lay with constructing a householder tradition in which doing one’s duty within a domestic setting is compatible with being a *bhakta*.

3. Summary

This chapter demonstrates that while some of the *caritras* exemplify the tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha* the conflict is not fully resolved in the *caritras* of the women *sants* and *bhaktas* associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Muktabāi is represented as a householder who is able to pursue a renunciate life in terms of her devotional practices as she is not represented as renunciate in the classical sense of *sannyāsa*. The *caritras* of Goṇāi, Rājāi and Āvalī highlight the possibility of living a devotional life even

⁴⁹ Gurlhosur (Guruvanpur) is in the Belgaum district of Karnataka.

when a *grhastha*. The narratives suggest that the suffering and deprivations of *sansār* equate to those of a spiritual path like *sannyāsa* and that these sufferings are effectively ‘authentic’. The male *sants* like Nāmdev and Tukārām do not appear to fare well in the narratives and one can imagine that audience for these narratives would sympathise with the female characters. The story of Limbāi and Vāñka highlights the unresolved tension between *grhastha*, as represented by Nāmdev’s daughter, and *vairāgya*, as represented by Rākā Kumbhār’s daughter. Janī’s *caritra* portrays her in a household but not as a *grhinī*; rather Janī lives a domestic life of service within a social setting. Significantly, Janī’s *caritra* like Kāñhopātrā’s *caritra* does not draw attention to the tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya*. Kāñhopātrā’s life-story seems to censure *kāma* and advocate *bhakti* and while Kāñhopātrā’s body is interred in the manner of a *sannyāsī* her status remains ambiguous, highlighting Laine’s point that there are ‘no pure types’ in *bhakti*. However, Kāñhopātrā’s *caritra* draws attention to the threat to the female body that is also depicted in the life of Sakhū. Gaṅgabāi/Guptanāth’s *caritra* portrays her as an ascetic due to widowhood, which is a form of renunciation that is within the *grhastha* idiom as this is prescribed behaviour for high-caste householder widows. Gaṅgabāi/Guptanāth’s overt connection to the Nāth *panth* rather than the Vārkarī *sampradāya* may account for her exclusion from the Vārkarī corpus. Viṭhābāi is depicted as renouncer who abandons house and home in favour of devotion to Cidambarsvāmī, which is probably why she is not included within the broader Vārkarī literary corpus. However, Sakhūbāi’s *caritra* presents her as a *bhakta* who epitomises *strīdharmā* and *pativrātādharmā*. It seems to me that it is Sakhūbāi who has come to represent the householder par excellence and it is she who seems to have been instrumentalised by biographers and film-makers, above all the other women mentioned above, to advocate women following their *strīdharmā* and *pativrātādharmā* while living as a Vārkarī *bhakta*. Nonetheless, there is a *santakaviyatrī* whose autobiographical poems are identified as attempting to resolve the conflict between *bhakti* and *pativrātā dharmā*. The autobiographical compositions attributed to Bahiñābāi are therefore discussed in the following chapter along with compositions attributed to other *santakaviyatrīs* so as to consider the role of gender attribution in the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMPOSITIONS ATTRIBUTED TO VĀRKARĪ SANTAKAVIYATRĪS

1. *Introduction: themes assigned to the compositions attributed to the santakaviyatrīs*

The *abhaṅgas* of Muktabāī, Goṇāī, Rājāī, Janābāī and Bahiṇābāī are all divided into sections by the editors or compilers of the volumes in which the *abhaṅgas* attributed to them appear and in particular within the *Sakala Santa Gāthā*. The verses attributed to Goṇāī and Rājāī—located within the Nāmdev *gāthā*—are given headings such as ‘Goṇāī and Nāmdev’s conversation’, ‘Goṇāī and Viṭṭhal’s conversation’, ‘Rājāī and Nāmdev’s conversation’, ‘Rājāī’s message to Viṭṭhal via Rakhumāī’, ‘Rājāī’s decision’ and ‘Nāmdev, Rājāī and Viṭṭhal’s conversation’. However, the *abhaṅgas* ascribed to Muktabāī, Janābāī and Bahiṇābāī are categorised according to certain themes, which may be due to the arrangement of verses in the notebooks of *kīrtankārs* or to the programmatic intent of the editors. It is possible that the size of the corpus ascribed to Janābāī and Bahiṇābāī accounts for the thematic division but the issue of quantity is unlikely in relation to Muktabāī as only forty-two *abhaṅgas* attributed to her are presented in the SSG. It is therefore likely that the complexity of the *abhaṅgas* or Muktabāī’s status as Ādimāyā, which was forged through *caritra*, is responsible for the thematic categorisation of the Muktabāī compositions. Five themes are used to divide the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Muktabāī in the SSG: *pañḍharīmāhātmya* ‘the greatness of Pañḍharī’ (1–3); *nāmapara* ‘on the Name’ (4–10); *santapara* ‘on the sants’ (11–19); *upadeśapara* ‘teaching’ or ‘advisory’ (20–40), and *kūṭa* ‘enigmatic’ (41–42).¹ These themes demonstrate that the concerns of the compositions attributed to Muktabāī are spiritual rather than biographical and that these concerns therefore differ from those of a biographer like Mahīpati.

The *abhaṅgas* attributed to Janābāī are divided under twenty-five themes: *nāmasankīrtana-māhātmya* ‘the greatness of chanting the Name’ (1–15); *viṭṭhal māhātmya* ‘the greatness of Viṭṭhal’ (16–33); *karuṇā* ‘compassion’ (34–68); *bheṭa* ‘meeting’ (69–154); *māgaṇe* ‘request’ (155–163); *santastuti* ‘in praise of sants’ (164–177); *ātmavarūpashīti* ‘the condition of my soul’ (178–203); *janābāī niścaya* ‘Janābāī’s decision’ (204–224); *jātē* ‘hand-mill’ (225–227); *upadeśa* ‘advisory’ (228–257); *kṛṣṇajanma, bālakṛīḍā va kālā* ‘Kṛṣṇa’s birth, child play and curds’ (258–265); *jñāneśvarstīti* ‘in praise of Jñāneśvar’

¹ Only one of the eleven *tāṭice abhaṅga* (‘door’ verses) appears in the SSG as it seems that these verses do not generally appear in ‘traditional *gāthās*’ (Tulpule 1979:334n.127).

(266–276); *senā nhāvī caritra* ‘Senā the barber’s actions’ (277); *śrīnāmadeva caritra* ‘Nāmdev’s deeds’ (278–293); *Hariścandra ākhyāna* ‘the story of Hariścandra’ (294–316);² *thālīpāka* ‘the cooking pot’ (317–330); *tīrthāvalī* ‘pilgrimage’ (331–334);³ *pāḷaṇā* ‘lullaby’ (335); *padē* ‘verses’ (336–340); *daśāvātāravarṇana* ‘extolling the ten descent-forms [of Viṣṇu]’ (341); *prārabdhagati* ‘the rolling on of the wheel of fate’ (342–343); *nāmadevaāce goṇāśī bhāṣaṇa* ‘conversation between Nāmdev and Goṇāī’ (344); *kūṭa* ‘enigmatic’ (345); *bhaktisvarūpa* ‘the appropriate form of devotion’ (346), and the *kākaḍa āratī* ‘the daybreak *āratī*’ (347). These themes demonstrate that whilst some of compositions attributed to Janābāī are concerned with *caritra*, most of the compositions have a spiritual rather than biographical focus.

The compositions ascribed to Bahiṇābāī are divided under different themes depending on the edition. The themes in Abbott’s translation number fourteen and appear to follow the Kolhārkar edition, which includes thirty-eight other thematic headings (1926). The first theme is *ādīparamparā* and contains one *abhaṅga* that traces Bahiṇābāī’s lineage through several *gurus* from Ādināth (Śiva) to Jñāneśvar and ultimately to Tukārām (SSG 1:1150; Abbott 1985:1). The presentation of Bahiṇābāī’s *guru paramparā* highlights the importance of the *paramparā* for authenticating a particular poet, for the transmission of teachings within the *sampradāya* and for the inclusion of attributed compositions within the Vārkarī corpus. Significantly, Muktabāī, Janābāī and Bahiṇābāī are all connected to the Nāth *panth* by *paramparā* and may even be connected to each other through Jñāneśvar.⁴ The second and third thematic sections in the *Bahiṇābāī Gāthā* are *ātmanivedan* and *niryānapara*, and these compositions are discussed below. The subsequent themes in the *Bahiṇābāī Gāthā* are primarily spiritual and are not detailed here due to their number and the differences between the various editions.

The themes used to group the compositions attributed to these three women show both similarities and differences. Firstly, the *Bahiṇābāī Gāthā* includes her spiritual autobiography and compositions relating to the behaviour and duties of a virtuous wife. Secondly, only the compositions attributed to Janī include a section on the hand-mill (*jātē*). Thirdly, Muktabāī and Janābāī are both given sections on *upadeśa* and *kūṭa*, while Janī and Bahiṇī are given a section entitled *māgaṇe*. However, there

² Hariścandra was a king who was raised to heaven with his subjects as a reward for piety (Molesworth 1857:888). I have translated the first and introductory verse of the Janābāī account (see Appendix B) but am not discussing the story as Madhuri Deshmukh (2006) has done detailed work on Janābāī’s story and her article on this topic is forthcoming. For the story in English see ‘Hariścandra and Viśvāmrita’ (Dimmitt and Buitenen 1978:273–286) and for a discussion of the Hariścandra legend see Sathaye (2009).

³ For a discussion on the *tīrthāvalī* see Novetzke 2005a:118ff, More 1994 and Grewal 2006.

⁴ Janābāī’s *guru* was Nāmdev and Nāmdev’s *guru* was Visobā Khecar but it is however unclear whether Visobā’s *guru* was Jñāneśvar or Muktabāī (see Muktabāī *caritra* in chapter four).

are some themes that appear in relation to the compositions of all three women—the Name; Puṇḍalik, Pandharpur and/or Viṭṭhal and the *sants*—and these themes are also found in the compositions attributed to the other *santakavis* and *santakaviyatrīs*. The presence of such spiritual themes demonstrates that the concerns of *bhakti* poets often differ from that of sacred biographers like Mahīpati. *Bhakti* poets are mainly preoccupied with devotional concerns and representing their devotional subjectivity or the devotional subjectivity of the attributed author (see Pechilis 2012:3, 14ff).

There are numerous possible themes that could be discussed with regards to the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* such as the body, suffering, status, seeking and/or meeting God. However, this chapter takes similarities and differences in the thematic groupings of the compositions attributed to Muktabāī, Janābāī and Bahiṇābāī as its template because it suggests programmatic intent in the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Consequently, the chapter considers some of the biographical images of figures like Soyarābāī and Nirmaḷābāī who are under-represented in Mahīpati’s *caritra* as well as exploring the spiritual autobiography attributed to Bahiṇābāī and its implications for the tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya* that characterise the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. The grinding songs ascribed to Janābāī and *abhaṅgas* attributed to other *santakaviyatrīs* are considered in relation to quotidian or domestic imagery. The *kūṭa* and *upadeśa* songs attributed to Muktabāī and Janābāī are discussed in relation to topics such as yoga and *nivṛtti* while the relationships between the devotee and deity is explored as a means of expressing devotional subjectivity. The efficacy of the name of God (*nāma*) is one of the most important devotional practices associated with *bhakti* so the discussion begins with this devotional theme so as to explore the function of gender attribution in the discursive construction of the Vārkarī tradition as a householder path.

1.1. *Nāma: the importance of the name of God for liberation*

The three pillars of *sant sādhana* are the Name (*nāma*), the Divine Guru (*satguru*) and the company of the *sants* (*satsaṅga*) according to Vaudeville (1987a:31). However, Deleury argues that the three methods of attaining liberation advocated by the Vārkarīs are *nāmapara*, *kīrtanapara* rather than *satguru* and *santapara* which includes the *guru* but Deleury notes that ‘for the Vārkarī the utterance of the Name is the most important part of *bhakti*’ (1994:121–25; see also BhG 10.25; Bonouvrié 1999:52; Vaudeville 1987b:216). The *Haripāṭh* extols the practice of *nāma* and forms part of many Vārkarīs’ daily *sādhana* as I mentioned in Chapter Three. *Nāma* is also called *nāmajapa*, *nāma-smaraṇa*, *nāma-saṅkīrtan* or *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, *nāmapara*, *nāmaghōṣa*, *nāmapantha* or *nāmapāṭha* and is a key theme in the compositions

attributed to both the Vārkarī *santakavis* and *santakaviyatrīs*. The practice of *nāma* may be done by *japa*—often a continual muttering of the Name—*bhajan*, *ajapā* or *ajāpajapa* and is considered to grant salvation.⁵ Moreover, the practice of *nāma* is one that can easily be undertaken within the domestic setting so by including songs attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* on this theme those with programmatic intent may be employing gender attribution to construct a householder tradition.

Sing bhajans faithfully, perpetually repeat the Name; a harlot can enter paradise thus.
 For us the sacred Names are Hari, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa; day and night they point the way to liberation.
 With the power of the Name the river of existence can be crossed; chanting the Name of Hari has now
 become a hobby.
 Mukṭāī ponders Hari-love after chanting the Name: the Name always leads to immortality.

(Muktābāī *abhaṅga* 7, SSG 1:239; my translation)

The practice of *nāma* is mentioned in verses attributed to Mukṭābāī (7, 10, 26, 37), Janābāī (3, 6, 8, 11, 155, 204, 208, 227), Goṇāī (1268, 1269, 1273), Rājāī (1325), Soyārābāī (4, 22, 41, 47, 62), Nirmaḷā (6, 16), Kānhopātrā (7, 12, 14), Viṭhābāī, and Bahiṇābāī (393–403; Abbott 1985:119–123). The performance of *nāma* is described in the verses attributed to these women as a ‘hobby’ (Muktābāī 7; Nirmaḷā 6), an ‘obsessive habit’ (Janābāī 11), a ‘daily task’ (Janābāī 204), a ‘remedy’ (Nirmaḷā 6), a ‘boon’ (Janābāī 155), and something that should be done continuously (Bahiṇābāī 393; Abbott 1985:119) because it is one’s ‘wealth’ (Muktābāī 26, 37).

The verses that I have translated and examined suggest that by chanting the Name all oppression and difficulties disappear (Kānhopātrā 14; Soyārābāī 41); that one is purified and sin is conquered (Soyārābāī 41); that the ‘net of evil’ ceases (Soyārābāī 4); that ‘familial life will be happy’ (Nirmaḷā 16); that one will gain eternal happiness (Goṇāī 1273), and as the *abhaṅga* attributed to Soyārābāī suggests one will gain fulfilment by uttering the Name:

Death trembles when the Name is uttered; saying ‘Viṭṭhal’ leads to fulfilment.
 The three syllable repetition is easily achieved: repeat it at all times.
 It removes life’s sorrow and strife: don’t follow any other path.
 Have faith in the Name and hold on to it within, says the Mahārī of Cokhā.

(Soyārābāī *abhaṅga* 47, SSG 1:1003; my translation)

The sacred and mystical syllable *om* is identified with Brahman in the Upaniṣads and in the *Bhagavadgītā* it is said that meditating on ‘the Brahman of the *om* syllable’ will lead to liberation (BhG 8.13; Patton 2008:96).

⁵ Lucia King’s film ‘The Warkari Cycle’ (2011) shows a woman at Alandi writing राम ‘Rāma’ repeatedly. For more on the topic of *nāma* see Dev 2002:110–120.

Moreover, by uttering the Name one can ‘become strong’ (Janābāi 209); ‘attain peace and forgiveness’ (Muktābāi 26); ‘cross the river of existence’ (Muktābāi 7; Bhāgubāi); make friends with Yama, the god of death (Viṭhābāi); ‘free the soul’ (Viṭhābāi); gain liberation (Muktābāi 7; Soyārābāi 41) or release from the cycle of existence and rebirth (Muktābāi 10, 26; Janābāi 11, 227; Soyārābāi 41); reach heaven (Nirmaḷā 16); enter paradise (Muktābāi 7); attain immortality (Muktābāi 7); attain union with the divine (Muktābāi 37) or as an *abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāi suggests actually become the deity:

The Name is free and excellent; one never tires of chanting the Name.
 A heavy stone in the ocean, the name ‘Ātmārām’ saves.
 Recollecting the son, he was taken to Vaikuṅṭh.
 Janī knows the greatness of the Name; by chanting she becomes Viṭṭhal.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 3, SSG 1:716; my translation)

This *abhaṅga* and one attributed to Muktābāi (10) both contain references to ‘stones’, which probably refer to an episode from the *Rāmāyaṇa* called the *Setubandha*, ‘The Building of the Bridge’.

Beginning – middle – end, the devotee of Hari is released; inwardly and outwardly Hari is all.
 No holy places are necessary when the essential hymn is repeated.
 Through His Name the slow and ignorant are liberated; even the stones floated on the ocean are saved from drowning.
 Through Hari’s name Muktāi is forever liberated, there is no beginning or end for us anymore.

(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 10, SSG 1:239; my translation)

The story goes that in order to make the stones ‘float’ Hanuman inscribed stones with *rā* and others with *ma* (or inscribed the stones with *rāma*). When the stones were put in the water they joined to form *Rāma* and floated due to the power of the deity’s name. Consequently, a bridge was formed allowing Rāma to cross the waters to Lanka and so rescue Sītā from Rāvaṇa. The Name therefore has the power to make stones float and so save people from drowning in the ocean of existence.

The practice of *nāma* can be done as part of one’s daily domestic activities as the composition attributed to Janī suggests:

Contemplate the name of Viṭhobā, then step ahead.
 Chanting the Name is a great saviour, it takes you beyond borders.
 Ājāmeḷā was sanctified; Cokhāmeḷā was set free.
 ‘Contemplate the name while grinding and pounding’, says Nāma’s Janī.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 8, SSG 1:716; my translation)

The Name is also said to be able to save sinners and social outcastes like the Vārkarī *sant* Cokhāmeḷā. Cokhāmeḷā was a *mahār* and therefore barred from entering the temple but Cokhā’s *guru* Nāmdev is regarded as responsible for getting Cokhā to worship on the steps of the temple in Pandharpur. Mahīpati’s *caritra* states that Cokhāmeḷā was led into the temple’s inner sanctum by Viṭṭhal where Cokhāmeḷā spent

the night and thus Cokhāmeḷā was thrown out of Pandharpur by the Brahmans (BVJ 23.6ff; Abbott and Godbole 1996:377ff). However, a well-known story and an *abhāṅga* attributed to Cokhāmeḷā relate that Viṭṭhal put His necklace around Cokhāmeḷā's neck and led him out of the temple. Cokhā in a state of bliss then lay down on the sands of the river in a trance. The temple priests discover Cokhāmeḷā with Viṭṭhal's missing gold necklace and are enraged that the temple and the deity have been polluted. When Cokhāmeḷā is about to be put to death he calls out to God and is miraculously saved, much in the way that Janī was saved from death. Cokhā is said to have died when a wall he and other *mahārs* were repairing in Mangalvedha collapsed on them. Nāmdev is thought to have gone to find Cokhāmeḷā's remains and to have picked up the bones that muttered 'Viṭṭhal, Viṭṭhal'. The bones were buried at the bottom of the steps outside the main door of the temple in Pandharpur where Cokhā had stood in worship and this is now the Cokhāmeḷā *samādhi* (Mokashi-Punekar 2005a:123–141).

Mahīpati refers to Ajāmeḷa as a sinful Brahman who on the point of death called out to his son 'Nārāyaṇa' and his sins were thus removed (BVJ 3.217; Abbott and Godbole 1996:47). Abbott and Godbole state that Ajāmeḷa was a Brahman who abandoned his parents and wife to spend his life with a *śūdra* woman and was thus deemed a sinner.⁶ Ajāmeḷa's youngest and much loved son was called Nārāyaṇa. One day Ajāmeḷa overheard Yama and Viṣṇu discussing him, which led Ajāmeḷa to repent and so abandon the *śūdra* woman and his child (in accordance with Vedic law). Ajāmeḷa then spent his remaining days at Gangadwar (Nasik district) in the service of God and so attained *mokṣa* after death (1996:389). However, Prapnnachari's story of Ajāmeḷa, based on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (6.1–3), states that Ajāmeḷa became a robber so as to satisfy his woman (Ajāmeḷa was thus a sinner on two counts). At the end of Ajāmeḷa's life messengers came from Yama in order to inflict death upon him. In fear Ajāmeḷa called out for his favourite son Nārāyaṇa and thus uttered the name of God. Viṣṇu's messengers consequently came to his aid and the two sides debated whether Ajāmeḷa had acted righteously. They came to the conclusion that although Ajāmeḷa was a sinner he had uttered the name Nārāyaṇa at the moment of death and that this absolved his sins (Prapnnachari 2007:143ff; Kiehnle 1997a: 24–25).⁷

The line attributed to Janī that reads 'recollecting the son, he was taken to Vaikuṅṭh' (*abhāṅga* 3.3) may refer to Ajāmeḷa going to heaven because he said the name 'Nārāyaṇa'. The idea that Ajāmeḷa was saved by uttering the Name is also found in an *abhāṅga* attributed to Soyarā:

⁶ The name is also rendered Ajāmiḷa (Marathi), Ajāmiḷa/Ajāmil (Hindi) or sometimes even Ājāmeḷa.

⁷ The story of Ajāmil is presented in Tulsīdās' *Rāmcaritmānas* (3.40.3–4). Ajāmil is also mentioned in Hawley's discussion of Sūrdās' poetry as 'the Brahman who deserted his family and ran off with a prostitute...' (Hawley 1992:232, 1994b:84; see Leslie 2003:165).

For those guilty of five great sins and breach of faith, Rāma's Name saves.⁸
It saved the great sinner Vālhā [Vālmīki]. It rescued the harlot.
The son's name sent him to paradise: Ajāmeḷa was liberated by the Name.
The Name saves men and women, says the Mahārī of Cokhā.

(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 22, SSG 1:1000; my translation)

This *abhaṅga* depicts various lowly figures, who were probably well-known to a Vārkarī audience as they appear in various epic and *purāṇic* stories, being saved by reciting the Name. These figures represent the 'Other' within or on the margins of the social order and are 'a metaphor for all the downtrodden and marginalized victims of human society' according to Lorenzen (1996:25). These are characters with whom the audience are meant to identify because they are not *sannyāsīs* but more than that they are characters with whom the composer of the *abhaṅga* may identify. Consequently, a listener/reader, would understand that they too might be saved by uttering the Name within a domestic setting.

This theme of low-caste persons or outsiders finding salvation through the Name is also found in an *abhaṅga* attributed to Kānhopātrā that also mentions Ājāmeḷa:

The one who knows your Name by heart threatens Death.
Hurray! Your great Name has delivered even the wicked.
The ruined harlot, Ajāmeḷa and Vālmīki all became pure.
Hurray! Kānhopātrā's neck is decorated with a garland of your Names.

(Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 12, SSG 1:919; my translation)

The 'harlot' (*gaṇikā*) mentioned in the compositions attributed to Muktābāi (7), Kānhopātrā and Soyarābāi is probably Piṅgalā, about whom there are several stories. One story goes that Piṅgalā had a pet parakeet that had learnt to repeat the name of God (Rāma) from a previous owner. Just hearing the Name repeated constantly meant Piṅgalā attained salvation (Leslie 2003:165). Another story states that one night Piṅgalā failed to get any customers and that in thinking the matter over Piṅgalā became detached from sense gratification and so praised God for saving her (BhP 11.8.22–44; Kiehnle 1997a:124). Although the *abhaṅga* attributed to Kānhopātrā does not mention Piṅgalā by name it is likely that the *gaṇikā* mentioned is Piṅgalā because both she and Ajāmeḷa are regarded as representing the redeemed sinner or what Kiehnle describes as the 'less super human *bhaktas*' (1997a:23–24; see Sellergren 1996:232).⁹

The Name as a means of salvation for the lowest of the low, by breaking the bonds of the cycle of existence, is also found in an *abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāi:

⁸ The five great sins or crimes are known as *mahāpātakī* (see Glossary).

⁹ Vālmīki, whom the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Kānhopātrā and Soyarābāi mention, also exemplifies the redeemed sinner but for more on this topic see Leslie 2003.

Great is the name of Viṭhobā; the fisherman and the potter have been saved.
By liking the Name, the fetters of *samsāra* are broken.
Time and again I sing the name of God; it has become *dāsī* Janī's obsessive habit.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 11, SSG 1:717; my translation)

It is likely that the potter mentioned was Gorā Kumbhār (c.1267–1397 C.E.) who is said to have lived in the village of Ter/Teraḍhokī/Tardokī (Deleury 1994:5, 33, 37).¹⁰ Mahīpati's *caritra* of Gorā begins with Gorā constantly repeating the Names of God, which indicates Gorā is a good *bhakta* (BVJ 17:99ff). One day, while in an ecstatic state of devotion and treading his clay Gorā inadvertently tramples his infant daughter to death. Although she is angry Gorā's wife wishes to have another child but Gorā refuses to touch her. Consequently his wife arranges a second marriage for him.¹¹ However, as he has sworn to treat both his wives equally Gorā also refuses to touch his second wife. One night, both wives each took one of his hands and placed them on their breasts in the hope Gorā will be aroused. However, Gorā—seeing he had broken his vow not to touch his wives—cuts off his hands and consequently loses the tools of his trade. Gorā tells his wives not to worry as Viṭhobā favours his *bhaktas* and carries on with *nāma* (BVJ 17.181). Not long after this Gorā and his wives go to Paṅḍharpūr for the *āṣādhī-vārī* and attend a *kīrtan* given by Nāmdev. The crowd claps with delight but Gorā is unable to join in the celebration. Gorā calls out for God to restore his hands so he can participate, God hears him and restores Gorā's limbs. Gorā's first wife then begs for a miracle of her own: the return of their infant daughter. A little child then comes crawling out of the crowd in answer to her prayers (BVJ 17.182–205; Abbott and Godbole 1996). The key feature of the story is that *bhakti* prevails as uttering the Name and the efficacy of Nāmdev's *kīrtan* leads to Gorā's hands being restored and the resurrection of Gorā's daughter (Novetzke 2008:64, 74). Mahīpati's account refers to Gorā constantly repeating the Name, which makes it clear that it was because of his faith and devotion that Gorā was the recipient of God's grace. Moreover, by having his hands restored Gorā will be able to continue to live a householder life and remain socially active as a potter. The story therefore highlights the compatibility of doing one's duty in the domestic setting and *bhakti*.

However, the reference to the fisherman (*koḷī*) in the Janī *abhaṅga* is unclear. Sadasivan states that 'the name Koli is taken by hillmen, fishermen, landless cultivators, weavers or a section of the Jats' (2000:276). Consequently, the term *koḷī* probably just connotes any lowly person as exemplars of those who attained redemption. Leslie asserts that the reason so many *bhakti* stories, and perhaps *bhakti* compositions, have 'untouchable' protagonists is that in respect of its self-presentation *bhakti* was

¹⁰ See 'Saint Gora Kumbhar'.

¹¹ Gorā's first wife may have been called Śāntī and this second wife Rāmī (Parchure 1974).

arguably a spiritual path open to low-caste persons and women. The ‘untouchable’ protagonist or exemplar may therefore have been a means through which the salvific power of *bhakti* was discursively demonstrated (2003:154–55).

The practice of *nāma* is often considered the best means of ending *samsāra*. An *abhaṅga* attributed to Muktabai draws attention to God as having both ‘name’ (*nāma*) and ‘form’ (*rūpa*).

Think of liberation at all times; proclaim—‘Rāma-Kṛṣṇa-Govind’—daily.
The habit of saying ‘Lord, Lord’ destroys the source of worldly existence; chanting consistently is
virtuous.
Everywhere Hari’s pleasing form is visible; Hari is the knower and all that’s comprehensible.
Muktāi’s wealth is reflecting on Hari’s form; the cycle of existence ends through Hari’s name.

(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 37, SSG 1:242; my translation)

The reference to God’s form indicates that *saguṇa bhakti* is being advocated in conjunction with *nāma* to achieve liberation as meditation on and worship of the divine form also coincides with *nāma* (Vaudeville 1987a:31–32). According to Lorenzen, *saguṇa bhakti* ‘represents a “liberal” reform of an earlier Vedic and *śāstrīk* Hinduism’ by allowing women and non-Brahmans access to salvation (1995:15). Moreover, devotion to the ‘form’ of God, particularly to an *avatāra* or *svarūpa* like Viṭṭhal, is regarded as allowing the deity to intercede on behalf of the *bhakta* resulting in salvation (1995:17). Thus, the author/speaker/Muktāi can be interpreted as the Vārkarī tradition advocating that salvation for all is possible through devotion to God’s name and form. The term *nāmarūpa* represents the phenomenal world rather than transcendent reality.¹² Individuality is considered to be comprised of *nāma* and *rūpa*. Guénon states that *nāma* refers to the ‘essential’ or ‘subtle’ aspect and *rūpa* refers to the ‘substantial’ or ‘corporeal’ aspect of individuality. Liberation is thus a state where one is beyond *nāmarūpa* (2004:68–69; see Vaudeville 1987a:28, 31). Guénon argues that in order to understand the true meaning of *nāma* one must remember that the ‘name’ of a being—in this case Hari, the Lord—expresses its ‘essence’. Moreover, the ‘name’ is a sound that is connected with the aural (and oral) while ‘form’ is connected with the visual (2004:71–72). The form of the deity is an object of adoration within *bhakti* and having sight of the deity (*darśan*) is the ultimate spiritual experience as through the act of *darśan* the devotee and Lord become united (Paranjpe 2009:133–135). The *nāmamudrā* in this verse and in *abhaṅga* thirty-two asserts that *muktāi sādhana*, ‘Muktāi’s wealth’ or Muktāi’s spiritual practice, is connected with the ‘form’ of God but that liberation is gained by uttering the Name. This demonstrates the power of the spoken word but also that one may need to transcend *saguṇa bhakti* and instead worship the Lord ‘without form’

¹² For more on *nāmarūpa*, particularly in relation to the philosophy of *advaita*, see Halbfass (1995) and Falk (2006).

(*nirguṇa bhakti*). This idea is also expressed in the phrase ‘inwardly and outwardly Hari is all’ (Muktābāi 10), which may suggest that reflecting on both ‘name’ and ‘form’ lead one to realise that Hari the Lord is ‘the knower and all that’s comprehensible’ but also that ultimately one unified with *brahman* so the anterior form is no longer necessary.

The idea that the devotee is discharged from performing all other religious observances by uttering the Name is expressed in an *abhaṅga* attributed to Muktābāi that states ‘No holy places are necessary when the essential hymn is repeated’ (10) and is also conveyed in a composition attributed to Viṭhābāi:

Avoid *yoga* and sacrifice. Chanting the Name will free the soul.
 Set aside *nādabindu*. Avoid the channels of the vital spirit.
 Do not search for Brahman, nor perform yogic postures.
 Do not seek a beehive in a cave, nor seek the *cakras* in yogic exercise.
 Do not seek a lotus in your heart, nor seek the *kuṇḍalinī*.
 Yama is Bhagavān’s chief devotee. Keep chanting the Name and you’ll make friends with him.

(Viṭhābāi *abhaṅga*; my translation)

This verse advocates chanting the Name above all else and exhorts the hearer/reader to avoid *yogic* practices in favour of *nāma*, again offering seeming confirmation that the Vārkaṛī *sampradāya* is constructing itself firmly as a householder tradition that has equivalence to that of *sannyāsa*. For example, the term *nādabindu* refers to ‘the unstruck sound heard by yogis and the luminous point they see’ when they experience union or liberation (Tulpule 1999:369–70). In Yoga uttering the sacred syllable ॐ (*om*) is said to lead to liberation due to the unification of *bindu* or ‘Śiva’ and *nada* or ‘Śakti’ (Beck 1995:81–83, 93; Gupta 1972:100). In Kuṇḍalinī Yoga *bindu*, as nasal resonance, is the rise of *prāṇic* energy in the form of vibration. Singh states that ‘the energy of the *bindu* appears as a point of light in the middle of the eye-brows’ and the *bindu* is transformed into *nāda*, the mystical resonance that extends from the summit of the head (*nādabindusthāna*) through the central channel of the body (1991: xliii–xliii). Although the utterance of *om* is said to lead to liberation, as the *abhaṅga* attributed to Soyarābāi presented above suggests, the Viṭhābāi *abhaṅga* and others which promote the citing of *nāma*, discourages uttering the *praṇava* in conjunction with *yogic* practices in favour of *nāma*, often within quotidian contexts.

While the *abhaṅga* attributed to Viṭhābāi itemises practices from which one should abstain in favour of chanting the Name, a Janābāi *abhaṅga* warns of the negative consequences if one should fail to perform *nāmajapa*:

If you dislike Viṭṭhal’s name, dire consequences will ensue.
 Tie your neck to a pillar and place a scorpion on your tongue.

Such a damned egoist goes to hell.
Nāmdev advises me, *dāsī* Janī stays at the feet.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 6, SSG 1:716; my translation)

The threats conveyed in this verse are very forceful. The second part of the first line—*kāla hāṇoni tonḍa phoḍī*—literally translates as ‘time will strike [you with a] punch in the face’ or ‘death will hit [you with a] punch in the mouth’. The second line presents excruciating means of permanently silencing oneself, implying that it is better to be voiceless than take God’s name in vain or fail to perform *nāma*. Moreover, the author/speaker states that failure to perform *nāmajapa* will result in going to hell. However, something in the tone of this verse leads me to wonder if Nāmdev’s “advice” to Janī is in actual fact a reprimand, in the form of a warning, saying ‘there will be dire consequences for *you* if you don’t acquire a taste for Viṭṭhal’s name’. The *nāmamudrā* reflects Janī’s servile position in the household as a *dāsī* but also depicts her as at Nāmdev’s feet and implies that there is no contradiction between household duties and devotional practice. This is an act of submission and surrender, which can be interpreted as humility and reverence for the *guru* as well as one of accepting fault and seeking guidance (Olson 2003:313).

In contrast to the consonance promoted here between citation of the *nāma* and household duties, where most of the compositions that advocate *nāma* present it as having a positive outcome, words attributed to Rājāi suggest otherwise: ‘The door to our house is always open, which affects business. He is dedicated to chanting the Name. Night and day his heart is filled with Govind’s name. He shows no concern about our welfare’ (Rājāi *abhaṅga*, 1325.8–9, SSG 1:490–491; my translation). For Rājāi *nāma* seems to mean that everyday family and business life are negatively affected. It seems that Nāmdev operated an ‘open-door’ policy for *bhaktas*, as suggested by Mahīpati’s *caritra* outlined in Chapter Four, which would have meant added financial pressures and practical concerns for Rājāi and her mother-in-law Goṇāi. It is interesting to note that Cokhāmeḷā advised Nirmaḷā that by chanting the Name ceaselessly ‘familial life will be happy’ (Nirmaḷā 16). However, the words attributed to Rājāi and spoken to Rukmiṇī suggest that she did not share Cokhāmeḷā’s view:

Because of you we are miserable. How don’t you feel for us?
Everyone has troubles in life but we are doing what is fitting to deal with these.
There is only one answer, but have you thought about it?
You comprehend all this due to experience. We recite your name continuously.
From birth to death you sustain us. There is no one else but you to help us.
We beseech you—body, speech and mind, Rājāi implores dearest Rukhumāi.

(Rājāi *abhaṅga* 1325.10–15, SSG 1:490–491; my translation)

Rājāi obviously hopes that Rukhumāi will intercede with Viṭṭhal on her behalf and get Nāmdev to perform his duties as a householder. This verse, like the Janābāi *abhaṅga* above, indicates that life for the

women in the household of a male *bhakta* was not without its trials and tribulations, and that even the practice of *nāma* did not alleviate all suffering.

The sense of distance from the Name, expressed in the composition attributed to Rājāī, is also found in a Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga*, which like the Janī verse connects the Name and ‘feet’:

You are named ‘Purifier and restorer of the fallen’, Nārāyaṇa.
Keep your promise, acknowledge your vow.
My caste is unclean, I lack faith; my behaviour and character are vile.
No Name on the tip of my tongue. Kānhopātrā seeks the protection of your feet.

(Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 7, SSG 1:918; my translation)

This *abhaṅga* draws attention to the status of the locuteur as one who feels so unworthy, due to their family profession and social status, that s/he is unable to utter the Name. Consequently, s/he humbles herself before God and seeks redemption at His feet. In Indian traditions the feet are usually regarded as polluted and are associated with servants but within the *bhakti* context the deity’s feet are regarded as symbols of purity and auspiciousness which represent the deity’s grace. The devotee therefore approaches the deity in a position of humility, as his servant, and gains access to the only part of the deity/*mūrti* attainable to them and in so doing attains salvation (Bryant 2003:xxxv–xxxvi; Pechilis 2012:44). Evidently, Kānhopātrā/the speaker/author wants to be redeemed like the other ‘untouchable’ protagonists mentioned above. However, Sellergren suggests that Kānhopātrā was afraid that she was ‘outside the scope of God’s love’ due to her social status (1996:227). Consequently, Kānhopātrā might have sought the protection of God’s feet as a means of attaining the grace of God.

A further *abhaṅga* attributed to Kānhopātrā expresses a different perspective, suggesting that the author/speaker/Kānhopātrā may have progressed on their spiritual journey.

Chant the Name by heart, with love from within.
My Father is trusting; he removes all oppression.
Through chanting Names, difficulties will quickly disappear.
Experience Him yourself. He is Kānhopātrā’s Mādhav.

(Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 14, SSG 1:919; my translation)

This *abhaṅga* refers to God as ‘my father’, which is a very common appellation among the Vārkarī *bhaktas* but it also employs the epithet Mādhav. Stoler Miller states that epithets are names that ‘function to delineate the subject’s character by evoking his deeds, relations, physical forms, and qualities’ (1997:18). Vaudeville notes that although the divine Name is considered unique numerous names for the Supreme deity are used in devotional compositions (1987a:32).

The epithets that the Vārkarīs use first and foremost are ‘Viṭṭhal’ and ‘Viṭhobā’ (see Deleury 1994:122, 127; Dhare 2011). The Vārkarīs use a number of diminutives for Viṭṭhal and Viṭhobā such as Viṭho, Viṭhū or Iṭhobā as a song I heard attributed to Sakhūbāī demonstrates (see Appendix B), and a number of feminised forms like Viṭhābāī, Viṭhobāī and Viṭhāī (see Deleury 1994:127–28). The epithets that appeared most frequently after Viṭṭhal and Viṭhobā were *deva*, Hari, Nārāyaṇa and Pāṇḍuraṅga. The epithet Pāṇḍuraṅga, as discussed in Chapter One, may refer to the Śaivite form of the deity connected to Pandharpur but the compositions use other epithets that connect the deity with Paṇḍharpūr as demonstrated in the table of appellations (see Appendix D).

However, in the context of *nāma* it is worth exploring the significance of some of the epithets which are employed in the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs*. The name Mādhav means ‘a descendant of *madhu*’ but also connotes ‘sweet’, ‘honey’ or ‘intoxicating drink’, ‘springtime’, ‘the progenitor of Krishna’s own Yadu clan’, and refers to the demon destroyed by Kṛṣṇa (Monier Williams 2008). Stoler Miller states that the various meanings suggest Kṛṣṇa absorbed into himself the potentially dangerous power of what he conquered: ‘Springtime...is erotically powerful and painful for parted lovers. Honey, the prized food of the forest, is cited as an aphrodisiac...the dominant meanings of *madhu* thus provide a strongly erotic content...’ (1997:19–21). This erotic element is significant when one considers that Kānhopātrāī is regarded as the daughter of a courtesan and that Kānhopātrāī is said to have united or merged with Viṭṭhal at Pandharpur rather than to have died (BVJ 39.43–47; Ramaswamy 2007:226). Thus, the use of the epithet ‘Mādhav’ could imply an erotic-emotional connection with Kṛṣṇa/Viṭṭhal and desire for union with the divine. However, an erotic interpretation of ‘Mādhav’ may reflect the concerns of a biographer more than those of the poet and present an ahistorical perspective as the *abhaṅga* probably preceded the *caritra*. The epithet Mādhav is also used in a Mukṭābāī *abhaṅga*: Mādhav, Mukund and Hari—all lead to liberation! Mukṭāī’s wealth is in uttering God’s name; freedom from successive lives is thus achieved’ (Mukṭābāī *abhaṅga* 26.3–4, SSG 1:241; my translation). What is significant about these epithets is that they relate to the function of the deity as conquering and absorbing (Mādhav), offering liberation (Mukund) and destroying pain or removing sin (Hari). Both Hari and Mukund can be taken as referring to the Ultimate Reality, which suggests one can achieve liberation by uttering these efficacious epithets on a regular basis within the domestic context and thus the efficacy of the householder path is being emphasised (see Stoler Miller 1997:20; Monier Williams 2008).

An *abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāī asks for the ‘blessing’ (*vara*) of singing the Name “Hari” eternally, to serve the Lord forever and for Cakrapāṇī to bless the author/speaker:

Let Hari give me a boon: to sing his name eternally.
Satisfy my desire to be of service to you.
This is my will, bless me Cakrapāṇī.
I’m looking at you closely; let me chant your name habitually.
O Generous One, *dāsī* Janī touches your feet.

(Janābāī *abhaṅga* 155, SSG 1:731; my translation)

The epithet *udārācyā rāyā*, which is used in the final line, is one that appears to have been devised by the author. It is formed of *udāra* (‘generous’ or ‘bountiful’) and *rāyā* (‘king’ or ‘master’) and therefore translates as ‘Bountiful King’ or ‘Generous One’. This epithet seems fitting considering that the speaker/Janī is asking humbly for the ‘boon’ or ‘blessing’ of singing the Lord’s name, which might ultimately lead to salvation.

The notion of continual remembrance is also present in another Janābāī *abhaṅga* but this time in the context of daily domestic chores. The singer/Janī, says that she sings “Ananta” while she husks the grain by pounding and while grinding the grain:

While grinding and pounding I’ll sing your name Eternal One (refrain).
I can’t forget your name for a moment Murārī.
Saying Hari’s name is my daily task,
While grinding and pounding I’ll sing your name Eternal One.
You are my mother and father, brother and sister, Cakrapāṇī.
I shall contemplate your feet, says Nāma’s Janī.
While grinding and pounding I’ll sing your name Eternal One.

(Janābāī *abhaṅga* 204, SSG 1:736)

The singer is not only asserting that both grinding the grist and singing the Name are Janābāī’s daily tasks but that these actions are ‘endless’ like *samsāra*. The domestic arena therefore provides the resources on which to reflect spiritual truths and the song shows the viability of the domestic context for *bhakti*. Nāma while grinding and/or pounding is recommended as singing traditionally accompanies these tasks and as singing the Name(s) is the ‘easiest and most spontaneous act of personal worship’ according to Poitevin and Rairkar (1996:70–71). The song implies that by performing *nāma* continually one may destroy evil in the way that Kṛṣṇa destroyed the demon Mura. There are other epithets that appear specifically in relation to the Name in the *abhaṅgas* I have translated, most of which refer to Kṛṣṇa in some form, which suggests that the composers of the songs referred to specific characteristics and qualities associated with the deity in relation to the practice of *nāma* and in their search for liberation. However, the compositions attributed to Janābāī and Kānhopātrā also refer to certain attributes of the deity by employing the appellation ‘Viṭhābāī’, the feminine form of the name Viṭthal that refers to Viṭhobā as a mother or as a

woman friend. These intimate relationships with the divine, to which the discussion now turns, suggest a domestic setting and familial interactions. Consequently, gender attribution is probably being employed by those with programmatic intent to construct the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

1.2. *Intimate relations with the divine*

The compositions attributed to the various *santakaviyatrīs* portray different intimate relationships with the Divine. These relationships depict responses to and imaginings of the Divine, which indicate the poets' perceptions of themselves and of their surroundings according to Pechilis (1999:7, 26–27). The intimacy between devotee and deity is expressed in different forms within *bhakti* literature: child-to-parent, servant-to-master (*dāśya*), disciple-to-teacher (*śiṣya-guru*), friend-to-friend (*sakhya*), parent-to-child (*vātsalya*), and bride-to-husband, spouse-to-spouse or lover-to-lover (Thielemann 2000:19; Cutler 1987:51; Vaudeville 1989:29; McLean 2008:213; see Aklujkar 2007). For Mclean these relationships represent some of the ascending forms of *parā-bhakti* or 'perfect devotion' in which the devotee expresses *prema* 'tender devotion' or 'selfless love' towards the divine (2008:213). Vaudeville regards *prema-bhakti* or *bhāva-bhakti* as characterising the attitude of the Vārkarī *sants* toward Viṭṭhal because they address the deity as a parent (1989:29; see Aklujkar 1992:102). However, other relationships with the divine such as *sakhya-bhakti* also characterise the interactions between devotee and deity in the Vārkarī community. Vanita suggest that relationships like *sakhya-bhakti* move the idea of intimacy beyond the confines of the patriarchal family where relations were circumscribed by gender and age (2001:62). However, as I shall demonstrate, familial relationships form the basis of many interactions with the divine by poets and *bhaktas* and these relationships reflect the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as concerned with accommodating *gṛhastha* religiosity and resisting the attraction of *sannyāsa*.

1.2.i. *The relation of parent-to-child*

One form of intimacy expressed in *bhakti* is that of god as child and devotee as parent. In this form of *bhakti* the *bhakta* assumes a form of tender, protective love (*vātsalya bhakti*) shown by a cow for her calf or *vatsa* (Lipner 1998:191). The *vātsalya* relationship portrays the parent, particularly the mother, as concerned with the child's welfare. The ultimate goal for Hindu women is considered to be bearing a child, especially a male child, who is regarded as the source of her happiness, object of her tender affection and the basis of her prosperity and security. Moreover, the relationship of mother and child is one of close bodily contact—the mother often massages the child's body with her bare hands—and this

provides the child with security in which to develop (see Stork 1991:103–105). The mother-child relationship is transformed within the *bhakti* context into a relationship of close contact between devotee and divine and is thus once more reflective of householder concerns, drawing on householder imagery. This trope often represents the deity as ‘mischievous and whimsical’ with the devotee as ‘mature and amused by the deity’s doings’ according to Vanita (2001:61). The Lord’s divine *līlā* is celebrated and thus behaviour that would be regarded as abnormal or scandalous is transformed into something joyful and venerable. These actions include erotic behaviours, such as the adolescent Kṛṣṇa teasing the milkmaids (*gopīs*), stealing their clothes and forcing them to emerge naked from the water. These activities are described as ‘sport’ (*kṛida*) and because the deity is viewed as a child all such activity can be considered innocent (Vanita 2001:62). This is a sentiment that certainly predominates in Vallabhite poetry (see Barz 1992:89ff; Thielemann 2000:81) but is not a motif that is often considered in relation to the compositions of Vārkarī *sants* and *santakaviyatrīs* as the focus tends to be on other connections between devotee and deity. However, there are numerous *abhaṅgas* describing Viṭṭhal in the form of a child and describing *bālakṛṣṇa*, while the stories of Kṛṣṇa’s childhood pranks are often the focus of *kīrtans* (Deleury 1994:148, 183; Novetzke 2008:112–115), all of which in my view, reinforce the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition. There is a section on *kṛṣṇajanma, bālakṛīḍā va kālā* ‘Kṛṣṇa’s birth, child-play and curds’ in the Janābāi section of the SSG (258–265). One *abhaṅga* illustrates *vātsalya bhakti* by describing how Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa’s foster-mother, cared for him despite his pranks like stealing butter but the *abhaṅga* also reminds the hearer/reader that the child Kṛṣṇa is actually the Cosmic Reality (Janābāi 262; see BhP 10.8.32–45, 10.9.1–21; Bryant 2003:43–47). However, what is significant about this *abhaṅga* is that it shows Yaśodā as a mother to Kṛṣṇa. Karve comments that devotees do not imagine Viṭhobā as their child because Viṭṭhal is not considered inferior to the *bhakta*. Only Yaśodā has the right to call Kṛṣṇa her child because she sacrificed her own child to save him. According to Karve, Viṭṭhal has therefore always been assigned roles that are considered superior or equal to that of the devotee in the different familial relationships used to describe God (1988:6). However, the relation of *bhakta* to divine in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is generally regarded as one of child-to-parent, which like the relationship of parent-to-child signals a domestic setting and the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

1.2.ii. *The relation of child-to-parent*

The child-to-parent in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* usually has Viṭṭhal/Viṭhobā as a parent and in particular a mother who is often addressed in the feminine as Viṭhāī, Viṭhyā or Viṭhābāī (Vaudeville 1989:29; Dhre 2011:207ff). This is however only partially true as the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* also express different forms of intimate relationships with the divine. Nonetheless, there are a number of compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* that portray the divine in the role of parent: mother and father (*māyabāpa*), and as either father (*bāpa*) or mother (*māya*, *mātā*, *āī*). Interestingly the term ‘mother’ appears before father in the term *māyabāpa* which may allude to the importance of and reverence of the mother in the tradition (see Manu 2.145, 4.183; Altekar 1959:100–101).

A composition attributed to Janābāī portrays the speaker as a calf (*vatsa*) and the divine as the mother. The speaker is seeking love and tenderness from the divine Mother (*māya*) while in a state of desperation: *tuja vāñconiyā māye / jīva mājhā jāvo pāhe // Mī vatsa mājhī māya / naye ātā karī kāya //* ‘Without you Mother, my soul wants to abandon me. I am the calf, you are my mother; I don’t know what to do now’ (74.2–3). For the author/Janī the divine parent(s) may replace those she has lost and provide her with a ‘spiritual’ family instead: *māya melī bāpa melā / ātā sām̐bhāī viṭṭhalā//* ‘Mother died, father died; please take care of my Viṭṭhal’ (58.1); *pāñḍuraṅga mājhā pita / rakhumāī jhālī mātā//* ‘Pāñḍuraṅga is my father, Rakhumāī is my mother’ (82.3) and *māyabāpa bandubahiṇī / tū bā sakhā cakrapāṇī //* ‘You are my mother and father, brother and sister, Cakrapāṇī’ (204.4).

The divine parent in Pandharpur provides Kānhopātrā/the author/speaker with a sense of belonging and reassurance: *yethē āhe māyabāpa / hare tāpa daruśanē //* ‘This is where my parents are; all my anxiety will end after seeing God’ (8.2). While for Bhāgū/the author/speaker the lack of parents and family, and therefore social status, may be the reason she feels the parental role is not being fulfilled by the divine: *anātha mhañūnī dhariyelē dūra / maga kaisā dātāra mhañavisī //* ‘Orphaned, I’m kept at arm’s length. How can you be called generous?’ (4.2). Furthermore, Limbāī/the author/speaker refers to Viṭṭhal as her parent while she beseeches him for salvation: *tārī maha ātā rakhumāīcyā kāntā / pañḍharīcyā nāthā māyabāpā//* ‘Please liberate me Husband of Rakhumāī, Master of Pañḍharī, my parent’ (1.1).

Soyarābāī *abhaṅga* (31.1, 3–4) portrays the common Vārkarī understanding of God as mother and father (*māyabāpa*): ‘With unbecoming familiarity I speak but you are a forgiving parent. The afflicted and miserable seek refuge with you. Please run to their aid, our mother and father. Soyarā prostrates herself: ‘You are our leader and mother, Pāñḍuraṅgā’. The speaker communicates directly with

the divine, saying s/he speaks with familiarity. This suggests that there is an impediment, like low-caste status, to the speaker addressing God. However, the speaker's 'familiarity' could also be understood as that of 'an intimate companion' or 'familiar acquaintance' (*salagī*), which fits with the personal and intimate relationship one has with a parent. So while the speaker implies a close connection with the parental figure s/he retains a respectful distance. This is borne out by the use of the second-person plural (*tumhī*), the formal 'you', which is the correct way to address elders and superiors. However, the divine parent is also presented as 'generous' (*udāra*) suggesting that God forgives one's faults or transgressions. This poem, like numerous others ascribed to the *santakaviyatrīs*, portrays the speaker seeking refuge and aid, the kind of aid a loving parent offers. The final line refers to Soyārā/the author/speaker performing a full body prostration and form of greeting (*daṇḍavata*) that low-caste persons would have given Brahmans and those considered superior to them. This demonstrates the humility of the speaker/author but also their depth of entreaty to God, her mother and *nāyak*. The term *nāyak* connotes a 'leader' but can refer to a man, husband or lover in a dramatic or amorous composition, as well as the hero in a drama or poem (Molesworth 1857:454). Consequently, these designations could apply in this poem and the speaker/author could be referring to God as the head-man/leader of the Mahārs while calling on him for aid.

A very touching verse attributed to Bhāgū Mahārīṅ asks Viṭhāi to come and meet her outside the temple as she is pining outside: 'Listen to my desperate plea Viṭhāi; meet me, your child'. Wonderfully 'God came outside, picked me up on his shoulders' and granted the meeting (1). The significance of this verse lies in the fact that it describes God, female or male, carrying an 'untouchable' into the temple on her/his shoulders (Zelliot 2005:32). This has similarities with the story of Viṭthal leading the *mahār* Cokhā by the hand into the temple (BVJ 23:6ff) and the story of Tiruppāṅ Ālvār who was carried into the temple on the back of the Brahman who had thrown a stone at him (Hardy 1983:478; Zelliot 2005:31). This *abhaṅga* attributed to Bhāgū Mahārīṅ can be understood as expressing a desire for more than just spiritual egalitarianism as the speaker is resisting the dominant religio-social ideology of the time. It portrays God as a mother who hears her child's plea and a God who is willing to 'embrace' (*bheta*) the lowest of the low. Unfortunately little social reform has taken place within or through the Vārkarī *sampradāya* but the notion of Viṭthal as all-embracing prevails among Vārkarīs (see Zelliot 1981:153; Karve 1988:142ff; Youngblood 2003:299).

The idea of God as father is expressed in compositions attributed to both Kānhopātrā and Lādāī: *mājhā āhe bhoḷā bāpa / ghetto tāpa haronī //* ‘My Father is trusting; he removes all oppression’ (Kānhopātrā 14.2) and *pūrvasanbandhe maja didhalē bāpānē / śekhī kāya jāṇē kaisē jhālē//* ‘From an earlier life I’ve been related to my father; in the end, who knows how that happened (Lādāī, line 1).¹³ Viṭho, the familiar male diminutive, is also used in some compositions. One verse attributed to Bhāgū asks for God’s protection and love and says ‘Viṭho, please hold me close’ (Bhāgū *abhaṅga* 5.4). In a Janābāī verse Viṭho appears in conjunction with the word *bā*, which is a familiar form of *bāpa* ‘father’ and can be understood as ‘pa’ or ‘dad’ (*abhaṅga* 116). This composition is found in the SSG under the heading *bheṭa* ‘meeting’ or ‘the mutual embrace of friends meeting’ and it is this relationship of friend-to-friend, which occurs in a householder context, that I now explore.

1.2.iii. *The relation of friend-to-friend*

The relationship where the devotee relates to the deity as an intimate friend is known as *sakhya-bhakti*. Lipner notes that *sakhya-bhakti* is a form of *bhakti* that includes expressions of such familiarity that the *bhakta* can even insult, scold or belittle the deity (1999:316). In *sakhya-bhakti* the devotee usually approaches God as friend and the relationship tends to be male-male or male-female amorous love rather than female-female friendship. However, Vanita submits that a relationship between female friends allows for greater equality and reciprocity in the relationship. This is because one is engaged with a ‘fellow-seeker’ and a dialogue with a female friend (*sakhī*) is like a dialogue with the self. According to Vanita, the *sakhī* occupies a ‘psychological space’ akin to the ‘philosophical space’ occupied by the *sākṣī* (witness) in Vedānta. The *sākṣī* is viewed as the ‘real self’ that observes the actions of the ‘phenomenal self’ but does not participate in them. The *sakhya* relationship is thus one of mutuality rather than difference. Vanita, like Aklujkar, argues that *sakhya-bhakti* is the ‘dominant mode’ in the Vārkarī community (2001:66; 2005:92–93; Aklujkar 2007:205–221).

In Marathi *sakhā* means ‘male friend’, ‘compassion’ and ‘associate’ (Tulpule 1999:701; Molesworth 1857:808) while the words for ‘female friend’, ‘confidante and ‘companion’ in Marathi are *ālī*, *gaḍīṇa*, *maitraṇī* or *maitriṇī*, *sakhī* and *sahelī* (Molesworth 1857). However, the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* seem to refer to God as a male friend (*sakhā*, *sakhya*, *sakhe*), for example: *Māgē puḍhē nāhī koṇī / sakhya viṭthalāvāncunī //* ‘There’s no one around me apart from my friend Viṭthal’ (Bhāgū 2.2). There are also several Janābāī compositions that refer to God as a male

¹³ The reference to ‘father’ in this verse is rather ambiguous and could refer to Nāmdev as the ‘father’ of the family.

friend: *sakhyā paṇḍharīcyā rāyā / ghaḍe daṇḍavata pāyā*// ‘Friend, Master of Paṇḍharī, May I be able to prostrate myself at your feet?’ (53.1); *Tujavīṇa sakhe koṇa / mājhē karīla saṃrakṣaṇa*// ‘Who else is there, my friend, to protect me?’ (58.4); *janī sāṅge sarva loka / nhāũ ghālī mājhā sakhā* // ‘Janī tells everyone, ‘My dear friend is washing me’ (86.4), and *māyabāpa bandubahiṇī / tũ bā sakhā cakrapāṇī*// ‘You are my mother and father, brother and sister, and friend Cakrapāṇī’ (204.4). There are also some Bahiṇābāī *abhaṅgas* that refer to god as her brother or sister and friend: *Sakhā sahodara tūmcī ek harī / dīnāncā kaivārī pāṇḍuraṅga* // ‘Hari, you alone [are my] friend, my sibling; Protector of the Lowly, Pāṇḍuraṅga’ (Bahiṇābāī 68.1, my translation, see Abbott 1985:41)¹⁴ and *sosiyale kleśa jivē bahū phāra / jālī he apāra dīn sakhya* // ‘My soul has borne much distress; it is greatly afflicted, dear Friend’ (Bahiṇābāī 70.1, my translation, see Abbott 1985:42).

However, numerous compositions refer to Viṭhābāī, the feminised divinity who is understood as mother (Deleury 1994:127; Dhare 2011:207) or as a female friend (Vanita 2005). According to Vanita the conception of the relationship between devotee and deity as one between two women in the compositions attributed to Janābāī is ‘unique in medieval Indian poetry’. Female friendships tend to occur in domestic settings as there is no other context in which girls can be friends so this relationship implies the householderness. Vanita argues that Viṭhāī, Viṭṭhal in female form, only appears as a mother in the compositions attributed to the male Vārkarī poets and that Viṭhāī is ‘frequently a woman friend’ in the Janī compositions (2005:96). Vanita therefore contends that Janābāī is the only *santakaviyatrī* to reverse the gender of a male deity and so construct an intimate female-female relationship between the deity and devotee, which reflects the love between women (2005:99; 2012:13).¹⁵

Although Viṭhābāī does appear in some of the Janī compositions as a female friend, in my opinion it is not the only role which Viṭhābāī inhabits in compositions attributed to Janābāī or in those of other *santakaviyatrīs*. Viṭhābāī is described as ‘mother’ in several of the Janī verses I have translated, for example: *ye ga ye ga viṭhābāī / mājhe paṇḍharīce āī* // ‘Come O, come O, Viṭhābāī, my mother from Paṇḍharī (71.1); *tuja vāñconiyā māye / jīva mājhā jāvo pāhe* // Without you Mother, my soul wants to abandon me (74.2), and *janī mhaṅe māya jhālī* ‘Janī says, “My mother has come”’ (85.6). However, another composition describes Viṭhābāī as *māyabahiṇī* ‘mother and sister’ (48.4). The term *māyabahiṇī* is

¹⁴ The term *sahodar* means ‘co-uterine, born of the same womb’ (Molesworth 1857; Monier Williams 2008).

¹⁵ There are also references to Viṭhābāī in compositions attributed to men. Mahīpati quotes two *sants* as referring to Viṭhābāī: Nāmdev (BVJ 22.144, Abbott and Godbole 1996:199) and Tukārām (BVJ 52.311, Abbott and Godbole 1996:293). Moreover, the eighteenth-century poet Govinda also refers to Viṭhābāī in one of his compositions (v.3, Abbott 1999:153).

‘a respectful or affectionate term for a female’ (Molesworth 1857:647) and it depicts the divine as female but specifically as ‘mother’ thus countering Vanita’s assertion that Viṭhābāi is only a female friend. However, the role of sister is very similar to that of the female friend (*sakhī*) so the speaker may be assigning both those roles to the deity.

However, there are two compositions attributed to Kānhopātrā that uses the epithet Viṭhābāi but do not specify if the deity is fulfilling the role of mother or friend (whether female or male). The first one says: *tujaviṇa ṭhāva na dise tribhuvanī / dhāve bo janānī viṭhābāi* // ‘Apart from You, I see nothing in the three worlds; please come to our aid Viṭhābāi’ (*Nako devarāyā* line 4). The second one says: *Dīna patita anyāyī / śaraṇa ālyē viṭhābāi* // ‘Lowly, fallen, unrighteous: I seek your protection Viṭhābāi’ and *maja adhikāra nāhī / bheṭi deī viṭhābāi* // ‘I have no rights; please meet me Viṭhābāi’ (10.1, 3). This verse expresses a desire for Viṭhābāi’s protection but also to ‘meet’ or ‘embrace’ (*bheṭa*) God, suggesting that Viṭhābāi may refer to mother Viṭṭhal as the use of the term Viṭhābāi seems to occur when the devotee wishes to address ‘the motherly, tender side of God’ states Abbott (1990:153, 3). However, these compositions also draw attention to the desire for refuge and protection that low-status figures like Kānhopātrā, Rājāi, Janī, Soyarā and Nirmaḷā have in relation to God.¹⁶

In the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Janābāi her friend Viṭhābāi shares Janī’s tasks of grinding, pounding, washing clothes (122, 124, 130), making cow-dung cakes (125, 130), collecting firewood sweeping (80.1) and washing Jain’s hair (85, 86). The relationship is therefore an intimate one, as acts such as washing one’s hair or bathing would normally be done privately. God is depicted in these *abhaṅgas* as a friend and attendant but also as a participant in the activities of Janī (Vanita 2005:96–97). God’s involvement in the life of the servant Janī highlights the participatory nature of *bhakti* but also suggests that the deity is intimate with every part of the devotee’s life. These compositions also suggest that there is no need to renounce to encounter or meet God as God is within the domestic setting.

Janī’s head is itching. Viṭhābāi runs to her aid.
God unties her hair, crushes the lice quickly.
She combed her tangled hair free. Janī says, ‘I feel clean’.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 83, SSG 1:724; my translation)

This *abhaṅga* depicts the female friend Viṭhābāi performing a task that a man from Janī’s own social strata might not perform as it may be regarded as defiling (Vanita 2005:97). The declaration that God cleans Janī’s hair makes a statement about touching the body of a *śūdra* and calls into question notions of

¹⁶ See Kānhopātrā *abhaṅgas* 4, 6, 7, 10, x; Rājāi *abhaṅgas* 1325–26; Janābāi *abhaṅgas* 38, 42, 104535; Soyarā *abhaṅga* 31 and Nirmaḷā *abhaṅga* 21 in Appendix B.

impurity based on caste. These verses therefore suggest that Janī is a special person because God is willing to touch her (Vidyut Bhagwat, personal communication, 29th January 2005). Significantly, the deity does not always appear in feminine form in the *abhaṅgas* in which he aids Janī:

To remove the husk from rice he swept the mortar.
Pounding vigorously Paṇḍharīnāth became exhausted.
His entire body drenched in sweat, his yellow *dhoti* became wet.
Anklets on his feet and rings on his hands, he removed the chaff by winnowing.
On his hand a blister appeared, Janī said, ‘let go of the pestle’.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 87, SSG 1:724; my translation)¹⁷

In this *abhaṅga* the deity appears in all his temple finery as the Lord of Pandharpur but he still participates in the domestic chores that Janī undertakes. The *abhaṅga* draws attention to the reciprocal relationship of exchange between deity and devotee in *bhakti* as Janī, like any good friend, responds to the deity’s exhaustion (see Eck 1996:7; Vanita 2005:98). Moreover, the reciprocal relationship portrayed in this and other *abhaṅgas* echoes the relationship described in Mahīpati’s *caritra* in which Janī and Viṭṭhal share food (Aklujkar 1992:101–03).

Having myself translated and analysed most of the verses which Vanita presents and discusses it seems to me that while God shares or participates in many of the domestic chores undertaken by Janī, as well as fulfilling a nurturing and supportive role, the deity is rarely represented in the form of Viṭṭhābāi the female-friend.¹⁸ For instance, there are two *abhaṅgas* that refer to the deity Cakrapāṇī (‘discus-bearer’): *jhāḍaloṭa kāri janī / kera bharī cakrapāṇī*// ‘Janī sweeps briskly. Cakrapāṇī collects the rubbish’ (80.1) and *hātī gheūniyā loṇī / doī colī cakrapāṇī* // Cakrapāṇī takes some butter and massages Janī’s head’ (86.2). Vanita regards the epithet Cakrapāṇī as a ‘grammatically ungendered appellation’ for Kṛṣṇa which allows one to regard the deity as an ‘empowered female figure’ (2005:96). This is a view with which I find it difficult to concur. Firstly, the epithet Cakrapāṇī is not always considered gender neutral (see Monier Williams 2008). Secondly, both these *abhaṅgas* appear to play with the term ‘Cakrapāṇī’. While the epithet Cakrapāṇī is generally accepted as a conjunction of *cakra* ‘discus’ or ‘wheel’ and *pāṇi* ‘bearing in hand’ it is possible that the author may have been applying a different interpretation as *abhaṅga* authors are inventive in terms of appellations and their uses (see Appendix D). The second of the *abhaṅgas* mentioned above continues “‘My Janī has no one”, so God pours water’ (86.3), which suggests a play on the words *cakra* ‘circle’ or ‘whirlpool’ and *pāṇi/pāṇī* ‘water’ (Molesworth 1857:267;

¹⁷ There is a partial translation of this *abhaṅga* by Pandharipande (2000:167) and full translation by Vanita (2005:97–8).

¹⁸ Vanita presents and discusses *abhaṅgas* 59, 71, 74 (which she also numbers 59), 80, 83, 86, 87, 89, and 191. The only verses of these I have not translated are 59 and 89.

Monier Williams 2008). Vanita’s proposition that God is ‘feminized’ by participating in household chores seems to limit the possible readings of gendered relations in the context of the *sakhya* relationship. Is it not startling to see the male God, the first among men, participating in domestic work? Does it not highlight the depth of love felt by the deity for the devotee that he is conceived as sharing the burdens of his *bhakta*? Does it not draw attention to the speaker’s desire for intimacy, for someone with whom to share their obligations and anxieties? What is so striking about these compositions is that God is present even in the most trivial and denigrated tasks in the household environment. The *sakhya* relationship is therefore another argument for the efficacy of the householder path.

Moreover, many of the compositions discussed by Vanita are grouped together under the heading *bheṭa* ‘meeting’ in the SSG, suggesting that those with programmatic intent place a different interpretation and value on these compositions. Vanita suggests that the ‘love between women’ is a ‘trope for God’s love’ (2005:99ff) but I wonder whether Vanita is trying to read more into the compositions than is actually there, particularly if one bears in mind the issue of gender attribution. Those with programmatic intent appear to be using the relationship of friendship, represented in compositions attributed to women, within a domestic setting to construct the *sampradāya* discursively as a householder tradition.

When Janī feels neglected by Viṭṭhal she goes into a rage and swears at him:

O Viṭhyā Viṭhyā, you’re the naughty son of the primal mother.
Your widow has become a prostitute and wears the bangles of Sāvitrī.
Your corpse is gone; looking at you Death cries.
Standing in the courtyard, *dāsī* Janī swears.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 19, SSG 1:717; my translation)

Janī refers to Viṭṭhal as ‘Viṭhyā’ a name which appears to be a diminutive for the deity but which also translates as ‘Tom cat’ (Molesworth 1857:757). Janī tells Viṭṭhal he is a brat born out of illusion (*māyā*) that he was not God to begin with and that if he is God she is the one who has given him power so he cannot ignore her (Vidyut Bhagwat, personal communication, 29th January 2005). The *abhaṅga* refers to the story of Sāvitrī whose exemplary behaviour and arguments persuaded Yama to restore her husband Satyavān to life (Mbh 3.277:19–65; Bryant 2009:215–227). Sāvitrī therefore never had to break her marriage bangles or endure the stigma of widowhood. The speaker plays on the fact that during their lives prostitutes also wear bangles (*cuḍa*) as the “wives” of innumerable men. Janī thereby insults Viṭṭhal and his wife Rukmiṇī by implying that Viṭṭhal is dead and that Rukmini has become a bangle-wearing prostitute (Sellergren 1996:222–223). Janī may also be insinuating that Rukmiṇī, unlike Sāvitrī, could not

persuade Yama not to take Viṭṭhal and therefore deserved to become a widow. The anger expressed in this *abhaṅga* may express the struggle of a marginalised *śūdra* woman who wants her rebirth and distress removed so as to gain liberation (see Janābāi *abhaṅgas* 43.3, 44.3 in Appendix B). However, this *abhaṅga* also represents the form of *sakhya-bhakti* in which the devotee insults or belittles the deity.

The intimacy between devotee and deity is primarily expressed as friend-to-friend or child-to-parent(s) in the compositions of the Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs* although there are instances of *dāsyā-bhakti* in the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs*.¹⁹ However, there is another relationship with the divine that of union. Mystical union with the divine is expressed in a number of the compositions attributed to Janī (see *abhaṅgas* 38, 180 and 186) but one well-known verse states that all Janī’s actions—eating, drinking, and sleeping—are dedicated to God, as there’s no place without God:

I eat God, I drink God; I sleep on God.
I give God, I take God; I deal with God.
God here, God there; void is not devoid of God.
Janī says, ‘Viṭhābāi, no distance remains between the two of us’.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 191, SSG 1:735; my translation)

This *abhaṅga* may be based on a verse from the *Bhagavadgītā*: ‘Son of Kunti, all that you do, all that you take, all that you offer, all that you give, all that you strive for, in heated discipline – do that in offering to me’ (BhG 9.27; Patton 2008:108). This verse is a statement of mystical understanding and union with the divine who is conceived as Viṭhābāi, the ultimate Mother. Bynum suggests that the analogy of eating god indicates the devotee’s experience or feeling of knowing God with their whole being but Bynum also suggests that eating god has an erotic element to it as the fusion of the self and god is rather like a sexual orgasm (1988:151, 156). This *abhaṅga* refers to the void (*ritā*)—a theme that is found in the *abhaṅga* attributed to Āubāi but which uses the term *śūnya*—which suggests that the author is familiar with Nāth or *yogic* practices.²⁰ Similarly, the references to union as the conjunction of the self and *śiva* (Muktābāi.32.4; Janī 186.1, 226.2), as a ‘flood’ in the compositions attributed to Janī (195) and Nāgarī, as well as the use of *yogic* term *pranayama* in an *abhaṅga* attributed to Lādāi, all suggest that the authors were conversant with the Nāth *yoga* tradition (see Kiehnle 1997a:188).

These intimate and unitive relationships with the divine as well as the concern with *nāma* suggest that poets were probably more concerned with encouraging devotional practice and devotional

¹⁹ See Janābāi *abhaṅgas* 11.4, 42.4, 54.3, 58.1, 67.4, 155.5 and 284, and Kānhopātrā *abhaṅgas* 10.4 and 11.4 in Appendix B.

²⁰ I am grateful to V.P. Kanitkar for the BhG reference. For other translations of the verse see Macnicol (1919:50, v.25), Kolatkar (1982:114), Aklujkar (1999:25; 2005:120), Arun Kolatkar (1982:114; quoted in Sellergren 1996:225), Pandharipande (2000:161) and Vanita (2005:99).

subjectivity within the idiom of *grhastha* practices than with creating a life-narrative (see Pechilis 2012:3, 14ff). However, some of the compositions attributed to *santakaviyatrīs* do provide some biographical images that appear to highlight the particular concerns of the poets and/or the female *bhakta* in question. Consequently, the next section explores some biographical images of figures who are under-represented in *caritra* so as to consider issues like caste status but also to maintain the focus on the construction of the *sampradāya* as a householder tradition and the role that gender attribution plays in that process.

1.3. *Biographical images*

In the previous chapter the *caritras* presented provided few biographical details about Soyarā and Nirmaḷā suggesting that these women are not of much interest to biographers. However, the compositions attributed to Soyarā and Nirmaḷā do provide some biographical images which suggest that these figures were Mahārs and connected to each other. Soyarā is identified through the *nāmamudrā* ‘Cokhā’s Mahārī’ that connotes ‘Cokhāmeḷā’s wife’ and apart from this designation the compositions attributed to Soyarā rarely refer to Cokhā/her husband. However, one composition with Soyarā’s name seems to relate the story narrated by Mahīpati in his *caritra* (BVJ 23.11–86) that recounts Cokhāmeḷā’s exile from and return to Pandharpur at the hands of the Brahmans:

All the Brahmans of Paṇḍharpūr were cruel to Cokhā; God was astonished.
The whole community is at Cokhā’s home; wealth and accomplishments remain at the door.
Beautiful *raṅgamāḷā*, *guḍhī* at the door—a Vaiṣṇava *kīrtan* is proceeding happily.
Innumerable Brahmans are sitting for *paṅgatī* while great souls look down from above.
This happy occasion is equal to *divālī* or *dasarā*, Cokhā’s Soyarā does *ovālī*.

(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 19, SSG 1:1000; my translation)

The presence of the *raṅgamāḷā* and the *guḍhī* indicate that a special event is taking place as the presence of patterns in coloured powders (*rāṅgoḷī*) on the ground at the entrance to a building marks festive occasions. *Guḍhī* refers to a pole that is usually wrapped with cloth and hung with mango leaves and marigold flowers which is erected before the door to a house. The special event is the *kīrtan* that is occurring at Soyarā and Cokhāmeḷā’s home and the significance of this event is that the audience is drawn from different castes and classes. The reference to numerous Brahmans being fed also indicates an auspicious occasion. Moreover, the *abhaṅga* suggests that the diners are seated in a row (*paṅgatī*) which indicates commensality, companionship and fellowship: an ideal in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. The reference to *ovālī* suggests Soyarā performed a light-offering ritual by waving a small oil lamp in a circle

in front of each individual or the image of the deity and that Soyarā was therefore instrumental in concluding the occasion.²¹

The compositions attributed to Soyarā do refer to her supposed sister-in-law Nirmaḷā (Zelliot 2005:160)—for example ‘Taking leave of everyone, Nirmaḷā set out and soon reached Mehuṅpūrī’ (Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 62.1, 12, 13 and 15)—and one *abhaṅga* attributed to Soyarā refers to the birth of Soyarā and Cokhāmeḷā’s son:

‘Karmameḷā was born: a promise from black Viṭṭhal.²²
Viṭṭhal’s Name acclaimed. Rukmiṇī’s husband comes running.
Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī perform the naming ceremony joyfully
With all the necessary materials’, says Cokhā’s Mahārī.

(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 14, SSG:999; my translation)

This composition describes Karmameḷā’s birth as a joyous event. Firstly, Soyarā had a son and so is fulfilled. Secondly, it appears that his birth was due to a ‘promise’ or vow, which Soyarā may have undertaken in order to have a child and which she regarded as being fulfilled by Viṭṭhal. Thirdly, the baby survived a number of days and could therefore undergo the naming ceremony. The story of Karmameḷā’s birth is, however, told in more detail by Nirmaḷā who shows Cokhāmeḷā to be an inadequate husband. He leaves his heavily pregnant wife at home, without provision, and goes to visit his sister:

‘You are my elder brother yet you acted thoughtlessly. Tell me why did you act with such determination?
Why did you come running without even asking, wouldn’t sister-in-law be grieving for you?’.
He says, ‘Vitho will provide all necessities, the burden is his’.
Nirmaḷā says, ‘making this Viṭṭhal’s business is not the right thing to do’.

(Nirmaḷā *abhaṅga* 14, SSG 1:1010; my translation)

The story is completed by Nāmdev who describes how Soyarā searched for Cokhā but could not find him. When the time came to deliver the child Nāmdev describes how “Mother Viṭhū” came to Soyarā’s aid in the form of her sister-in-law Nirmaḷā. For Zelliot, the moral of the story is that God will look after you. However, in her presentation and discussion of Karmameḷā’s birth Zelliot notes that the story also has some ‘human touches’: the husband who leaves to avoid a ‘bloody mess’, the sister who is appalled by her brother’s behaviour, a *sant* who ignore his duties due to his detachment, the deity who comes to the rescue in female form, and a wife who forgives her husband (Zelliot 2005:149–155).²³ These *abhaṅgas*

²¹ *Ovāḷī/ovāḷaṇī* is also mentioned in Janābāi *abhaṅgas* 53 and 172 and *aratī* is mentioned in Janābāi *abhaṅga* 347 (see Appendix B).

²² This line could also be interpreted ‘when faced with the fruits of one’s actions [*karmameḷā*] speak the name of black Viṭṭhal’ (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 14th May 2011).

²³ The story of Karmameḷā’s birth appears in the compositions attributed to Soyarābāi (14), Nirmaḷā (12–16) and Nāmdev (2353).

combine biographical, religious and domestic imagery, reinforcing the sense that the religious and domestic domains are not necessarily separable: housewives and young girls draw the *raṅgamālā/rāṅgoḷī* and create the decorated pole (*guḍhī*), women undertake *navas* or a votive rite in order to have a child; the naming ceremony of a child (*bārāse*) also refers to the mother's restoration of purity/auspiciousness after eleven or twelve days of seclusion with her child, and if the child is a boy and was subject to a vow, his right nostril is then bored and a gold ring put into it. Nirmaḷā challenges Cokhā's extreme detachment suggesting that while Cokhā might have faith that all will be well practical issues have to be considered when a child is being born.

The compositions attributed to Nirmaḷā do not mention her husband Banka, although he is thought to have been Soyarā's brother, but they do mention Cokhāmeḷā as he is thought to have been Nirmaḷā's spiritual guide. In one *abhaṅga* Nirmaḷā complains to God 'You have given Cokhā peace and happiness yet it looks like you've forgotten me' (19.3). Nirmaḷā clearly desires a relationship with God and contrasts Cokhā's intimate relationship with God with hers: 'Until today you've taken care of him and tolerated all Cokhā's faults' (21.1). Significantly, the poems attributed to Soyarā and Nirmaḷā contain few quotidian or domestic images but they do refer to the burden of *sansār* (see Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 10; Nirmaḷā *abhaṅgas* 1, 5; Zelliott 2010:83, 2005b:163–164); thus they indicate the necessary struggle of grappling with drudgery of daily life (*sansār*) whilst seeking to be devout. Moreover, the compositions attributed to Soyarā and Nirmaḷā refer to their low status, for example: 'Base and lowly, I am a mass of sin [but] seek refuge at your feet with heart and soul. Nirmaḷā says, you are the compassionate one, so please take care of me' (Nirmaḷā *abhaṅga* 21.3–4, SSG:1011). Some of the songs attributed to Soyarā mention caste but other *abhaṅgas* are concerned with issues relating to purity and impurity (see Soyarābāi *abhaṅgas* 3, 4, 6 and 41 in Appendix B). One Soyarā *abhaṅga* disputes the notion of pollution as innate and determining social status:

A body is unclean, they say, but the soul is clean and aware.
 The body's pollution arises through menstruation, birth, death and touch. What kind of dharma makes
 the Brahmin pure in body?
 Nobody is born without becoming polluted.²⁴
 Therefore, praise Pāṇḍuraṅga: impurity resides within the body.
 'The body's pollution lies within the body', says the Mahārī of Cokhā with confidence.

(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 6, SSG 1:999; my translation)

²⁴ This line is rather complex: it suggests that because we are all born in the same way (in blood) we are all equally polluted.

The third line of the *abhaṅga* particularly refers to *sovalā* Brahmins or Brahmins who would be rendered unclean by the touch of impure persons or things having attained a state of cleanliness by ablution or purificatory ceremony. The term *sovalā* is also applied to those regarded as uncontaminated or undefiled (by any bad action) or to anyone who, by purification, is fit for everything (Molesworth 1857:868). This phrase refers to the idea that while a Brahmin's spiritual pollution can be removed by a purificatory bath, a low caste person—particularly a *mahār* who deals with human excrement or dead animals—remains in a permanent state of spiritual pollution, even after bathing (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 22nd March 2011). The third line suggests that because we are all born in the same way (in blood) we are all equally polluted and this *abhaṅga* therefore offers a direct challenge to untouchability. Once more, here is an example where the attribution of compositions to women signals a discursive construction, in this case perhaps of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as egalitarian. Zelliott suggests that the limited reference to untouchability is due to the songs of the *sants* being 'kept orally for generations' and being 'sung by pilgrims going to Paṇḍharpūr, so those specifically about untouchability might have been considered inappropriate for the joyous pilgrimage' (2005:160). However, as I mentioned earlier caste attribution may apply in the same way that gender attribution does. Accordingly, the caste status of the author/speaker may be indeterminable, as is the case with Nāgarī to whom the discussion now turns.

1.3.i. Nāgarī

The only study of compositions attributed to Nāgarī was undertaken by the Marathi scholar R.C. Dhere who was given eight compositions by the *pūjārī* of the Sopān temple in Sāsavaḍ.²⁵ The compositions were presented in a research article in which Dhere sought to clarify the references to Nāgarī and Nāgī (Nāgī being the *mudrā* 'seal' employed in the eight *abhaṅgas* attributed to Nāgarī). Dhere concluded that the autobiographical compositions had a special place in Marathi literature (*sāhitya*) as the first autobiography by a woman (1977a:15; Shrotriya 1992:64). There is a reference in the compositions that the autobiography was due to the 'company' of Janābāi and the 'influence' of Nāmdev which is why Nāgarī is connected to Nāmdev's family. The familial connection highlights the importance of *kul* for the Vārkarī *sampradāya* and draws attention to the householder nature of the tradition that is being discursively constructed through the use of compositions attributed to women like Nāgarī.

Nāgarī's autobiography refers to her father Ramayā who, was a Viṭṭhal-*bhakta* like Nāmdev. The story goes that Ramayā married Nāgarī off when she came of age: 'Ramayā's daughter, small and sweet,

²⁵ This is probably the *Sant Sopānakākā samādhi* temple.

he sent her off to her in-laws' (Shrotriya 1992:62). Nāgarī apparently found the contrast between her *māher*, a devotional household, and her *sāsar* disturbing. The story states that one *ekādaśī* Nāgarī wanted to go on the pilgrimage but her in-laws locked her up to prevent her from going. So while Nāgarī was physically at her in-law's house she mentally travelled through the main gate of the Viṭṭhal *mandir* to the feet of Viṭṭhal. The following morning Ramayā saw Nāgarī in Paṇḍharpūr 'standing behind where the *kīrtan* is going on like an enlightened statue' (Shrotriya 1992:62) and was angry that she had come on the *vārī*. Nāmdev explained to Ramayā that Nāgarī's mind was entangled with Keśava/Viṭṭhal. Nāgarī then explains to her father why she has chosen the *bhaktimārga* before stating that she has accomplished something as she has a place at Viṭṭhal's feet (Shrotriya 1992:63). This account bears a remarkable similarity to the Sakhūbāi *caritra* presented in the previous chapter and highlights the suffering of young married girls in their marital homes. The narrative also highlights the possibility of combining *gr̥hastha* and *bhakti* so gender attribution plays a role in constructing the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path.

The eight *abhaṅgas* attributed to Nāgarī have almost no information about Nāgarī but do suggest that Nāgarī may have come from Narsī Brāhmanī—Nāmdev's probable birth place—which is situated in the Parbhani district of the Marāṭhavāḍā region of eastern Maharashtra (Shrotriya 1992:64; Callewaert 1989:30; Dhere 1977a).²⁶ The third of the eight *abhaṅgas* is entitled *Nāgarī Nāmdevācī dhvādī* 'Nāgarī Nāmdev's Niece'. It is this statement, along with the reference to Narsī Brāhmanī and the reference to Nāgarī in the Gondā *abhaṅgas*, which Dhere regards as proof that Nāgarī was in fact Nāmdev's niece (1977b; Shrotriya 1992:64). A number of the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Nāgarī use old Marathi words. For example the word *avacchā* 'a state' or 'a condition' appears in the fifth *abhaṅga*. Tulpule notes that this word appears in a Nāmdev *abhaṅga*, which could indicate Nāmdev's influence as Nāgarī's *guru* or just place Nāgarī to the same era as Nāmdev (1999:31). However, one must remember that there were a number of different Nāmdevs and compositions could be attributed to any one of them (see Novetzke 2008).

In expressing her experience as an eyewitness (*sākṣa*) Nāgarī is attributed as saying her ten working organs, which actively controlled her life, were at peace. This was because there was no more sorrow or worry in the condition of complete happiness. The thoughts and desire that shaped her character were submerged in complete happiness as she was now a *yoginī* (*abhaṅga* 6, Dhere 1977a; Shrotriya

²⁶ Narsī Brāhmanī is twenty-six miles from Washim in Vidarbha according to Parchure (1973).

1992:65).²⁷ In the Nāgarī *ātmānubhava* (*abhaṅga* 5)—which has similarities to a Janābāī *abhaṅga* (284 in the *Śāsakīya Nāmdev Gāthā*, Appendix B)—Nāgarī is attributed with saying, ‘Along with my character, my mind is drowned in happiness and I’m entranced like a *yoginī*’ (quoted in Shrotriya 1992:65). The final composition attributed to Nāgarī states, ‘Viṭṭhal has provided me with so much happiness that I cannot speak’ and then says that she is convinced she has no more to achieve before concluding: ‘At length Nāgarī has swallowed her own speech and the flood of happiness has rolled through me’ (Shrotriya 1992:65–66). The reference to terms like flood, drowned, submerged and *yoginī* suggest that Nāgarī/the author was familiar with Nāth practices as the speaker describes their emancipation in *yogic* terms (see Kiehnle 1997a:188). These references may suggest that the author is referring to the Nāth origins of the *sampradāya* but it may also be a means of connecting Nāgarī and Nāmdev via a *guru-paramparā*. Dhare and Shrotriya regard the Nāgarī compositions as the first autobiography by a woman connected with the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, signalling that the *sampradāya* was being constructed discursively by utilising gender attributed compositions. However, traditionally the narrative compositions by Bahiṅābāī are regarded as the first autobiography by a woman associated with the Vārkarīs.

1.3.ii. Bahiṅābāī’s autobiographical compositions

Bahiṅābāī (c.1628–1700) is best known for her attributed autobiography or more accurately her *ātmanivedan* ‘offering one’s self up to the deity’ (Monier Williams 2008) or ‘consecration of body and soul’ (Molesworth 1857:67). The term *ātmanivedan* appears in the *Jñāneśvarī* (7.97) but is also used by *sant* Rāmdās in his *Dāsabodha* to describe the highest form of *bhakti* through which the *bhakta* realises God and becomes one with Him (8.8.9–24, 6.2.39–45; see Ranade 2003:406–407; see McGee 1999:165n.7). The Marathi text of the *ātmanivedan* is found in the editions the *Bahiṅābāī gāthā* by Umārkhāne (1914), Kolhārkar (1926; 1956) and Jāvāḍekar (1979) while Abbott provides English translations of the *ātmanivedan* (v.2–73, 1929/1985:1–44) and some of Bahiṅābāī’s other attributed compositions.²⁸ Bahadur states that the first 116 *abhaṅgas* in the *Bahiṅābāī Gāthā* are biographical as they relate the early period of Bahiṅābāī’s life, her death and her previous births (1998:36). Usually only the *ātmanivedan* is discussed when considering Bahiṅābāī’s attributed autobiography but including the verses on *niryāṇa* allows a more detailed picture of the Bahiṅābāī figure to emerge. Consequently, the

²⁷ There are eight stages in *yoga* and the last stage is that of entrancement but by following the path of *bhakti* Nāgarī reached the state of deep meditation (*samādhi*) early and did not have to follow the path of *yoga* in its entirety.

²⁸ The SSG provides Bahiṅābāī’s *ātmanivedan* and her *gāthā* but most of it appears in the addendum (SSG 2:1150–57, 1421–93).

niryāṇapara abhaṅgas are considered as part of the spiritual autobiography attributed to Bahiṇābāī in the following discussion.

The *ātmanivedan* relates that Bahiṇābāī's natal place (*māher*) was Devgāv/Devgaon (2, 55) and her father and mother were Audev/Aūjī and Jānakī Kulkarnī. Bahiṇābāī says that while other girls wanted to play with toys she was thinking of *nāma* (55). The life of Bahiṇī thus corresponds to the notion of early dedication to God, the first of Ramanujan's five phases for women *sants*. Aged about three Bahiṇī was married to a Brahman astrologer, Gaṅgādhar Pāthak, who was thirty years old and who had been married before (5–6, 57).²⁹ After about four years a quarrel between Bahiṇī's father and his family meant that Bahiṇī and her husband had to emigrate with her parents and brother (7). They moved around Maharashtra, begging for survival, and visiting various holy places until they arrived in Kolhapur. Bahiṇī was now eleven years old (8–12, 58). In Kolhapur the family were given a place at the house of a Brahman called Harirambhaṭ. While they were living there they listened to *Hari-kathās* given by Jayarām Gosāvī and discussed spiritual matters (13).

One day Harirambhaṭ gave Gaṅgādhar a black cow and a calf, which developed a great affection for Bahiṇī. The calf followed Bahiṇī everywhere and in turn Bahiṇī felt lost without it. Gaṅgādhar did not like this and excused her behaviour by saying that the calf was a substitute for the children that Bahiṇī—aged eleven—did not yet have (14.29). When Bahiṇī went to listen to Jayarām Gosāvī's *Hari-kathās* the calf went with her. However, one *ekādaśī* the house in which Jayarām was giving his discourse was so crowded that the calf was removed, which caused both Bahiṇī and the calf to wail. Informed about the reason for the commotion Jayarām called for the girl and the calf to be brought to him and caressed them both, even though this shocked people (14.58). Bahiṇī and the calf both prostrated themselves at Jayarām's feet and the performance continued. The next day Gaṅgādhar overheard a woman called Nirābāī describing what had happened, including that Jayarām had put his hand on Bahiṇī's head. Bahiṇābāī's husband rushed to the house, grabbed Bahiṇī by her braid, beat her uncontrolledly (5.11–12), and then trussed Bahiṇī up and flung her aside. Bahiṇī's husband only untied her when he saw that both the calf and cow were refusing to eat (16). The cow and calf still refused grass and water and so Bahiṇī forsook all food but after two days the calf died. At the calf's burial Bahiṇī fainted and was unconscious for four days. Bahiṇī awakened to a vision of Pāṇḍuraṅga (21.1; SSG2) and a desire to meet Tukārām.

²⁹ Suma Chitnis referred to Bahiṇābāī's husband as Ratnārkar, a Yajurvedī Brahmin of the Gautama *gotra*, astrologer and performer of rituals (personal communication, 24th February 2005). Dada Maharaj Manmadkar also referred to Bahiṇābāī's husband as Ratnārkar Bhat (personal communication, 10th July 2006).

After a week Tukārām appeared to Bahiṇī in a vision, fed her nectar and taught her the *mantra* ‘Rāma-Kṛṣṇa-Hari’ (25), signalling the Bahiṇābāī was Tukārām’s disciple.

After this Bahiṇī recovers but becomes addicted to meditating on Tukārām, which adversely affects her marriage. Bahiṇābāī’s husband had a narrow and orthodox religious outlook and was therefore antagonistic to her religious pursuits and *bhakti* particularly as a woman was not allowed to have a *mantra* and was supposed to worship her husband as god (Suma Chitnis, personal communication, 24th February 2005). Bahiṇī has another vision of Tukārām (30) and crowds of people come to see her so her husband beats her again. Gaṅgādhar complains bitterly about *bhakti*, and declares he will abandon Bahiṇī and go into the forest (as a renouncer) even though Bahiṇī is three months pregnant (34.3). Gaṅgādhar would therefore be going against his *varṇāśramadharmā* by becoming an ascetic but his threat suggests that he feels Bahiṇābāī is destabilising family life (*sansār*). Moreover, the account draws attention to the tension between *grhastha* and *sannyāsa* that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* attempts to resolve in its discursive construction. According to the *ātmanivedan*, Bahiṇī contemplates her situation and capitulates:

Bhratārācī sevā toci āmhā deva / bhratāra svayameva parabrahmana//
I’ll serve my husband, he’s my god; my husband is the supreme Brahman (35.4)

Sadgurū bhratāra sādana bhratāra / satya hā nirdhāra antarīcā//
My husband’s my guru, my husband’s my way; this is my heart’s true resolve (35.11)

Bhratāradarśanāviṇa jāy disa / tarī teci rāsa pātakāncī//
A day spent without sight of my husband will be a heap of sin (37.6)

Pāṣāna viṭṭhala svapnātila tukā / pratyakṣa kṣā sukhā antarāvṛṇḍ//
Why should the stone Viṭṭhal and dream Tukā, deprive me of the happiness I know? (38.1)

However, just when Gaṅgādhar was about to leave and Bahiṇī was about to conform to his views he fell ill. Gaṅgādhar suffered from a fever for a week and could not eat for more than a month. While he was in this feverish state an old Brahman appeared and chastised Gaṅgādhar for planning to abandon his wife. The Brahman advised Gaṅgādhar that Bahiṇī was a true *bhakta* and that he should also be one (40.6). Gaṅgādhar returned to health a changed man and resolved that the family would go to Dehū, Tukārām’s village, and give themselves over to *bhakti* (42). This story therefore draws attention to the compatibility of the householder life and *bhakti* but the narrative also suggests that *grhastha* and *bhakti* are necessary.

However, Bahiṇābāī’s life still had its difficulties. One of the local Brahmins, Mambājī Gosāvī, persecuted Bahiṇī and Gaṅgādhar for being the disciples of the *śūdra* Tukārām but this situation was miraculously resolved (43–53). Gaṅgādhar also appears to have resented Bahiṇī’s devotion to Tukārām (73.5) but Bahiṇī thanks God for allowing her to fulfil both her *pativratādharmā* and be devoted to Him

(68.2–4). However, it seems that Bahiṇī would have preferred to live as a renunciant but could not do so because she is female and married:

Śtriyecē śarīra parādhīna deha / na cāle upāva viraktīcā//
Possessing a woman's body and subject to another body / I was not able to embark on
renunciation (60.1)

Bhratāra tyāgitā vedāsī virūddha / paramārtha to śuddha sām̐paḍenā//
Leaving one's husband is contrary to the Vedas; one would never attain pure spiritual knowledge
(62.3)

The authoritative Brahmanical tradition, here represented by the Vedas, had taught Bahiṇī that her body was an impediment to obtaining spiritual knowledge or attaining liberation (McGee 1999:144). In re-examining her life Bahiṇābāī is attributed with saying that she was depressed due to the restrictions placed on her by her female body (63–64) and her marriage to a man who disapproved of *bhakti* (65), and that she therefore contemplated suicide (66–67). However, in anguish Bahiṇābāī turned to God (68–72) but had to wait for her husband to leave town before she could spend three days meditating, during which time she was given three *mantras* by Tukārām—probably the ‘Rāma-Kṛṣṇa-Hari’ *mantra* delivered in a dream (25)—and was inspired to become a poet (73–78, 98.25ff).

Bahiṇābāī's *ātmanivedan* thus concludes with her *dīkṣā* and her biography then continues with Bahiṇī aged seventy-two in the *niryāṇapara abhangas* (98.38). The focus of the intervening years may have been on *bhakti* and the concerns expressed in the other compositions that make up the *Bahiṇābāī Gāthā* (Suma Chitnis, personal communication, 24th February 2005). It may have been during this period that Bahiṇābāī gave *kīrtans* as suggested by Mahīpati's statement ‘Govind danced in her *kirtan*’ but due to gender attribution one cannot assert that Bahiṇābāī was a *kīrtankārī* (BVJ 57.181; Abbott and Godbole 1996:384). Bahiṇābāī, like Kānhopātrā, is often depicted holding a *vīṇā* as both the picture of Bahiṇābāī in the SSG and her image at the Dehu temple demonstrate (see Plate 20). Thus, Bahiṇābāī appears to be remembered as giving public performances.



Plate 20: Bahiṇābāī at Dehu Temple

The *niryāṇapara* verses (90–115) are not part of the *ātmanivedan* attributed to Bahiṇābāī but I think they are important as they relate to her attributed life-story and spiritual experiences. Suma Chitnis suggested that the narration of transmigration, of twelve lives over 360 years, is very unusual and special and not just because Bahiṇābāī was a woman (personal communication, 24th February 2005). McGee states that ‘to have knowledge of previous lives is a sign of a great yogī’ (1999:162). Thus the detailing of Bahiṇābāī’s twelve previous births may signal her spiritual status, spiritual knowledge or spiritual aspirations. Bhagwat suggested that Bahiṇābāī dreamt about her past lives as a way of coping with the beatings she suffered and therefore proposed that Bahiṇābāī’s rebirths—which mention she was not married in every birth—need to be translated or decoded differently (personal communications, 27th October 2004 and 29th January 2005). Consequently, one may interpret the *niryāṇapara abhaṅgas* as Bahiṇābāī, a Brahman woman, resisting the socio-religious restrictions placed on women as the *abhaṅgas* state that in each birth Bahiṇābāī was born a woman who was spiritually inclined. For example, Bahiṇābāī is attributed with saying that in her first birth she was initiated into Śaivism with a *mantra* (90.13) and that by her seventh birth she was recognised as a *yogabhraṣṭa* by a *siddha* (93.1, 7–10). The

niryānapara abhaṅgas, which Bahiṇābāī is attributed as relating to her son Viṭṭhalpanth, conclude by summarising Bahiṇābāī's thirteenth life (97–98) and describing her union with God, her realisation 'I am Brahma' (107.8) and her comprehension of *advaya* (111.17, 113.5). These compositions establish that Bahiṇābāī, the *bhakta*, has attained realisation and union, and has thus accomplished *ātmanivedan*, the ninth form of *bhakti* listed in the *Nārada Bhakti Sutra* (9.82) and the *Bhāgavata Purāna* (BhP 7.5.23–4).

The spiritual biography attributed to Bahiṇābāī is often understood as attempting to reconcile the conflict between *pativratādharma* and *bhakti* or *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*.³⁰ The *ātmanivedan* makes it clear that Bahiṇāī was a victim of domestic violence—like Sakhūbāī, Viṭhābāī and Nāgarī—but according to McGee Bahiṇābāī appears to rationalise the abuse she receives as being due a sin she had committed in a previous life which resulted in being born a woman (64.1–2) or as a test from God (67.3) (1999:143). The sexuality of Brahman women was closely monitored and highly valorised during the eighteenth century and Brahman women were socialised to accept *strīdharma* and *pativratā dharma* (Chakravarti 2001:239; see Kosambi 1998). Bahiṇābāī is said to date to an earlier age but her attributed biography reflects this socialisation. The beating Bahiṇāī received after Jayarām's blessing demonstrates the gender bias of the dominant Brahmanical culture (McGee 1999:143). However, Bahiṇābāī is represented as defying patriarchal and orthodox social norms by participating in *bhakti* and accepting the *śūdra* Tukārām as her *guru* (see Ramaswamy 2007:217). Bahiṇābāī therefore exemplifies both conformism and dissent as I outlined in Chapter One and thus seems to exemplify the message of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* that a householder path is compatible, whilst in tension with, that of a devotional orientation.

However, Harlan observes that Rajput women commented that it is impossible for a *bhakta* like Mīrābāī who has realised *mokṣa* to live at home as a *pativratā*. A woman can be a *pativratā* or a *sant* but not both as 'these are two separate paths' (1992:217). Similarly, Suma Chitnis suggested that Bahiṇābāī was searching and came to the conclusion that *pativratādharma* was not for devotees (personal communication, 24th February 2005). Conversely, McGee suggests that Bahiṇābāī's life does not represent a compromise between *pativratādharma* and *bhakti* but rather the realisation of their complementary nature as Bahiṇābāī advocated performing *pativratādharma* with detachment. McGee submits that this harmonising should not be a surprise as the Vārkarī *sampradāya* 'is known for its advocacy of integrating the life of *bhakti* into the household'. Moreover, McGee proposes that Bahiṇābāī is an example of a great devotee *and* a great householder (1999:163). Bahiṇābāī might be used as an

³⁰ See Feldhaus 1982:593ff, 1985:vi; McGee 1999:134, 154; Rosen 1999:6; Pechilis 2004:27–9; and Teskey Denton 2004.

example to convince women to accept social oppression but Suma Chitnis suggested that married women can associate themselves with Bahiṇābāī if they are torn between profession/calling and family/community (personal communication, 25th February 2005). Likewise Feldhaus implies that such an association is possible because Bahiṇābāī ‘provides an example for other Hindu women, a promise that they too can remain faithful to their wifely duties and still participate fully in the *bhakti* tradition’ (1985:vi). However, if one takes account of Bhagwat’s statement that Bahiṇābāī’s *niryānapara abhaṅgas* must be decoded differently one can understand the *ātmanivedan* attributed to Bahiṇābāī as a means of resisting the religious and social restrictions placed on women. But the presence of a woman’s spiritual autobiography within the Vārkarī corpus is significant as it demonstrates the harmonisation of *pativratādharma* and *bhakti*, *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, and *grhasṭha* and *vairāgya*. It is thus an exemplar for seeing the ways in which the *sampradāya* constructed itself as a *grhasṭha* tradition.

1.4. Quotidian imagery

There are numerous ordinary, everyday, domestic and household images and motifs in the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* and these taken together reinforce the strong presentation of the tradition as *grhasṭha*. Swami Radhika Anand suggested that the reason the *santakaviyatrīs* stand out or are special is that the compositions attributed to them ‘reflect routine life’ and that ‘they were able to bring out the spiritual content from their day-to-day lives and apply it’. However, Anand commented that ‘the activities that women do have changed...so what the saints said at that time has to be looked at from a different perspective’ (personal communication, 30th October 2004). The presence of quotidian imagery seems significant when one considers the function of gender attribution in the formation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition because it attests to the concerns of ordinary householders even if the context is devotional.

Muktābāī’s *caritra* describes her cooking *māṇḍe* on Jñāneśvar’s back but the compositions attributed to her present very few domestic images or terms. This suggests that the author/speaker of the Muktāī compositions was primarily concerned with religious, devotional or philosophic subjects as the *kūṭ* and *upadeśa* themes discussed below indicate. However, cloth is mentioned as a philosophical metaphor in the *tāṭice abhaṅga* attributed to Muktābāī (1) and the lack of clothing is referenced in *abhaṅgas* attributed to Rājāī (1322.2, 1324.4). The lack of domestic necessities appear to be due to Nāmdev not performing his trade as a tailor for the Rājāī verse refers to ‘needle and scissors’ as an analogy for her husband’s occupation (1324.10). The *padar* is mentioned in Janī (224.1) and Soyārā

(35.1), while the *lugaḍī* appears in the Sakhū song. The song attributed to Sakhū also refers to the *phugaḍī* game that women play and the *riṅgaṇa* with which Vārkarīs interact on the *vārī*.

The topic or image of food appears in many of the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs*. Sometimes the references to food are quotidian but sometimes the references are metaphorical or even divine. In the SSG there are a series of Janī *abhaṅgas* under the heading *thālīpāka* ‘a plateful of food’,³¹ which tell a story relating to Draupadī:

Due to the *ṛṣi* a calamity struck the forest at midnight.
Paṇḍu’s children gathered; the *ṛṣi* revered.
Dharma glances at Bhīmā, righteousness is being damaged.
Draupadī cried for help, God left his meal unfinished.
He satisfied the sage in the forest, says Nāma’s Janī.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 318, SSG:752; my translation)

This *abhaṅga* refers to an incident in the *Mahābhārata* in which the sage Durvās visits the Pāṇḍavas in the forest.³² Durvās was known for his quick temper and was thus treated with reverence wherever he went. While in exile in the forest the Pāṇḍavas were all fed by the means of the *akṣayapātra* (the inexhaustible vessel), which was depleted once Draupadī had eaten. As Draupadī had just eaten when Durvās arrived she had no food left to serve the sage. The brothers Dharma and Bhīmā glance at each other concerned that *sattva* will be damaged if they cannot offer Durvās hospitality. While Durvās and his retinue were away bathing in the river Draupadī prayed to Kṛṣṇa for aid. Kṛṣṇa appeared immediately and asked her for food. Draupadī said she had none to give him and that she had prayed to him because she had no food! Kṛṣṇa then asked her to bring him the *akṣayapātra* and finding a grain of rice and a piece of vegetable in the vessel declared himself satisfied. Thus, the hunger of Durvās and his disciples was satisfied and they left without returning to the hermitage and offending the Pāṇḍavas by declining their hospitality (see Ganguli 2008; van Buitenen 1973–1978). The author/Janī may therefore be glorifying Kṛṣṇa and/or empathising with Draupadī by putting themselves in Draupadī’s shoes in having Kṛṣṇa come to their aid. The incident, also referred to in compositions attributed to Bahiṅābāi and Soyārābāi,³³ portrays the devotee fulfilling God’s desires and God as the recipient rather than the devotee (Aklujkar 1992:107). Similarly, an *abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāi refers to Janī feeding Viṭhobā:

One fine day, Viṭho went to Janī.
Quietly He asked her for food to eat. ‘Father, what can I give you?’

³¹ The Sanskrit term is *sthālīpāka* ‘a dish of barley or rice boiled in milk’ (Monier Williams 2008; see Molesworth 1857:868).

³² *Mahābhārata*, Book 3, Vana Parva, ‘The Forest’; Draupadī Harana Parva.

³³ Bahiṅābāi *abhaṅga* 400, Abbott 1985:122; Kolhārkar 1926:82 and *yeī yeī garuḍadhvajā*, Soyārābāi *abhaṅga* 1, SSG 1:998, translated by Zelliott:2005:158.

Holding hands she led him inside, served him *pañcāmṛta* and rice.
Belching with love and satisfaction, Janī says ‘Viṭṭho is sated’.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 116, SSG 1:727; my translation).

Mahīpati’s story of Janī offering Viṭṭhal food in her hut seems to replicate this *abhaṅga* as Mahīpati mentions that Viṭṭhal was sated (BVJ 21.64–76). The life-stories of Janī, Sakhū and Bahiṅābāi all mention *amṛta* but this *abhaṅga* refers to *pañcāmṛta*, the five nectar like substances or delicious food. Aklujkar suggests that the *abhaṅga* expresses God’s hunger for love or faith and the idea that He is only sated when he has received an adequate satisfaction of *bhāva* (1992:108). This *abhaṅga* also draws attention to the reciprocal relationship between devotee and deity or *sakhya-bhakti* which is prevalent in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Aklujkar also suggests that the devotee is eternally hungry for God but compositions attributed to Goṇāi (1300.3) and Rājāi suggest that Nāmdev’s family members suffered from hunger due to Nāmdev’s disinterest in *sansār*:

In the middle of the night when there’s peace, Rājāi reports to the Mother.
‘O Rakhumābāi, please ask Viṭṭhobā why He has made my husband go mad.
There’s nothing to eat, drink or wear yet still he dances shamelessly.
There are fourteen people in my house, roaming from door-to-door for food.
Direct him towards the correct path or Nāma’s Rājāi won’t be good’.

(Rājāi *abhaṅga*, 1322, SSG:490; my translation)

This idea of starvation is also visible in Sakhū’s *caritra* but in Sakhū’s case her hunger was due to malicious intent rather than her husband’s *vairāgya*. This *abhaṅga* attributed to Rājāi highlights the tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya* and the draws attention to the consequences of *vairāgya* in everyday life. There is reference to Rājāi cooking but with very negative connotations as she is boiling up a snake to poison herself and her children as she can no longer cope with Nāmdev’s *vairāgya* (1326.11–14, see Appendix B). The effect of Nāmdev’s *vairāgya* is also alluded to in an *abhaṅga* attributed to Goṇāi who suggests that Nāmdev’s birth is the result of the deeds she performed in a previous birth: ‘Why were you born?’ Goṇāi says, ‘my deeds have borne fruit’ (Goṇāi *abhaṅga* 1275.11). The metaphor of ‘fruit’ as the result of deeds is also mentioned in a composition attributed to Kānhopātrā : ‘The virtuous actions of all my lives have borne fruit today; That’s why I saw the feet of Viṭṭhal’ (20.1). However, unlike the *abhaṅga* attributed to Goṇāi the Kānhopātrā attributed verse suggests that her actions have had a positive result.

There are also references to food and drink in other compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs*. However, the compositions attributed to Janī contain the largest number of quotidian and

domestic images and these include references to grain, grist and flour. Thus, the genre of grinding songs and their connection to *sakhya-bhakti* is discussed below.

1.4.i. *Grinding and pounding*

The genre of grinding songs within the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is interesting as traditionally grinding songs use the *ovī* metre and the *ovī* is the basis for the *abhaṅga* metre used by the Vārkarī poets. As I mentioned in the Introduction, the *ovī* is an oral folk metre that is mainly used by women while performing domestic tasks. Junghare observes that *ovīs* ‘are primarily grinding songs, sung while grinding spices, lentils, and grains such as rice’ but that rural women also sing *ovīs* while doing other domestic chores and sometimes while working in the fields.³⁴ The *ovī* is thus usually performed in a work context. Additionally, Junghare argues that the content of the *ovīs* ‘generally revolves around some legendary event or hero from the great epics...and the Puranas’ but that the songs ‘also reflect some personal element, expressing the woman’s particular problems and experiences’ (1983:273–74; see Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:130–31ff). In their cultural-anthropological study of grinding songs Poitevin and Rairkar argue that the songs of rural miller-women only deal with ‘the personal and subjective relationship that they entertain with their millstones and their flour’ as they are not concerned with discursive representations. However, Poitevin and Rairkar find three traits in the women’s songs: the existential; the experience of and relationship with the gods, and oral tradition of singing while grinding (1996:8–11). Grinding is usually undertaken at cockcrow by one woman but sometimes by women working in tandem. Consequently, if two women are grinding together then one will begin singing the first line of the *ovī* and the other woman will add to it. Thus, women are able express themselves relatively freely and confide in one another (Junghare 1983:273; Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:1, 4, 11, 93–99, 106–108, 113; Amshoff 1999:160). However, the grinding *ovī* is dying out as stone hand-mills have been replaced by electricly-powered flour mills and because many young women no longer learn the songs as they do not participate in the early morning grind (Junghare 1983:274; Amshoff 1999:160; Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:3).

The majority of *abhaṅgas* which refer to grinding and/or pounding within the Vārkarī corpus are songs ascribed to Janābāī. However, Poitevin and Rairkar note that the allegory of the grindmill has been used by male *gurus* and poets since the fourteenth century to communicate philosophical ideas and provide religious instruction (1996:7, 61–68). Pounding grain is mentioned in an unpublished *abhaṅga*

³⁴ Poitevin and Rairkar suggest that the grinding *ovī* may be comparable to other Marathi work songs like the *bhalari* (*bhalerī*) harvesting songs (1996:93–94*).

attributed to Jñāneśvar, a Nāmdev *abhaṅga* describes the grinding of *saṃsāra*, while winnowing, pounding and grinding are included in *abhaṅgas* attributed to Tukārām (Kiehnle 1997a:42; Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:62–63, 108–110). Moreover, there are some *abhaṅgas* attributed to Bahiṇābāī on the related theme of *ṭoṇapyāce* ‘thrashing’ (507–522, Kolhārakar 1926:205–07) and there is also a *pad* attributed to Sakhūbāī that states ‘Grinding the grist; Viṣṇu should arrive and purify my mind. Govind, Govind!’ (see Appendix B).³⁵ The SSG groups three songs attributed to Janābāī under the theme *jātē* ‘hand-mill’ but there are at least thirty songs on the theme of grinding and pounding in the Janābāī corpus.³⁶ It seems significant that the majority of grinding songs are attributed to Janī who is the preeminent exemplar of female domestic labour. In fact one of the most interesting Janī verses relating to grinding appears to have been put into Janī’s mouth by the mistress of a prosperous household:

My beautiful stonemill rotates, singing verses praising you.
 You come Viṭṭhal.
Jīva and Śīva both support of the world; touching all five of my fingers.
 You come Viṭṭhal.
 Mother-in-law; father-in-law; third, the brother-in-law; singing verses for the husband.
 You come Viṭṭhal.
 The sixteen confidantes assembled are friends, sitting together singing verses.
 You come Viṭṭhal.
 Having ground *prapañca*, gathered the flour, [then] laid it in front of my mother-in-law.
 You come Viṭṭhal.
 Keeping existence on the boil, making merit my daily diet; my sins have spilled over.
 You come Viṭṭhal.
 Janī’s stonemill will keep singing, your fame will continue; I will gain a little.
 You come Viṭṭhal.

(Janābāī *abhaṅga* 226, SSG 1:738, my translation)³⁷

In their discussion of this verse Poitevin and Rairkar draw attention to three themes. Firstly, this verse calls to *bā viṭṭhalā*, which literally translates as ‘Dad’ or ‘Pa’ Viṭṭhal but could also be interpreted as ‘Dear Viṭṭhal’, and thus invokes the benevolent presence of God as the women perform their daily chores. Secondly, the song shows concern for the prosperity of the family and implies that by invoking the divine one secures protection for members of the household. The reference to singing verses for the husband may suggest that the woman singing is performing a votive right, in accordance with her *pativrataḍdharma*, to maintain marital felicity (see McGee 1991:78–9). Thirdly, the song is didactic as it depicts the daughter-in-law as under the authority of her mother-in-law. The domestic relationship and tasks of the daughter-in-law comprise the *prapañca* (worldly life) and theme of the song. The daughter-in-law says that having ground *prapañca* she offers the flour to her mother-in-law. This suggests that she

³⁵ Bahadur suggests that many of the songs attributed to Bahiṇābāī were sung while she was grinding as ‘it was customary for village woman to sing songs while working’ (1998:21).

³⁶ See *abhaṅgas* 42, 87, 118, 121, 181, 204, 225, 226, 227 and 262 in Appendix B.

³⁷ For other translations of this verse see Poitevin and Rairkar (1996:86–7) and Sellergren (1996:220).

may be offering her illusions about *sansār/samsāra*. This is probably why the mother-in-law is mentioned first as she might be overseeing the task in hand. However, the main message of the verse is that by calling on God for his collaboration a woman can accomplish her daily tasks although the singer/Janī may not be rewarded for her effort (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:86–89).



Plate 21: Janī grinding with the help of Viṭṭhal (Gopalpur)³⁸

Women often grind together as grinding is a strenuous, repetitive and exhausting task, which can be relieved by help and companionship. Viṭṭhal aids Janī with grinding and pounding in many of the grinding *abhaṅgas* attributed to Janābāī and in Mahīpati’s *caritra*. This interaction allows Viṭṭhal to hear Janī expressing her personal sentiments and experiences. In the following *abhaṅga* Janī offers herself as feed to the mill, the feed/self is ground to dust or duality (*dvaita*) is crushed and the dust forms the flour, implying that ultimately all beings merge into One (*advaita*).

With the excuse of grinding Viṭṭhal comes in slowly.
Body and soul, as the handful of feed, clean the stone of duality.
Alone, she sings; another voice responds.
‘Who are you with?’ He constantly answers your call.
‘Nāmdēv, I know the sign’. Viṭṭhal hears Janī’s feelings.

(Janābāī *abhaṅga* 118, SSG 1:727; my translation)

You sing by yourself; another voice is heard nearby.
‘Who’s singing with you?’ One who sings continuously.
‘Pāṇḍuraṅga is my father, Rakhumāī is my mother’.
Janī says, ‘I’ve come home. I am blessed’.

(Janābāī *abhaṅga* 82, SSG 1:724; my translation)

³⁸ The writing on the wall reads ‘Janī grinding with God. Witness her faith. Bless the King of Paṇḍharī’.

The suggestion in the first *abhaṅga* that Viṭṭhal slips in unobtrusively ties in with Janī attaining union as Janī sings alone but God joins in her song. However, Janī is the only one who recognises the other voice as belonging to God as her partner remains unknown to the third party who is present, for unlike Janī they have not attained the state of realisation or union. In Mahīpati’s *caritra* the ignorant third party appears to be represented by Goṇāī (BVJ 21.103ff). Poitevin and Rairkar argue that the two voices represented in these *abhaṅgas* are involved in a never-ending dialogue as the voices are distinct yet intertwined (1996:77–78). This interaction is thus a particular expression of *sakhya-bhakti*, in which God participates in the lives of his *bhaktas*. However, the interaction is also a metaphor for *advaita*, a theme which is present in another *abhaṅga* that concludes ‘Let’s all become Brahman. Let’s see all beings unified’ (Janābāī *abhaṅga* 181.3, SSG 1:734).

The genre of grinding songs within the Vārkarī corpus utilises a quotidian image to express religio-philosophical ideas concerning liberation, stressing perhaps again the compatibility of the domestic arena and the devotional path. The *ovī-abhaṅga* metre and the grinding theme connect the compositions to female domestic labour. However, due to the issue of attribution and the fact that grinding songs are also ascribed to Jñāneśvar, Nāmdev and Tukārām one cannot take these songs to represent a female voice or even necessarily to reflect female concerns. Nonetheless, the grinding songs are contextualised within a domestic setting and may therefore be regarded as a means of reflecting the personal sentiments, the experience of and relationship with the deity, or the oral tradition of singing while grinding that is attributed to women. Moreover, the interaction between deity and devotee in many of the grinding songs draws attention to *sakhya-bhakti* as a means of coping with the demands of *sansār*. Again, the emphasis seems to be on the possibility and efficacy of devotion in domestic settings and thus these compositions could be read as a discursive argument for the *grhastha* framework. The compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* which contain quotidian and domestic imagery reflect the routine of daily life and the concerns of ordinary householders, particularly female householders, even if the context in which these concerns are expressed is devotional. However, there are songs attributed to Muktabāī and Janābāī which reflect different concerns and employ extraordinary images to convey philosophical and devotional concepts.

1.5. *Kūṭ*: enigmatic, puzzling and obscure compositions

The Marathi term *kūṭ* refers to ‘a riddle’ (Tulpule 1999:52), ‘an enigma; a puzzling question; a knotty point; an obscure, perplexing stanza or passage’ (Molesworth 1857:177) and is applied by the compilers

of the SSG to *abhaṅgas* attributed to Muktābāi (41 and 42) and Janābāi (345).³⁹ The classification *kūṭ* is similar to a type of poem known as *ulaṭbāmsī*, poems in ‘upside-down language’ according to Hess (1983; see Gold 1992:32). This type of back-to-front language or the ‘ambiguous language of ciphers’ according to Ramanujan (1973:49) was part of the *sandhyābhāṣa* tradition of medieval India. Both *ulaṭbāmsī* and *sandhyābhāṣa* refer to the same tradition but according to Hess *ulaṭbāmsī* ‘usually applies only to medieval vernacular poetry’ and ‘poetry associated with the Nath yogis’ (1983:315, n.7; see McGregor 1984:22; Ramanujan 1973:49).⁴⁰ Ramaswamy suggests that the *kūṭ abhaṅgas*, which she terms ‘mystical verses’, resemble the *vacanas* of Allama Prabhu and Muktāyakka of the Vīraśaiva tradition (2007:221).⁴¹ There is a genre of esoteric *vacanas* called *beḍagina vacana* ‘fancy poem’ or ‘riddle poem’ that Ramanujan believes has a ‘common pool of symbols and concepts drawn from yogic psychology and tantric philosophy’ (1973:48, 196n.69). It is therefore likely that the *kūṭ abhaṅgas* may be considered part of the *ulaṭbāmsī* or *sandhyābhāṣa* tradition and had various influences including Nāth *yoga*.

The term *ulaṭa* is better understood as ‘reversed’ as the connotation ‘upside-down’ suggests there is a ‘right side up’ suggests Hess (1983:316).⁴² Hess states that the *ulaṭbāmsī* expressions are based on ‘reversals of roles, personalities, [and] laws of nature’ like fire burning water or rain falling from earth to sky. The reversals often occur as almost instantaneous inexplicable transformations without any space to consider how the world has altered. Hess therefore argues that what is being transformed ‘is the very apparatus of thinking’ (1983:316). There are two possible levels of interpretation—simple or esoteric—and according to Hess one can choose whether to intuit the compositions directly or to ‘pursue the meaning endlessly’ (1983:318). Hess suggests that the interpretation of such poems cannot be too dogmatic as different authors and traditions have their own symbols and meanings (1983:317). Ramanujan proposes that such poems are ‘meant to shatter the ordinary language of ordinary experiences’ and confound rational intelligence so that one gains insight (1973:49). The poems have thus been described as ‘Zen *yoga*’ by Hess as one has to figure something out in order to access truth (1983:318,

³⁹ There are also *kūṭ abhaṅgas* ascribed to Jñāneśvar (SSG 1, 704–719, pp. 184–187) and Cāṅgadev (SSG 1, 43–46, pp. 249). Interestingly, Cāṅgadev *abhaṅga* (44.1) refers to ants (*mungi*) like the Muktābāi *kūṭ abhaṅga*: मृगजळावरी मुंगिंच्या हारी । दुरुनि नारी दावितसे ॥१॥ *mṛgajāḷāvarī mungiyāñcyā hārī/ durūni nārī dāvitase/1/1*

⁴⁰ For more on the definitions of *sandhābhāṣa* or *sandhyābhāṣa* see Hess 1983:336–37.

⁴¹ Allama Prabhu (Master Allama) was a twelfth-century Kannada poet who presided over the company of Vīraśaiva saints (Ramanujan 1973:143–148). Muktāyakka is said to have met Allama Prabhu after the death of her brother Ajaganna and thought to have had a ‘polemical conversation’ with him in which the *guru*-disciple relationship and ultimate union were debated (Ramaswamy 2007:179ff; Datta 2005:134). For more on the Vīraśaivas see Ramanujan (1973), Michael (1983; 1992), Zydenbos (1997), White (1998) and Leslie (1998).

⁴² The Marathi term *ulaṭa* connotes ‘return’ or ‘inverse’ while *ulaṭāpāḷāṭā* means ‘upside-down’ or ‘inside-out’ (Molesworth 1857:105; Tulpule 1999:97, 463, 622, 657, 667).

333). This idea ties in with Gold's suggestion that the use of such language even if not understood by its hearers 'might point to hidden powers within themselves' (1992:33).

One of the two *kūṭ abhaṅgas* ascribed to Mukṭābāi fits into the *ulaṭbāmsī* or *sandhyābhāṣa* category and describes what Zelliott calls the 'mystery of life' (2000:193):

Ant flew in the sky, she swallowed the sun.
A great surprise: a barren woman gave birth to a son.
A scorpion went to the underworld, Śeṣa touched his feet.
The fly gave birth to a kite; seeing [all this] Mukṭāi laughed.

(Mukṭābāi *abhaṅga* 42, SSG 1:242; my translation)⁴³

This *abhaṅga* may refer to the union of *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*, a theme that appears in many of the compositions attributed to Mukṭābāi. The ant, barren woman, scorpion and fly are symbols of *jīvātmā* while the sun, the snake and the kite exemplify *paramātmā* states Joshi (2009:378). Furthermore, as Ramaswamy suggests this *abhaṅga* has similarities to an Allama Prabhu *beḍagina vacana*:

A little bee born in the heart's lotus flew out and swallowed the sky.
In the breeze of his wing, three worlds turned upside down.
When the cage of the five-coloured swan was broken, the bee fell to the ground with broken wings.
Living among your men, O Lord of Caves, I saw the lovely tactic of truth's coming on.

(Ramanujan 1973:150, v.95)

In interpreting this *vacana* Ramanujan identifies the bee as 'ignorance' that 'obscures the light, [and] overturns the worlds, even though it begins in a small way'. It is only when one realises the body's impermanence—the swan's five-coloured cage symbolises the soul—that the bee/ignorance loses its power (1973:196n.69). Consequently, the ant in the *abhaṅga* attributed to Mukṭābāi could be interpreted as ignorance or illusion (*māyā*) that obscures the truth and which is only broken when one realises what is true and real, the ultimate union/non-duality of the individual soul (*jīva*) and the Ultimate Reality (Śiva).

The second *kūṭ abhaṅga* attributed to Mukṭābāi does not fit quite so easily into the *ulaṭbāmsī* or reversal category but can easily be understood as posing puzzling questions:

On the temple dome dwelt a sage, Yogeśvar asked him:
'Moon[shine] by day, heat by night: how can this conundrum be resolved?'
The sage said: 'Death trembles before the cāmpā-bud!⁴⁴ In the mind luminousness and madness flow
as one.
Interweaving one alone is futile. Viṭṭhal easily liberates!
The Unfailing One is manifest in paradise'. Mukṭāi says, 'byways are futile'.

(Mukṭābāi *abhaṅga* 41, SSG:242, my translation).

⁴³ This verse has also been translated by Arun Kolatkar (1982), Champa Limaye and Ruth Vanita (Vanita 1989:46), Ramaswamy (2007:221) and summarised by Joshi (2009:378).

⁴⁴ This is reference to a variety of Magnolia (*michelia champaca*) which is native to India. It has orange, yellow or creamy-white flowers in spring.

The question posed by Yogeśvar (the Lord of Yoga; Kṛṣṇa) could refer to the union/conjunction of the (female) moon and (male) sun as the moon is particularly identified with Kṛṣṇa in Braj-*bhakti* according to Sanford (2009:23–4; see Doniger 1982:255, 263; Stanley 1977:28). However, in his poetry Paramānand also equates Kṛṣṇa to the sun and its life-giving rays. Normally, the sun stalks the *gopīs* and sears them with its rays and it is only the presence of Kṛṣṇa—as the moon and its cooling rays—that allays the heat of separation (Sanford 2009:52–3). This line may therefore be asking how one can have the presence of Kṛṣṇa during the day rather than at night when Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* engage in the *rāsa* dance. The reference to new life budding suggests that the advent of Spring makes Death apprehensive as his power is diminished. The *abhaṅga* seems to suggest that one should focus on matters such as gaining liberation and not worry about things that one cannot understand.

The *kūṭ abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāi also appears to refer to gaining liberation and uses a game of chess as its exemplar:

The game has been laid out; the player’s judgement colours the game.
The King marched; the pawn trampled the Queen.
The King’s side won, Janī says ‘it’s checkmate’.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 345, SSG 1:756; my translation)

The author may be implying that s/he is the pawn (foot-soldier, servant, attendant) on the king’s side who took the queen. There is a suggestion that life is a game of chess which the author/Janī has won as s/he was on the king’s side. In order to play a good game of chess one needs to concentrate and ignore any distractions. This is also what one must do in order to attain salvation. Consequently, this verse can be read as advocating that one focus on playing the right game so as to attain the goal of liberation (Potter 1956:242).

There is a composition (*pad*) attributed to Janābāi which, although not categorised as *kūṭ* by the editors of the SSG, fits the *ulaṭbāmsī* category as it reverses accepted spiritual and religious truths:

Those with spiritual merit are sent to hell. The poor are made weary. Thieves are inundated with honour. The illustrious are dishonoured.
You grant the greedy and indifferent an audience (refrain).
Your enemies are granted liberation. Fraudsters are enriched. Servants must choose between poor cloth and rags. Pranksters are loved and adored in the three worlds.
The dutiful wife is engaged fruitlessly. The dancing-girl and courtesan are conducted to the highest heaven. Your own people are displaced. The full story of the many Yādavas is not told.
The virtuous are persecuted. The children of the illustrious are killed. Friends are made to say your power is false. Janī says, ‘I know your game’.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 336, SSG 1:754; my translation)

Poitevin and Rairkar argue that this verse suggests that ‘the government of God is apparently insane’ (1996:81–82). While at first glance their assertion may ring true the *pad* makes the point that through

bhakti those persons who are traditionally deemed social outcastes or unworthy may be redeemed. The *pad* has a didactic element which is similar to that found in the compositions relating to *nāma*. However, while the compositions on *nāma* stress *nāmajapa* as a means to redemption the *pad* seems to imply that not everyone may attain salvation or liberation despite accumulating merit or performing their *dharma* because ultimately salvation occurs through God's grace. The *bhakti* aspect of this composition sets it apart from the other *kūṭ abhaṅgas* due to their *yogic* and esoteric content but its ambiguous language allows it to be considered an enigmatic composition.

The connection between the *kūṭ abhaṅgas* and the poetry associated with the medieval Nāths is interesting as both Muktabāī and Janābāī are connected to the Nāth *panth* through their *guru paramparās*. However, the fact that the *kūṭ abhaṅgas* contain *yogic* philosophy and provide a means of gaining insight suggests that these compositions are thematically connected to the advisory compositions that are also attributed to Muktabāī and Janābāī. Moreover, the inclusion of these attributed compositions suggests that the *sampradāya* negotiated a set of tensions in its discursive construction and so included Nāth/Śaivite/*sannyāsa* notions of mystical union to correspond to the *bhakti* concepts of salvation and ultimate liberation. The function of gender attribution within this context may relate to the inclusion of women as both disciples and preceptors within the Nāth *panth*, as I mentioned in Chapter Four. Consequently, by including compositions attributed to women the Vārkarī *sampradāya* may have been indicating that female figures capable of giving advice were worthy of inclusion in the Vārkarī literary corpus. Thus, gender attribution functioned to construct the *sampradāya* discursively by directing the hearer/reader away from *sannyāsa*.

1.6. *Upadeśa* or 'advisory' *abhaṅgas*

The term *upadeśa* in Marathi connotes 'advice' (Berntsen 1982:14) as well as 'instruction, teaching, communicating knowledge; impartation of or initiation in a mantra' (Molesworth 1857:98), 'spiritual initiation; a direct mystical experience' (Tulpule 1999:96) and 'instruction or initiation given by the guru' (Tulpule 1999:205). The SSG credits Janābāī with twenty-nine *upadeśa* compositions (of which I have translated only one) and Muktabāī with twenty (of which I have translated five). It is striking that in one attributed *abhaṅga* Muktabāī advises her elder brother Nivṛtti.⁴⁵ Thus, as I suggested in Chapter Four, Muktabāī is portrayed as a woman capable of instructing a man on spiritual and philosophical matters.

⁴⁵ Kiehnle mentions a Muktabāī-Nivṛtti dialogue discussed by L.R. Pāṅgārkar in the 1927 (March-April) edition of the Marathi magazine *Mumukṣu* (1997b:16n.80).

Union with God, Excellent! The soul speaks languages.
Worldly attachments arise from illusion; this leads to the city of Yama.
Advise such a being—an insect or a dull witted person—God sends such a being back to the womb.
Muktāi counsels Nivṛtti: ‘there is no further rebirth for us’.

(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 21, SSG 1:240; my translation)

The speaker says that in order to gain liberation and experience union with the divine one must not get caught up in *māyā* as worldly attachments lead not to liberation but to judgement by Yama and therefore to rebirth. The *abhaṅga* suggests that both Muktāi and Nivṛtti have attained realisation and will thus escape rebirth. Another *abhaṅga* advises the hearer/reader to gain control of the mind to attain liberation:

When the mind is controlled and at peace, then you won’t need to meet Yama.
The authority of the mind gives you the wisdom to accomplish your spiritual goals.
As you perform your spiritual practice, repeat the *nārāyaṇa-mantra* in your heart.
Muktāi is an expert, for Nārāyaṇ has endowed her with spiritual wealth. Repeat the *mantra* as you purify the body.

(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 23, SSG:240; my translation)

The *nārāyaṇa-mantra* is presented as a means of purification and attaining the spiritual goal of liberation.⁴⁶ The *nārāyaṇa-mantra*—*auṃ namaḥ narāyaṇāya*, ‘Om, reverence to Nārāyaṇa’—is regarded as one of the most important Vaiṣṇava *mantras* as it can be recited by anyone (Gupta 1991a:241; Chawdhri 2005:90). The *Tārasāra Upaniṣad* (12.1.5) states that the *nārāyaṇa-mantra* is the means by which one is saved from transmigration: ‘Om’ is the form of the self; *namaḥ* (salutation) is the form of the world, and *narāyaṇāya* (to Nārāyaṇa) is the supreme Brahman. The *Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* states: ‘one who meditates on the *mantra* will reach Vaikunth... (I worship) Nārāyaṇa who abides in all beings, who is...the cause, who has no case, who is Brahman’ (18.4; Mahadevan 2000:217).⁴⁷ The *mantra* is thought to condense ultimate truth and make known the meaning of everything, so is therefore all that needs to be said. The *mantra* therefore has both a doxological and soteriological aim according to Sheveland (2011:125–126). However, the *mantra* is usually only muttered by the preceptor to the disciple, after which the disciple reflects upon it silently in order to gain salvation (Williams 2004: 68). One can therefore imagine the speaker/Muktābāi instructing a student—Cāṅgadev and/or Visobā Khecar are thought to have been Muktābāi’s disciples and Muktābāi is said to have initiated Visobā with a *mantra* as I mentioned in the previous chapter—or the speaker/Muktābāi may even have been instructing a wider audience on the use and aim of the *mantra*.

⁴⁶ It is also known as the *aṣṭakṣāra* (eight-syllabled) *mantra* and is the *mantra* of a Vārkaī subsect known as the Prakāśa *sampradāya* (Pandy 2010).

⁴⁷ For more on *mantras* see Clooney (2008), Coward (2004), Alper (1991), and Gonda (1963).

Another advisory *abhaṅga* also refers to Nārāyaṇa but this time in the context of union or non-differentiation:

On the bed of *nirguṇa* and the bedstead of *saguna* is where God will lie.
How do you get moonlight during the day? The dark Lord arises on one principle.
The ego vanishes, compassion for all remains; it doesn't take long to describe the beginning to end.
Muktāī's wealth emanates from seeing Nārāyaṇa everywhere; the personal soul and the Supreme Soul
are one.

(Muktābāī *abhaṅga* 32, SSG 1:241; my translation)

This verse suggests that Kṛṣṇa—referred to as Keśīrāja 'King Keśava' and the 'dark Lord'—is the Supreme Reality who has taken form. The reference to moonlight during the day, like that of the Muktābāī *kūṭa abhaṅga* (41) discussed above, connects the verse to Kṛṣṇa and suggests that the 'principle' that Kṛṣṇa represents is that of non-duality. The speaker/Muktāī advises the hearer/reader that liberation from *samsāra* occurs if one is egoless and compassionate, and if one realises that one is not different from the Supreme Reality (Nārāyaṇa, Śiva). The *upadeśa* compositions attributed to Muktābāī seem to combine different approaches to gaining liberation which may be based on different forms of *yoga*.

The 'advisory' *abhaṅga* attributed to Janābāī also portrays the philosophical doctrine of *advaita* by expressing various forms of non-difference and concluding that the deity and *sant* are one:

We and the *sants*, the *sants* and us; the sun and its rays, what's the difference?
The flame and the kite, the kite and the flame; meditation and silent chanting, what's the difference?
Peace and detachment, detachment and peace; contentment and satisfaction, what's the difference?
Disease and illness, illness and disease; body and frame, what's the difference?
Ear and auditory organ, auditory organ and ear; fame and pride, what's the difference?
'God and the *sant*, the *sant* and God', says Janī, 'these are both the same'.

(Janābāī *abhaṅga* 243, SSG 1:740; my translation)

What is significant about these advisory verses is that they are ascribed to unmarried non-householder women. Muktābāī is remembered as a young ascetic and Janābāī is remembered as a *dāsī*, as the biographies in Chapter Four highlight. In these attributed *abhaṅgas* women give advice, offer *advaitin* interpretations of philosophy and guide the hearer/reader towards the goal of liberation. This runs contrary to the orthodox notion of how a woman ought to behave as presented by Manu (5.147–48; Doniger 1991:115) or Tryambaka in the *Strīdharmapaddhati* (Leslie 1989). Traditionally, one was born a woman due to the sins of a previous birth and because a woman's nature (*strīsvabhāva*) was impure and sinful she was denied a *mantra*. Thus, as a woman was *amantra* she remained sinful all her life and had no hope of redemption argues Leslie (1989:246ff). The lack of a *mantra* denied women education, the right to perform religious roles, and disqualified women from taking *sannyāsa* (see Teskey Denton 2004;

Khandelwal 2004). However, these *abhaṅgas* signal that women may have been regarded by the tradition as capable of giving spiritual direction and of communicating a *mantra* to disciples if they had been initiated themselves. Muktabāī and Janī are both regarded as having been initiated into the Nāth *paramparā*, which accepted both men and women as disciples and preceptors. The editors of the SSG may therefore be demonstrating their acceptance of Muktabāī and Janī as initiated women capable of giving *upadeśa* but this possible acceptance also draws attention to the interaction between the anthologising of compositions attributed to the *sants* and *caritra*. Moreover, Muktabāī is also credited with *abhaṅgas* in which she acts as a teacher to her elder brother Jñāneśvar and these compositions may therefore also be considered advisory in nature. Whatever the case, here again we have an example where the attribution of compositions to women signals a discursive construction, in this case perhaps of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as egalitarian.

1.6.i. *Tāṭice abhaṅga: the songs of the door*

The famous *tāṭice abhaṅga*, of which there are generally accepted to be eleven, are thought to be words of advice spoken by Muktabāī to her brother Jñāneśvar through a *tāṭī* or door. The story goes that Jñāneśvar was so disgusted with some abuse he received that he shut himself up behind the door of a hut and resolved to give up his body through *samādhi* (Joshi 2009:378; Panicker 1997:356; Vanita 1989:52; Sivananda 2011). Dada Maharaj Manmadkar told me that Jñāneśvar and his siblings were thought to be unlucky (as the children of a *sannyāsī*) and that there was a *bhikṣekarī* who said that just because he saw Jñāneśvar first thing in the morning he would not get any alms that day. Consequently, Jñāneśvar thought ‘I’m shutting myself off from the world rather than living such an insulted life, I’d rather die. If someone who goes door to door...can treat us like that what is the dignity of...life?’ (Personal communication, 11th July 2006). Sivananda suggests that Jñāneśvar’s brothers Nivṛtti and Sopān implored Jñāneśvar not to leave them but to no avail. However, Muktabai returned from the river and ‘very lovingly, with a maturity and insight far beyond her young years’ pleaded with Jñāneśvar to give up his drastic plan and open the door (2011). Manmadkar quoted part of the first *tāṭice abhaṅga: viśvapaṭa brahma dorā / tāṭī ughaḍā jñāneśvarā* ‘the universe is the woven cloth, Brahma is the thread; please open the door Jñāneśvar’ (1.4) and explained ‘Muktabāī is saying that Jñāneśvar should rise above *saṃsāra* (a sea in which one drowns) and help people...’ rather than shutting himself off from the world. Manmadkar, like Sivananda, drew attention to the fact that the *tāṭice abhaṅga* are regarded as ‘advice coming from the younger sister’ and that they draw attention to Muktabāī’s level of understanding. However, Manmadkar also suggested that

what Muktabāi ‘said to Jñāneśvar changed his entire life and allowed his talents to blossom: he was going to end his life but the *Jñāneśvarī* and his other works were written after Muktabāi gave him advice’ and that the *tāṭice abhaṅga* are therefore the reason Muktabāi is called Ādimāyā (personal communication, 11th July 2006).

Swami Raghavdas and Ruth Vanita have translated eleven *tāṭice abhaṅga* and Vanita argues that these *abhaṅgas* use two main arguments. The first argument is based on Vārkarī *advaita* philosophy and asserts that as Brahman is indissoluble from the universe ‘one should see Brahm in all beings, treat them without distinction and remain unperturbed by their disturbing manifestations which are Maya; second, that a sant must not remain isolated from the world and from ordinary people but must give them the benefit of her or his experience (1989:52). While I concur with Vanita that the *tāṭice abhaṅga* invite an *advaitic* interpretation and elucidate the proper behaviour of a *sant*, I contend that these *abhaṅgas* also promote *nivṛtti dharma* as their didacticism outline rules of conduct for ascetics and the characteristics of a renouncer. The dichotomy between *nivṛtti* and *pravṛtti* echoes the tension between *sannyāsa* and *grhastha* outlined in the Introduction and once more signals effort at discursive construction. In her discussion of the works attributed to Jñāneśvar Kiehnle argues that *pravṛtti* can be interpreted as “‘moving forward’ into active live, the life of the householder’ while *nivṛtti* may be understood as “‘moving back’ into the *sannyāsi*’s life of retreat’ (1997a:146). However, Kiehnle also points out that *nivṛtti* is the method of rejecting objects of the senses or ‘turning away from the domain of Śakti or *māyā* who goes on creating and changing’ (1997a:148).

The first *tāṭice abhaṅga* is the only *tāṭice abhaṅga* presented in the SSG despite the fact that Tulpule states that the *tāṭice abhaṅgas* are not found within traditional *gāthās* (1979:334):

A *yogi* of pure mind bears people’s insults.
The world rages but as a *sant* you should easily douse your anger.
Words are like hurtful weapons but a *sant* regards these as teachings.
The world’s a cloth and Brahma the thread; open the door Jñāneśvar.

(First *tāṭice abhaṅga*, Muktabāi, SSG 1:236; my translation)⁴⁸

This *abhaṅga* seems to suggest that to be a *sant* one should cultivate serenity and detachment from the world.⁴⁹ This verse can also be interpreted as promoting *nivṛtti* ideals, as it is through non-attachment that one gains knowledge of the Self that leads to realisation and *mokṣa* (Patañjali 1983:xvi). This *abhaṅga* appears to reiterate ideas from the *Jñāneśvarī* and *Amṛtānubhava*, for example: ‘a *yogin* casts out all

⁴⁸ There is a rendition of this *abhaṅga* by aabasam (2009).

⁴⁹ Eknāth also puts forward similar ideas in the *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* (see Skyhawk 1983:345ff).

objects of desire by means of dispassion, and concentrates his mind within the body’ (Jñśv 5.150; Shima 2008:51).⁵⁰ Shima regards part of the *Jñāneśvarī* as describing *kuṇḍalinīyoga* or ‘a way of meditation to attain Brahmanhood without abandoning one’s body’ (Jñśv 5.149–157; 2008:51). Kiehnle suggests that *kuṇḍalinīyoga* is the means by which one returns to perfect rest in pure consciousness and that *nivṛtti* is therefore ‘the reversal of the creative process’ (1997a:148). It is therefore possible that the speaker was using Jñāneśvar’s own words to remind him/the hearer that he can achieve liberation through meditation and not by undertaking self-immolation (*samādhi*). The statement ‘the world’s a cloth and Brahma the thread’ expresses an *advaitic* idea. The relation of the world to *brahman* is like cloth to a thread, *brahman* is not the cloth but forms the cloth, and the cloth exists only when the threads exist. This idea is also expressed in the *Jñāneśvarī*: ‘He is as the ether pervading all Space, and like the threads of warp and woof a piece of cloth...so Brahma both is all and in all’ (Jñśv 13.887–890, Pradhan and Lambert 1987:382). One could imagine Muktābāī repeating Jñāneśvar’s words back to him, reminding him that deep down he knows there is no duality so being angry is fruitless and he should therefore calm down, open the door and come out. The *tāṭice abhaṅgas* continue in this vein outlining the characteristics of a *sant*.

People recognise a sant as one who is forbearing.
 As one whose mind lacks conceit, as one who is called ‘he who has attained bliss’,
 As one who desires happiness after death, as one whom in his youth attained pure knowledge,
 Set aside false doubts; open the door Jñāneśvar.

(Fourth *tāṭice abhaṅga*, my translation)

The characteristics of an ascetic—fornearance (*kṣamā*), attentiveness and vigilance (*jāgā*), consideration (*lobha*), indifference or freedom from worldly desires (*virakta*), bliss (*sukha*), purity (*śuddha*) and knowledge (*jñāna*)—are here asserted. These virtues are some of those listed in the *Bhagavadgītā* and which are ascribed to Brahmanical ascetics (BhG 16.1–3; Patton 2008:169–70; Zaehner 1973:369–70; Malinar 2007:207). The *Jñāneśvarī* elucidates upon these virtues (Jñśv 16.67–210; Pradhan and Lambert 1987:472–482) and states that one who possesses the ‘spiritual wealth’ of the twenty-six virtues ‘will excel among the seekers after liberation’ (Jñśv 16.205; Pradhan and Lambert 1987:481). The speaker is therefore reminding Jñāneśvar/the hearer of the qualities his behaviour should reflect—which he should know as he composed a text that detailed such virtues—and s/he is also recommending such behaviour to the hearer/reader.

⁵⁰ तरी वैराग्याचेनि आधारें। जिही विषय दवडूनि बाहिरें। शरीरीं एकंदरें। केलें मन॥१५१॥ (*Jñāneśvarī*, 5.150, Shima 2005:8).

If one knows oneself to be an ascetic, are all others worthless?
Passions arise from Brahma—the origin; all illusion is rubbish.
When the origins of illusion cease, then all will become Brahma.
Understanding this from beginning to end a *sant* should be content.
Leave behind all worry and anger; open the door Jñāneśvar.

(Fifth *tāṭīce abhaṅga*; my translation)

In the fifth *tāṭīce abhaṅga* the speaker or singer refers to Jñāneśvar as a *sadhu* and s/he draws attention to the fact Jñāneśvar's anger, a heightened or passionate emotional state (*vikara*), is not really real for it is the product of *māyā*. Jñāneśvar is being advised not to get carried away by emotion and realise that his anger is blinding him from the truth that ultimately he and *brahman* are non-distinct (*advaita*). The ideal characteristics of a *sant* are therefore intertwined with the rules of conduct for ascetics and renunciators in this didactic verse. The didacticism signals discursive construction, the function in this case is perhaps to signal the parity of the tradition with other parallel traditions with older pedigrees.

The following *abhaṅga* describes *brahma* as *vaḍīla* 'an ancestor; a senior or an elder; a superior' (Molesworth 1857:723) and suggests that it is He/It that drives us along, almost as if we were pieces on a chess board:

Brahma is the Absolute; the ancestor of us all.
If your own hand hits you, you don't get upset, do you?
If one's teeth bite one's tongue, do all thirty-two [teeth] break?
Great mental sorrow can lead to true wisdom.
Chew chick-peas as hard as iron, then dance at Brahma's feet.
Subdue the mind, become detached; open the door Jñāneśvar.

(Sixth *tāṭīce abhaṅga*; my translation)

The implication of this verse is that great hardship may have to be endured or experienced before one can comprehend the nature of *brahman*. Moreover, one can only 'dance' once one has realised the true meaning of *brahman*.⁵¹ The *yogic* state of detachment (*unmanī*) mentioned here comes about when one is no longer focussed on the self, when one is emancipated from *māyā* and immersed in contemplating the Divine (Mishra 1998:181; Kiehnle 1997b:129, 188ff; Daniélou 1990:149–50; Avalon 1974). Thus, the speaker is probably advising Jñāneśvar to stop thinking about himself, to put his *yogic* training into effect, to rise above his negative feelings and focus on higher things. One can imagine Jñāneśvar responding to the different statements, maybe even refuting them, so that the speaker/Muktāī keeps trying different tacks to get their point across and get Jñāneśvar to open the door and come out.

From where does this anger come? You are enlightened.
You know well the people are Janārdan.

⁵¹ My thanks to V.P. Kanitkar for elucidating this point (personal communication, 18th March 2011).

Pledged to serve, we cannot give up our pledge.⁵²
Anytime anger erupts, all *yoga* is wasted.
So enlarge your vision; open the door Jñāneśvar.

(Eighth *tāṭice abhaṅga*; my translation)

It is significant that this *abhaṅga* uses the term *Janārdan*—an epithet for Viṣṇu in his form as the preserver (Gonda 1968:221) and an epithet for Kṛṣṇa or Hari (Söhnen 1989)—to describe *jan* ‘man’ or, as I have translated it, ‘people’. *Janārdan* is a form of *brahman* according to the *Brahmapurāṇa* and a key feature of *Janārdan* appears to be division (BrP 20.41cd–41ab, Söhnen 1989:53ff). Firstly, as *Brahman* he is male in his right half and female in his left half (BrP 45.37–41; Söhnen 1989:99). Secondly, *Janārdan* is said to divide his body into two parts, one to suppress the wicked and the other to protect the righteous (BrP 181.2–4; Söhnen 1989:292; see BhP 4.7–8). This division may account for the various interpretations of the epithet. *Janārdan*—formed of *jan* and *ardana* ‘destroying’, ‘annihilating’, ‘disturbing’, ‘distressing’ or ‘tormenting’ (Monier Williams 2008)—appears as *janārdanaḥ* in *śloka* 14 of the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* and refers to ‘One who destroys the wicked’, ‘One who protects people from the wicked’ and ‘One who is approached by devotees for their wishes’ (Iyengar 2003–2010). The phrase *aisē kaḷē uttama / jana teci janārdana* // ‘you know well the people are *Janārdan*’ is a play on words. It implies that people, or one person in particular, may be ‘wicked’ for tormenting Jñāneśvar but also that ultimately people are *brahman* (*Janārdan*). This is an *advaitic* statement asserting that as all beings, including Jñāneśvar, are *brahman* anger is pointless. This fits with the idea that as a *yogin* or *sant* one should serve people. Jñāneśvar is being told in no uncertain terms that his anger counteracts *yoga*. Moreover, if Jñāneśvar is contemplating *samādhi* then his anger might negate the act. The *tāṭice abhaṅga* are a plea to Jñāneśvar’s better nature. Thus one can see that the *tāṭice abhaṅga* highlight the qualities and proper behaviour of a *sant* and for an ascetic, suggesting that the listener or reader is being provided with an exemplar on both counts.

The *tāṭice abhaṅgas* clearly advocate *advaita*, which is accepted as the predominant philosophical position of the Vārkarīs. However, the *tāṭice abhaṅga* also promote *nivṛtti dharma*. The term *nivṛtti* connotes cessation, inactivity, renunciation and a rejection of worldly life (Monier Williams 2008; Dhand 2008:33). *Nivṛtti dharma* or *nivṛttimārga* holds that the world is a place of suffering perpetuated by one’s actions (*karma*) and that one’s participation in the realm of pleasurable distraction leads to endless rebirth. One should therefore strive for emancipation from *punarāgamana* so as to attain

⁵² The translation by Raghavdas and Vanita (1989:53) use the word ‘pledge’ and I can find no other word that conveys the meaning of the line so fully.

mokṣa. *Nivṛtti dharma* is often used as a synonym for *mokṣadharmā* ‘the religion of freedom’ states Dhand (2008:33). Kiehnle suggests that the use of the term *nivṛtti* by Jñāneśvar and his followers indicates one of the highest states of consciousness ‘considered identical with the state of *turīya/nīlabindu*’ (1997a:148–49). The term *nīlabindū* or *nādabindu* refers to ‘the Ātman experienced as a lustrous point’ (Tulpule 1999:492) as discussed above. The *tāṭice abhaṅgas* may therefore be regarded as teaching the hearer/reader about how to gain liberation from a perspective different than that of *advaita*.

Nivṛtti adherents are supposed to be calm, patient and perfectly balanced in mind. Dhand suggests that the ethics of *nivṛtti* are ‘personal, self-cultivational, and mystical’. They are concerned with the ‘care of other beings, truthfulness, charity, patience, self-restraint and compassion’ (2008:36), which are all qualities described in *tāṭice abhaṅga* number four. Moreover, Dhand argues that *nivṛtti dharma* does not recognise social differences rather true worth is measured by conduct and not birth (2008:36; Mbh 12.182.8, 12.285.28). Thus, a low-caste person or a woman can achieve *mokṣa* as it is achieved by mental rectitude and personal effort. The only obstacle is ignorance so it is important to accept instruction from anyone with sufficient wisdom to help eradicate it (Dhand 2008:37). This is very similar to the *advaitist* position that advocates knowledge, particularly that gained from a teacher or *guru*, as the means of gaining liberation. The role of the *guru* or teacher in attaining liberation also draws attention to the *upadeśa* nature of these verses.

Dhand argues that there are three dimensions to *nivṛtti dharma*: the personal and introspective dimension that requires the individual to transform physically, mentally and emotionally so as to achieve equanimity. However, Dhand suggests that one’s efforts to achieve equanimity must be inspired by the soteriological goal of *mokṣa*, which in turn requires one to act without causing harm or injury (*ahiṃsā*). Consequently, one becomes a person ‘full of compassion and generosity for the suffering of others’ according to Dhand (2008:37–8), and this is what the *tāṭice abhaṅga* advocate. There is also a connection between *yoga* and *nivṛtti dharma*. *Yoga* regards the world as a place of inevitable and endless suffering, sees engagement with the world as futile and transient and asserts that the only worthwhile goal is to seek something constant within oneself. One is therefore encouraged to gain ‘liberating knowledge’ argues Dhand (2008:56). The phrase ‘open the door Jñāneśvar’ could therefore be read as a play on the word *jñāna*, in which the speaker advises the ascetic to ‘open’ himself to liberating knowledge.

Traditionally, Muktābāī the sister of Jñāneśvar is regarded as the speaker of the ‘songs of the door’. However, the *abhaṅgas* contain no reference to an author as they lack a signature such as ‘Muktāī’,

the *mudrikā* found in the other *abhaṅgas* attributed to Mukṭābāī. The first person plural pronoun (*āpaṇa*) is used in *tāṭice abhaṅga* five but this is a gender-neutral term meaning ‘oneself’ and cannot therefore be taken as a sign that the author was female. Moreover, the content of the *tāṭice abhaṅga* differs in content and style from the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Mukṭābāī according to Shrotriya (1992:19–20). If Mukṭābāī, Jñāneśvar’s sister, did compose these *abhaṅgas* then the principles of *advaita* and *nivṛtti dharma* are possibly being voiced by a young girl who elucidated the qualities Jñāneśvar and other ascetics and *sants* should exhibit. These *abhaṅgas* show the speaker to be knowledgeable, spiritually discerning and concerned with yogic rather than householder or worldly aims. The *tāṭice abhaṅga* highlight *nivṛtti* and it is therefore possible that those with programmatic intent did not want to include the *abhaṅgas* formally within the corpus of Vārkarī literature, even though public memory attributes these compositions to Mukṭābāī the sister of Jñāneśvar, because their concern was with constructing the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition.

Significantly, both Mukṭābāī and Janābāī are portrayed as women capable of instructing a man on spiritual and philosophical matters by the categorisation of their attributed composition under the *upadeśa* theme. However, as Dada Maharaj Manmadkar pointed out to me, even though women may have played a role in bringing about spiritual development by offering advice women are still considered ‘in a certain way’. Thus, even today *kīrtankārīs* are not given the same status as *kīrtankārs* within the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Manmadkar therefore advocated developing ‘an atmosphere of flexibility where the principle of equality is accepted and where there would be social approval for this equal status’ (personal communication, 11th July 2006).

2. *Summary*

The compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* were explored in order to consider the role of gender attribution in the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition. The important devotional practice of *nāma* is a practice that can be undertaken easily within the domestic setting. So by including songs attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* on *nāma* those with programmatic intent may be understood to be employing gender attribution to construct a householder tradition. The intimate relationships with the divine outlined in the chapter indicate familial situations and a domestic setting as female friendships and parental relationships occur within a *grhastha* and not a *sannyāsa* context. The intimate relationships reinforce the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition and draw attention to the possibility of performing *bhakti* within a householder environment. The *sakhya* relationship suggests

that the deity is present in all manner of mundane tasks and that the deity can be met anywhere so there is no need to undertake renunciation.

The biographical images of Soyarā and Nirmaḷā, like many of the domestic or quotidian images in other compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs*, reinforce the discursive construction of the tradition as *grhastha*. The biographical compositions attributed to Nāgarī and Bahiṇābāī as well as many of the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Goṇāī and Rājāī highlight the tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya*. This tension may not be fully resolved in the compositions attributed to Goṇāī and Rājāī but it is harmonized in the *ātmanivedan* attributed to Bahiṇābāī. The resolution of the tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya* as well as *pativratādharma* and *bhakti* in the spiritual biography of a woman is important in the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a household tradition because it signals the utilisation of gender attribution for the successful construction of the *sampradāya* as a householder path.

The inclusion of *abhaṅgas* on themes such as grinding or ‘helping’ appear to be explicitly directed at a female audience and may signify affiliation with a singing tradition through the use of the *ovī/abhaṅga* metre and the inclusion of a *dhrupad* like ‘You come Viṭṭhal’ (Janābāī *abhaṅga* 226). However, the grinding songs and compositions that employ quotidian imagery emphasise the possibility and effectiveness of devotion in domestic situations and thus these compositions can be interpreted as a discursive argument for the *grhastha* framework. The inclusion of *kūṭa* and *upadeśa abhaṅgas* attributed to Mukṭābāī and Janābāī suggests that the *sampradāya* negotiated a set of tensions in its discursive construction and so included Nāth/Śaivite/*sannyāsa* notions of mystical union to correspond to the *bhakti* concepts of salvation and ultimate liberation. Moreover, these attributed compositions signal a discursive construction, in this instance perhaps of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as egalitarian.

The issue of attribution means it is impossible to determine the gender of the speaker or author of any composition so one cannot assert that songs with domestic or quotidian images were composed by women or represent the ‘female voice’. It is therefore my contention that the presence of compositions attributed to women within the Vārkarī corpus is indicative of an argument for, and indeed *exemplification of*, the viability of the householder path by those who were involved in constructing the traditions of the *sampradāya*.

CONCLUSION

The Introduction to the thesis asserted that the approach offered by feminist historiography and early Subaltern Studies to recover the ‘female voice’ was untenable in relation to the women identified as *santakaviyatrīs* in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* due to the vexed issue of gender attribution and the speculative nature of any attempt to correlate attribution to gendered, living person. Consequently, the focus of the thesis has been altered to consider the ways the attribution of women’s authorship is used in the construction and development of the Vārkarī *bhakti* tradition and to ask what function the high visibility of *santakaviyatrīs* in the tradition might have played in its self-understanding and presentation. Therefore, I have chosen to examine the question of why there are so many women associated with the Vārkarī *sampradāya* by considering the function of gender attribution in the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path.

Chapter One began by providing a contextual overview of Pandharpur and Viṭhobā/Viṭṭhal and their apparent re-orientation from Śaiva to Vaiṣṇava that probably coincided with the transformation of the *deś* from a pastoral to an agrarian economy. The Vārkarī *sampradāya*’s primary myth elucidated the connection between the deity, Pandharpur and *bhakti* by relating that Puṇḍalik was responsible for God’s presence in Pandharpur due to his transformation from disrespectful to devoted son. The Puṇḍalik myth thus encapsulates the *sampradāya*’s householder values and relates to the discursive construction of the tradition as a householder path. The chapter noted that the Vārkarī *sants* are regarded as the preeminent proponents of *bhakti* and that they are crucially important to the *vārī*, the *sampradāya*’s distinguishing feature which the chapter detailed, as they act as ever-present intermediaries. It was also noted that the *sants* were predominantly low-caste ‘active producers’ and householders who are credited with poetic compositions in Marathi that now form the Vārkarī literary corpus. A brief sketch of the four main male *sants*—Jñāneśvar, Nāmdev, Eknāth and Tukārām—was provided as their attributed compositions are the key components of the Vārkarī ‘canon’ discussed in Chapter Three. The outline of the female *bhaktas* and poets who are the focus of the thesis determined that the majority of these women are remembered as *grhiṇī* and strongly connected to the householder life.

The chapter also accepts as plausible Zelliott’s three reasons for the householder character of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Firstly, there are several probable explanations for the rural nature of the

sampradāya: Viṭṭhal's connection to pastoralists and shepherds and the fact that most Vārkarīs are agriculturalists; the low status and practice of traditional occupations by most of the *sants*; the route of the *vārī* across the *deś* which converge on Pandharpur, a rural town connected with the local agrarian economy and society, which was administered by Vaiṣṇava Brahmans. Secondly, the 'lack of a strong *sannyāsī* tradition in the Marathi-speaking area' is perceptible by the philosophical influences of the Nāth *panth* rather than the number of *sants* who are regarded as *sannyāsīs*. Thirdly, the assertion that the 'leadership from either Śūdra or unorthodox Brahmans may be most responsible for Maharashtra's householder *bhaktas*' is demonstrable by the four main male *sants*. Jñāneśvar and Eknāth can be taken to represent the unorthodox Brahman leadership while Nāmdev, Tukārām and numerous other *sants* fit with the notion of *śūdra* leadership. However, the issue that emerges throughout the historical and contemporary development of the *sampradāya* is that of caste. The *sampradāya* advocates spiritual egalitarianism but caste and gender equality appear to be ideals rather than social realities as highlighted by the caste differentiation of *dinḍīs*, the removal of 'god' into a pot, the Mahārs' rejection *sant* Cokhāmeḷā, and Muktabai Maharaj's experience of male followers not wanting to touch her feet.

Chapter Two added an experiential dimension to the material presented in chapter one by relating my observations of some of the important Vārkarī religious practices such as the *kārttikī* and *āṣāḍhī vārīs*. Moreover, my ethnographic research explored the position and presence of the *santakaviyatrīs* in the contemporary tradition and determined that Goṇāī, Rājāī, Āūbāī, Limbāī, Lādāī, Soyārābāī, Nirmaḷābāī, Bhāgū Mahārīṇ, Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth, Bhāgū and Viṭhābāī seem to be largely ignored in public memory. However, Muktabāī, Janābāī, Kānhopātrā, Bahiṇābāī (Pāthak not Chaudhari) and Sakhūbāī appear to still be remembered to a limited extent. Moreover, Mīrābāī is also remembered in connection to the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, which may be due to Mīrābāī's non-householder status as she is considered 'unmarried' like Muktabāī and Janābāī. The notion that some female figures are ascribed non-householder status highlights a persistent tension between *grhastha* and *sannyāsa/vairāgya* that exists within *bhakti* traditions like the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

It was suggested that the reason women are remembered and characterised as *sants* may be due to the number of compositions attributed to a specific figure. Additionally, I argued that the characterisation of a female figure as a *sant* may be connected with the quality of their attributed compositions or their connection with a well-known *guru*. However, Sakhūbāī has few compositions in her name and has no connection with a male *guru* or *sant* which suggested that Sakhū's public

remembrance occurs for other reasons. Sakhūbāī is remembered as suffering distress, as her *caritra* in Chapter Four demonstrates, but Bhagwat argued that most men in positions of authority within the *sampradāya* and even some male scholars do not acknowledge the distress and/or suffering represented in the lives of female figures because they regard the inclusion of women in the Vārkarī literary corpus as effacing the possibility that female figures might have suffered in any way. Vyas suggested that the inclusion of women *sants* was due to the egalitarian nature of Vārkarī *sampradāya* while Utpat, Tade and Belgaonkar suggested that the lack of *kīrtankārīs* and women in prominent positions is due to the restrictions placed on women. Bhagwat declared that no emulation of *santakaviyatrīs* occurs in the contemporary tradition because ‘resistant voices and/or women are written out’. Rather, the balance between household and *bhakti* is advocated in the contemporary tradition because it is thought that women *sants* like Bahiṇbāī achieved this balance and they are thus exemplars. This message of balance appears to relate to the dominance of Brahmanism which is still apparent today as most of the *gurus*, temple officials, and *diṇḍī* leaders with whom I spoke were Brahman. The diminished presence of female figures appears to signal the successful construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path as women no longer need to be cited as figures or exemplars of household religiosity. To that extent, the constitutive tension between *gṛhastha* and *sannyāsa/vairāgya* appears, in the contemporary context of the *sampradāya* to have been resolved in favour of *gṛhastha* religiosity.

Chapter Three considered the discursive formation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path and what constitutes the Vārkarī corpus or ‘canon’ in order to examine the role of the *santakaviyatrīs* and the compositions attributed to them within the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. The discussion established that the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path is primarily due to the use of Marathi, the literate *ovī* and *abhaṅga*, and a combination of oral, literate, textual and performative means of dissemination. The *Jñāneśvarī* and *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* are texts that transmit the message of *bhakti* and disinterested action to a community predominantly formed of socially-active, Marathi-speakers by employing Marathi and the literate *ovī* metre. The use of the Marathi *ovī* as well as Jñāneśvar’s integration of orality and literacy and Eknāth’s addition of asceticism-in-marriage corresponds to the concepts of ingenuity or charismatic innovation. The liturgical role that texts like the *Jñāneśvarī* perform may also be interpreted as contributing to the ongoing discursive construction of the Vārkarī community. Moreover, the veneration of texts like the *Jñāneśvarī* and *Eknāthī Bhāgavata* as *pothī* suggests that they are regarded by the *sampradāya* as closed and permanent, and thus as canonical.

Contrastingly, the reason that most of the *abhaṅgas* attributed to the *sants* are categorised as ‘almost canonical’ and not as *prasthānatrayī* is probably due to the connection between orality and performance as well as the openness and fluidity of the *abhaṅga gāthās*. It is therefore possible to see a chain of religious legitimisation and discursive construction running from Jñāneśvar to Tukārām and beyond, which includes both canonical and sacred texts, as well as oral and performative means of transmission. Yet, the position of the compositions attributed to women is ambiguous as they are not formally part of *kīrtan* discussion even if songs attributed to some women are sometimes sung on the *vārī* as Chapter Two intimated. Furthermore, biographers like Mahīpati added meaning to the textual and oral compositions of the *bhaktas* and *sants* and helped to maintain and revitalise the Vārkarī *sampradāya* reproducing and enhancing the ethos of the tradition.

Chapter Four explored the presentation of women as exemplars of *bhakti* and as householders within the biographies of *santakaviyatrīs* to consider the role and function of gender attribution in the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Muktabāī is interpreted as a householder who is able to pursue a renunciate life in terms of her devotional practices but she is not represented as renunciate in the traditional sense of *sannyāsa*. Muktabāī is also represented as an *avatāra* of Ādimāyā and a knowledgeable woman capable of advising men like Cāṅgadev and Nāmdev, suggesting that she is regarded as a figure of spiritual status and ability. The *caritras* of Goṇāī, Rājāī and Āvalī highlight the possibility of living a devotional life as a *grhastha*. The narratives suggest that the suffering and deprivations of *sansār* equate to those of a spiritual path like *sannyāsa* and that these sufferings are thus effectively ‘authentic’. It is possible that Mahīpati represented Goṇāī, Rājāī and/or Āvalī as the antithesis of Nāmdev or Tukārām. In other words, Mahīpati may have used Goṇāī, Rājāī and/or Āvalī to symbolise the most undesirable aspects of *grhastha* and used Nāmdev and/or Tukārām to exemplify the negative elements of an extreme form of *vairāgya*. Consequently, one could construe Mahīpati’s portrayal of Goṇāī, Rājāī and/or Āvalī as drawing the hearer/reader towards a happy median between *grhastha* and *vairāgya* and thus discursively constructing the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder path. However, the tension between householdership and renunciation is not resolved fully in Mahīpati’s accounts as the conflict between Nāmdev’s daughter (Limbāī) and Vāṅka demonstrates.

Janī’s *caritra* depicts her as the ultimate servant by portraying her living a life of domestic service within a household and as an *avatāra* serving Viṭṭhal. Janī’s *caritra* suggests that even women of low status are loved and protected by god so they should perform their household duties faithfully with

devotion. Kānhopātrā's life-story seems to censure *kāma* and advocate *bhakti*. Kānhopātrā's interment probably signals her compliance with the tenets of *bhakti* and signify that the spiritual life is equal to *sannyāsa* and that such a life is to be found in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. The brief biographies of Soyārā and Nirmaḷā suggest they were low-caste, married women and therefore householders. Gaṅgabāī/Guptanāth's *caritra* portrays her as an ascetic due to widowhood, which is a form of renunciation within the *grhastha* framework that is prescribed behaviour for high-caste householder widows. The lives of these figures strongly imply the possibility of balancing domestic duties with *bhakti*, stressing that *sansār* might be full of difficulties but that one must nonetheless persist in dutiful and spiritual action. In contrast, Viṭhābāī is depicted as renouncer who abandons house and home in favour of devotion to Cidambarsvāmī, which may be why she is not included within the broader Vārkarī literary corpus. However, like Bahiṅābāī's *ātmanivedan*, Sakhūbāī's *caritra* presents her as a *bhakta* who epitomises *strīdharmā* and *pativrātādharmā*. It seems that Sakhūbāī represents the householder par excellence as it is she who has been instrumentalised by film-makers to advocate women following their *strīdharmā* and *pativrātādharmā* while living as a Vārkarī *bhakta*. Sakhū's *caritra* demonstrates that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* resolved the *sannyāsa-grhastha* tension and so advocated a *bhakti*-focused householder life.

Chapter Five took as its template the similarities and differences in the thematic groupings of the compositions attributed to Muktabāī, Janābāī and Bahiṅābāī within various editions as these suggest programmatic intent in the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. The chapter began by considering *nāma*, one of the most important devotional practices associated with *bhakti* as it reflected a devotional concern that appears in compositions attributed to almost all the Vārkarī *santakaviyatrīs*. The *nāma abhaṅgas* are effectively didactic as they outline the best means to achieve the spiritual goal of liberation or union but significantly the practice of *nāma* is one that can easily be undertaken within the domestic setting. In effect, the inclusion of the *nāma* songs attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* signals the use of gender attribution as an effective device in the construction of a householder tradition because women are so wholly identified with the domestic environment: they are in effect paradigmatic of the *grhastha* life. The intimate relationships with the divine outlined in the chapter reinforce the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder tradition and draw attention once more to the possibility of performing *bhakti* within a householder environment. The *sakhya* relationship suggests that the deity is present in all

manner of mundane tasks and that the deity can be met anywhere so there is no need to undertake renunciation.

The inclusion of the grinding *abhaṅgas* and compositions that employ quotidian imagery once more highlight the efficacy of *bhakti* in domestic settings and these compositions can therefore be interpreted as a discursive argument for the *grhastha* framework. The inclusion of *kūṭa* and *upadeśa abhaṅgas* attributed to Mukṭābāī and Janābāī suggests that the *sampradāya* negotiated a set of tensions in its discursive construction and so included Nāth/Śaivite/*sannyāsa* notions of mystical union to correspond to the *bhakti* concepts of salvation and ultimate liberation. Moreover, these attributed compositions signal a discursive construction, in this instance perhaps of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as egalitarian.

The biographical images of Soyarā and Nirmalā, like many of the domestic or quotidian images in other compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs*, reinforce the discursive construction of the tradition as *grhastha*. The biographical compositions attributed to Nāgarī and Bahiṇābāī as well as many of the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Goṇāī and Rājāī highlight the tension between *grhastha* and *vairāgya*. This tension is balanced in the *ātmanivedan* attributed to Bahiṇābāī. The resolution of the tension between *pativratādharma* and *bhakti* as well as *grhastha* and *vairāgya* in the spiritual biography of a woman is important in the construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a household tradition because it indicates that gender attribution has been utilised in the successful construction of the *sampradāya* as a householder path.

In summary then, this thesis has argued that gender attribution plays an important role in the discursive formation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as women are instrumentalised as householders par excellence. Moreover, I contend that the presence of compositions attributed to women and *caritras* about women within the Vārkarī corpus is indicative of an argument for, and indeed *exemplification of*, the viability of the householder path by those who were involved in constructing the traditions of the *sampradāya*. I therefore believe that the most plausible explanation for the number of women in the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is the effectiveness of gender attribution as a rhetorical device in the discursive construction of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* as a householder rather than a renunciatory path.

This thesis also raises some questions for future ethnographic research: to explore whether the compositions attributed to the *santakaviyatrīs* discussed in this thesis have a connection with the ‘popular base’. Do any of the *santakaviyatrīs* live in the popular imagination or operate as a resource to voice

resistance or protest against social discrimination and economic exploitation by the poor and powerless, particularly among members of lower castes. And if not why not?

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APPENDIX A:

GLOSSARY¹

<i>abadāgirī</i>	ornamental umbrella, carried in processions over kings or <i>pādukās</i>
<i>abhaṅga</i>	‘steady’, ‘continuous’, ‘unbroken’ and ‘inviolable’; a metrical composition based on the folk <i>ovī</i>
<i>abhiṣeka</i>	sprinkling of continual pouring of water; the ritual bath given to the image of the deity
<i>ācārya</i>	a spiritual guide or teacher, one invested with the sacrificial thread who instructs in the Vedas and in religious mysteries; a conductor of religious ceremonies; a founder or leader of a religious order or sect
<i>adhyāya</i>	section, chapter or part of a book
<i>advaya</i>	non-duality, unity, identity, ultimate truth (see <i>advaita</i>)
<i>Ādi</i>	‘beginning’; the first part of Jñāneśvar’s life told by <i>sant</i> Nāmdev and then Mahīpati
<i>Ādi-māyā/mātā/śakti</i>	primal power, primordial cosmic energy; the great divine mother; ‘a goddess united to the primeval male (<i>ādipurūṣa</i>) and genitress of the material world’ (Molesworth 1857:67); Pārvatī
<i>ādiparamparā</i>	spiritual lineage; succession from the beginning of time
<i>advaita</i>	“non-dual”, an influential school of thought that argues there is no distinction between Ultimate Reality (<i>brahman</i>) and the Self (<i>atman</i> , <i>jīva</i>); <i>advaita</i> Vedānta is considered the principal philosophy of the Vārkarīs
<i>agni/ajñī</i>	fire, the sacrificial fire; the ‘fire’ of the stomach or the digestive faculty
<i>agnihotra</i>	a priest who maintains a sacrificial fire in his home
<i>āī</i>	mother; a suffix, denoting respect, added to the name of a woman or goddess
<i>ajānavṛkṣa</i>	the name of a tree in the temple court at Ālandī, said to have sprung from the planted staff of Jñāneśvar and said to be unique
<i>ajñāna</i>	ignorance
<i>ajñī</i>	see <i>agni</i>
<i>ajapā</i>	inner meditation of the Name (<i>nāma</i>) synchronised with one’s breathing

¹ Compiled from Molesworth (1857), Tulpule (1999), Monier-Williams (2008), Berntsen (1975), Deshapande (2003), Ranade (2003) and CDSL (2003).

<i>ajāpajapa</i>	silent repetition of the Name (<i>nāma</i>)
<i>ākṛtrima bhakti</i>	natural devotion
<i>alaukika</i>	beyond the world, out of the world
Ālvār	‘those immersed in god’, south-Indian Vaiṣṇava poet-saints (c.6–9 th century C.E.), corresponding to the Nāyaṇārs
<i>amantra</i>	unaccompanied by, unentitled to or not knowing Vedic verses or texts (i.e. <i>śūdras</i> or women)
<i>amṛta</i>	nectar, the drink of the immortals; a preparation of milk, sugar and spices; deathless, eternal, immortal; final emancipation
<i>aṃśa</i>	part, portion
<i>anuḡraha</i>	favour, grace
<i>anuṣṭhāna</i>	observance, religious exercise
Anuṣṭhānapāṭh	‘litany of observances’
<i>anusvāra</i>	the nasal character represented by the dot over any letter (see <i>bindu</i>)
<i>apsarā</i>	a class of female divinity or celestial nymph, who dance and sing at Indra’s court in heaven
<i>āratī</i>	light from wicks soaked in purified butter or camphor is offered, in a circular motion, to a deity/person/object, sometimes with song(s) sung in praise of the deity (see <i>ovālaṇe</i>)
<i>arcana</i>	honouring, worshipping; homage paid to deities and superiors (see <i>navadhā bhakti</i>)
<i>ārta</i>	one who is distressed
<i>ārta-bhakti</i>	distressful yearning devotion
<i>arthārathī</i>	a seeker of worldly success, one who desires material gain
<i>ārto</i>	the afflicted
<i>āsana</i>	a posture held while seated; abiding; a small stool
<i>āśrama</i>	the stages of life for a twice-born (<i>dvija</i>) male: <i>brahmacārya</i> (celibate student), <i>gṛhastha</i> (householder), <i>vānaprastha</i> (hermit or forest dweller), and <i>sannyāsa</i> (renouncer)
<i>atiśūdra</i>	persons beyond the class of <i>śūdra</i> , ‘untouchables’
<i>ātman</i>	the soul, the [essential] self
<i>ātmānubhava</i>	experience or knowledge of the self

<i>ātmanivedana</i>	offering oneself to the deity (see <i>navadhā bhakti</i>)
<i>avatār/avatāra</i>	descent-form; incarnation (see <i>svarūpa</i>)
<i>bābā</i>	‘father’, a term of respect for an elderly man; a term of endearment for a child
<i>bāḍa</i>	a notebook, book or compendium
<i>baḍvā/baḍavā</i>	hereditary Brahman priest with a share in the proceeds of the temple of Viṭhobā at Paṇḍharpūr
<i>bālakṛṣṇa</i>	adolescent Kṛṣṇa
<i>bārase</i>	the naming ceremony of child on the eleventh or twelfth day after birth (also <i>nāmavidhāna</i>)
<i>bhaḍa</i>	bright
<i>bhaḍakhambā</i>	‘hero-stone’, memorial stone erected for a hero; a statue with human form
<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>	‘the Song of the Lord’ (c. 200 BCE), an episode in the <i>Mahābhārata</i> , is a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjūna discussing <i>jñāna</i> ‘knowledge’, <i>karma</i> ‘action’ and <i>bhakti</i> ‘devotion’ at the end of which Kṛṣṇa is revealed as the Supreme Lord (Bhagavān)
Bhagavān	God, the Supreme Lord/Being; Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa
<i>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i>	a Sanskrit text, composed in South India, detailing the exploits of Kṛṣṇa and present Kṛṣṇa as the highest manifestation of the divine
<i>Bhāgavata</i>	a follower or worshipper of Bhagavān; a Vaisnavite devotee
<i>bhajan</i>	adoration, worship, reverence; repeating/singing the names of god as an act of worship; group devotional signing
<i>bhākarī</i>	millet flat bread, the staple food of Maharashtra
<i>bhakta</i>	a devotee
<i>bhakta-vachaḷa</i>	devotee-lover
<i>bhakti</i>	devotion, adoration; participation; performance
<i>bhakti-mārga</i>	the way or path of devotion
<i>bhaktin/bhaktīn</i>	a female devotee, worshipper
<i>bhāṇḍē</i>	a vessel, dish, pot, pan (of metal, earth, wood or stone)
<i>bhārūd</i>	a drama poem
<i>bhāṣya</i>	a commentary or exposition (see <i>ṭīkā</i>)
<i>bhāṭ</i>	a bard or minstrel

<i>bhāva</i>	faith; condition, emotion, mood
<i>bhāva-bhakti</i>	emotional devotion
<i>bhāvārtha</i>	inherent meaning; faith in
<i>bhedīka</i>	ballad, song, poem
<i>bhikṣā</i>	alms, begging, mendicancy; to beg for alms
<i>bhikṣekarī</i>	beggar (for alms)
<i>bhikṣu</i>	an ascetic mendicant (of the Mahānubhāva sect); a Brahman in the fourth <i>āśrama</i> (<i>saṁnyāsa/sannyāsa</i>) existing by begging
Bhīmā	the main tributary of the river Krishna in Maharashtra, Paṇḍharpūr lies on its banks
<i>bhrāntīnārak</i>	suffering the hell of a confused mind
<i>bhūpālī</i>	a metrical composition sung or hummed in the morning
<i>bindu</i>	dot, central or focal point; the dot representing the <i>anusvāra</i> in the syllable <i>om</i>
Bohra	part of the Isma'ili sub-sect of Shi'a Islam
Brahmā	the creator deity; first of triad with Śiva and Viṣṇu
<i>brahmacārya</i>	celibate student, a Brahman or twice-born male (<i>dvija</i>) in the first stage of his life
<i>brahmagranthi</i>	knot of Brahmā
<i>brahman</i>	the impersonal Absolute, the Ultimate Reality (see <i>paramātmā</i>); a <i>brāhmaṇ</i> , one of the priestly class
<i>buddhi</i>	intellect, mind, understanding
<i>bukā</i>	fragrant black powder
Candrabhāga	the river Bhīmā at Paṇḍharpūr is known thus ('moon-quarter') because it resembles a crescent moon
<i>caritra, carita</i>	the actions, acts, deeds, exploits, adventures, feats or exploits of gods, heroes or <i>sants</i> ; a life-story, biography
Cēkkiḷār	Tamil court minister and hagiographer of the <i>Periya Purāṇam</i> (c.12 th century)
<i>cidvilāsa</i>	'the complete absence of duality and the absolute oneness of the creator and creation'
<i>citkalā</i>	one with divine intelligence
<i>dabba/ḍabbā</i>	'little box', tiffin
<i>dabbawalla/ḍabbāvālā</i>	lit. 'box (-carrying) person'

<i>dacoit</i>	a bandit, armed robber (from the Hindi term <i>ḍakait</i>)
<i>daḷaṇe</i>	to grind grain
<i>darśan</i>	‘sight’, ‘vision’ of the deity, exchange of vision; audience, meeting
<i>dāsa</i>	a servant or slave (m)
<i>dasarā</i>	the 10 th day of the bright half of Āśvina (Sept.–Oct.), which concludes <i>Navarātrī</i> , when Rāma defeated Rāvaṇa
<i>dāsī</i>	a maidservant or slave; the wife of a <i>śūdra</i> (see <i>navadhā bhakti</i>); a prostitute
Daśnāmī	‘ten names’, a Śaiva ascetic belonging to one of ten orders established by Śaṅkara in the 8 th century (Araṇya, Āśrama, Bhāratī, Giri, Parvata, Purī, Sarasvatī, Sāgara, Tīrtha, and Vana)
<i>dāsya</i>	servitude, service
Dattātreya/Dattā	Lord of ascetics; an incarnation of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahma
<i>deś</i>	(desh) ‘country’, ‘region’; in Maharashtra, the (west-central Deccan) plateau: the area east of the <i>ghāṭs</i> /Sayhādris to the Bālāghāṭs, from the Godāvarī river in the north to the Karnāṭaka border
<i>deśastha</i>	Brahmans of the <i>deś</i>
<i>deva pradakṣiṇā</i> ‘	the circuit of the gods’
<i>devadāsī</i>	a girl dedicated to the worship and service of a deity or temple; a temple dancer or ‘prostitute’
Devakī	Kṛṣṇa’s mother, wife of Vasudev and sister of Kāṁsa
<i>devanāgarī</i>	‘divine city writing’; the script used for Sanskrit and other Indian languages, commonly known as <i>nāgarī</i>
<i>devasāyanī ekādaśī</i>	(<i>śayana ekādaśī</i>) the <i>ekādaśī</i> when the god goes to sleep
<i>dharmakīrtan</i>	a religious discourse
<i>dharmasālā</i>	free accommodation for travellers (also <i>dharmasāla</i>)
<i>dhotar</i>	five to seven yards of cloth that is tied and knotted at a man’s waist and which covers most of the legs
<i>dhoti</i>	(Hindi) see <i>dhotar</i>
<i>dhrupad/dhruvpad</i>	‘refrain’, the second or first stanza of a verse which acts as the refrain of a song and which is meant to be sung by the audience
<i>dhvājī</i>	a brother’s daughter, niece
<i>dinḍī/dinḍī</i>	a (walking) group of pilgrims, usually with a leader; a stringed instrument, with a gourd and long stick to which strings are fastened; a musical metre

<i>diṇḍīgān</i>	a singer accompanied by a stringed instrument (<i>diṇḍī</i>)
Diṇḍīrvaṇ	the Diṇḍīra forest to which Kṛṣṇa came in search of his wife Rukmiṇi
<i>dīvalī</i>	the festival of lights (falling on the last two days of Āśvina) celebrating the victory of light over darkness, good over evil etc.
<i>dosa/ḍosā</i>	South Indian crepe made from fermented rice batter and black lentils
<i>dvaita</i>	dualism (see <i>sāṃkhya</i>)
<i>dveṣa-bhakti</i>	hate-devotion
<i>ekabhakta</i>	the preeminent devotee
<i>ekādaśī</i>	the eleventh lunar day (<i>tītha</i>) of the fortnight (<i>pakṣa</i>)—waning/dark (Kṛṣṇa) or bright/waxing (<i>śukla</i>)—of every lunar month of the Hindu calendar (see Appendix C); viewed as a spiritually beneficial day
<i>ḥakīr</i>	a Muslim mendicant
<i>gāḍge</i>	a small earthenware pot
<i>gālī/gālī</i>	rude scolding; a curse; a term of abuse
<i>gaṇa</i>	a composition in praise of Gaṇeśa and others
Gaṇeśa	the deity of wisdom (hence the elephant head) and remover of obstacles; the son of Śiva and Pārvatī; chief of subordinate gods who attend Śiva
Gaṅgā	the Ganges river
<i>garbhagrha/garbha</i>	‘womb chamber’; inner sanctum of the temple, where the image of the deity resides
<i>gāruḍa</i>	the mantra of Garuḍa, the king of birds
<i>gāthā</i>	a book, collection of poems; a verse or stanza
Gauḍīya	Bengali (Vaiṣṇavism)
<i>gavḷaṇa/gauḷaṇ/gauḷaṇī</i>	a milkmaid or cowherdess; the song of a milkmaid or cowherdesses, a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and the milkmaids
<i>ghar</i>	a house, household, habitation; domestic or social life
<i>gharadhanī</i>	a householder, the husband or head of a household/family
<i>gharakarī</i>	a householder, the master of the house
<i>gharavāsī</i>	a householder
<i>ghāṭ</i>	(ghat) a mountainous range
<i>gōḍaḍī</i>	a rough patchwork quilt, often made from old saris using running stitch

<i>gondhaḷa</i>	a religious rite with singing and drama
<i>gopa</i>	cowherd, cowherd song
<i>gopī</i>	cowherdess, milkmaid
<i>gopīcandana</i>	sandalwood-paste
<i>gotra</i>	lineage, family
<i>gotrī</i>	belonging to the lineage of...
<i>govarī</i>	cow-dung cake
Govind	‘the chief of the cowherders’ or ‘the protector of cows’; Kṛṣṇa
<i>grhastha</i>	a householder; a Brahman or twice-born (<i>dvija</i>) male in the second stage of his religious life
<i>grhastha-sādhaka</i>	householder-spiritual seeker
<i>grhiṇī</i>	a housewife; a wife, a mistress of a house
<i>guḍhī</i>	a pole wrapped in cloth, decorated with coconut, marigold flowers and mango leaves, topped with a flag or upturned brass or silver pot (<i>kalaśa</i>)
<i>guḍhīpāḍavā</i>	the spring festival celebrating the first day of the New Year (in Caitra) when <i>guḍhī</i> are displayed in front of the house
<i>guñja</i>	wooden knob, i.e. handle
<i>gurava</i>	low-caste worshipper of Śiva
<i>guru</i>	religious teacher
<i>guru-śiṣya paramparā</i>	guru-disciple lineage, disciplic succession
<i>haripāṭh</i>	reciting the name of Hari (god)
<i>haṭha yoga</i>	a branch of <i>yoga</i> that unites opposites, based on <i>āsanas</i> (postures) and <i>prāṇāyāma</i> (breathing techniques)
<i>hīn/hīna</i>	low, vile, bad, base, mean; deficient, defective, faulty, poor (skill); abandoned, forsaken; brought low
Janārdan	‘One who stimulates men’, an epithet for Kṛṣṇa
<i>japa</i>	vocal repetition of the Name (<i>nāma</i>)
<i>jātē</i>	hand-mill, quern
<i>jātī/yātī</i>	castes
<i>jayajayakār</i>	acclamation, calls of praise
<i>jayantī</i>	birthday (of Kṛṣṇa)

<i>jheṇḍā</i>	a flag, ensign or banner
<i>jheṇekārī</i>	a flag-bearer
<i>jhūlana/jhulaṇā</i>	a swing or swinging seat
<i>jjñāsuh</i>	the inquisitive
<i>jīva</i>	soul
<i>jīvalagā/jīvalaga</i>	dear, beloved, a person attached to one's heart
<i>jīvanmukti</i>	liberation
<i>jñāna</i>	knowledge, understanding
<i>jñāna-yoga</i>	discipline of knowledge, wisdom and direct experience of Brahman as ultimate Reality, includes the renunciation of desires and actions to attain advaitin (<i>advaita</i>) knowledge as the means to liberation
<i>jñānī</i>	a person of higher knowledge
<i>jñasu</i>	a seeker of knowledge
<i>kaivalya</i>	isolation; liberation; the state of the being reabsorbed into <i>brahman</i>
<i>kākaḍā/kāṅkaḍā</i>	a coarse cloth wick, a wick of a lamp
<i>kākaḍāratī</i>	waving a platter with a cloth-wick lamp before the idol at day-break
<i>kalā</i>	murmuring
<i>kaḷasa</i>	pinnacle or zenith, a dome or cupola; a metal or earthen water-pot (also <i>kaḷāśa</i> , <i>kaḷāśa</i> , <i>kaḷasā</i>)
<i>kaḷas-darśan</i>	sight of the temple pinnacle
<i>kalāvantiṇa</i>	dancing girl
<i>kāma</i>	desire, pleasure, longing, love; an act or deed, work, action
Kāṇṇaḍā/ Kannaḍa	the language of Karnataka; that which pertains to Karnāṭaka
<i>kanyā</i>	girl of marriageable age, about eight years old
<i>karman</i>	act, action, performance, work; an religious act or rite (e.g. sacrifice)
<i>karma-yoga</i>	discipline of action without desire for results
<i>kathā</i>	story, account; a legend of a deity related in public with music and singing
<i>kavi, kavī</i>	poet (m)
<i>khāpara</i>	a flat earthenware dish in which cakes are rolled, grain parched etc.; the lower half of a pitcher, serving as a bowl etc.; a potter's vessel or earthenware pot

<i>kīrtan/kīrtana</i>	a public religious discourse, recitation, narration or story-telling with musical interludes (see <i>saṅkīrtana</i> and <i>nāma-saṅkīrtana</i> ; <i>navadhā bhakti</i>)
<i>kīrtankār</i>	a performer of <i>kīrtans</i> (m)
<i>kīrtankārī</i>	a woman who performs <i>kīrtans</i> (not usually a Vārkarī)
<i>krāntīkārak</i>	revolutionary principles
<i>kīrtanapara</i>	‘the way of <i>kīrtan</i> ’
Kṛṣṇa	‘black’, ‘dark-blue’; the deity regarded as an <i>avatāra</i> of Viṣṇu
<i>kṛṣṇa-līlā</i>	Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes
<i>kṣatriya</i>	warrior, the second of four <i>varṇas</i> (social orders)
<i>kṣetra</i>	a sacred site, a field, a human body
<i>kubjā</i>	hump-backed, crooked, dwarfed; the ‘hunch-backed’ maid Trivakrā whom Kṛṣṇa first encountered on the road to Mathura
<i>kūḷ/kul</i>	family, race, tribe, lineage, caste
<i>kulācāra</i>	behaviour/practices/duties of a family/tribe
<i>kuladevatā</i>	family and/or tutelary deity (also <i>kuladaivata</i> , <i>kuladaivatva</i>)
<i>kuladharmā</i>	religion or religious practice particular to a family
<i>kulākaraṇī/kulkarṇī</i>	village accountant and record keeper
<i>kullāḷa/kullāla</i>	a potter
<i>kuṭ</i>	enigmatic
<i>kuṭumb</i>	family, household; mistress of a household, a wife
<i>lākh</i>	one hundred thousand (100,000); also <i>lakṣa</i>
<i>lākhōṭā</i>	a closed or sealed letter
<i>laḷīta/laḷitā</i>	a dramatic entertainment on the last night of <i>navratra</i> , songs composed and sung for this event; the last <i>abhaṅga</i> of a series
<i>laukika</i>	worldly, belonging to the world
<i>lāvaṇī</i>	a love song with a powerful rhythm and erotic sentiment; ² a song sung by women when planting or sowing
<i>līlā</i>	pastime, exploit
<i>liṅga</i>	the phallus representing Śiva; a penis; gender; a distinguishing mark

² See Thielemann (2000:419, 443, 521); Datta (2006:1003, 1087, 1285, 1304, 1377, 1467, 1557, 1583); Varadpande (1992:164–65, 169, 171–73);

Lingāyat	one who wears the Śiva- <i>liṅga</i> ; a devotee of Śiva (Vīraśaiva)
<i>lōṭāṅgaṇa</i>	a prostration; a means to proceeding to a pilgrimage site or temple by rolling one's self over and over; a means of obtaining religious merit
<i>lugaḍī</i>	a nine-yard <i>sāḍī</i> (<i>sārī</i>)
<i>madhurā bhakti</i>	intimate loving devotion
<i>mādhurya</i>	love, amorous passion, the erotic sentiment (see <i>śṛṅgāra</i>)
<i>mādhuryyabhāva</i>	beautiful-sentiment
<i>Mahābhārata</i>	Sanskrit epic poem (c.400 BCE–300 CE) about the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, resulting in a battle that the Pāṇḍavas win
Mahānubhāva	a religious tradition that began in the thirteenth century in protest against image worship and Brahmanical orthodoxy ³
<i>mahāpātaka</i>	the five great sins or crimes: killing a Brahman (<i>brahmahatyā</i>), stealing gold (<i>survaṇa-steya</i>), drinking spirits (<i>surāpāna</i>), adultery with one's spiritual teacher or incest with one's mother (<i>gurutaḷpagamana</i>), and associating with anyone who has committed the previous four crimes (<i>tatsamsarga</i>)
Mahārāj	'great king', an honourific title
Mahārāṣṭra	the Marathi speaking state, formed in May 1960
Mahārvāḍā	the part of a village or town where the Mahārs live
<i>māhātmya</i>	a legendary account
<i>mahayogini</i>	the great mistress of yoga; the Goddess (Devi)
<i>māher</i>	a woman's maternal home, a married woman's mother's home; a refuge or resting place, a place of pleasant resort, an asylum or retreat (contrasts with <i>sāsar</i>)
<i>mahinemāha</i>	monthly
<i>māḷkarī</i>	'one with a garland' of <i>tulasī</i> beads (a Vārkarī)
<i>māṅḍā/māṅḍe</i>	a thin, sweet pastry made from wheat flour
<i>maṅgalasnāna</i>	an auspicious bath in oil and afterwards in water
Maṅgaḷvedha	a town near Paṅḍharpūr, associated with Cokhāmeḷā and Kānhopātrā
<i>manas puja</i>	mental worship, meditation
<i>mantra</i>	sacred incantation
<i>marga</i>	way, path, road

³ See Skultans 2011, Feldhaus 2003 and 1983, Sontheimer 1989, Zelliott and Berntsen 1988 and Raeside 1979.

<i>maṭh</i>	a college; a hermitage; a devotee's dwelling place; a residence of a company of ascetics; a religious community
<i>māulī</i>	“mother” (lit.); used as a term of endearment or respect for a woman, the deity Viṭṭhal, the <i>sant</i> Jñāneśvar and for a cow
<i>māyā</i>	illusion, ignorance; creative energy; love, affection; compassion, pity, tenderness; a mother
<i>māyabāpa</i>	‘mother-father’ (lit.), parents
<i>mehuṇ</i>	a couple
<i>Mehuṇpur/ī</i>	a town associated with Cokhāmeḷā, his sister Nirmaḷā, and Mukṭābā
<i>moḍī</i>	the syllabary used to write Marathi until 1950 when it was replaced with <i>devanāgarī</i>
<i>mokṣa</i>	liberation, emancipation from transmigration and absorption of the self into the Absolute (Brahman)
<i>moṭī</i>	a pearl; an ornament (for the nose)
<i>mṛdaṅga</i>	long drum held horizontally and played on both ends
<i>mudrā</i>	seal, stamp, imprint
<i>mudrikā</i>	‘little symbol’; the seal or signature of a poem or song
<i>mukta</i>	liberation or freedom from worldly existence
<i>mukti</i>	final liberation, freedom or emancipation
Mukund	the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who awards liberation
<i>muni</i>	a sage, ascetic, seer, monk, devotee, hermit
<i>mūrti</i>	manifestation, embodiment, personification, incarnation; an image or idol of a deity
<i>nada</i>	nasal sound indicated by the <i>ardha-mātrā</i> ‘semi-circle’ in <i>ॐ</i>
<i>nāda-bindu</i>	the unstruck sound heard by yogis and the Ātman experienced as the luminous/lustrous point they see
<i>nagarapradakṣiṇā</i>	‘circuit of the town’; carrying the image of a deity around a city in procession; making a round of temples in a city paying one's respects
<i>nāma</i>	a name; the Name of the divine
<i>nāma-ghoṣa/ghosa</i>	loud utterance of the Name
<i>nāma-japa</i>	repeating/muttering the Name

<i>nāmamudrā</i>	the ‘symbol’ (<i>mudrā</i>) of the name (<i>nāma</i>); the ‘seal’ or ‘signature’ of a poem or song (also <i>mudrikā</i>)
<i>naman</i>	veneration, obeisance
<i>nāmapantha</i>	the practice of repeating the Name
<i>nāma-para</i>	the way of the Name
<i>nāma-pāṭha</i>	repetition of the Name
<i>nāma-saṅkīrtana</i>	chanting the name(s) of the Lord (a deity or King)
<i>namaskāra</i>	worship, obeisance or salutation; performed by joining the palms, inclining the head and saying <i>namaskār</i>
<i>nāmasmaraṇa</i>	calling to mind the names of a deity, repeating the divine Name
Nammālvār	the most famous of the Ālvārs (c. 880–930 C.E.); composed the <i>Tiruvāymoli</i> ‘the ten decades’ to Viṣṇu, which is considered the ‘Tamil Veda’
Nāth	‘Lord’; a Śaivite sect
<i>navadhā bhakti</i>	nine forms of <i>bhakti</i> : <i>śravaṇa</i> , <i>kīrtana</i> , <i>smaraṇa</i> , <i>pādasēvana</i> , <i>arcana</i> , <i>vandana</i> , <i>dāsyā</i> , <i>sakhya</i> , <i>ātmanivedan</i>
<i>navarātra</i>	nine days and nights
<i>navarātrī</i>	festival of nine days and ten nights when the nine forms of the goddess Śakti are worshipped; the tenth day is <i>dasarā</i> or <i>vijayādaśamī</i>
<i>nayan</i>	an eye
Nāyanār	Tamil Śaiva ‘poet-saints’ corresponding to the Ālvārs
<i>nirguṇa</i>	without attributes, devoid of all qualities or properties
<i>nirūpaṇa</i>	explanation, narration, telling
<i>nirvāṇā</i>	final emancipation, cessation, death, dissolution, extinction, vanishing
<i>nirveda</i>	disgust, loathing (of the world)
<i>niryāṇa</i>	departing, death, final emancipation
<i>niryāṇapara</i>	‘on’ or ‘about’ <i>niryāṇa</i>
<i>niṣedha</i>	prohibition
<i>niṣkāma karma</i>	disinterested action
<i>nivṛtti dharma</i>	the way of renunciation
<i>nivṛtti</i>	inactive contemplative life; death, emancipation from existence; stopping, resting
<i>nivṛttimārga</i>	the way of renunciation and withdrawal

<i>om</i>	the sacred and mystical syllable identified with Brahman; ॐ (<i>a+u+m</i>) is formed of the <i>bindu</i> (dot) and <i>nada</i> (nasal sound indicated by the <i>ardha-mātrā</i> ‘semi-circle’) and is known as the <i>praṇava</i>
<i>ōvāḷaṅḅ/ōvāḷī/ōvāḷla</i>	the ritual act of waving a small lighted oil lamp, in a vertical circle, in front of a deity or person in order to remove evil or in consecration. The receiver will often have a <i>kuṅkum</i> (saffron, turmeric) <i>tilak</i> (mark on the forehead) and then be offered rice, grains and flame (see <i>ārātī</i>)
<i>ovaḷe</i>	normal, medial ritual state (neither polluted nor pure), (see <i>sovaḷe</i>)
<i>ovī</i>	a poetic stanza, verse; a song sung by women while pounding and/or grinding (pl. <i>ovyā</i>)
<i>pada</i>	a foot or footprint; a metrical composition
<i>padar</i>	the end or ornamental border of a <i>sādī</i> (<i>sārī</i>)
<i>pādasevana</i>	service to the feet [of a deity in a temple] (see <i>navadhā bhakti</i>)
<i>pādukā</i>	a sandal; an impression of the feet of a deity or holy person worshipped as a source of grace
<i>pālakī/pālakhī</i>	‘cradle swinging’
<i>pālkhī</i>	palanquin, litter
<i>pañcāmṛta</i>	the five nectar like substances—milk, curds, clarified butter, honey and sugar—in which the image of a deity is bathed; a seasoning of chillies, tamarind, coconut milk, molasses and oil; or delicious food
<i>Paṇḍharī</i>	a religious name for the town of Paṇḍharpūr
<i>Paṇḍharīnāth</i>	‘Lord of Paṇḍharī’ (Paṇḍharpūr)
<i>paṇḍit</i>	an learned man, a teacher
<i>Pāṇḍuraṅga</i>	‘The White One’; an epithet for Viṭhobā (also Pāṇḍuraṅga, Pāṇḍuraṅga, Pāṇḍuraṅgā)
<i>paṅgatī/paṅgata</i>	group of people dining in a row, commensal dining
<i>panth</i>	a ‘road’ or ‘way’; a religious group; a ‘sect’
<i>paramārtha</i>	spiritual knowledge; spirituality, meditation
<i>paramātmā</i>	the Cosmic Soul, Supreme Reality (see <i>brahman</i>)
<i>paramparā</i>	lineage, succession, tradition
<i>parāvācā</i>	evening recitation
<i>pārāyaṇa</i>	reading (a <i>purāṇa</i>), perusal, studying

<i>patākā</i>	red-ochre flag
<i>pāṭh</i>	reciting or reading
<i>pāṭī</i>	village headman
<i>pativratā</i>	a devoted, dutiful and virtuous wife
<i>Periya Purāṇam</i>	‘Great story’, a hagiographical account of the lives of 63 Tamil Śiva- <i>bhaktas</i> (Nāyaṇārs) by Cēkkiḷār that forms the twelfth and final volume of the <i>Tirumurai</i>
<i>phugaḍī</i>	a game in which two [female] players hold hands and spin rapidly in a circle (the players often utter a puffing sound <i>phū</i>)
<i>pitāmbara</i>	a yellow silk <i>dhotar</i> (<i>dhotī</i>)—five to seven yards of cloth that is tied and knotted at a man’s waist and which covers most of the legs—worn by Kṛṣṇa and Viṭṭhal
<i>pohe</i>	flattened rice flakes cooked with onions, turmeric, chillies, mustard and cumin seeds, and curry leaves; served as a snack or for breakfast
<i>pothī</i>	a manuscript (of a religious text); a loose leaf volume; reading or reciting a <i>pothī</i>
<i>pothīpāṭha</i>	reading or reciting a <i>pothī</i>
<i>prabodhinī ekādaśī</i>	eleventh day of the bright fortnight
<i>pradakṣiṇā</i>	circumambulation of an object keeping one’s right-side towards it
<i>praṇava</i>	the sacred syllable <i>om</i>
<i>prāṇāyāma</i>	breathing techniques; the practice of ‘restraining of breath’ while mentally reciting the names and attributes of the deity. This form of spiritual meditation includes <i>kumbhaka</i> (stopping the breath by shutting the mouth and closing the nostrils with the fingers of the right hand), <i>pūraka</i> (closing the right nostril with the forefinger and drawing up air through the left nostril and then closing the left nostril and drawing up air through the right nostril) and <i>recaka</i> (expelling the breath from one nostril). It is also one of the eight modes of self-restraint (yoga): <i>yama</i> (restraint [of the senses]), <i>niyama</i> (voluntary penance, meritorious piety), <i>āsana</i> (holding a posture), <i>prāṇāyāma</i> (‘breath exercises’), <i>pratyāhāra</i> (withdrawal), <i>dhāraṇā</i> (concentration of the mind), <i>dhyāna</i> (meditation), and <i>samādhi</i> (to repeat, study thoroughly)
<i>prāṇotkramaṇa</i>	departure of the breath or spirit; death
<i>prapañca</i>	the world; the business of life; worldly life; deceit, trick, fraud; error, illusion
Prārthana Samāj	Prayer Society

<i>prasthānatraya/i</i>	triple foundation
<i>pratīkṣā anugraha</i>	favourable attention
<i>pravacana</i>	recitation, oral instruction, exposition; sacred writings
<i>pravṛtti</i>	active worldly life
<i>prema</i>	love, affection, tenderness, devotion
<i>prema-bhakti</i>	tender devotion
<i>punarāgamana</i>	rebirth, returning
<i>Puṇḍalīk</i>	a great <i>bhakta</i> , considered to have attracted Viṭhobā to Paṇḍharpūr
<i>purāṇa</i>	a sacred or poetical work; stories and myths of gods and/or kings (see <i>smṛti</i>)
<i>pūrṇimā</i>	the day of the full moon
<i>pūrvaraṅga</i>	first discourse, explanation
<i>rāga</i>	musical mode
Rakhumāī	the wife of Viṭṭhal or Kṛṣṇa (in Maharashtra); also Rukmiṇī
Rakmāī	see Rukmiṇī or Rakhumāī
<i>rāmanavamī</i>	the ninth day of the light half of the month of Caitra (March-April); celebrated as the birthday of Rāma and the marriage day of Rāma and Sītā
<i>rāma-rājya</i>	the kingdom of Rāma or God
<i>rana/rāṇā</i>	prince, monarch, king, chief
<i>raṅgaṇ</i>	a circle, an arena; a ceremony of horses circling the <i>pālkhī</i> in a large field; the platform or rostrum for performing a <i>kīrtan</i>
<i>rasa</i>	taste, flavour, sentiment or feeling
<i>ṛgvedī</i>	a Brahman following the Ṛg Veda
<i>ṛṣi</i>	ancient sage or seer; inspired poet, singer of sacred hymns (Vedas); seven were innumeraled in the Brāhmaṇas and later ten (Mbh)
Rukmiṇī	the wife of Viṭṭhal or Kṛṣṇa; also Rakhumāī, Rakhamāī, Rakhumādevī, Rakhamīṇa (in Maharashtra)
<i>rūpaka</i>	a musical measure; a drama or play
<i>sābudāṇā (khicaḍī)</i>	sago fried with black mustard seeds, cumin seeds, green chillies, salt, sugar and peanuts
<i>sābudāṇā vaḍā</i>	fried sago patty
<i>sadguru</i>	a good teacher or a spiritual instructor; the Divine Guru (see <i>satguru</i>)

<i>sādhaka</i>	a spiritual seeker or aspirant, an adept
<i>sādhana</i>	practice (one's own spiritual practice), observance; method, means (the 'means' to an end); study with the goal of obtaining emancipation
<i>sadhu</i>	a holy man, sage or saint
<i>saguṇa</i>	with attributes, qualities, properties, virtues
<i>sahaja</i>	mystic union, emancipation during life; innate, natural
<i>sāhitya</i>	literature
<i>śaka/śake</i>	era
<i>sakhī-bhāva</i>	the state, condition or emotion of female friendship or companionship
<i>sakhya</i>	friendship, companionship (see <i>navadhā bhakti</i>)
<i>sākṣātkār</i>	perception or apprehension of God; direct mystical experience
<i>śakti/Śakti</i>	the active energy or power of a deity often personified as his wife; the vulva (see <i>liṅga</i>)
<i>samādhi</i>	'union'; profound or abstract meditation (so as to identify with the object meditated upon), a religious vow of intense devotion; self-immolation by drowning or burying oneself alive; the rite of burying in water a deceased <i>sannyāsī</i> ; the tomb or sanctuary of a <i>sant</i> or <i>sannyāsī</i> (often with a <i>tulasī</i> plant erected over it)
<i>sāṃkhya/sāṅkhya</i>	a system of philosophy that posits dualism (<i>dvaita</i>)
<i>saṃnyāsa</i>	asceticism; renunciation (S)
<i>saṃnyāsin</i>	a renouncer (S)
<i>sampradāya</i>	a religious tradition or 'sect'; a system of religious doctrine transmitted from one teacher to another; custom, practice
<i>saṃsāra</i>	the cycle of birth and rebirth, reincarnation, transmigration, wandering through [one existence to another], the circuit of mundane existence; secular; worldly illusion (see <i>sansār</i>)
<i>saṃvād</i>	conversation, dialogue
<i>saṃvittī</i>	consciousness; knowledge
<i>sandhyābhāṣa</i>	'intentional' or 'secret' language
<i>sañjīvan samādhi</i>	living tomb
<i>saṅkalpa</i>	resolution
<i>saṅkīrtana</i>	praise, celebration, glorification; congregational chanting of the Lord' name

<i>sannyāsa</i>	asceticism; renunciation (M)
<i>sannyāsī</i>	a renouncer or an ascetic (M)
<i>sannyāsini</i>	a renouncer or an ascetic (F), see <i>yoginī</i>
<i>sansār</i>	secular life (as a householder), domestic life, married life or familial life; domestic affairs (see <i>samsāra</i>)
<i>sant</i>	‘saint’, a holy person,
<i>santakavi</i>	<i>sant</i> -poet
<i>santakaviyatrī</i>	<i>sant</i> -poetess
<i>santapara</i>	‘the way of the <i>sants</i> ’, the companionship of the <i>sants</i> (see <i>satsaṅga</i>)
<i>santa-parivār</i>	followers or family of <i>sants</i>
<i>santa-sevā</i>	service to the <i>sants</i>
<i>śānti</i>	peace, tranquillity; death
<i>saptāha</i>	reading a text over seven days
<i>saradār</i>	a title of honour conferred by Maratha and Peshwa rulers; a chief, a leader, a military commander, an officer
Sarasvatī	the wife of Brahma; the goddess of speech and eloquence; patron of arts and music; the inventor of Sanskrit and <i>devanāgarī</i> (Sanskrit works like the Veda are ascribed to her); speech
<i>sāsar</i>	a woman’s father-in-law’s house (contrasts with <i>māher</i>)
<i>śāstra</i>	a didactic religious text or treatise considered to be of divine origin
<i>śāstrik/śāstric</i>	relating to the <i>śāstras</i>
<i>sāsuravāśīṇ</i>	daughter-in-law, a girl living in her father-in-law’s house
Śatarudrīyastotra	a liturgical prayer dedicated to Rudra (Śiva)
<i>satguru</i>	the Divine Guru; a good teacher
<i>satsaṅga</i>	good society, good company, good association
<i>sattva</i>	righteousness, goodness, purity, wisdom
Satyaśodhak Samāj	Truth-seeking Society
<i>saubhāgya</i>	good fortune; the happy and joyous state of wifehood as opposed to widowhood (consisting in the privilege of wearing ornaments, using pigments, etc.); the auspiciousness, excellent and blessed quality, inhering in a woman with a husband
<i>saudāgar</i>	trader

<i>śejāratī</i>	waving a platter with a burning lamp before the idol at night
<i>sevā</i>	religious service
<i>sevak</i>	servant, attendant
<i>siddha</i>	‘realised, perfected one’, a practitioner (<i>sādhu</i>) who through his practice (<i>sādhana</i>) realises his goal of superhuman powers (<i>siddhis</i>) and bodily immortality (<i>jīvanmukti</i>); a sectarian appellation
<i>siddhi</i>	‘realisations’, ‘perfections’; superhuman powers
<i>śimpī</i>	tailor
<i>śiṣya</i>	a pupil, disciple, follower or apprentice
Śiva	deity of ‘destruction’ in triad with Brahmā and Viṣṇu; the supreme Lord who creates, maintains, and destroys the cosmos; the Lord of <i>yoga</i> and asceticism; the Lord of the Dance (Śiva Naṭrāja)
<i>śiva-liṅga</i>	a representation of the phallus within a vulva symbolising the union of Śiva and <i>śakti</i> (his dynamic energy)
<i>śivarātrī</i>	a night on which fasting, vigil, and other observances are held in honour of Śiva. The night is the thirteenth/fourteenth of the dark half (<i>kṛṣṇa pakṣa</i>) of every month and particularly that of Māgha
<i>skandha</i>	chapter, section, part (of a book)
<i>śloka</i>	a verse or stanza of two lines
<i>smaraṇa</i>	remembering, recollection; mental recitation of the name(s) of a deity (see <i>navadhā bhakti</i>)
<i>smṛti</i>	‘that which is remembered’ or indirect revelation (see <i>śruti</i>)
<i>soḷe/soḷā</i>	undefiled (derived from <i>sovalā</i> , <i>soṃvalā</i> or <i>sovala</i>)
<i>sovala/sovalē</i>	pure, clean, holy (see <i>ovalē</i>)
<i>śraddhā</i>	reverence, veneration; faith, belief
<i>śravaṇa</i>	‘hearing’; listening to spiritual discussions, sermons or discourses (see <i>navadhā bhakti</i>)
<i>śṛṅgāra</i>	love, amorous passion (see <i>mādhurya</i>)
<i>śruti</i>	‘that which is heard’ or divine revelation (see <i>smṛti</i>)
<i>strīdharmā</i>	the office, business, proper function, or appropriate virtue of woman; the religious duties/path of women; menstrual excretion; modesty (<i>lajjā</i>)
<i>suddha pratipadā</i>	first full moon day
<i>śūdra</i>	the fourth <i>varṇa</i>

<i>śukla</i>	bright
<i>sumeru</i>	the golden or sacred mountain, Meru
<i>sūna</i>	daughter-in-law
<i>svadharmā</i>	one's own duty
<i>svādhyāya</i>	reading, repeating or reciting a text to one's self in a low voice
<i>svakarma</i>	one's own occupation or duty (see <i>svadharmā</i>)
<i>svāmī</i>	'master, 'lord'; applied to God, a deity, king, spiritual preceptor, husband, holy person, learned Brahmin, or ascetic
<i>svarūpa</i>	[having] one's own form or figure; a spontaneous manifestation (in contrast with <i>avatāra</i>)
Śyāma	dark blue, black; dark coloured; an epithet for Kṛṣṇa.
<i>ṭāl</i>	cymbal(s); a musical measure
<i>ṭāḷakarī</i>	a cymbal player; a chorus of 10–50 cymbal players who stand behind a <i>kīrtankār</i> singing and playing <i>ṭāl</i>
<i>tapasvinī</i>	female ascetic
<i>tāḷī</i>	a 'gate or fence made of strips of bamboo' (Tulpule 1991: 297); 'a light frame of bamboos or other sticks covered with grass, leaves...used as a door' (Molesworth 1857:273)
<i>thālīpāka</i>	a plateful of food; the name of a poem by Janābāī
<i>ṭīkā</i>	a commentary (see <i>bhāṣya</i>)
<i>tīrtha</i>	'holy place', 'holy water', 'crossing place' and 'ford'; a sacred pilgrimage site usually beside a river, stream or sacred spring; the pilgrimage to such a site
<i>tīrthāvalī</i>	Nāmdev and Jñāneśvar's pilgrimage of holy places; a line or list of places of pilgrimage (recited at worship)
<i>tīrthayātrā</i>	pilgrimage of holy places
<i>Tirumurai</i>	a canon consisting of eleven volumes of songs praising Śiva in Tamil by south Indian poets (c.6 th to 11 th century) and a final hagiographical volume (the <i>Periya Purāṇam</i>)
<i>tribhaṅgī</i>	thrice-bent: Kṛṣṇa
<i>tulasī/tuḷasī/tuḷasī</i>	holy basil (<i>ocimum sanctum</i>), venerated by Vaiṣṇavas as sacred to Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa; worn by Viṭṭhal (commonly <i>tulsī</i>)
<i>tulasīmālā</i>	garland of beads (made from <i>tulsī</i> wood)
<i>tutārī</i>	a large curved horn

<i>udvega</i>	distress due to separation from beloved
<i>udyāpana</i>	a completion ceremony
<i>ulaṭbāmsī</i>	‘upside-down language’, paradox
<i>unmanī</i>	detachment
<i>upadeśa</i>	advice
<i>vacana</i>	a saying, utterance or aphorism
<i>vāḍā</i>	a large house with a compound; public building; a quarter, a division of a town or village
<i>vadya</i>	dark
<i>vahī</i>	a stitched book; a register
<i>vaikuṅṭha</i>	Viṣṇu’s paradise or highest heaven
<i>vairāgya</i>	absence of worldly desire or passion; renunciation of sensuous delights or gratification; detachment from the world
Vaiṣṇava	a devotee or follower of Viṣṇu (or one of his incarnations)
<i>vaiśya</i>	the third <i>varṇa</i> (agriculturalists, merchants)
<i>vaṃśāvalī</i>	chronicle of a dynasty or region
<i>vānaprastha</i>	a hermit or forest dweller, a Brahman or twice-born male (<i>dvija</i>) in the third stage of life
<i>vandana</i>	praise, worship, adoration, obeisance (see <i>navadhā bhakti</i>)
<i>vāṇī</i>	merchant
<i>vārī</i>	pilgrimage (to Paṇḍharpūr)
Vārkarī	‘one who goes on pilgrimage’ to Paṇḍharpūr (see <i>māḷkarī</i>)
<i>varṇa</i>	the social order (<i>brahman, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra</i>)
<i>varṇa-dharma</i>	the duty of one’s social order
<i>varṇāśrama-dharma</i>	the obligations of one’s class or caste associated with one’s stage of life (<i>āśrama</i>)
Vaśiṣṭha	a celebrated Vedic sage; a Brahman man who observes all commands and rites
Vāsudev	father of Kṛṣṇa and husband of Devakī; an epithet for Kṛṣṇa; a type of wandering mendicant who sings devotional songs, a member of a (Marāṭhā) caste whose men wear a cap of peacock feathers and go on begging rounds at daybreak (see Kiehnle 2005)
<i>vātsalya</i>	parental love, affection or tenderness

Veda	‘sacred knowledge’, ancient scriptures that were ‘revealed’ (<i>śruti</i>) to the sages of which the <i>R̥gveda</i> is considered the holiest by the orthodox
Vedānta	‘end of the Vedas’; the philosophical systems based on the Upaniṣads; <i>advaita</i> Vedanta is considered the principal philosophy of the Vārkarīs
Vedic	relating to the Vedas
<i>veśyā</i>	prostitute
<i>vidhi</i>	an injunction; a sacred precept
<i>vīṇā</i>	a stringed musical instrument; an Indian lute
<i>vīṇākarī</i>	a lute-player
<i>viraha</i>	separation, the anguish of separation or of absence (of lovers or friends, from God)
<i>virahiṇī/virani</i>	a woman under the pangs of separation from her beloved; a song of such a woman
<i>virakta</i>	detached, dispassionate; an ascetic or renouncer
<i>vīrāṅganā</i>	stories of heroic (Rajput) women
Vīraśaiva	‘heroic’- <i>śaivas</i> , devotees of Śiva (see Lingāyat)
<i>virodha</i>	opposition, obstruction, antagonism, contradiction
<i>vīryāṇī</i>	‘the wonderful activities of god’
Viṣṇu	the ‘maintainer’ deity in triad with Brahmā and Śiva; the transcendent Lord dwelling in Vaikuṅṭh where his devotees go, with his grace, upon liberation; he manifests himself in the world by his <i>avatāra</i> , <i>mūrtis</i> and in the hearts of all beings as their inner controller (<i>antaryāmin</i>)
<i>Viṣṇusahasranāma</i>	the Thousand Names of Vishnu
<i>vīṭ</i> or <i>īṭ</i>	brick
Vīṭhobā	the deity at Paṇḍharpūr, worshipped by Vārkarīs
Vīṭṭhal	the deity at Paṇḍharpūr, worshipped by Vārkarīs
<i>viyoga</i>	suffering in separation
<i>vrata</i>	votive rites; vow
<i>yajña</i>	worship, devotion, prayer, oblation, sacrifice
Yajurveda	liturgical manual to perform sacrifice (c. 1400–1000 B.C.E)
Yama	the god of the underworld who judges/governs the spirits of the dead
Yaśodā	Kṛṣṇa’s foster-mother

<i>yoga</i>	‘yoke’; physical, mental and spiritual discipline; abstract meditation; devotion; with the aim of gaining spiritual insight and/or union with the Absolute (Brahman)
<i>yogabhraṣṭa</i>	one who was interrupted during the performance of <i>yoga</i> in former birth; a person eminent for virtues and graces, who would have been liberated is s/he had completed what s/he had begun (i.e. a course of Yogic discipline)
<i>yogapar abhaṅgamālā</i>	garland of songs about <i>yoga</i>
Yogeśvar	the Lord of Yoga; Kṛṣṇa
<i>yogi/yogin</i>	a follower of <i>yoga</i> ; a contemplative, devotee, ascetic
<i>yoginī</i>	a female ascetic or <i>yogi</i> in the Siddha/Śaiva tradition; a woman in whom Śiva and Śākti are united or a woman who meditates on the union of Śiva and Śākti

APPENDIX B:

COMPOSITIONS ATTRIBUTED TO THE VĀRKARĪ SANTAKAVIYATRĪS¹

1. *Muktābāī*²

*Tāṭice abhaṅga.*³

योगी पावन मनाच । साही अपराध जनाचा ।१।
विश्व रागें झालें वन्ही । संती सुखें व्हावें पाणी ।२।
शब्दशस्त्रे झाले क्लेश । संती मानावा उपदेश ।३।
विस्वपाश ब्रह्म दोरा । ताटी उघडा जानेश्वरा ।४।⁴

*Yogī pāvana manācā / sāhī aparādha janācā /1/
Viśva rāgē jhālē vanhī / santī sukhē vḥāvē paṇī /2/
Śabdaśastre jhāle kleśa / santīmānāvā upadeśa /3/
Viśvapaśa brahma dorā / tāṭi ughaḍā jñāneśvarā /4/*

A *yogi* of pure mind bears a person's faults.
The world rages but as a *sant* you should easily douse your anger.
Words are like hurtful weapons but a *sant* regards these as teachings.
The world's a cloth and Brahma the thread;⁵ open the door Jñāneśvar.
(First *tāṭice abhaṅga*, Muktābāī, SSG 1, p.236).

ॐ

संत तेचि जाणा जर्गी । दया क्षमा ज्यांचे अंगी ।१।
लोभ अहंता नये मना । जर्गी विरक्त तेचि जाणा ।२।
इह परलोकीं सुखी । शुद्धज्ञान ज्यांचे मुखीं ।३।
मिथ्या कल्पना मागें सारा । ताटी उघडा जानेश्वरा ।४।

*Santa teci jāṇā jagī / dayā kṣamā jyānce angī /1/⁶
Lobha ahantā naye manā / jagī virakta teci jāṇā /2/
Ih paralokī sukhī / śubhdajñāna jyānce mukhī /3/
Mithyā kalpanā māgē sārā / tāṭi ughaḍā jñāneśvarā /4/*

People recognise a *sant* as one who is forbearing.

¹ The translations were undertaken with Dr. Kasturi Dadhe (2004–2007) and the author V.P. (Hemant) Kanitkar (2010–2011) with some additional help from Sulu Abhyankar.

² There are forty-two Muktābāī *abhaṅgas* in the SSG and I have translated nine. There are several translations of Muktābāī verses by Vanita (1989) with Champa Limaye but due to the lack of references it is difficult to identify the *abhaṅgas*. However, two of these are probably the *kuṭ abhaṅgas*—‘On the temple dome dwelt a sage’ (SSG 1:41; Vanita 1989:48) and *muṅgī uḍālī ākāśī* ‘Ant flew in the sky’ (SSG1:42; Kolatkar 1982:114; in Zelliott 2000:193; Vanita 1989:46; Ramaswamy 2007:221)—that I have also translated. There are also eleven *tāṭice abhaṅga* ‘Songs of the Door’ ascribed to Muktābāī and Vanita (1989) has translated all eleven *tāṭice abhaṅga* while I have translated five.

³ A *tāṭi* is a door made of planks or a wattle gate. These *abhaṅgas* tend to appear in manuscript form rather than compendia like the SSG, see Dāṇḍekar (1980) and muktAbA_I (1999). Babras accepts these verses as being by Muktābāī, Jñāneśvar's sister, aged nine (1996:76) but the question of authorship remains open.

⁴ The first part of this line may also read विश्वपट ब्रह्मदोरा and *paṭa* means ‘cloth’.

⁵ This could also read ‘Brahma ties the folds of the universe together’.

⁶ muktAbA_I (1999) replaces *teci* with *toci* throughout this verse.

As one whose mind lacks conceit, as one who is called 'he who has attained bliss',
 As one who desires happiness after death, as one whom in his youth attained pure knowledge,
 Set aside false doubts; open the door Jñāneśvar.
 (Fourth *tāṭice abhaṅga*).⁷

ॐ

एक आपण साधु झाले । येर कोण वाया गेले ।१।
 उठे विकार ब्रह्मी मूळ । अवघे मायेचे गाबाळ ।२।
 माया समूळ नुरे जेव्हां । विश्व ब्रह्म होईल तेव्हां ।३।
 ऐसा उमज आदि अंती । मग सुखी व्हावे संती ।४।
 चिंता क्रोध मार्गे सारा । ताटी उघडा ज्ञानेश्वरा ।५।

*Ek āpaṇa sādhu jhāle / yera koṇa vāyā gele /1/
 Uṭhe vikāra brahmī mūḷa / avaghe māyece gābāḷa /2/
 Māyā samūḷa nure jevhā / viśva brahma hoīla tevhā /3/
 Aisā umaja ādi antī / maga sukhīvhāvē santī /4/
 Cintā krodha māgē sārā / tāṭī ughaḍā jñāneśvarā /5/*

If one knows oneself to be an ascetic, are all others worthless?
 Passions arise from Brahma—the origin; all illusion is rubbish.
 When the origins of illusion cease, then all will become Brahma.
 Understanding this from beginning to end a *sant* should be content.
 Leave behind all worry and anger; open the door Jñāneśvar.
 (Fifth *tāṭice abhaṅga*).⁸

ॐ

ब्रह्म जैसे तैशापरी । आम्हां वडील भूते सारी ॥
 हात आपुला आपणा लागे । त्याचा करूं नये खेद ॥
 जीभ दातांनीं चाविली । कोणें बल्लिशी पाडिली ॥
 थोर दुखावले मन । पुढें उदण्ड शाहाणे ॥
 चणे खावे लोखण्डाचे । मग ब्रह्मपदीं नाचे ॥
 मन मारुनी उन्मन करा । ताटी उघडा ज्ञानेश्वरा ॥

*Brahma jaisē taiśāparī / āmhā vāḍīla bhūte sārī //
 Hāta āpulā āpaṇā lāge / tyācā karū naye kheda //
 Jībha dātānī cāvīlī / koṇē battīśī pādīlī //
 Thora dukhāvalē mana / puḍhē udṇḍa śāhāṇe //
 Caṇe khāve lokhaṇḍāce / maga brahmapadī nāce //
 Mana mārunī unmana karā / tāṭī ughaḍā jñāneśvarā //*

Brahma is the Absolute; the ancestor of us all.
 If your own hand hits you, you don't get upset, do you?
 If one's teeth bite one's tongue, do all thirty-two [teeth] break?
 Great mental sorrow can lead to true wisdom.
 Chew chick-peas as hard as iron, then dance at Brahma's feet.⁹
 Subdue the mind, become detached; open the door Jñāneśvar.
 (Sixth *tāṭice abhaṅga*).¹⁰

⁷ This is probably verse number 4 of those translated by Swami Rajhandras and Ruth Vanita (1989:52).

⁸ This is probably verse 5 as translated by Swami Rajhandras and Ruth Vanita (1989:53).

⁹ The word 'chickpeas' (*caṇā*) appears in the *Jñāneśvarī* 12.70 (see Pradhan and Lambert 1987:318; Tulpule 1999:225).

¹⁰ This seems to be verse 6 of those translated by Swami Rajhandras and Ruth Vanita (1989:53).

अहो क्रोधं यावे कोठे । अवघे आपण निघोटें ॥
 ऐसें कळलें उत्तम । जन तेचि जनार्दन ॥
 ब्रीद बांधिलें चरणीं । न ये दावितां करणी ॥
 वेळ क्रोधाचा उगवला । अवघा योग फोल झाला ॥
 ऐसी थोर दृष्टी धरा । ताटी उघडा जानेश्वरा ॥

Aho krodhē yāve koṭhē / avaghe āpaṇa nighoṭē //
Aisē kaḷē uttama / jana techi janārdana //
Brīda bandhilē carṇī / na ye dāvitā karaṇī //
Vēla krodhācā ugavalā / avaghā yoga phola jhālā //
Aisī thora dr̥ṣṭī gharā / tāṭī ughadā jānēśvarā //

From where does this anger come? You are enlightened.
 You know well the people are Janārdan.¹¹
 Pledged to serve,¹² we cannot give up our pledge.¹³
 Anytime anger erupts, all *yoga* is wasted.
 So enlarge your vision; open the door Jñāneśvar.
 (Eighth *tāṭice abhaṅga*).

॥॥॥॥॥॥॥॥

भजनभावो देहीं नित्यनाम पेठा । नामेंचि वैकुंठा गणिका गेली ।१।
 नाममंत्र आम्हां हरिरामकृष्ण । दिननिशीं प्रश्न मुक्तिमार्गु ।२।
 नामचि तारकु तरले भवसिंधु । हरिनामछंदु मंत्रसार ।३।
 मुक्ताई चिंतनीं हरिप्रेम पोटीं । नित्य नाम घोटी अमृत सदां ।४।

Bhajanbhāvo dehīñ nityanām peṭhā / nāmenci vaikuṅṭhā gaṇikā gelī /1/
Nāmamantra āmhā harīrāmakṛṣṇa / dinaniśīñ praśna muktimārgu /2/
Nāmci tāraku tarale bhavasindu / harināmachandu mantrasāra /3/
Muktāī cintanīñ hariprema poṭīñ / nitya nāma ghoṭī amṛta sadā /4/

Sing *bhajans* faithfully, perpetually repeat the Name; [even] a harlot can enter paradise thus.
 For us the sacred Names are Hari, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa; day and night they point the way to liberation.¹⁴
 With the power of the Name the river of existence can be crossed; chanting the Name of Hari has now
 become a hobby.

¹¹ Janārdan is referred to in the *Bhagavadgītā* where he is identified with Kṛṣṇa (1.35–39; 3.1; 11.51). In the *Mahābhārata* (3.186.14) Janārdan is described by Mārkaṇḍeya as Viṣṇu with ‘broad eyes and yellow garments’ [Kṛṣṇa] and as ‘the creator, the transformer and the maker of the existence of all beings’ (Sutton 2000:204). This follows the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.2.63–66) where Janārdan takes the form of Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva to create, maintain and destroy the world (Sutton 2000:244 n.20). In the *Matsya Purāṇa* Viṣṇu, in the form of a fish, is manifested as Janārdan (Muir 1868). ‘Janārdan’ has been interpreted as ‘Punisher of Man’ (Molesworth 1857); ‘exciting or agitating men’ (Monier Williams 2008); ‘Punisher of the wicked’ and ‘Giver of benevolence to beings’ (Abbott 1996, 2: 452); ‘the destroyer of people’s distress’ (Kumar 1998:31); ‘the Ideal Hero and Paragon of Universal Humanity’, the ‘Paragon and Perfection of all sublimated aspirations’ (Gitanand 2004:334); ‘slayer of Jana’ the demon (Mokherjee 2002:291); ‘the object of adoration to mankind’ (Wilson 1864:41 n.1); ‘He who is adored by devotees for the fulfilment of their desires’ (Chinmayananda 2008:xvii).

¹² This line talks of wearing a badge (*brīda*) and being bound or attached to feet, both of which can be interpreted to indicate service.

¹³ The translation by Vanita and Swami Raghavdas (1989:53) use the word ‘pledge’ and I can find no other word that conveys the meaning of the line so fully.

¹⁴ This line appears to follow the second line of a Sopān *abhaṅga*: *sabāhya kondalē nivānta ugalē/rāmarasē rangalē are janā/1/ hari rama kṛṣṇa, hari rama kṛṣṇa/ dinaniśīñ praśna mukhē kara/2/* (v. 7, SSG 1:231). The word *praśna* in this context may mean ‘a call’ rather than ‘a question’ (Tulpule 1999:467).

Muktāi ponders the extent Hari-love after chanting the Name: the Name always leads to immortality.¹⁵
(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 7, SSG 1, p.239).

ॐॐॐॐ

आदि मध्य ऊर्ध्व मुक्त भक्त हरि । सबाहय अभ्यंतारीं हारि ऐकु ।१।
नलगती तीर्थे हरिरूपे मुक्त । अवघेचिं सूक्त जपिनिले ।२।
ज्याचेनि नामे मुक्त पै जडमूढ । तरले दगड समुद्रीं देखा ।३।
मुक्ताई हरिनामे सर्वदां पै मुक्त । नाही आदि अंत उरला आम्हां ।४।

*Ādi madhya ūrdhva mukta bhakti hari / sabāhya abhayantārī hari eku /1/
Galagatī tīrthe harirūpē mukta / avadhencī sūkta japinilē /2/
Jyāceni nāmē mukta pai jaḍamūḍha / tarale dagaḍa samudrī dekhā /3/
Muktāi harināmē sarvadā pai mukta / nāhī ādi anta uralā āmhā /4/*

Beginning – middle – end, the devotee of Hari is released;¹⁶ inwardly and outwardly Hari is all.
No holy places are necessary when the essential hymn is repeated.¹⁷
Through His Name the slow and ignorant are liberated; even the stones floated on the ocean are saved
from drowning.¹⁸
Through Hari’s name Muktāi is forever liberated, there is no beginning or end for us anymore.
(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 10, SSG 1, p.239).¹⁹

ॐॐॐॐ

नादाबिंदा भेटी जे वेळीं पै जाली । ऐशी एके बोली बोलती जीव ।१।
उगेचि मोहन धरुनि प्रपंची । त्यासी पै यमाचि नगरी आहे ।२।
जीव जंतु जड त्यासी उपदेशी । त्यासी गर्भवार्सी घाली देवो ।३।
मुक्ताई श्रीहरि उपदेशी निवृत्ति । संसार पुढती नाही आम्हां ।४।

*Nādābindā bheṭī je veḷī pai jāli / eśī eke bolī bolatī jīva /1/
Ugeñci mohana dharūni prapañcī / tyāsī pai yamācī nagarī āhe /2/
Jīva jantū jaḍa tyāsī upadeśī / tyāsī garbhavārsī ghālī devo /3/
Muktāi śrīharī upadeśī nivr̥tti / saṃsāra puḍhatī nāhī āmhā /4/*

Union with God, Excellent! The soul speaks languages.
Worldly attachments arise from illusion; this leads to the city of Yama.²⁰
Advise such a being—an insect or a dull witted person—God sends such a being back to the womb.²¹

¹⁵ The term *poṭī* means ‘stomach’, ‘abdomen’ or ‘womb’ but also refers to the belly figuratively (Molesworth 1857:530), which is why I have translated it as ‘extent’.

¹⁶ A devotee of the Lord is released from rebirth. The words ‘beginning-middle-end’ may refer to the various ‘worlds’ (*loka*) of which there are different levels and enumerations.

¹⁷ A *tīrtha* (‘holy place’, ‘sacred site’, ‘crossing place’ and ‘ford’) is a sacred pilgrimage site usually beside a river, stream or sacred spring. It can also refer to the pilgrimage to such a site or the water from such a location, which is considered holy.

¹⁸ This is a reference to an episode from the *Rāmāyaṇa* known as the *Setubandha*, ‘The Building of the Bridge’. One stone had the letter ‘rā’, the second stone had the letter ‘ma’. When they were put in the water the stones joined to form *rāma* and floated due to the power of the deity’s name (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 27th January 2011). The *Setubandha* (also known as the *Rāmsetu* or the *Rāvaṇa-vaha*) is the name given to various works relating how Hanuman and the monkey army formed a bridge of rocks to give Rāma’s army passage to Lanka. For example, the *Māhārāṣṭrī* Prakrit epic commissioned or composed by the Vākātaka king Pravarasena II in the 5th century (Datta 2005:1189, 1201; Pruthi 2004:195). There is a verse attributed to Janābāi (*abhaṅga* 3, SSG 1:716) with a similar allusion.

¹⁹ This verse may have been translated by Vanita (1989:50).

²⁰ Worldly attachments do not lead to liberation but rather to judgement and ‘punishment’ from the deity Yama.

²¹ Unless one realises that attachments to the material world are false one will be reborn and have to live through another cycle of existence.

Muktāi counsels Nivṛtti: ‘there is no further rebirth for us’.²²
(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 21, SSG 1, p.240).²³

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विश्रान्ति मनाची निजशांति साची । मग त्या यमाची भेटी नाही ।१।
अधिकारी मन मग सारी स्नान । रोकडेंचि साधन आलें हाता ।२।
साधिलें साधन नित्य अनुष्ठान । चित्तीं नारायणमंत्र जपे ।३।
मुक्ताई प्रवीण नारायण धन । नित्य मंत्रें स्नान करीं बेगीं ।४।

*Viśrānti manāci nijaśānti sācī/ maga tyā yamācī bheṭī nāhī /1/
Adhikārī mana maga sari snāna / rokadēci sādhana ālē hātā /2/
Sādhilē sādhana nitya ānuṣṭhāna / cittī nārāyaṇamantra jape /3/
Muktāi pravīṇa nārāyaṇa dhana / nitya mantrē snāna karī veginī /4/*

When the mind is controlled and at peace, then you won’t need to meet Yama.
The authority of the mind gives you the wisdom to accomplish your spiritual goals.²⁴
As you perform your spiritual practice, repeat the *nārāyaṇa-mantra* in your heart.
Muktāi is an expert, for Nārāyaṇ has endowed her with spiritual wealth. Repeat the *mantra* as you bathe.²⁵

(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 23, SSG 1, p.240).

ॐॐॐॐ

नामबळें देहीं असोनि मुक्त । शांति क्षमा चित्त हरिभजनं ।१।
दया धरा चित्तीं सर्वभूतीं करुणा । निरंतर वासना हरिरूपी ।२।
माधव मुकुंद हरिनाम चित्तीं । सर्व पै मुक्ति नामपाठें ।३।
मुक्ताईचें धन हरिनामें उच्चारु । अवघाचि संसारु मुक्त केला ।४।

*Nābalaḷē dehīṅ aṣoni mukta / śānti kṣamā citta haribhajanē /1/
Dayā dhara cittī sarvabhūṭī karuṇā / nirantara vāsanā harirupī /2/
Mādhava mukunda harināma cittī / sarva pāi mukti nāmapāṭhē /3/
Muktāicē dhana harināmē uccāru / avadhāci saṁsāru mukta kelā /4/*

The embodied soul is liberated by the power of the Name. The mind attains peace and forgiveness through singing Hari’s praises.

Show compassion for all creatures, then your only desire will be for the Lord.

Reciting the Names—Mādhav, Mukund and Hari—all lead to liberation!

Muktāi’s wealth is in uttering Hari’s name; freedom from successive lives is thus achieved.

(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 26, SSG 1, p.241).²⁶

ॐॐॐॐ

²² The author states that as devotees of the Lord (*bhaktas*) they are not caught up in *māyā* (illusion) or *saṁsāra* (the cycle of rebirth). *Jīva jantū jaḍa*, ‘living being, insect, inanimate [body]’, does not apply to them (Personal communication, Sulu Abhyankar, 16th November 2010). *Jīva* may be understood here as ‘a living being, an animate creature’ (Molesworth 1857:316). *Jantū* refers to ‘an animated creature’ but the word is commonly applied to insects—any animal of the lowest organisation (Molesworth 1857:304; Monier Williams 2008). *Jaḍa*, ‘inanimate, lifeless’ (Monier-Williams 2008) probably refers to the material body (Molesworth 1857:301).

²³ Kiehnle mentions a Muktā-Nivṛtti dialogue discussed by L.R. Pāṅgārkar in the 1927 (March-April) edition of the Marathi magazine *Mumukṣu* (1997b:16n.80).

²⁴ The second part of this line could be interpreted as ‘hands you “the ready” for your spiritual observances’. *Rokaḍa* means ‘cash, ready money, hard coin’, while *rokaḍā* has the additional meaning of ‘wisdom or understanding’ (Molesworth 1857:700).

²⁵ The term *snāna* connotes ‘a ritual bath’ (Tulpule 1999:783), ‘ceremonial purification of the body’ (Molesworth 1857:868) or ablutions (Monier Williams 2008).

²⁶ There is a translation of this verse by Ramaswamy (2007:218) and possibly by Vanita (1989:50).

निर्गुणाची सैज सगुणाची बाज । तेथे केशीराज पहुडले ।१।
 कैसें याचें दरणें दिवसां चांदिणें । सावळें उठणें एका तत्त्वें ।२।
 नाहीं या ममता अवधीच समता । आदि अंतु बिंबतां नलगे वेळू ।३।
 मुक्ताई सधन सर्वत्र नारायण । जीव शिव संपूर्ण एकतत्त्वें ।४।

*Nirguṇācī saija saguṇācī bāja / tethe keśīrāja pahuḍale /1/
 Kaisē yācē daraṇē divasā cāndiṇē / sāvaḷē uṭhaṇē ekā tattvē /2/
 Nāhī yā mamatā avadhīca samatā / ādi antu bimbatā nalage veḷū /3/
 Mukṭāī sadhana sarvatra nārāyaṇa / jīva śiva sampūrṇa ekatattvē /4/*

On the bed of *nirguṇa* and the bedstead of *saguṇa* is where Keśīrāja will lie.²⁷
 How do you get moonlight during the day?²⁸ The dark Lord arises on one principle.²⁹
 The ego vanishes, compassion for all remains; it doesn't take long to describe the beginning to end.³⁰
 Mukṭāī accomplishes seeing Nārāyaṇa everywhere; the personal soul and the Supreme Soul are one.³¹
 (Muktābāī *abhaṅga* 32, SSG 1, p. 241).

ॐॐॐॐ

मुक्तलग चित्ते मुक्त पै सर्वदां । रामकृष्ण गोविंदा वाचें नित्य ।१।
 हरिहरिछंदु तोडी भवकंदु । नित्य नामानंदु जपे रया ।२।
 सर्वत्र रूपडें भरलेंसे दृश्य । ज्ञाता ज्ञेय भासे हरिमाजी ।३।
 मुक्ताई सधन हरी रूप चित्ती । संसारसमाप्ति हरिच्या नामें ।४।

*Muktalaga cite mukta pai sarvadā / rāmakṛṣṇa govindā vācē nitya /1/
 Hariharichandu toḍī bhavakandu / nitya nāmānandu jape rayā /2/
 Sarvatra rūpaḍē bharalēse dṛśya / jñātā jñeya bhāse harimājī /3/
 Mukṭāī sadhana hari rūpa cittī / saṁsārasamāptī haricyā nāmē /4/*

Think of liberation at all times; proclaim—‘Rāma-Kṛṣṇa-Govind’—daily.
 The habit of saying ‘Lord, Lord’ destroys the source of worldly existence; chanting consistently is virtuous.
 Everywhere Hari’s pleasing form is visible; Hari is the knower and all that’s comprehensible.
 Mukṭāī’s practice is reflecting on Hari’s form; the cycle of existence ends through Hari’s name.
 (Muktābāī *abhaṅga* 37, SSG 1, p.242).

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²⁷ Keśīrāja connotes ‘Hair-Lord’ and is an epithet for Viṣṇu.

²⁸ The moon, particularly in Braj-*bhakti*, is identified with Kṛṣṇa (Sanford 2009:23–4). However, in his poetry Paramānand also equates Kṛṣṇa to the sun and its life-giving rays. Normally, the sun stalks the *gopīs* and sears them with its rays and it is only the presence of Kṛṣṇa—as the moon and its cooling rays—that allays the heat of separation (Sanford 2009:52–3). This line may, therefore, be asking how one can have the presence of Kṛṣṇa during the day rather than at night when Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* engage in the *rāsa* dance.

²⁹ The line uses the verb *uṭhaṇē* (to rise, arise, mount, ascend; get up) which also has the meaning ‘to stand up against’ (Molesworth 1857:89–90). One could therefore translate the phrase as ‘the dark Lord stands up for one principle’. This is most likely a reference to Kṛṣṇa and may refer to the story of Kṛṣṇa lifting mount Govardhana in which Kṛṣṇa defeats Indra and teaches about *karma* (BhP 24–25; Bryant 2003:111–120). The ‘principle’ would therefore be *karma*. However, the line could also refer to the idea, put forward in the *Bhagavadgītā*, that one must perform one’s duty (*dharma*).

³⁰ In other words it does not take long to describe one’s life on earth or one’s wandering through (*samsāra*).

³¹ *Śiva*—‘the Supreme Self’, ‘the Universal Soul’, ‘the Absolute’, ‘the pure soul or divine emanation’; ‘the vivifying, actuating, and sustaining principle in animated beings’ (Molesworth 1857:792)—is generally considered, particularly in Śaivism, to share the same consciousness as *jīva*—the individual or embodied soul or self. The relationship between *jīva* and *śiva* does however vary from school to school. The relationship correlates to that of *ātman* (the individual self) and *paramātman* (the Supreme Spirit).

देउळाच्या कळशीं नांदे एक ऋषी । तया घातली पुशी योगेश्वरी ।१।
दिवसा चांदिणें रात्रीं पडे उष्ण । कैसैनी कठिण तत्त्व जालें ।२।
ऋषीं म्हणे चापेकळिकाल पै कांपे । प्रकाश पिसे मनाच्या धारसैं एक होय ।३।
एकट एकलें वायांचि पै गुंफलें । मुक्त पै विठ्ठलें सहज असे ।४।
वैकुंठ अविट असोनि प्रकट । वायांचि आडवाट मुक्ताई म्हणे ।५।

*Deulācyā kaṣāṣī nānde eka ṛṣī / tayā ghātalī puśī yogēśvarī /1/
Divasā cāndiṇē rātrī paḍe uṣṇa / kaisēnī kaṭhiṇa tattva jālē /2/
Ṛṣī mhaṇe cāpekaḷikāla paī kāmpe / prakāśa piṣe manācyā ghārasē eka hoyā /3/
Ekaṭa ekalē vāyāñci paī guṃphalē / mukta paī viṭṭhalē sahaja ase /4/
Vaikuṇṭha aviṭa asoṇi prakāṭa / vāyāñci āḍavāṭa muktāī mhaṇe /5/*

On the temple dome dwelt a sage, Yogeśvar asked him:
‘Moonshine by day, heat by night: how can this conundrum be resolved?’
The sage said: ‘Death trembles before the *cāmpā*-bud!³² In the mind luminousness and madness flow as one.

Interweaving one alone is futile. Viṭṭhal easily liberates!
The Unfailing One is manifest in paradise’.³³ Muktāī says, ‘byways are futile’.
(Muktābāī *abhaṅga* 41, SSG, p.242).³⁴

ॐॐॐ

मुंगी उडाली आकाशीं । तिणें गिळिलें सूर्यशीं ।१।
थोर नवलाव जाहला । वांझे पुत्र प्रसवला ।२।
विंचु पातळाशीं जाय । शेष माथां वंदी पाय ।३।
माशी व्याली घर झाली । देखोन मुक्ताई हांसली ।४।

*Muṅgī udālī ākaśī / tiṇē giḷilē sūryāśī /1/
Thora navlāva jāhalā / vāñjhe putra prasavalā /2/
Viñcu pāṭaḷāśī jāya / śeṣa māthā vandī pāya /3/
Māśī vyālī ghāra jālī / dekhona muktāī hāsalī /4/³⁵*

Ant flew in the sky, she swallowed the sun.
A great surprise: a barren woman gave birth to a son.³⁶
A scorpion went to the underworld, Śeṣa³⁷ touched his feet.
The fly gave birth to a kite,³⁸ seeing [all this] Muktāī laughed.

³² This is reference to a variety of Magnolia (*michelia champaca*) which is native to India. It has orange, yellow or creamy-white flowers in spring. This new life is presumably what makes Death tremble.

³³ *Avīṭa* ‘unfailing’ or ‘unfading’ is an epithet for God (Molesworth 1857:50).

³⁴ There is a translation of this verse in Vanita (1989:48).

³⁵ The final word of this verse is given as *hāsalī*. *Hāsa* means ‘laughing’ or ‘laughter’ while the verb *hasaṇē/haṃsaṇē* means ‘to laugh’ but can also be used to mean ‘ridicule, deride, and jeer’ (Molesworth 1857:888). Thus the final phrase could also be translated as ‘seeing [all this] Muktāī jeered’. Considering the events described are unlikely it might be appropriate to imagine Muktāī giving something between a jeer and a laugh.

³⁶ The notion of a barren woman giving birth to a son is mentioned by Bahiṇābāī in the *Puṇḍalīkamāhātmya* (466.8) as an example of something that occurred despite being thought impossible (Abbott 1985:149, २९२). The notion of a ‘barren woman’ may be a metaphor for spiritual barrenness (Ramaswamy 1997:165) or may be connected to the Nāths as the BhP (4.108) mentions that a ‘barren woman was born in the Plantain Forest’ or the ‘Kadalīrājya, the “Kingdom of the Plantain Forest” or the Kadalīvana (‘Plantain Forest’), a place the Nāths associate with eroticism and spiritual attainment (White 1996: 236ff, 475–76, n. 100).

³⁷ Śeṣa is the cosmic snake who supports the earth. Viṣṇu is often depicted resting upon Śeṣa during the dissolution of the universe while Śiva is shown with Śeṣa as a garland around his neck.

³⁸ These different events may be referring to *māyā* (illusion). The *Jñāneśvarī* states that ‘Māyā both is and is not and is as impossible to describe as the offspring of a barren woman. She neither exists nor does not exist, she cannot tolerate the idea of thought; this is her nature, and is thought of as eternal’ (15.79–80; Pradhan 1987:434–435).

(Muktābāi *abhaṅga* 42, SSG 1, p. 242).³⁹

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वाह वाह साहबजी सदगुरु लाल जुसाईजी।
लाल बाच मो उडला काला ओंठ पीठसो काला।
पीत उनयनी भ्रमर गुफा रस झूलनवाल ।
सदगुरु चेले दोनो बराबर एक दस्तयो भाई ।
एकसे एक दर्शन पाये महाराज मुकाबाई ॥

*Vāha vāha sāhabajī sadaguru lāla gusāījī /
Lāl bīc mo uḍalā kālā oṅṭha pīṭhaso kālā /
Pīta unyanī bhramara guṇphā rasa jhūlanavālā /
Sadaguru cele dono barābara eka dastayo bhāī /
Ekase eka darśana pāye mahārāja muktābāī //*

Hurrah! Hurrah! Master, True Guru, Dear Darling.
Darling Kṛṣṇa poured black on me; my lips are darker than my back.
The yellow one swings high with their love in a garlanded arbour.
The True *guru* and the disciple are equal, one...brother.
The *mahārāj* and Muktābāi have *darśans* of each other.
(Muktābāi, Hindi *abhaṅga*, quoted in Shrotriya 1992:26).

1.1. Cāṅgadev *abhaṅga*

ब्रह्मांड गोळकीं पवनाच्या पालखीं । अवधूत कवतुकीं पहुडलासे ।१।
बोलवी चांगया मुक्ताई माता । ब्रह्मविद्या पर्यदें सुख देखतां ।२।
डोळा लाउनी निजीं निजेला निवांत । स्वप्नीं वटेश्वर देखिला निवांत ।३।⁴⁰

*Brahmāṇḍa goḷakī pavanācyā pālakhī / avadhūta kavatukī pahuḍalāse /1/
Bolavī cāṅgayā muktāī mātā / brahmavidhyā paryandē sukha dekhatā /2/
Doḷā lāunīnījī nijelā nivānta / svapnī vaṭeśvar dehilā nivānta /3/*

The breeze, like a palanquin, is making its rounds of the universe; god lies down in appreciation.
Mother Muktāi calls on Cāṅgayā; she gives knowledge of Brahma through which happiness is achieved.
He has slept peacefully in his place; in his peaceful dream he saw Vaṭeśvar.⁴¹
(Cāṅgadev *abhaṅga* 11, SSG 1, p. 246).⁴²

2. Goṇāī⁴³

Ranade states that *māyā* ‘is merely a synonym of non-existence’, which is why it is like the description of the children of a barren woman (2003:59).

³⁹ There are a two other translations of this verse: Kolatkar (1982: 109–14; provided by Zelliott in Bose 2000:193) and Champa Limaye and Ruth Vanita (1989:46).

⁴⁰ Some of the spellings given in the SSG may be incorrect: *nijī* should be replaced with *niji*, and *dehilā* with *dehile* (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 27th January 2011).

⁴¹ Vaṭeśvar, ‘Lord of the Banyan Tree, is the epithet used for Śiva (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 27th January 2011). Vaṭeśvar is the village, on the Tapti river, where Cāṅgadev is believed to have lived. It is also the name of a Śiva-*liṅga* and there are Vaṭeśvar temples at Vategaon and Saswad. Cāṅgadev is connected to the deity he worshipped by the name Cāṅga-Vaṭeśvar or Vaṭeśvacāṅga, although at least fourteen possible Cāṅgadevs have been identified by scholars (Ranade 2003:45; Vaudeville 1987:225; Dhere 1977b).

⁴² This *abhaṅga* is presented and discussed in Shrotriya 1992.

⁴³ There are over twenty compositions signed ‘Goṇāī says’ (*goṇāī mhaṇe*) within the *Nāmdev Gāthā* but as these are part of a conversation between Goṇāī and Nāmdev, Goṇāī and God, and Nāmdev and God it is extremely difficult to determine in whose voice the poems are composed (SSG 1: 477–487, v.1264–1307). Nonetheless, I have translated

माता म्हणे नामा राउळाशी खेळतां । तुज कोण्या दैवता ओढियले ।१।
 लाजिरवाणें नाम्या तूवा केलें जिणें । हांसती पिशुनें देशोदेशीं ।२।
 सांडि देवपिसें नको करूं ऐसें । बळें घर कैसे बुडविसी ।३।
 जन्मा येऊनियां पराक्रम करी । कां होसी संसारी भूमिभार ।४।
 सुदैवार्ची लेंकरें वर्ततात कैसीं । तूं मज झालासि कुळक्षय ।५।
 कैसी तुज नाहीं लौकिकाची लाज । हेंच थोर मज नवल वाटे ।६।
 अभिमान अहंता सांडूनियां जर्गीं । नाचतोसि रंगीं गीत गातां ।७।
 तुजविण लोक अज्ञान नसती । क्षण न विसंबती मायबापा ।८।
 पुत्र आणि कलत्र घराची विपत्ति । तुज अभाग्याचे चित्तीं पंढरीनाथ ।९।
 यातें भजती त्याचें न उरेचि कांहीं । हाचि देव पाहीं घरघेणा ।१०।
 जयाचें खुंटे तो लागे याच्या पंथें । तुजसि शिकवितें म्हणोनियां ।११।
 गोणाई म्हणे नाम्या हें नव्हे पें भलें । विठोबाने केलें आपणा ऐसें ।१२।

Mātā mhaṇe nāmā rāuḷāśī kheḷatā / tuja koṇyā daivatā oḍhiyale /1/
Lājiravāṇē nāmyā tūvā kelē jivaṇē / hāmsatī piṣunē deśodeśī /2/
Sāṇḍi devapisē nako karū aisē / baḷē ghara kaise buḍavisī /3/
Janmā yeūniyā parākrama karī / kā hośi saṁsārī bhūmibhāra /4/
Sudaiṽācī lēkarē vartatāti kaisī / tū mja jhālāsi kuḷakṣaya /5/
Kaisītuja nāhī laukikācīlāja / hēcīthora mja navala vāṭa /6/
Abhimāna ahantā sāṇḍūniyā jagī / nācatosi raṅgī gīta gātā /7/
Tujaviṇa loka adhyāna nasatī / kṣaṇa visambatī māyabāpā /8/
Putra āṇi kalatra gharācī vipatti / tuja abhāgyācē cittī paṇḍharīnātha /9/
Yātē bhajatī tyācē na ureci kāṁhī / hāci deva pāhī gharagheṇā /10/44
Jayācē khunṭe to lāge yācyā panthē / tujasi śikavitē mhaṇoniyā /11/
Goṇāi mhaṇe nāmyā hē navhe pē bhalē / viṭhobāne kelē āpaṇā aisē /12/

Mother says,⁴⁵ ‘Nāmā plays in God’s palace. Who are these gods who have attracted you? Nāmā you’ve made life embarrassing, laughing all over the place as if possessed. Give up this addiction to God. Why are you bent on totally destroying the home? Having been born, achieve something worthwhile. Why are you being a burden here on earth? Children of good fortune behave soberly. You’re the reason for my line’s extinction. How come you’re not ashamed of your lost honour? I am amazed at such behaviour. Leaving all pride and ego, you are engrossed in singing songs. People won’t be ignorant without you! There’s not a moment’s peace for your parents. Son and wife have become the cause of the family’s misfortune, but you misfortunate think only of Pāṇḍharīnāth.

Praying in anguish, nothing remains of him; this same God is a destroyer of families. I tell you this: whomever He stumbles upon becomes His follower. Goṇāi says, ‘Nāma, what’s happening isn’t good; Viṭhobā is responsible for our state’”. (Goṇāi *abhaṅga* 1266, SSG 1, p.478).⁴⁶

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गोणाई म्हणे नाम्या सोडीं देवपिसें । बुडविसी कैसें घर बळें ।१।
 तुज सईल लेकुरें वर्ताती कैसीं । तूं मज झालासी कुळक्षय ।२।

thirteen of forty-three ‘Goṇāi’ *abhaṅgas*. A translation of the verse Goṇāi *mhaṇe nāmyā soḍī devapisē / budavisī kaisē ghara baḷē* ‘Goṇāi says, Nāma give up being over-religious; how come you’re hell-bent on drowning us all?’ by Jayant Karve is presented by Zelliott (1999:419), while other Goṇāi verses have been summarised by Aklujkar (1999).

⁴⁴ The term *gharagheṇā*—which also appears in Goṇāi *abhaṅga* 1267.7, 1268.7—means ‘a ruiner of families’ (Molesworth 1857:253) or ‘(a man) who brings ruin on his family’ (Tulpule 1999:216). Laine suggests that a similar term, *ghar-gheyā*, connotes ‘house-plunderer’ (1998:134).

⁴⁵ The fact the verse begins ‘Mother says’ suggests that Nāmdev is recording what Goṇāi said to him.

⁴⁶ Aklujkar has translated the third line of this verse (1999:15).

धन्य धन्य पुत्र कलत्रे नांदती । तुज अभाग्य तों चित्ती पांडुरंग ।३।
 शिवण्या टिपण्या घातलेसे पाणी । न पहासी परतोनि घराकडे ।४।
 कैसी तुझी भक्ती लौकिका बेगळी । संसाराची होळी केली नाम्या ।५।
 याची तुंवा कैसी खरलिसे कांस । हा तो कवणास झाला नाही ।६।
 यातें जे अनुसरती त्याचें नुरे कांहीं । हा देव नव्हे पाहीं घरघेणा ।७।
 गोकुलली करी चोरी आपुलें पोट भरी । तो तुज निर्धारी देईल काय ।८।
 गोणाई म्हणे नाम्या हें तों नव्हे भलें । गर त्वां बुडविलें कुललासहित ।९।

Goṇāi mhane nāmyā soḍī devapisē / buḍavisī kaisē ghara baḷē /1/
Tuja sīla lekure vartātī kaisī / tū maja jhālāsī kulakṣaya /2/
Dhanya dhanya putra kalatrē nādatī / tuja ābhāgya tō cittī pāṇḍuraṅga /3/
Śivanyā tipaṇyā ghātalēsē pāṇī / na pahāsī paratoni gharākaḍe /4/
Kaisī tujhī bhakti laukikā vegāḷī / saṃsārācī hoḷī kelī nāmyā /5/
Yācītū vā kaisī dharlise kāṃsa / hā to kavaṇāsa jhālā nāhī /6/
Yātē je ānusaratītyācē nure kāṃhī / hā deva navhē pāhī gharagheṇā /7/
Gokuḷī karī corī āpulē poṭa bhari / to tuja nirdhārī deīla kāya /8/
Goṇāi mhane nāmyā hē tō navhe bhalē / ghara tvā buḍavilē kuḷāsaḥita /9/

Goṇāi says, ‘Nāma give up being over-religious; how come you’re hell-bent on drowning us all? How can your lax children succeed you; you are causing the extinction of our family. Blessed sons reside together; you, unfortunate one, have Pāṇḍuraṅga in mind. You’ve ignored tailoring and you don’t look back towards your home. How is your *bhakti* different from notoriety? You have made a bonfire of your household Nāma.⁴⁷ How come you held on to Him, He who has never belonged to anyone? The one who follows Him, nothing will remain of him; He is not god but rather a demolisher of families. By stealing in Gokul he fills his stomach, how will he ever support you? Goṇāi says: ‘Nāma, this is all wrong; you have destroyed our home along with our family’.
 (Goṇāi *abhaṅga* 1267, SSG 1, p.478).⁴⁸

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जन्मासी येऊनि पराक्रम धरी । कां होशीसंसारीं भूमिभार ।१।
 आणीकांची मुलें संसारिक कैसी । तूं मज झालअसी कुलक्षण ।२।
 कैसी नाही तुज या लोकअंची लाज । हेंचि तों मज नवल बाटे ।३।
 अभिमान अहंकार सांडोनियां जर्गी । नाचतोसी रंगी गित गात ।४।
 तुजहुनि लोक आहेती अज्ञान । न विसंबती क्षण मायबापा ।५।
 याची कां रे तूवा धरियेली आंस । हा तंव कवणास झाला नाही ।६।
 यातें जे भजती त्याचें नुरे कांहीं । हा देव नव्हे पाहीं घरघेणा ।७।
 याचें नांव चक्रपाळ । हा ब्रह्मादिका आकळ । तो कैसा कृपाळ दीनालार्गी ।८।
 होणार सारिखी तुज रचिली बुद्धी । देवनव्हे त्रिशुद्धी मारकु जर्गी ।९।
 ज्याचें खुंटतें तो लागे याची पंथें । माऊली म्हणूनी तुंतें सांगतें रे ।१०।
 गोणाई म्हणे नाम्या हें नव्हे भलें । विठोबानें केलें आपणाऐसें ।११।

Janmāsī yeūni parākrama dhari / kā hośīsaṃsārī bhūmibhāra /1/
Āṇīkācīmule sasārika kaisī / tū maja jhālāsī kulakṣaṇa /2/
Kaisī nāhī tuja yā lokāncī lāja / hēci tō maja navala vāṭe /3/
Abhimāna ahaṅkāra saṅḍoniyā jagī / nācatosī raṅgī gīta gāta /4/

⁴⁷ Nāmdev has destroyed the family business as he is not concerned with worldly affairs.

⁴⁸ Zelliott (1999a:90) presents a translation of this verse by Jayant Karve while Aklujkar (1999:15) provides a summary of the verse.

*Tujahuni loka āhetīadñyāna / na visambatī kṣaṇa māyabāpā /5/
 Yācī kā re tīvā dhariyelī āṃsa / hā taṃva kavaṇāsa jhālā nāhī /6/
 Yātē je bhajātītyācē nure kāṃhī / hā deva navhe pāhī ghargheṇā /7/
 Yācē nāṃva cakrapāla / hā brahmādikā ākaḷa / to kaisā krpāḷa dīnālāgī /8/
 Hoṇāra sārīkhī tuja racilī buddhī / deva navhe trīsuddhī māraku jagī /9/
 Jyācē khunṭatē to lāge yācī panthē / māulī mhanūnī tūtē sāṅgatē /10/
 Goṇāi mhaṇe nāmyā hē navhē bhalē / viṭhobānē kelē āpanāisē /11/*

Being born, achieve something. Why are you being a burden on earth?
 The children of others lead a family life, [but] you've caused the ruin of my race.
 How come you aren't ashamed [when you stand] before people, I'm amazed at such behaviour.
 You live without shame or pride, engrossed only in singing and dancing.
 There are people more ignorant than you, but there's not a moment's peace for your parents.
 Why have you held onto Him with hope, He has been useless up until now.
 The one who keeps singing is left with nothing. He whom you call God isn't a god— He ruins families.
 His name is Cakrapāla;⁴⁹ even Brahma cannot fully comprehend Him. How can he be the one who shows
 compassion to the lowly?
 You'll learn a lesson [because] of your inflated intellect: He is not God, he is the destroyer of the three
 pure worlds.
 Only he who is deficient follows His path: as your mother I give you this advice.
 Goṇāi says: 'Nāma, what Viṭhobā has done to us is not right'.
 (Goṇāi *abhaṅga* 1268, SSG 1, p. 478).⁵⁰

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अरे नामदेवा नव्हेसी लेंकरूं । जरी जाणसी विचारू संसारिक ।१।
 शिवण्या-टिपण्यासी त्वां घातलें पाणी । न पाहसी परतोनी घराकडे ।२।
 कैसी तुझी भक्ति या देशावेगळी । संसाराची धुळी केली नाम्या ।३।
 उदंड पें आम्ही देखिले भक्त । परि तूं आपुलें हित न विचारिसी ।४।
 अन्नेंसि उपवासी बैसलासि येथें । काय देईल तूंतें विड्वल हा ।५।
 थिता पुंडलिकें भाकेसी गोंविला । त्यासि प्रयत्न बळ न चले कांहीं ।६।
 गोकुळीं करुनि चोरी आपुलें पोट भरी । तो तुज निर्धारिं देईल काय ।७।
 तूं निलाजिरा पाहीं तुज लाज नाही । वेळोवेळां कायी सांगो तुज ।८।
 सांडून घरदार आपुला संसार । नाचतां विचार न करिसी मनीं ।९।
 काम कष्ट तुंवा सांडियलें आतां । संसाराची चिंता कोण करी ।१०।
 गोणाई म्हणे नाम्या नव्हे रे हें भलें । विड्वल नामें केलें आपणा ऐसें ।११।

*Are nāmadevā navhesī lēkarū / jarī jāṇasī vicārū saṃsārika /1/
 Śivanyā-ṭipanyāsītvā ghātalē paṇī / na pāhasī paratonī gharākaḍe /2/
 Kaisī tujhī bhakti yā deśāvegaḷī / saṃsārācī ghuḷī kelī nāmyā /3/
 Udaṇḍa paī āmhī dekhīyale bhakta / pari tū āpulē hita na vicārisī /4/
 Annēsi upavāsī baisalāsi yethē / kāya deīla tūtē viṭṭhala hā /5/
 Thitā puṇḍalikē bhākesī gōvilā / tyāsi prayatna baḷa na cale kāmhī/6/
 Gokulī karūni corīāpulē poṭa bhārī / to tuja nirdhārī deīla kāya /7/
 Tū nilājirā pāhī tuja lāja nāhī / veḷovelā kāyī sāṅgo tuja /8/
 Sāṇḍūna gharadāra āpulā saṃsāra / nācatā vicāra na karisī manī /9/
 Kāma kaṣṭa tūvā sāṇḍiyalē ātā / saṃsārācī cintā koṇa karī /10/
 Goṇāi mhaṇe nāmyā navhē re hē bhalē / viṭṭhala nāmē kelē āpaṇā aisē /11/*

'Nāmdev you're no longer a child, think of your worldly business a little.
 You've ignored tailoring and you don't look back towards your home.

⁴⁹ *Cakrapāla*, 'Discus-Holder', is an epithet for Viṣṇu.

⁵⁰ Line five has been translated by Aklujkar (1999:15).

What kind of devotion is this, how is it different from the known; you've made your worldly affairs into dust Nāma.

We have seen innumerable devotees, but you don't even ask us wherein your benefit lies.
You sit hungry beside food [but] what will Viṭṭhal give you?
He holds Puṇḍalik there; it's useless to try and win Him.
By stealing in Gokul He feeds himself;⁵¹ what then does He have to support you?
You're unabashed, without shame; what is the point in repeatedly telling you the same?
You have renounced your family along with your worldly life; you caper about thoughtlessly.
You have abandoned all work, so who will worry about our worldly affairs?
Goṇāi says: 'Nāma, this isn't right; Viṭṭhal's name is responsible for this'.
(Goṇāi *abhaṅga* 1269, SSG 1, p. 479).

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कापड घेऊनी जाय वाजारासी । गोणाई नाम्यासी शिकवितसे ।१।
लोकांचे हे पुत्र संसार करिती । आमुची फजिती केली नाम्या ।२।
नाम्या विठोबाचा संग नव्हे बरा । मेंद हा खरा गळाकाटु ।३।
याचे संगतीनें संसार जाळावा । भोपळा हा घ्यावा भक्ति मागूं ।४।
नको संग धरूं नाम्या ऐक गोष्टी । गोणाई हनुवटी धरुनी सांगे ।५।

*Kāpaḍa gheūnī jāya vājārāsī / goṇāi nāmyā śīkavitase /1/
Lokāṅce ha putra saṁsāra karitī / āmučī phajitī kelī nāmyā /2/
Nāmyā viṭhobācā saṅga navhe barā / mainda hā kharā ghaḷākāṭu /3/
Yāce saṅgatīnē saṁsāra jāḷāvā / bhopaḷā hā ghyāvā bhakti māgū /4/
Nako saṅga dharū nāmyā aika goṣṭī / goṇāi hanuvaṭī dharūnī sāṅge /5/*

'Take cloth and go to the market', Goṇāi instructs Nāma.
'Other people's sons take on family responsibilities; Nāma has made us look ridiculous.
Nāma, the company of Viṭhobā is no good. He's a real hypocrite and a cut-throat.
You reduce our business to ashes through being in His company; your devotion will earn your nothing!
Don't get into His company, Nāma listen to this', says Goṇāi while tugging your chin!
(Goṇāi *abhaṅga* 1270, SSG 1, p.479).

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साधावया अत्मसुख । तें हें विटेवरी देख ।१।
नको जाऊं परदेशीं । वास करी गे पंढरिसी ।२।
भाव धरुनि बळकट । मुखीं नाम एकनिष्टि ।३।
नामा म्हणे गोणाबाई । सर्व सुख याचे पार्यीं ।४।

*Sādhāvayā atmasukha / tē hē viṭevarī dekha /1/
Nako jāūparadeśī / vāsa karīge paṇḍharisī /2/
Bhāva dharūni baḷakāṭa / mukhī nāma ekaniṣṭi /3/
Nāmā mhaṇe goṇābāī / sarva sukha yāce pāyī /4/*

To gain eternal happiness,⁵² behold Him on the brick.
Don't go to a foreign land, stay in Paṇḍharī.
Let faith endure; dedicatedly chant the Name.
Nāma says, 'Goṇābāi all happiness is found at His feet'.
(Goṇāi *abhaṅga* 1273, SSG 1, p.479).

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⁵¹ This is a reference to the village in which Kṛṣṇa was raised.

⁵² The term *atmasukha* (*āmasukha*) refers to 'inherent pleasure; the satisfaction in the consciousness of being' (Molesworth 1857:67).

गोणाई म्हणे नाम्या राहिलासी उदरीं । तें हुनि मी करीं आस तुझी ।१।
 उपजलासी तें मज झाला संतोष । आनंद उल्हास वाटे जीवां ।२।
 गणगोतामार्जी केलें बा रे नांव । पंढरीचा देव प्रसन्न केला ।३।
 रात्रंदिवस लेखी अंगोळी वरी । तूं मज संसारीं होसी म्हणोनि ।४।
 तंव तुज अवचिती उपजली बुद्धी । भोपळा हा खांदी आवडला ।५।
 हातीं टाळ घेऊनी करीसी आळवणी । घागरीया चरणीं बांधोनियां ।६।
 सांडोनि घरदार आपुला संसार । नाचतां विचार न धरिसी ।७।
 नव्हे तें करितां कोण असे वारिता । परि त्वां अपुल्या हिता प्रवर्तावें ।८।
 मी एक आहे तंव करीन तळमळ । मग तुझा सांभाळ करील कोण ।९।
 या विठ्ठलावांचुनी तुज नाही रे संसार । हा बोल निर्धार सत्य माझा ।१०।
 कोण्या गुणें त्वा घेतलें धरणें । गोणाई म्हणे करणें फळासी आलें ।११।

Goṇāi mhaṇe nāmyā rāhilāsī udarī / taiḥuni mī karī āsa tujhī /1/
Upajalāsī tai maja jhālā santōṣa / ānanda ulhāsa vāṭe jīvā /2/
Gaṇagotāmājī kelē bā re nāmva / paṇḍharīcā deva prasanna kelā /3/
Rātrandivasa lekhī aṅgoḷivarī / tū maja saṃsārī hosī mhaṇoni /4/
Ṭaṃva tuja avacitī upajalī buddhī / bhopaḷā hā khāndī āvaḍalā /5/
Hātī ṭāḷa geūnī karīsī āḷvaṇī / ghārīyā caraṇī bāndhoniya /6/
Sāṇḍoni gharadāra āpulā saṃsāra / nācatā vicāra na dharīsī /7/
Navhē tē karitā koṇa ase vāritā / pari tvā āpulyā hitā pravartāvē /8/
Mī eka āhe ṭaṃva karīna ṭāḷamaḷa / maga tujhā sāmbhāḷa karīla koṇa /9/
Yā viṭṭhalāvācunī tuja nāhī re saṃsāra / hā bola nirdhāra satya mājhā /10/
Koṇyā guṇē tūmvā ghetalē dharāṇē / goṇāi mhaṇe karaṇē phaḷāsī ālē /11/

Goṇāi says, ‘Nāmyā after I’d wished for you, you lay in my belly.’⁵³
 When you were born I was delighted, I was filled with happiness.
 You gained a good name among our people and relations; the God of Paṇḍharī was pleased with you!
 Day and night, I counted on my fingers until you, my householder, would exist.⁵⁴
 At that point you had a brainstorm: you’d prefer a “gourd” on your shoulder.⁵⁵
 You keep praying and requesting, clanging cymbals in your hands and jingling bells tied at your feet,
 Neglecting the household and dancing thoughtlessly.
 You’ll gain nothing behaving like this: start behaving properly!
 I worry about you: when I am gone who will look after you?
 Your life is nothing but Viṭṭhal: this is my opinion.
 Why were you born?’ Goṇāi says, ‘my deeds have borne fruit’.
 (Goṇāi *abhāṅga* 1275, SSG 1, p. 480).

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आपणा वेगळा कशाला निवडीसी । कां मज दवडीसी सांग नाम्या ।१।
 बरवें पुत्रपण झालासी उत्तीर्ण । आतां अभिमान पाहें माझा ।२।
 तुज नेल्यावांचून नव जाय येथून । पंढरी गिळीन(त) विठोबासहित ।३।
 जरी झालासी शाहाणा तरि माझाहें लेंकरूं । माझा आहे वेव्हारू या विठ्ठलासी ।४।
 हा दानवांते छळी आपणा म्हणवी बळी । तें मज जवळी न चले काहीं ।५।
 विटेसहित चरणीं बांधीन आपुला गळा । क्षण जीवा वेगळा जाऊं नेदी ।६।

⁵³ Translated literally the phrase reads ‘Nāmyā you lay in my belly after I’d wished for you’.

⁵⁴ Goṇāi eagerly anticipated the birth of a son not expecting that he would cause her disappointment.

⁵⁵ Goṇāi is saying that the *diṇḍī* (or *vīṇā*) Nāmdev carried is ‘nothing’, that it is hollow and worthless. Goṇāi is implying that Nāmdev preferred carrying an empty gourd and *bhakti* to everything else and that he is ‘a victim of the Viṭṭhal craze’ (Kiehnle 1997b:18).

आसनीं शयनीं न विसंबे भोजनीं । घालीन मुरडोनी हृदयामार्जी ॥७॥
या देहाचा संकल्प आलेंसें करोन । घातलेंसे पाणी घरादारां ॥८॥
हा त्रिभुवनीं समर्थ मी असें जाणत । पाहीन पुरुषार्थ आजी याचा ॥९॥
अड्यावीस युगे भरलीं तया बोला । धरोनी उभा केला पुंडलिकें ॥१०॥
गोणाई म्हणे देवा होई कां शहाणा । वांया कां परधना धरिसी लोभ ॥११॥

*Āpanā vegalā kaśālā nivaḍīsī / kã maja davaḍīsī sāṅga nāmyā /1/
Baravē putrapaṇa jhālāsī uttīrṇa / ātā abhimāna pāhē mājhā /2/
Tuja nelyāvāñcūna nava jāya yethūna / pañḍharī gīṭa viṭṭhalāsahita /3/
Jarī jhālāsī śahāṇā tari mājjahē lēṅkarū / mājhā āhe vevhārū yā viṭṭhalāsī /4/
Hā dānavātē chaḷī āpanā mhaṇavī baḷī / tē maja javaḷī na cale kāmī /5/
Viṭṭesahita caraṇī bāndhīna āpulā gaḷā / kṣaṇa jīvā vegalā jāū nedī /6/
Āsanī śayanī na visambe bhajanī / ghālīna mukadonī hrdayāmājī /7/
Yā dehācā saṅkalpa ālēśē karona / ghātalēse pāñī gharādārā /8/
Hā tribhuvanī samartha mī asē jāṇata / pāhīna puruṣārtha ājī yācā /9/
Aṭṭhāvātsa yugē bharalī tayā bolā / gharonī ubhā kelā puṅḍalikē /10/
Goṇāī mhaṇe devā hoī kã śahāṇā / vāya kã paradhanā dharisī lobha /11/*

‘Why have you chosen differently for yourself? Why do you run away? Tell me Nāmyā?
You have been released from son-hood. Please consider nourishing my pride.
I won’t go away without taking you along with me; I will swallow Paṅḍharī along with Viṭṭhal.
Although you’ve become so smart, you’re still my son; my business is with this Viṭṭhal.
He harasses the demons calling himself strong;⁵⁶ this won’t work with me at all’.
‘I’ll tie my neck to your feet and brick; every moment kills a part of me.
I won’t let you rest even when sitting or eating; I’ll rip out my heart and give it to you.
I have come having pledged my life, on the way I cried at every house.
I know you’re the Lord of the three worlds, but today I will test your prowess.⁵⁷
It has been said that twenty-eight ages have passed since Puṅḍalik made you stand thus’.
Goṇāī says, ‘O God, why don’t you smarten up? Why do you yearn for someone else’s wealth?’
(Goṇāī *abhaṅga* 1276, SSG 1, p. 480).

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बहुत दिवस भरले पै गोपाळा । अगा ये विठ्ठला कणव नये ॥१॥
नामा माझा वेगीं देई माझ्या हातीं । जाऊं दे परती अनाथानाथा ॥२॥
खाऊं जाऊं तुज असोस पै देऊं । कीर्ति तुकी गाऊं जगामार्जी ॥३॥
तुज काय उणे ब्रह्मांडनायका । नव्हेसी मजसारिखा एकदेसी ॥४॥
अनंत ब्रह्मांडे क्षणें घडामोडीसी । कां मज दुर्बळासी कष्टविलें ॥५॥
तुज दुजेपणाचा सहज आला वीट । तूं तंव एकट एकलाची ॥६॥
ऐसी कीर्ति वेद वर्णिते पुराणें । तें कां लाजिरवाणें करिसी देवा ॥७॥
तूं कृपेचा कोंवळा म्हणति विश्वजन । त्या तुझें निर्वाण कळलें नाही ॥८॥
मैंद मुद्रा धरणें गळां तुळसीमाळा । निवटितोसी गळा न कळतां ॥९॥
आतां आपुला भ्रमु राखे तो शहाणा । झणीं माझ्या निर्वाणा पहासी देवा ॥१०॥
गोणाई म्हणे माझा नामा देऊनी गातीं । अंगिकारीं कीर्ति पंढरीराया ॥११॥

*Bahuta divasa bharale paī gopālā / agā ye viṭṭhalā kaṇava naye /1/
Nāmā mājhā vegī dēī mājhyā hātī / jāū de paratī anāthanāthā /2/
Khāū jāū tuja asosa paī deū / kīrti tukī gāū jagāmājī /3/*

⁵⁶ This phrase could also be interpreted as ‘He extols gift-giving, calling himself the offering/oblation/sacrifice’.

⁵⁷ The term *puruṣārtha* refers to the four objects of human existence: *dharma* (the performance of duty), *artha* (the acquisition of wealth; the pursuit of fame, riches or power), *kāma* (the gratification of desire) and *mokṣa* (final emancipation). In Marathi the word is also used poetically for ‘prowess’ and ‘martial daring’ (Molesworth 1857:523).

*Tuja kāya uṇē brahmāṇḍanāyaka / navhesī majasārikhā ekadesī /4/
 Ananta brahmāṇḍe kṣaṇē ghaḍāmoḍīsī / kā maja durbaḷāsī kaṣṭavilē /5/
 Tuja dujepaṇācā sahaja ālā vīṭa / tū tamva ekaṭa ekalācī /6/
 Aiṣī kīrti veda varṇitī purāṇē / tē kā lājiravāṇē karisī devā /7/
 Tū kṛpecā koṃvaḷā mhaṇati viśvajana / tyā tujhē nirvāṇa kaḷalē nahī /8/
 Mainda mukrā dharāṇē gaḷā tuḷasīmālā / nivaṭitosī gaḷā na kaḷatā /9/
 Ātā āpulā bhramu rākhe to śhāṇā / jhaṇī mājhyā nirvāṇā pahāsī devā/10/
 Goṇāī mhaṇe mājhā nāmā deūnī gāī / aṅgikārī kīrti paṇḍharīyā /11/*

Many days have passed now Gopāl. At least now Viṭṭhal, show some compassion.
 Give me back my Nāma quickly; let me him come back, O Friend of the friendless.
 I will give you food and drink to satisfy your desire; I will sing your praises across the world.
 Of what are you short, O Lord of the Universe; You are not confined to the same place as me.
 Ananta⁵⁸ you can make or break universes in an instant, so why do you trouble a weak one like me?
 You are easily tired of duality; You are alone and will stay solitary.
 The Vedas and Purāṇas sing your praises; why would they shame you, O God?
 The people of this world say that you're compassionate; they don't understand your distress.
 You seem like a hypocrite with the *tuḷasīmālā* at your neck; You destroy without knowing.
 He is wise who retains his ignorance. But now, O God, look quickly unto my final departure.
 Goṇāī says, 'By handing over my Nāma, I will acknowledge the fame of the King of Paṇḍhart'.
 (Goṇāī *abhaṅga* 1286, SSG 1, p. 483).⁵⁹

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ज्याचें दैव त्या सांगातें । मला नवल वाटतें ।१।
 एक बैसती अशवावरी । एक चालतीचरणचाली ।२।
 एक जेविती मिष्टान्न । एका न निळे कोरान्न ।३।
 गोणाई म्हणे धन्य देवा । नामयाचा संचित ठेवा ।४।

*Jyācē daiva tyā sāṅgātē / malā navala vāṭatē /1/
 Eka baisatīśvāvarī/ eka cālāṭīcaraṇacālī /2/
 Eka jevitī miṣṭānna / ekā na niḷē korānna /3/
 Goṇāī mhaṇe dhanya devā / nāmayācā saṅcīṭa thevā /4/*

One's own fate is one's companion, it amazes me.
 Someone sits on the horse, someone walks on foot.
 Someone eats sweetmeats, yet someone else may not even get basic food.
 Goṇāī says, 'Blessed God; you are Nāmā's stock of wealth'.
 (Goṇāī *abhaṅga* 1300, SSG 1, p.486).

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मग पंढरीनाथ म्हणे नामयासी । तूं जाई गोणाईसी घेऊनियां ।१।
 अतिशय कां इणें मांडिलासे फार । मातेसि निष्ठुर होऊं नये ।२।
 स्तनपान दऊनि मोहें पाळिलासी । अंतर तियेसी देऊं नये ।३।
 नामा म्हणे शरणा आलों जिच्या भेणें । तिचे हातीं देणें उचित नव्हे ।४।

*Maga paṇḍharīnātha mhaṇe nāmayāsī / tū jāī goṇāīsī gheūniyā /1/
 Atīśaya kā iṇē māṇḍilāse phāra / mātesī niṣṭura hoū naye /2/
 Stanapāna dūni mohē pālilāsī / antara nivesī deū naye /3/
 Nāmā mhaṇe śaraṇā ālō jicyā bheṇē / tice hātī denē ucita navhe /4/*

Then Paṇḍharīnāth said, 'Nāma go back to Goṇāī.

⁵⁸ Ananta (Eternal, Boundless) is an epithet for Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa.

⁵⁹ Line four has been translated by Aklujkar (1999:16).

This excessive scolding is too much; you must not be hard-hearted towards your mother. She nourished you fondly at her breast; you must not abandon her'.
Nāma says, 'In fear I seek protection; it is not right to hand me back to her'.
(Goṇāī *abhaṅga* 1304, SSG 1, p.487).

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देव झाला नामा नामा झाला देव । गोणाईचा भाव पहावया ।१।
हा घे तुझा नामा काय चाड आम्हां । आनंदाचा प्रेमा गोणाईसी ।२।
हाती धरोनियां गेऊनी चालिली । फिरून पाहती झाली तंव तो देव ।३।
अगा माझ्या बापा तूं कोणा हवासी । मज दुर्बळासी काय होय ।४।
सोळा सहस्र मुख्य अष्ट तुझ्या कांता । त्या माझ्या घाता प्रवर्ततील ।५।
पुंडलिकासी तुंवां दिधली आहे भाक । गोणाई म्हणे ठक बहु होसी ।६।

*Deva jhālā nāmā nāmā jhālā deva / goṇāīcā bhāva pahāvayā /1/
Hā ghe tujhā nāmā kāya cāḍa āmhā / ānandācā premā goṇāīsī /2/
Hātī dharoniyāṅ geūnī cālilī / phirūna pāhatī jhālītamva to deva /3/
Agā mājhyā bāpā tūṅ koṇā havāsī / mājā durbaḷāsī kāya hoyā /4/
Soḷā sahasra mukhya aṣṭa tujhyā kāntā / tyā mājhyā ghātā pravartatīla /5/
Puṇḍalikāsī tūṅvāṅ didhalī āhe bhāka / goṇāī mhaṇe ṭhaka bahu hoṣī /6/*

God became Nāmā and Nāmā became God to test Goṇāī's faith.
'Here, take your Nāmā, who loves him?' Goṇāī's ecstatic with joy.
Taking him by the hand she proceeded. Looking back she saw she was holding God by the hand [instead].
'Hey Father, who wants you? I'm weak, what would I do with you?'
Your sixteen thousand and eight principal beloved women, they would set about me.
You gave your word to Puṇḍalik'; Goṇāī says, 'You great rascal, you can't come with me!'
(Goṇāī *abhaṅga* 1305, SSG 1, p.487).

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सुख पंढरीस पाहूं । आले भीमातीरीं बहू ।१।
प्रेमें गर्जती हरिचे दास । मार्गे पंढरी-निवास ।२।
मोक्ष पायीं लोळण घाली । देखोनी मुक्ताई निवाली ।३।
ज्ञानदेव सददित । देखोनी गोणाई हांसत ।४।

*Sukha paṇḍharīsa pāhūṅ / āle bhīmātīrīṅ bahū /1/
Premē garjatī harice dāsa / māgē paṇḍharī-nivāsa /2/
Mokṣa pāyīṅ loḷaṇa ghālī / dekhonī muktāī nivālī /3/
Jñānadeva sadadita / dekhonī goṇāī hāsata /4/*

To see happiness in Paṇḍharī, a group has gathered on the banks of the Bhīmā.
The servants of Hari shout with love, the house of Paṇḍharī stands behind them.
Roll over to attain bliss.⁶⁰ Seeing this Muktāī was calmed,
Jñānadev was touched and Goṇāī looked on laughingly.
(Goṇāī *abhaṅga* 1307, SSG, p.487).

3. Rājāī⁶¹

⁶⁰ The term *loḷaṇa* means 'rolling about' (Tulpule 1999:617), 'rolling one's self on the ground; rolling over' (Molesworth 1857:723) and is probably a reference to a rolling prostration, *lōṭāṅgaṇa*, performed by *bhaktas*.

⁶¹ There are only a couple of compositions in the *Nāmdev Gāthā* with signature 'Rājāī says' (*rājāī mhaṇe*) as the compositions attributed to Rājāī continue the conversation(s) Goṇāī began (Aklujkar 1999:17). I have only translated four of the thirteen verses in the Rājāī section of the *Nāmdev Gāthā* (SSG 1: 479–94, v.1320–1333) as they are long

दोन प्रहर रात्र पाहोनी एकांत । राजाई वृत्तांत सांगे माते ।१।
 अहो रखुमाबाई विठोबासी सांगा । भतारासी कां जा वेडें केलें ।२।
 वस्त्र पात्र नाहीं खाया जेवायासी । नाचे अहर्निशीं निर्लज्जसा ।३।
 चवदा मनुष्ये आहेत माझ्या घरीं । हिंडती दारोदारीं अन्नासाठीं ।४।
 बरा मार्ग तुम्ही उमजोनी सांगा । नामयाची राजा भली नव्हे ।५।

*Dona prahara rātra pāhonī ekānta / rājāi vṛttānta sāṅge māte /1/
 Aho rakhumābāi viṭhobā sisāṅgā / bhratārāsī kā jā veḍē kelē /2/
 Vastra pātra nāhī khāyā jevāyāsī / nāce aharnīśī nirlajjasā /3/
 Cavadā manusyē āheta mājhyā gharī / hiṇḍatī dārodārī annāsāthī /4/
 Barā mārga tumhī umajonī sāṅgā / nāmayācī rājā bhalī navhe /5/*

In the middle of the night when there's peace, Rājāi reports to the Mother.
 'O Rakhumābāi, please ask Viṭhobā why He has made my husband go mad.
 There's nothing to eat, drink or wear yet still he dances shamelessly.
 There are fourteen people in my house, roaming from door-to-door for food.
 Direct him towards the correct path or Nāma's Rājāi won't be good'.
 (Rājāi *abhaṅga*, 1322, SSG, p.490).⁶²

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परियेसी रुक्माई जैसा बैसला पाटीं । दैन्य पै न सोडी काय करूं ।१।
 सदैवाच्या स्त्रिया अलंकारमंडित । मजवरी नाहीं प्रीत काय करूं ।२।
 दरिद्रें विश्रांति घातली वो कैसी । सांगों कोणापार्शीं माउलीये ।३।
 एकी दिव्य वस्त्रें नेसल्या परिकर । मज खंडे जर्जर मिळालेंसें ।४।
 मोडकें खोंपट वारा येतो भराभराट । बहु होती कष्ट कोणा सांगें ।५।
 कैची कुसुमसेज कैचे पटकळ । फाटकी वाकळ अंथरुणा ।६।
 कन्या आणि पुत्र झालीं उपवरी । अजोनी न धरी घर प्राणनाथ ।७।
 जनलोकांमार्जी केलें येणें हासें । म्हणती लागलें पिसें नामयासी ।८।
 जनमीं न देखे उपाय येणें केले अपाये । कोणा सांगो माये सुकदःख ।९।
 आमुच्या वडिला शस्त्र सुई आणी कातरी । हा बाण आणि सुरी वागवीतसे ।१०।
 एकांते भाकिलें रुदना करी त्याची नारी । वाहियेली सुरी नागनार्थी ।११।
 लज्जेचा हा गांव सांडियेला येणें । शिकवावें कोणें माउलीये ।१२।
 संसाराचा येणें सांडिला पसारा । कणव स्त्री बाळा नये कैसी ।१३।
 नसतां विठोबा नसतां पंढरी । तरी हा सुखे घरीं नांदतां कीं ।१४।
 होणार होऊन गेलें शिकवूं आतां काई । विनविते राजाई रखुमाई सी ।१५।

Pariyesī rukmāi jaisā baisalā pāṭī / dainya paī na soḍikāya kauṇa /1/

and complex. *Dona prahara rātra pāhonī ekānta* 'In the middle of the night' has also been translated fully by Zelliott (1999a:91) and partly by Aklujkar (1999:18); *Pariyesī rukmāi jaisā baisalā pāṭī* 'Listen Rukmiṇī' has been partially translated by Aklujkar (1999:18) as has *Śikavā vo rukmāi āpuliyā kantā* 'O Rukmāi, counsel your husband' (Aklujkar 1999:18). Zelliott has translated *donhī joḍunī kara mātāhī thevī caranī* 'Joining her palms, she put her head on his feet' (1999a:91-92).

⁶² There is a translation of this by Zelliott (1999a:91): 'In the middle of the night, in private, Rajai pleads with the Mother. "Oh Lady Rukmini, please ask Lord Viṭṭhal: Why did you make my husband crazy? No food in the house, No pots, no pans—he has no shame. He dances night and day while I have fourteen people to feed. Give some thought to this, Mother, find me a way. Am I not right?" asks Rajai'. There is also a translation by Aklujkar (1999:18) but without the first line of the verse: 'O Rakhumābāi, ask your husband why he has fooled my husband. He has no clothes, no pot, nothing to eat but he goes on dancing day and night like a shameless man. I've got fourteen mouths to feed in my house, and I have to go from door to door to feed them. You better realise this and convince Him to find a better way, or else this Rājāi of Namā won't remain good anymore!'

*Sadaivācyā striyā alaṅkāramaṇḍita / majavarī nāhī prīta kāya karū /2/
 Daridrē viśrānti ghātalīvo kaisī / sāṅgō koṅāpāśī māūliye /3/
 Ekī divya vastrē nesalyā parikara / maja khaṇḍe jarjara miḷālēsē /4/
 Moḍakē khōpaṭa vārā yeto bharābharāṭa / bahu hotī kaṣṭa koṅā sāṅgō /5/
 Kaī kusumaseja kaīce paṭakuḷa / phāṭakī vākaḷa antharuṅā /6/
 Kanyā āṇi putra jhālī upavarī / ajonīna dharī ghara prāṇanātha /7/
 Janalokāmājī kelē yenē hāsē / mhaṇatī lāgalē piśē nāmayāsī /8/
 Janī na dekhe upāya yenē kele apāye / koṅā sāṅgo māye sukhaduḥkha /9/
 Āmucyā vaḍilā śastra suīāṇi kātari / hā bāṇa āṇi surī vāgavītase /10/
 Ekānte bhākilē rudanā karī tyācī nārī / vāhiyelī surī nāganāthī /11/
 Lajjecā hā gāva sāṅḍiyelā yenē / śikavācē koṅē māūliye /12/
 Sansārācā yenē sāṅḍilā pasārā / kaṇava strībālā naye kaisī /13/
 Nasatā viṭhobā nasatā paṅḍharī / tarīhā sukhē gharī nāndatā kī /14/
 Hoṅāra hoṅāra gelē śikavū ātā kāī / vinavite rājāī rakhumāī sī /15/*

Listen Rukmāī, sitting there with your ornaments, poverty will never leave me. What am I to do?
 Fortunate women are adorned with jewels but I am an unloved woman. What am I to do?
 Poverty is wearisome; it ruins everything; who will hear my woes, Mother?
 Some wear beautiful clothes but my clothes are worn out rags.⁶³
 The hut is broken, the wind howls; I have much to bear, yet whom shall I tell?
 Never mind a bed of flowers, a torn quilt is all I have for bedding.
 My daughter and son are still unmarried, my husband does not care about the home – he’s busy with you!
 Everyone is laughing at me, saying Nāma has gone mad.
 It’s unbearable so I seek a remedy. Whom shall I tell Mother of my joys and sorrows?
 Our weapons are needles and scissors; he’s busy with arrow and knife.⁶⁴
 Tell Nāganāth privately that the woman,⁶⁵ who bears the burden of this knife, is crying.
 O the shame, the town sees I am forsaken; come Mother, who shall instruct me, uh?
 The remnants of my married life are scattered.⁶⁶ Will there be no pity for this young woman?
 If there were no Viṭhobā, no Paṅḍharī then he would have happily stayed at home.
 What was to happen has happened, now what more remains for me to learn; such is Rājāī’s request to
 Rakhumāī.
 (Rājāī *abhaṅga*, 1324, SSG 1, p.490).⁶⁷

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शीकवा वो रुक्माई आपुलिया कांता । कां आम्हां अनाथां कष्टवीतो ।१।
 जन्मोनियां आमची पुरविली पाठी । मोडिली राहाटी संसाराची ।२।
 आतां आम्ही काय करणें माउलीये । बैसूं सावलीये कवणाचीये ।३।
 माझ्या भ्रतारासी लावियेला चाळा । क्षण जि वेगळा न कारी त्यासी ।४।
 आमचा वेव्हार विध्वंसिला पाहीं । करुणा माझी कांहीं नये त्यासी ।५।

⁶³ A *parikara* is a girdle, sash or petticoat. The first phrase could be read as ‘some complain about wearing the petticoat’.

⁶⁴ The term used for arrow (*bāṇa*) can also refer to ‘a man without wife, or family, or home, or friends, or money’ (Molesworth 1857:573). Consequently, Nāmdev could be being described as such a man because he has abandoned his family. There is a Nāmdev poem that refers to ‘needles and thread, scissors and measure’ (Novetzke 2003:215). One can interpret the reference to needles and scissors as indicating the profession and caste of the household (Glushkova 1998a:35).

⁶⁵ Nāganāth is an epithet for Śiva. It refers to one of the twelve *vyotirlinga* ‘*linga* of light’ or manifestations of Śiva. The location of the Nageshvar *linga* is disputed with Jagheshvar near Almora in Uttarakhand, Dwarka in Gujarat, and the Aundha Nāganāth temple in the Hingoli district of Maharashtra all claiming to be the correct location. The Aundha Nāganāth temple has a connection with Nāmdev. It is said that Nāmdev was performing a *kīrtan* to a large crowd in front of the temple when Brahmins complained and told him to move the *kīrtan* to the back of the temple. Having complied, Nāmdev and the audience were then amazed when Nāganāth turned the temple around to face them so he could listen to the *kīrtan* (BVJ 12:73ff, Abbott and Godbole 1996:193–203).

⁶⁶ The meaning of *samsāra/sansāra* in Marathi includes the notion of ‘married life’ as well as that of worldly/mundane existence.

⁶⁷ See the translation by Aklujkar (1999:18).

सकळाचें मूळ आपणा आधीन । केलें येणें जाणें पांडुरंगें ।६।
 आपुलें परावें मोहो ह सांडिला । आंगोठा मोडिला उपाधीचा ।७।
 उघडें घरदार लौकिक वेव्हारा । धरिला निर्धार याचे नामी ।८।
 रात्रंदिवस जपे जोविंद हृदयी । आमुची चिंता कांही नलगे त्यासी ।९।
 तुमचें सन्निधानें झालें आम्ही दीन । न वाटे निर्वाण कैसें तुम्हां ।१०।
 संसाराची व्यथा नेणव सर्वथा । होय तें उचिता करणें आम्हां ।११।
 धरी निरंतर एकची उत्तर । परि हा तुम्हीं विचार काय केला ।१२।
 अनुभव अनुभवीं जाणें तुम्हीं समर्थपणें । सदा मुखीं म्हणे नामी तुझ्या ।१३।
 जन्मोनी अवघी तुमची पोसणी । नेणें तुम्हांवांचोनी कोणी दुजें ।१४।
 कायावाचामनं तुमचीये पायीं । विनविते राजाई जीवलगा ।१५।

Śikavā vo rukmāi āpuliya kantā / kã āmhã anāthã kaṣṭavīto /1/
Janmoniyā āmucī puravilī pāthī / modilī rāhāṭī saṃsārācī /2/
Ātā āmhī kāya karanē māūliye / baisū sāvalīye kavaṇācīye /3/
Mājhyā bhratārāsī lāviyelā cālā / kṣa jīvegalā na karītyāsī /4/
Āmucā vevhāra vidhvamsilā pāhī / karūṇā mājhīkāhī naye tyāsī /5/
Sakaḷācē mūla āpanā ādhīna / kelē yenē jānē pāṇḍuraṅgē /6/
Āpulē parāvē mohō hā sāṇḍilā / āṅgoṭhā modilā upādhīcā /7/
Ughaḍē gharādāra laukika vevhārā / dharilā nirdhāra yāce nāmī /8/
Rātrandīvasa jape govinda hṛdayī / āmucī cintā kāmhī nalage tyāsī /9/
Tumcē sannidhānē jhālē āmhī dīna / na vāṭe nirvāṇa kaisē tumhā /10/
Saṃsārācī vyathā neṇave sarvathā / hoyā tē ucitā karṇē āmhā /11/
Dharī nīrantara ekaḷī uttara / pari hā tumhī vicāra kāya kelā /12/
Anubhava anubhavī jāṇē tumhī samarthapanē / sadā mukhī mhaṇe nāmī /13/
Janmonī avaghī tumacī posanī / neṇō tumhāvāconī koṇī dujē /14/
Kāyāvācāmanē tumacīye pāyī / vinavite rājāī jīvalagā /15/

‘O Rukmāi, counsel your husband and ask why we—the wretched—are distressed?
 He is responsible for our condition and destroying our daily routine.
 Mother, what can we do now? Under whose roof can we seek shelter?
 My husband’s addiction is caused by your husband. God will not leave him alone for a minute.
 Our business is destroyed through neglect, by a husband who shows no compassion.
 It’s up to you Rukmāi to remedy the distress caused by Pāṇḍuraṅga.
 My husband doesn’t differentiate between what belongs to him and what belongs to others. He can’t get
 to grips with reality.

The door to our house is always open, which affects business.⁶⁸ He is dedicated to chanting the Name.
 Night and day his heart is filled with Govind’s name.⁶⁹ He shows no concern about our welfare.
 Because of you we are miserable. How don’t you feel for us?
 Everyone has troubles in life but we are doing what is fitting to deal with these.
 There is only one answer, but have you thought about it?
 You comprehend all this due to experience. We recite your name continuously.
 From birth to death you sustain us. There is no one else but you to help us.
 We beseech you—body, speech and mind’, Rājāī implores dearest [Rukmāī].
 (Rājāī *abhaṅga*, 1325, SSG 1, p.490–491).⁷⁰

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अंगोळिये विठा कडियेसी नारा । राजाई पंढरपुरा चालीयेली ।१।
 भीवरा संपूर्ण जातसे भरली । राजाई बोलली कैसें झालें ।२।
 एकली मी बाळें काय करूं आतां । आहा पंढरीनाथा काय केलें ।३।

⁶⁸ This phrase suggests that Nāmdev operates an open-door policy for *bhaktas*.

⁶⁹ Govind (‘Protector of Cows’) is an epithet for Kṛṣṇa.

⁷⁰ See the translation by Aklujkar (1999:18), which is much shorter than mine.

एक बांधिलें पाठीसी दुजें बांधिलें पोटासी । वेणुनादापार्शी वाहावत गेली ।४।
 हांबरडा हाणोनी बोभाय नामया । आवतीं पडोनियां तळास गेली ।५।
 योगनिद्रा सारोनी देव जागा झाला । त्वरित पावला काढिलीं तिघें ।६।
 नारा विठा दोघे कडियेसी घेतले । राजाईस धरिलें दिक्षण करीं ।७।
 आणिलीं महाद्वारां पुढें दे लेंकुरां । विठोबा सामोरा नामा आला ।८।
 बाबा बाबा म्हणोनी नारा धाविन्नल । नामा त्या बोलिला परते होई ।९।
 देखोनी राजाईसी गहिवरु पें आला । अरे बा विठ्ठला काय केलें ।१०।
 बोळेसहित विख घेईन मी आतां । पाहें पंढरिनाथा बुडवीन घर ।११।
 मेला सर्प होता तो ओटीये घेतला । खांडोनी घातला डेयामाजी ।१२।
 खालीं ज्वाळ घाली उकळी फुटली । पोटासीं धरिलीं दोघे बाळें ।१३।
 देह विठोबासी समर्पण करूं । ऐसां पें निर्धरु धरियेला ।१४।
 रुक्मिणी म्हणे देवा अनर्थ मांडिला । नामा बाहेर गेला निश्चयेसी ।१५।
 डेरा उघडोनी राजाई जंव पाहे । तोंडभरी भरलाहे अवघें सोनें ।१६।
 राजाईनें धरिले नामयाचे चरण । कृपादृष्टि पाहणें आम्हांकडे ।१७।
 विठ्ठल विठ्ठल ऐसें बोलियेला । निवांत राहिला घटका चारी ।१८।
 कांपत कांपत महाद्वारां आला । तुझी माव विठ्ठला नकळे कांहीं ।१९।
 दिशा देवा वरुता आणि खालुता । तुजवीण सर्वथा ठाव नाहीं ।२०।
 तंव नामदेव निजला देखिला । अंतरीं उठिला विठ्ठल ध्यनी ।२१।
 राजाई म्हणे प्रयत्न न चले तेथें आतां । प्रार्थू पंढरिनाथा बहुतांपरी ।२२।
 राजाईनें धरिले विठोबाचे पाय । कृपादृष्टि पाहें आम्हांकडे ।२३।

*Aṅgoliye viṭhā kaḍiyesī nārā / rājāi paṇḍharpurā cāliyeli /1/
 Bhīvarā sampūraṇa jātase bharalī / rājāi bolalī kaisē jhālē /2/
 Ekalī mī bālē kāya karū ātā / āhā paṇḍharināthā kāya kelē /3/
 Eka bāndhilē pāṭhīsī dujē bāndhilē potāsi / veṇunādāpāśī vāhāvata gelī /4/
 Hāmbaraḍā hāṇonī bobhāya nāmayā / āvatī paḍoniyā taḷāsa gelī /5/
 Yoganidrā sāronī deva jāgā jhālā / tvarita pāvalā kādhilī tighē /6/
 Nārā viṭhobā doghe kaḍiyesī ghetalē / rājāis dharilē dakṣiṇa karī /7/
 Āṅilī mahādvārā puḍhē de lēkurā / viṭhobā sāmora nāmā ālā /8/
 Bābā bābā mhaṇonī nārā dhāvinnalā / nāmā tyā bolilā parate hoī /9/
 Dekhonī rājāisī gahimvaru paī ālā / are bā viṭṭhalā kāya kelē /10/
 Baḷesahita vikha gheīna mīātā / pāhē paṇḍharināthā buḍavīna ghara /11/
 Melā sarpa hotā oṅīye ghetalā / khāṇdonī ghātalā ḍeyāmājī /12/
 Khālī jvāla ghālī ukālī phuṭalī / potāsi dharilī doghē bālē /13/
 Deha viṭhobāsi samarpaṇa karū / aisā paī nirdhārū dhariyelā /14/
 Rukmiṇī mhaṇe devā anartha māṇḍilā / nāmā bāhera gelā niścyesī /15/
 Ḍerā ughaḍonī rājāi jaṃva pāhe / toṇḍabharī bharalāhē avaghē sonē /16/
 Rājāinē dharile nāmayāce caraṇa / kṛpādr̥ṣṭi pāhaṇē āmhākaḍe /17/
 Viṭṭhala viṭṭhala aisē boliyelā / nivānta rāhilā ghaṭakā cārī /18/
 Kāmpata kāmpata mahādvārā ālā / tujhī māva viṭṭhalā nakaḷe kāmhī /19/
 Aṣṭa diśā devā varutā āṇi khālutā / tujavīṇa sarvathā ṭhāva nāhī /20/
 Taṃva nāmadeva nijalā dekhilā / antarī uṭhilā viṭṭhala dhvanī /21/
 Rājāi mhaṇe praylṇa na cale tethē ātā / prārthū paṇḍharināthā bahutāparī /22/
 Rājāinē dharile viṭhobāce pāya / kṛpādr̥ṣṭi pāhē āmhākaḍe /23/*

With Viṭhā holding her finger and Nārā on her hip, Rājāi went to Paṇḍharpūr.
 The Bhīmā was in full flood.⁷¹ Rājāi asked, ‘How has this happened?’

⁷¹ There is an *abhaṅga* by Eknāth which refers to the Bhīmā: माझें माहेर पंढरी । आहे भीवरेचे तीरी ।१। बाप आणी
 आई । माझी विठ्ठल रखुमाई ।२। पुंडलिक बंधू आहे । त्याची ख्याती सांगूं काय ।३। माझी बहीण चंद्रभागा । करीतसे

All alone I asked, ‘what do I do now? Oh! Paṇḍharīnāth, what am I to do?’
 One tied to the back, the other tied to the belly; near the Veṇunāda they floated downstream.⁷²
 Shouting, crying out for Nāmdev, they were swept away.
 God came out of his yogic trance, reached the river in one step and rescued all three.
 He took Nārā and Viṭhā on his hips and grasped Rājāī’s right hand.
 He brought them to the great door of the temple. Nāmā came and stood before Viṭhobā.
 ‘Father, Father’ called Nārā, running up to him. Nāmā said, ‘Nārā, return home’.
 Rājāī was overcome. ‘O Viṭṭhal, what have you done?’
 ‘I’ll drink poison along with the children now. Look Paṇḍharīnāth I will destroy our home and family!’
 There was a dead snake, which she tucked into her sari, chopped up and put it in a metal pot.
 She put the pot on the fire, the water boiled. She held the children to her.
 ‘We will donate our bodies to Viṭhobā’ [and so die] she resolved.
 Rukmiṇī says, ‘Lord, Nāmā is now beyond redemption’.
 The moment Rājāī lifted the lid she noticed the pot was brim-full of gold.
 Rājāī touched Nāmā’s feet, and asked for grace and forgiveness.
 Nāmā exclaimed ‘Viṭṭhal, Viṭṭhal’ and remained still for a while.
 Trembling, Nāmā came to the great door. ‘I cannot comprehend your compassion’, he said.
 She bowed towards the eight points of the compass, God, the west and the east. ‘Without You I’d be at
 the bottom of the river’.
 Then she saw Nāmdev asleep. In his mind arose the voice of Viṭṭhal.
 Rājāī says, ‘I won’t attempt suicide. Now let’s pray and beseech Paṇḍharīnāth’.
 Rājāī clasped Viṭhobā’s feet and said ‘view us with a favourable eye’.
 (Rājāī *abhaṅga*, 1326, SSG 1, p.491)⁷³

पाप भंगा ।४। एका जनादनी शरण । करी माहेरीची आठवण ।५। *Mājhē māhera paṇḍharī / āhe bhīvarece tīrī /1/ Bāp āṇī āī / mājhī viṭṭhala rakhumāī /2/ Puṇḍalika bandhū āhe / tyācī khyātī sāṅgū kaya /3/ Ekā janārdanī śaraṇa / karī māherīcī āṭhavaṇa /4/*. ‘My natal home is Paṇḍharī, on the bank of the Bhīmā. My father and mother are Viṭṭhal and Rakhumāī. Puṇḍalik is my brother, what can I say about his fame? My sister is the [river] Candrabhāgā, she washes away sin. Janārdan’s Eknāth surrenders to God and remembers his true home’ (*abhaṅga* 434, SSG 2: 102). For a rendition of the verse see SJisBack (2010c).

⁷² The term *veṇunādā*—from *veṇu* ‘flute’ and *nāda* ‘sound’—refers to a sacred site near the river at Paṇḍharpūr, which commemorates Kṛṣṇa’s playing the flute at the site of some ‘footprints’ (see Sontheimer 1995:119–122). Molesworth states that *veṇunāda* is the name of a Kṛṣṇa-*mūrti* found in the river at Paṇḍharpūr (1857:773). The *Pāṇḍuranga-Māhātmya* of Śrīdhara located Veṇunāda or Viṣṇupada ‘a little north of the Puṣpāvati *sangam*’ (‘meeting of menstruating women’) and Raeside stated that ‘the various footprints of cows and gods are still shown on the rocks all around’ (Raeside 1965:97). See Soyarābāī *abhaṅga* 35 (SSG 1, p.1001) for a reference to Viṣṇupada.

⁷³ In the SSG this verse is headed *rājāīcā niścaya* ‘Rājāī’s resolve’. Zelliott presents a translation of *abhaṅga* 1332 (SSG 1 p.493)—*donhī joḍunī kara mātḥā thevī caraṇī*—in which Rājāī realises her life is tied to Nāmdev’s and that she wants to share in his devotion to Viṭṭhal (1999a:91–92).

4. *Āübāi*⁷⁴

शून्य साकारलें साध्यांत दिसे । आकार नासे तेथें शून्याकार दिसे ।१।
शून्य तें सार शून्य तें सार । शून्याची चराचर सामावली ।२।
नामयाची बहिण आऊबाई शून्याची सामावली । विठ्ठली राहिली चित्तवृत्ती ।३।

*Śūnya sākāralē sādhyānta dise / ākāra nāse tethē śūnyākāra dise /1/
Śūnya tē sara śūnya tē sara / śūnyā carācara sāmāvalī /2/
Nāmayācī bahiṇa āübāi śūnyā sāmāvalī / viṭṭhalī rāhili cittavṛttī /3/*

The universal zero has now been achieved, where form is destroyed [there] is formlessness.⁷⁵
The formless is the essence, the formless is the essence; every atom becomes one with the formless.
Nāma's sister Āübāi has become one with the universal zero; her thought and soul have become one with
Viṭṭhal.
(Āübāi *abhaṅga*, SSG 1, p.775).⁷⁶

5. *Limbāi*

तारीं मज आतां रखुमाईच्या कांता । पंढरीच्या नाथा मायबापा ।१।
अनाथांचा नाथ ऐकियेलें कार्नी । सनकादिक मुनि बोलताती ।२।
त्याचिया वचनाचा पावोनी विश्वास । धरिली तुझी कास पांडुरंगा ।३।
नामयाची लेकी लिंबाई म्हणे देवा । कृपाळू केशवा सांभाळावें ।४। n

*Tārī maja ātā rakhumāicyā kāntā / paṇḍharīcyā nāthā māyabāpā /1/
Anāthācā nātha aikiyelē kānī / sanakādika muni bolatātī /2/
Tyāciyā vacanācā pāvōnī viśvāsa / dhariṭī tujhī kāsa pāṇḍuraṅgā /3/
Nāmayācī lekī limbāi mhaṇe devā / kṛpāḷū keśavā sāmabhāḷāvē /4/*

Please liberate me Husband of Rakhumāi, Master of Paṇḍharī, my parent.
Lord of the destitute you hear the needy,⁷⁷ even great sages like Sanaka talk to you.
From their promises I gain my faith. I grasp your waist Pāṇḍuraṅga.⁷⁸
Nāma's daughter Limbāi says, 'O compassionate Keśava please protect me'.
(Limbāi *abhaṅga*, SSG 1, p.775).⁷⁹

6. *Lādāi*

पूर्वसंबंधे मज दिधलें बापानें । शेखीं काय जाणें कैसें झालें ।१।

⁷⁴ Āübāi, Limbāi and Lādāi each have one *abhaṅga* attributed them and I have translated these. Zelliott has translated the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Āübāi and Limbāi (1999b:420).

⁷⁵ Here 'formlessness' refers to the 'absolute absence of properties or predicables, whether of time or of space' (Molesworth 1857:797) thus *brahman*. There is a verse in the *Jñāneśvarī* (13.888) which suggests similar sentiments 'If zero ('void') is to be indicated one has to make a dot...Similarly, if one has to talk in words about non-duality, duality is produced' (Kiehnle 1997a:165; see Jñśv 13.883 in Pradhan and Lambert 1987:382).

⁷⁶ This verse has been translated by Zelliott: 'I have come to see the Great Void [*śūnya*] revealed. Form ceases to be and Nothing takes its place. The voice is the essence, it is the essence. It contains all that moves and all that does not move. Nama's sister Aubai is contained in that void, Her mind is at rest in Vitthal' (1999a:92; 1999b:420). Zelliott regards Janābāi *abhaṅga* 191 (SSG 1:735) as also referring to the Void but the Janī composition uses the term *ritā* rather than *śūnya* (1999a:92-3).

⁷⁷ The adjective *anātha* means 'destitute' and 'orphaned' (Berntsen 1982:3; Tulpule 1999:428, 459) as well as 'forlorn' and 'friendless' (Molesworth 1857:27). Consequently the phrase *anāthācā nātha* could be interpreted as 'Lord or Master (*nātha*) of the destitute, orphaned, forlorn or friendless'. However, Molesworth defines the epithet *anāthanāth*, which has similarities to the epithet used in this *abhaṅga*, as 'Friend of the friendless' (1857:27).

⁷⁸ The use of the word *kāsa* (waist) suggests that the author was clinging to Pāṇḍuraṅga for protection (Molesworth 1857:162).

⁷⁹ This verse has been translated by Zelliott (1999:420).

प्रसुतीलागीं मज अणिलें कल्याणा । अंतरला राणा पंढरीचा ।२।
मुकुंदें मजशीं थोर केला जोवा । लोटियलें भवनदीमार्जी ।३।
ऐकिला वृत्तांत सर्व झालें गुप्त । माझेंचि संचित खोटें कैसें ।४।
द्वादशबहात्तरीं कृष्ण त्रयोदशी । आषाढ हें मासीं देवद्वारीं ।५।
सर्वांनीं हा देह अर्पिला विठ्ठलीं । मज कां ठेविलें पापिणीसी वेगळी ।६।
लाडाई म्हणे देह अर्पिन विठ्ठला । म्हणोनी आदरिला प्राणायाम ।७।

*Pūrvasanbandhe maja didhalē bāpānē / śekhī kāya jāñē kaisē jhālē /1/
Prasūtīlāgī mājā aṇilē kalyānā / antaralā rāṇā paṇḍharicā /2/
Mukundē majaśī thora kelā jovā / loṭiyalē bhavanadīmājī /3/
Aikilā vṛttānta sarva jhālē gupta / mājhēcī sañcita khoṭē kaisē /4/
Dvādaśabahattarī kṛṣṇa trayodaśī / āṣāḍha hē māśī devadvārī /5/
Sarvāñnī hā deha arpilā viṭṭhalī / maja kā ṭhevīlē pāpīṇīsī vegaḷī /6/
Lāḍāī mhaṇe deha arpīna viṭṭhalā / mhaṇonī ādarilā prāṇāyāma /7/*

From an earlier life I've been related to my father; in the end, who knows how that happened.
I was made pregnant and was blessed; then I was separated from the king of Paṇḍharī.
Mukund put me in an embarrassing situation in the river of life.⁸⁰
Hearing my version of the facts, all was kept hidden. Can my stock of merit have been false?
In 1272, on the thirteenth day of the dark (Kṛṣṇa) half of the month of Āṣāḍh, at the temple door,
My family all offered their bodies to Viṭṭhal. Why was I excluded? What was my sin?
Lāḍāī says, 'I offer my body to Viṭṭhal, that's why I've begun *prāṇāyāma*'.⁸¹
(Lāḍāī *abhaṅga*, SSG 1, p. 775).⁸²

7. *Janābāī*⁸³

⁸⁰ Mukund is an epithet for Viṣṇu and sometimes Śiva. It translates as the 'Giver of Salvation' (Abbott and Godbole 1996, Vol 2, p.453), the 'giver of liberation' (Monier Williams 2008) or the 'Personality of the Godhead, who awards liberation' (BhP 3.13.4). The phrase about the 'river of life' implies that daily life is a struggle which flows endlessly.

⁸¹ *Prāṇāyāma*—the practice of 'restraining the breath'—is undertaken in three stages, while silently reciting the *gāyatrī mantra*: breathing in (*pūraka*), holding the breath (*kumbhaka*) and breathing out (*recaka*). Lāḍāī is thought to have been the only member of the family left behind when the others entered *samādhi* so the verse suggests that she attempts to 'hold' her breath as a means to attaining *samādhi*.

⁸² This *abhaṅga* attributed to Lāḍāī expresses Lāḍāī's sorrow at being left behind when the entire family entered *samādhi* or died c.1350 C.E (SSG 1:775). Lāḍāī had probably gone to her natal village, which Shrotriya suggests was Kalyān, to give birth and on her return found the whole family, including her husband had entered *samādhi* (1992:75). This verse mentions the same event as that of an unpublished Janābāī *abhaṅga* (43, SSG 2:1400). There is a story told by Dattātreya that the entire family—Dāmāśeṭī, Goṇāī, Nāmdev, Rājāī and the four children committed ritual suicide by drowning (*jalasamādhi*) in the Bhimā river at Paṇḍharpūr because they were unable to bear the absence of Jñāneśvar and his siblings. Dattātreya's biography thus recalls the ritual suicide of Muktabāī and Jñāneśvar's parents (see Novetzke 2008:71–2).

⁸³ Janābāī is credited with composing over 340 songs of which about fifty have been translated into English (SSG 1:716–56, v.1–347). The largest number of Janābāī compositions have, until now, been those translated by Pandharipande (2000)—she has translated thirty-four *abhaṅgas* and paraphrased others. Poitevin and Rairkar (1996) translated over twenty-five verses and paraphrased others, while Sellergren (1996) translated thirteen verses. Translations of Janābāī compositions have also been undertaken by Macnicol (1919), Kolatkar (1982), Vanita (1989), Bhagwat (1990), Sarang (1993), Bhavalkar (1996), Aklujkar (1999), Zelliott (1999; 2000), Sāibābācyā Mandrāṭī (2002), Sivananda Saraswati (2004), Vanita (2005) and Yardi (2006). Only Macnicol, Sellergren, Zelliott, Aklujkar, and the Sāibābā Mandīr provide any Marathi by which to identify their translations, so it is difficult to know exactly to which compositions the translators are referring. Nonetheless, I have attempted to establish which compositions the translators have translated but the list is by no means comprehensive. The underlined verses indicate *abhaṅgas* that I have also translated: *Aho sakhīve sājanī* 'O Friend, Dear One' (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:80n.200; Vanita 2005:98), *āī melī bāpa melā* 'Mother died; father died' (Yardi 2006; Sellergren 1996:217; Poitevin and Rairkar 1996: 73v. 266; Aklujkar 1999:25; Pandharipande 2000:158); *āmhi patakācyā rāsī* 'A storehouse of sins' (Yardi 2006); *are viṭhyā viṭhyā* 'O Viṭhyā viṭhyā' (Sellergren 1996:222–23 Bhagwat 1990:229; Pandharipande 2000:175); *ātā pure hā saṃsāra* 'enough of this *sansār/saṃsāra* now' (Sellergren 1996:221; Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:74v.261); *bhakta mājī agraganī* 'To holy Pundalik give' (Macnicol 1919:49; v.23); *dalanyācyā misē* (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:77v.256); *dalitā kānditā* 'As I mill and pound' (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:70v.342; Yardi 2006); *dalū kāṇḍāi khelū* 'Let us grind' (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:72v.317); *deva bhāvācā lampata* 'Dev was trapped in Janī's intense

नाम फुकट चोखट । नाम घेतां नये वीट ।१।
जड शिळा ज्या सागरीं । अत्मारामें नामें तारी ।२।
पुत्रभाव स्मरण केलें । तया वैकुंठासी नेलें ।३।
नाममहिमा जनी जाणे । घ्यातां विठ्ठलचि होणें ।४।

*Nāma phukaṭa cokaṭa / nāma ghetā naye vīṭa /1/
Jaḍa śiḷā jyā sāgarī / ātmārāmē nāmē tāri /2/
Putrabhāva smarāṇa kelē / tayā vaikunṭhāsī nelē /3/
Nāmamahimā janī jāṇe / dhyātā viṭṭhalaci hoṇē /4/*

The Name is free and excellent; one never tires of chanting the Name.

A heavy stone in the ocean,⁸⁴ the name ‘Ātmārām’ saves.⁸⁵

Recollecting the son, he was taken to Vaikuṅṭh.⁸⁶

Janī knows the greatness of the Name; by chanting she becomes Viṭṭhal [himself].

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 3, SSG 1, p.716).

devotion’ (Pandharipande 2000:173); *deva khāte deva pīte* ‘I eat god, I drink god’ (Macnicol 1919:50v.25; Kolatkar 1982:114; Sellergren 1996:225; Pandharipande 2000:161; Vanita 2005:99); *dhariḷā pandharicā cora* ‘I’ve caught the thief of Pandhari’ (Sellergren 1996:223–24; Pandharipande 2000:154ff); *dhune gheūni kānkheṣī* ‘Carrying the washing’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:75v.262; Pandharipande 2000:162–163); *doicā padar ālā khāndvāvarī* ‘Cast off all shame’ (Sellergren 1996:224; Bhavalkar 1996:245; Sarang 1991:83; Aklujkar 1999:26); *eka divaṣī nhāvavāsa* ‘One day no cold water’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:79v.224; Vanita 2005:96); *eka prahar rātra jhālī* ‘Once in the middle of the night’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:79v.267; Pandharipande 2000:174); *eke ratricē samajī* ‘One night God hastened to Janī’s house’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:80v.285); *ekati tū gānē gāsī* ‘You sing alone’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:77v.221; Pandharipande 2000:176); *gangā gelī sindhūpāsī* (Sellergren 1996:222); *gonāi rājāi doghī sāsū sunā* ‘Goṇāi and Rājāi are mother-in-law and daughter-in-law’ (Zelliot 1999:418–19); *janī doimē gānjali* ‘Janī’s head is itching’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:79v.222; Vanita 2005:97); *janī jāva pānīvāsī* (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:74–5v.268); *janī jāva senāsāthī* ‘Janī goes to fetch cow dung’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:75v.263); *janīnē bohilē taisenca lihilē* ‘I wrote down Janī’s words as she uttered them’ (Pandharipande 2000:173–74); *jāv jāy rāūlasī* ‘Go away, go back’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:76v.260); *jhādhota kāri janī* ‘When Janī sweeps the floor’ (Sarang 1991:83; Poitevin and Rairkar 1996: 76v.219; Pandharipande 2000; Vanita 2005:96; Yardi 2006); *kā ge nisthura jhālīsī* ‘Why have you become so cruel’ (Vanita 2005:98); *kākaḍ āraī* (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:74v.259); *maga hansonī sakaḷī* ‘All jeered seeing God a victim to such a point’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:80v.257); *māyā meli bāpa melā* ‘Mother is dead, father is dead’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:69v.199); *nāhī kelī tujhī sevā* ‘I have not served you’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:73v.186); *nāma viṭhobācē dhyāvē* ‘Take the name of Viṭhobā’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:70v.152); *niṭya hātānē vārāvē* ‘Please settle my life’s difficulties’ (Kiehnle 1997b:188–89); *pānī tēci medha medha tēci pānī* ‘Water and cloud, cloud and water’ (Pandharipande 2000:145); *pūrvī kaya tapa nenē pai ho kele* ‘What austerities have I practised’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:76, v.220); *rājāi gonāi* ‘Rājāi and Goṇāi’ (Sellergren 1996:218–19); *salī sadā yāsa kadhī* ‘for cleaning the rice by pounding’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:75, v.266; Pandharipande 2000; Vanita 2005:97–8); *strī janma mhanavunī na vhavē udāsa* ‘I should not feel sad that I was born a woman’ (Sellergren 1996:219–220; Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:81 v.312); *sundara mājhē jāṭē ge phire bahutekē* ‘My grinding stone goes round and round’ (Sellergren 1996:220; Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:86v.364); *pakṣī jāy digantarā* ‘the bird flies in four directions’ (SSG 1:724v.89; Vanita 2005:99); *tujhā lobha nāhī deva* ‘O God I have lost your love’ (Sellergren 1996:223); *tujze kai devoon saawalyaa mee khaayaa taree* (Kākaḍa Ārtyā, Sāibābācyā Mandīrātīl, 2002); *tulaśice banī* ‘Among a cluster of basil plants’ (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:79v.225; Vanita 2005:97); *uthā pānduraṅga ātā prabhātasamayo pātalā* ‘Arise Pānduraṅga it is now dawn’ (Kākaḍa Ārtyā, Sāibābācyā Mandīrātīl, 2002); *yairāgya abhimāne* ‘Dispassion’s mill’ (Macnicol 1919:49v.24); *viṭho mājhā lēkurvālā* ‘My Viṭho has many children’ (Sellergren 1996:218; Vanita 1989:55, 2005:101); *ye ga ye ga viṭhābāi* ‘O Viṭhābai come soon’ (Vanita 2005:100), and *yere yere mājhyā rāmā* ‘come, come, oh my Rāmā’ (Sellergren 1996:221–222). This list counters Pandharipande’s assertion that there are no translations of Janābāi compositions in English (2000:150). However, no one has yet undertaken to translate all the Janābāi compositions, although I think that my contribution is probably the largest as I have translated seventy-two verses and at least thirty-five of these are new.

⁸⁴ This is a reference to an episode from the *Rāmāyaṇa* known as the *Setubandha*, ‘The Building of the Bridge’. One stone had the letter *rā* and the second stone had *ma*. When they were put in the water the stones joined to form *rāmā* and floated due to the power of the deity’s name (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 27th January 2011). This allusion also appears in a verse attributed to Muktabāi (*abhaṅga* 10, SSG 1:239).

⁸⁵ *Ātmārām* in *sant* poetry refers to the ‘Supreme Reality’ or the ‘all-pervading Being’ and not ‘Rām’ the incarnation of Viṣṇu according to Vaudeville (1987:32). Literally *ātmārāma* means ‘one who finds joy in his/her own self’ or ‘one who finds joy in the supreme Reality’ but Vaudeville states that in *sant* literature the word refers to ‘he who is immanent in all beings’ (1987:32–3, n.16).

⁸⁶ *Vaikunṭh* is Viṣṇu’s heaven or paradise.

विठ्ठल नामाची नाही गोडी । काळ हाणोनि तोंड फोडी ।१।
 गळां बांधोनि खांबासी । विंचू लाविती जिव्हेसी ।२।
 ऐसा आभिमानी मेला । नर्ककुंडीं थारा त्याला ।३।
 नामा बोध कारी मना । दासी जनी लागे चरणा ।४।

*Viṭṭhala nāmācīnāhī goḍī / kāḷa hāṇoni toṅḍa phoḍī /1/
 Gaḷā bāndhoni khāmbāsī / viñcū lavitī jivhesī /2/
 Aisā abhimānī melā / narkakuṇḍī thārā tyālā /3/
 Nāmā bodha karī manā / dāsī janī lāge caraṇā /4/*

If you dislike Viṭṭhal's name, dire consequences will ensue.⁸⁷
 Tie your neck to a pillar and place a scorpion on your tongue.
 Such a damned egoist goes to hell.
 Nāmdev advises me, servant Janī stays at the feet.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 6, SSG 1, p.716).

नाम विठोबाचें घ्यावें । मग पाऊल टाकावें ।१।
 नाम तारक हें थोर । नामें तरिले अपार ।२।
 आजामेळ उद्धरिला । चोखामेळा मुक्तीस नेला ।३।
 नाम दळणीं कांडणीं । म्हणी नामयाची जनी ।४।

*Nāma viṭhobācē dhyāvē / maga pāula ṭākāvē /1/
 Nāma tāraka hē thora / nāmē tarile apāra /2/
 Ājāmeḷa uddharilā / cohāmēḷā muktīsā nelā /3/
 Nāma daḷaṇī kāṇḍaṇī / mhaṇī nāmāyācī janī /4/*

Contemplate the name of Viṭhobā, then step ahead.
 Chanting the Name is a great saviour, it takes you beyond borders.
 Ājāmeḷa was sanctified; Cokhāmēḷā was set free.⁸⁸
 'Contemplate the name while grinding and pounding', says Nāma's Janī.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 8, SSG 1, p.716).

⁸⁷ The last part of the line literally translates as 'time (or death) will strike [with a] punch in the face'.

⁸⁸ Ājāmeḷa (Ajāmīḷa, Ajāmīla) was a Brahman from Kanyakubja (central India). He abandoned his parents and wife to spend his life with a *śūdra* woman and was thus a sinner. His youngest and much loved son was called Nārāyaṇa. One day Ājāmeḷa overheard Yama (the king of the underworld who is regarded as the punisher of the wicked) and Viṣṇu discussing him, which led him to repent and so abandon the *śūdra* woman and his child (in accordance with Vedic law). Ājāmeḷa then spent his remaining days at Gangadwar (Nasik district, Maharashtra) in the service of God and so attained *mokṣa* (liberation, emancipation) after death (Abbott 1996, 2:389). The Prapnāchari (*skanda* 6, BhP 7.1) version of the story states that Ajāmīl became a robber to satisfy his woman (he was thus a sinner on two counts). At the end of his life messengers came from Yama in order to inflict death upon him. In fear Ajāmīl called out for his favourite son and thus uttered the name of God. Viṣṇu's messengers consequently came to his aid. The two 'sides' debated whether Ajāmīl had acted righteously. They came to the conclusion that although Ajāmīl was a sinner he had uttered the name Nārāyaṇa at the moment of death and that this absolved his sins (Prapnāchari 2007:143ff). Hawley mentions Ajāmīl in his discussion of Sūrdās' poetry as 'the Brahman who deserted his family and ran off with a prostitute...' (1992:232) and as 'the dissolute, womanizing Brahman who met death by calling desperately for his son Narayan and was answered instead by God, one of whose names...was also Narayan' (1994b:84). There have been several Hindu movies entitled *Ajāmīl*: 1934 (directed by Abdul Rehman Kabuli) and 1947 (staring Narmada Shankar). Ājāmeḷa/Ajāmīl and Cokhāmēḷā are mentioned as being accepted by Kṛṣṇa (BVJ 39:16). This suggests that, particularly within *bhakti*, both sinners and low-caste persons can be liberated by contemplating/uttering the name of God (BhG 8.7, 9.22). There is a verse attributed to Kāṇhopātrā that mentions Ajāmīla (SSG 1, p. 191, v.12) and which Sellergren has translated (1996:232).

नाम विठोबाचें थोर । तरला कोळी आणि कुंभार ।१।
ऐसी नामाची आवडी । तुटे संसाराची बेडी ।२।
नाम गाय वेळावेळां । दासी जनीसी नित्य चाळा ।३।

*Nāmā viṭhobācē thora / taralā koḷīāṇi kumbhāra /1/
Aisī nāmācī āvaḍī / tuṭe saṃsārācī beḍī /2/
Nāma gāya veḷavellā / dāsī janī śīnitya cāḷā /3/*

Great is the name of Viṭhobā; the fisherman and the potter have been saved.⁸⁹
By liking the Name, the fetters of *samsāra* are broken.
Time and again I sing the Name; it has become servant Janī's obsessive habit.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 11, SSG 1, p.717).

ॐॐॐ

अरे विठ्या विठ्या । मूळ मायेच्या कारट्या ।१।
तुझी रांड रंडकी झाली । जन्मसावित्री चुडा ल्याली ।२।
तुझे गोलें मढें । तुला पाहून काळ रडे ।३।
उभी राहूनी आंगणीं । शिव्या देत दासी जनी ।४।

*Are viṭhyā viṭhyā / mūḷa māyēcyā kāraṭyā /1/
Tujhī rāṇḍa raṇḍkī jhālī / janmasāvitrī chudā lyālī /2/
Tujhē gelē maḍhē /tulā pāhūna kāḷa raḍe /3/
Ubhī rāhūnī āṅgaṇī / śivya deta dāsī janī /4/*

O Viṭhyā Viṭhyā,⁹⁰ you're the naughty⁹¹ son of the first mother.
Your widow has become a prostitute and wears the bangles of a married woman.
Your corpse is gone; looking at you time cries.
Standing in the courtyard, servant Janī swears.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 19, SSG 1, p.717).⁹²

ॐॐॐ

विठो माझा लेंकुरवाळा । संगे लेंकुरांचा मेळा ।१।
निवृत्ती हा खांद्यावरी । सोपानाचा हात धरी ।२।
पुढे चाले ज्ञानेश्वर । मार्गे मुक्ताई सुंदर ।३।
गोरा कुंभार मांडीवारि । चोखा जीवा बरोबरी ।४।
वंका कडियेवरी । नामा करांगुळी धरी ।५।
जनी म्हणे जोपाळा । करी भक्तांचा सोहळा ।६।

⁸⁹ It is likely that the potter mentioned here was Gora Kumbhār but the reference to the *koḷī* is unclear. Sadasivan states that 'sometimes between two different linguistic regions, a name may be adopted by two or more castes who have no occupational identity. The name Koli is taken by hillmen, fishermen, landless cultivators, weavers or a section of the Jats' (2000:276).

⁹⁰ Viṭhyā is a very casual or unrefined way to address Viṭhobā. It is an expression of familiarity by the author who is indicating her/his intimate relationship with God.

⁹¹ *Kāraṭyā* means 'the epitome of naughtiness' and the term derives from *kāraṭā* a term used to censure a mischievous or troublesome child (Molesworth 1857:159) but *kāṭā* connotes 'brat' according to Bernstsen (1982:24).

⁹² There are other translations of this verse by Sellergren (1996:222–223), Pandharipande (2000:175) and Bhagwat. The translation by Bhagwat differs from my translation and that of Sellergren but provides an interesting interpretation of the meaning of the verse: 'Vithya, you brat of Adimaya. You begetter of umpteen kids. How do you dare to forsake me? Wages of adultery are burdens of responsibility. As to myself, I have none else to look upon' (1990:229).

*Viṭho mājhā leṅkuravāḷā / sangē leṅkurāncā meḷā /1/
 Nivṛttihā khāndyāvarī / sopānācā hatā dharī /2/
 Puḍhē cāle jñāneśvara / māgē muktāi sundara /3/
 Gorā kumbhār māndīvara / cokhā jivā barobarī /4/
 Vankā kaḍīyevārī / nāmā karānguḷī dharī /5/
 Janī mhaṇe gopāḷā / karī bhaktāncā sohaḷā /6/*

Viṭho my family-man, with a gathering of children.⁹³
 Nivṛtti on the shoulders, Sopān holding the hand.
 Jñāneśvar walks ahead, behind is beautiful Muktāi.
 Gorā the potter at his thigh, Cokhā in his heart.
 Bankā on the hip,⁹⁴ Nāmā holds the little finger.
 Janī says, ‘Gopāḷ is having a *bhakta* festival’.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 30, SSG 1, p.718).⁹⁵

ॐॐॐॐ

गंगा गेली सिंधूपाशीं । त्याणें अव्हेरिलें तिसी ।१।
 तरी तें सांगावें कवणाला । ऐसें बोलें बा विठ्ठला ।२।
 जळ कोपे जळचरा । माता अव्हेरी लेंकुरा ।३।

⁹³ One version of the verse replaced *leṅkurāncā* with *gopāḷāncā*, ‘a gathering of Gopāḷs’. Gopāla (cowherd, a king, or a caste) is an epithet for Kṛṣṇa. Molesworth states that *gopālas* are leapers, tumblers, weightlifters or those who perform feats of strength (1857:245). One could therefore interpret the ‘gathering of Gopāḷs’ as a joyful get-together of Viṭṭhal’s caste, family or followers.

⁹⁴ The SSG refers to Vankā, while Marathi World refers to Bankā. Bankā, a *mahār*, is generally accepted as Soyarābār’s brother and Nirmaḷā’s husband (Mokashi-Punekar 2005b:143ff; Zelliott and Mokashi-Punekar 2005:30). There are two Vankās mentioned in the BVJ— one male and one female—as well as a female Bankā (BVJ 17.9, 74, 98). The first Vankā is associated with Cokhāmeḷā and is described as a woodcutter (BVJ 13.76; 15.71; 15.145). The second Vankā is the daughter of the potter Rākā and his wife Bankā (BVJ 17.8ff), although some versions of the story call the wife Baka and the daughter Bankā (Chenthil 2009). Due to a promise Rākā made Viṭṭhal—to save some kittens from dying—the whole family became mendicants. Rākā and his wife (Bankā or Baka) are recorded as dressing themselves in rags and then in leaves. This is significant when one considers the meaning of *vankā* (‘bare, naked, and void’). The term *vankā* is sometimes written *onkā* as a number of words that appear under ‘o’ are also written and pronounced under ‘va’ (Molesworth 1857:117, 727). Rākā is also described as collecting and selling faggots, from which the family subsist (BVJ 17. 67), which means that one could describe Rākā as a woodsman— although the story makes clear that he was not a woodcutter (BVJ 17:76). There is also a story (BVJ 17:59–285; and possibly a Nāmdev *abhaṅga*)—related by Ralhan (1997:238–9)—in which Vankā and Nāmdev’s daughter Limbāi get into an argument, the result of which is that Nāmdev is ultimately convinced of Rākā’s (and his family’s) detachment and indifference to worldly things. If there was a connection with Limbāi and Nāmdev then it is possible that Janābāi could have heard about or possibly even met Rākā, Bankā/Baka and/or Vankā. There are two main reasons that one might suppose that the most likely referent is Bankā: firstly, the figure is mentioned after Cokhāmeḷā (his brother-in-law) and secondly, the name Bankā appears in the *Śrīsakalasantagāthā*. One could argue that because the verse includes Muktābāi, a female *sant*, it is possible that the author of the verse may have incorporated another female. However, Muktābāi has the status of a poet while the relatively unknown female Bankā/Vankā might be considered a mere *bhakta*. Nevertheless, the difference in the two renditions leads me to wonder if there is some form of conflation here. Are there two Bankās: one male and one female? Could the verse actually be referring to them both under one name? Are there three Bankās: Cokhāmeḷā’s brother-in-law, a ‘woodcutter’ and a woman? Or is Bankā an amalgam of mother and daughter? If this is the case what might the author be indicating? Could Vankā be a reference to Rākā? Is the name/term *vankā* being used as an epithet for the *bhakti* ideal of worldly detachment rather than the name of a specific person? One could speculate that if the author was Janābāi, Nāmdev’s servant, she might have included a woman who she knew to represent worldly detachment. The last line of the verse refers to a festival of devotees, so it might be conceivable that the author would include the female Bankā-Vankā as representing worldly detachment, if not a dutiful wife/daughter? It may also be significant that the deity is carrying *vankā* (‘naked’) on his hips. The name Bankā is considered the diminutive of Venkaṭeśvar, ‘Lord who destroys sin’ (Mokashi-Punekar 2005b:143) so one might wonder if this a subtle reference to the gathering of ‘children’, Viṭṭhal’s devotees who are all ‘bare’ or ‘naked’ when with Viṭṭhal. However, the whole issue may be invalid because the difference is just a spelling mistake: ‘va’ instead of ‘ba’ or vice versa.

⁹⁵ There is also a translation by Sellergren (1996:218) and a ‘modern religious illustration’ of this verse, with the caption ‘My Vithoba has many children’, in *Manushi* (Vanita 1989:49; 2005:101). This fits with the SSG version of the verse as it depicts the *sants*, as children, with Viṭhobā.

जनी म्हणे शरण आलें । अच्हेरितां ब्रीद गेलें ।४।

*Gaṅgā gelī sindhūpāśī / tyāṅē avherīlē tisī /1/
Tarī tē saṅgāvē kavaṅālā / aisē bolē bā viṭṭhalā /2/
Jaḷa kope jaḷacarā / mātā avherī lēkurā /3/
Janī mhaṅe śaraṅa ālē / avheritā brīda gelē /4/*

If the Gaṅgā goes to the sea and the sea rejects her,⁹⁶
Tell me who would rebuke him father Viṭṭhal?
Can a river be angry with its fish?⁹⁷ Can a mother reject her child?⁹⁸
Janī says, ‘those who seek protection must not be rebuffed’.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 38, SSG 1, p.719).⁹⁹

ॐॐॐ

नाहीं केली तुझी सेवा । दुःख वाटतसे माझे जिवा ।१।
नष्ट पापीण मी हीन । नाही केले तुझे ध्यान ।२।
जेंजे दुःख झालें मला । तें त्वां सोसिलें विठ्ठला ।३।
तात्रंदिवस मजपाशीं । दळूं कांडूं लागलासी ।४।
क्षमा करावी देवराया । दासी जनी लागे पायां ।५।

*Nāhī kelī tujhī sevā / duḥkha vātatase mājhe jivā /1/
Naṣṭa pāpīṅa mī hīna /nāhī kele tujhē dhyāna /2/
Jēje duḥkha jhālē malā / tē tvā sōsilē viṭṭhalā /3/
Tātrandivasa majapāśī / daḷū kāṅḍū lāgalāsī /4/
Kṣmā karāvī devarāyā / dāsī janī lāge pāyā /5/*

I have not served you. I am very sorry.
I am a vile sinner, contemptible. I have not meditated upon You.
You have endured all my troubles and sorrows Viṭṭhal.
Beside me, day and night, you’ve helped me grind and pound.
‘Please forgive me Lord God’, begs your servant Janī.¹⁰⁰
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 42, SSG 1, p.720).

ॐॐॐ

येरे येरे माझ्या रामा । मनमोहन मेघश्यामा ।१।
संतमिसें भेटी । देई देई कृपा गोष्टी ।२।

⁹⁶ This line is similar to *Amṛtānubhava* 1.54: सिंधू आणि गंगेची मिळणी । स्त्रीपुरुष नामाची मिरवणी । दिसतसे तरी काय पाणी दवैत होइल ।।? *sindhū āṅi gaṅgecī miḷaṅi / strīpuruṣa nāmācī miravaṅi / diastase tarī kāya pāṅi dvaita hoila?* ‘Although the names “Ganges” and “ocean” are different, when then commingle, are their waters not the same?’ (Abhayananda 2000:119) and *Jñāneśvarī* 18.1572: गंगा सिंधू सेवू गेली । पावतांचि समुद्र जाली । तेवीं भक्तां सेल दिधली । निजपदाची ।।१५७२।। *Gaṅgā sindhū sevū gelī / pāvataīcī samudra jāli / tevī bhakta sela didhalī / nijapadācī //* ‘The river Ganges goes to serve the ocean but becomes the ocean. Similarly you give the devotee a share of Yourself’ (my translation).

⁹⁷ The term *jala* refers to water or any fluid in general but is also the name of a river (Monier Williams 2008) and *jalacara* refers to ‘a water animal’ (Molesworth 1857:309; Tulpule 1999:574; Vaze 1911:204). I have translated *jala* as ‘river’ rather than ‘water’ and *jalacara* as ‘fish’ due to the reference to rivers in the first line of the *abhaṅga*.

⁹⁸ The term *sindhu* refers ‘the ocean or a sea’, ‘the river Indus’, a ‘river’ (Molesworth 1857:852) or ‘a stream; flood, waters’ (Monier Williams 2008). This verse may be referring to the *bhakta*’s unitive experience with the Divine put forward in the *Jñāneśvarī* (18.1138) and *Amṛtānubhava* (9.1–71).

⁹⁹ See Sellergren (1996:222) for another translation, although it would appear that the Marathi Sellergren uses differs from this rendition (1996:235, n.14).

¹⁰⁰ Janābāi *abhaṅga* 155 (SSG 1, p.731) also ends *dāsī janī lāge pāyā*. The phrase translates literally as ‘servant Janī touches your feet’.

आमची चुकवी जन्मव्याधी । आम्हां देई हो समाधी ।३।
जनी म्हणे चक्रपाणी । करीं ऐसी हो करणी ।४।

*Yere yere mājhyā rāmā / manamohana medhaśyāmā /1/
Santamisē bheṭī / deī deī kṛpā goṣṭī /2/
Āmacī cukavī janmavyādhi / āmhā deī ho samādhi /3/
Janī mhaṇe cakrapāṇī / karī aisi ho karaṇī /4/*

Come oh come my Rāma; Charmer, the Dark One.
Look upon the meeting of the *sants* with kindness.¹⁰¹
Remove our re-birth and disease, please give us bliss.
Janī says, Cakrapāṇī, please do this deed.¹⁰²
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 43, SSG 1, p.720).¹⁰³

ॐॐॐॐ

अहो नारायणा । मजवरी कृपा कां कराना ।१।
मी तो अज्ञानाची रासी । म्हणोन आलें पायांपाशीं ।२।
जनी म्हणे आतां । मज सोडवीं कृपावंता ।३।

*Aho nārāyaṇā / majavarī kṛpā kā karānā /1/¹⁰⁴
Mīto adñyānācī rāsī / mhaṇona ālē pāyāṃpāśī /2/
Janī mhaṇe ātā / maja soḍavī kṛpāvantā /3/*

O Nārāyaṇā, why don't you bless me?
I am ignorant; therefore I have come to your feet.
Janī says, it's high time, O Compassionate One, [that you] liberate me!
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 44, SSG 1, p.720).

ॐॐॐॐ

पोट भरूनी व्यालासी । मज सांडुनी कोठें जासी ।१।
धिरा धिरा पांडुरंगा । मज कां टाकिलें निःसंगा ।२।
ज्याचा जार त्यासी भार । मजला नाही आनिक थार ।३।
विठाबाई मायबहिणी । तुझे कृपे तरली जनी ।४।

*Poṭa bharūnī vyālāsī / maja sāṇḍunī koṭhē jāśī /1/
Dhirā dhirā pāṇḍuraṅga / maja kā ṭākilē niḥsaṅgā /2/
Jyācā jāra tyāsī bhāra / majalā nāhī ānika thāra /3/
Viṭhābāi māyabahiṇī / tujhe kṛpē taraḷī janī /4/*

You've filled my belly; how come you now abandon me.
Gently, gently Pāṇḍuraṅga; why have you abandoned me without a companion?
Only I know how stressed I am; I have no other resting place.
Viṭhābāi, my mother and sisters, with your blessing Janī is saved.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 48, SSG 1, p.720).

ॐॐॐॐ

सख्या पंढरीच्या राया । घडे दंडवत पायां ।१।

¹⁰¹ This literally means 'Meeting with the saints, look upon with blessings'.

¹⁰² *Cakrapāṇī* means 'discus bearer' and is an epithet for Viṣṇu.

¹⁰³ There is a translation of this verse by Sellergren (1996:221–222).

¹⁰⁴ The words *nārāyaṇā* and *karānā* rhyme.

ऐसें करीं अखंडित । शुद्ध प्रेम शुद्ध चित्त ।२।
वेध माझ्या चित्ता । हाचि लागो पंढरीनाथा ।३।
जावें ओवाळुनी । जन्मोजन्मीं म्हणे जनी ।४।

*Sakhyā paṇḍharīcyā rāyā / ghaḍe daṇḍavata pāyā /1/
Aisē karī akhaṇḍita / śuddha prema śuddha citta /2/
Vedha mājhyā citta / hāci lāgo paṇḍharīnāthā /3/
Jāvē ōvāḷunī / janmojanmī mhaṇe janī /4/*

Friend, King of Paṇḍharī, may I be able to prostrate myself at your feet.¹⁰⁵
[May I be able to] do this uninterruptedly, with pure love and pure understanding.
My constant thought, may it be of the Lord of Paṇḍharpūr.
'I'll perform *ōvāḷaṇī* from birth to birth', says Janī.¹⁰⁶
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 53, SSG, p.721).

ॐॐॐॐ

कां गा उशीर लाविला । माझा विसर पडिला ।१।
तुजवरी संसार । बोळविलें घरदार ।२।
तो तूं आपुल्या दासासी । म्हणें जनी विसंबसी ।३।

*Kā gā uśīra lāvilā / mājhā visara paḍilā /1/
Tujavarī saṃsāra / boḷavilē gharadāra /2/
To tū āpulyā dāsāsī / mhaṇē janī visambasī /3/*

Why are you late? Did you forget me?
You're responsible for this life; everyone calls upon you.
You are burdened with your servants' demands, says Janī, 'rest awhile'.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 54, SSG 1, p.721).

ॐॐॐॐ

माय मेली बाप मेला । आतां सांभाळी विठ्ठला ।१।
मी तुझे गा लेकरूं । नको मजशीं अव्हेरूं ।२।
मतिमंद मी तुझी दासी । ठाव द्यावा पायांपाशीं ।३।
तुजविण सखे कोण । माझे करील संरक्षण ।४।
अंत किती पाहासी देवा । थोर श्रम झाला जीवा ।५।
सकल जीवाच्या जीवना । म्हणे जनी नारायणा ।६।

*Māya melī bāpa melā / ātā sāmbhālī viṭṭhalā /1/
Mī tujhe gā लेकरूं / nako majaśī avherूं /2/
Matimanda mī tujhī dāsī / thāva dyāvā pāyāmpāśī /3/
Tujaviṇa sakhe koṇa / mājhē karīla saṃrakṣaṇa /4/
Anta kiṭī pāhāsī devā / thora śrama jhālā jīvā /5/
Sakala jīvācyā jīvanā / mhaṇe janī nārāyaṇā /6/*

Mother is dead, father is dead; please take care of my Viṭṭhal.
I am your child, don't set me aside.

¹⁰⁵ As a low caste woman Janī would not have been allowed to enter the temple so this is poignant.

¹⁰⁶ *Ōvāḷaṇē* (*ōvāḷī*, *ōvāḷla*, *ōvāḷaṇī*) means to move a lamp vertically in a circular motion in front of a deity or person in order to remove evil or in consecration (Molesworth 1857:122). The receiver will have a *kuṅkum* (saffron, turmeric) *tilak* (mark on the forehead) and then be offered rice, grains and flame (Personal communication, V.P. Kaniṭkar, 27th January 2011). See Janābāi *abhaṅga* 172 (SSG 1, p.733) for another reference to Janābāi performing *ōvāḷaṇe*.

I am a slow learner, a dumb person and your servant; give me a place at your feet.
 Who else is there, my friend, to protect me?
 Don't test my patience O Lord, my spirit is weary.
 O life force in all living things, Janī says 'Nārāyaṇā'.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 58, SSG 1, p. 721).¹⁰⁷

ॐॐॐ

अहो सखीये सजणी । ज्ञानाबाई हो हरणी ।१।
 मज पाडसाची माय । भक्ति वत्साची ते गाय ।२।
 कां गा उशीर लाविला । तुजविण शिण झाला ।३।
 अहो बैसलें दळणीं । धांव घाली म्हणे जनी ।४।

Aho sakhīye sajanī / jñānābāi ho haraṇī //1//
Maja pāḍasācī māyā / bhakti vatsācī te gāya //2//
Kā gā uśīr lāvilā / tujaviṇa śiṇa jhālā //3//
Aho baisalē ḍalaṇī / dhāṃva ghālī mhaṇe janī //4//

O friend, beloved companion, Jñānābāi, O doe.¹⁰⁸
 I am your child, attached to you like a calf to its mother.¹⁰⁹
 Why are you late? Without you I am exhausted.
 I've sat down to grind; 'O make haste', says Janī.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 59, SSG 1, p. 721).¹¹⁰

ॐॐॐ

राजाई गोणाई । अखंडित तुझे पार्यी ।१।
 मज ठेवियलें द्वारीं । नीच म्हणोनि बाहेरी ।२।
 नारा गौदा महादा विठा । ठेवियलें अग्रवाटा ।३।
 देवा केव्हां क्षेम देसी । आपुली म्हणोनि जनी दासी ।४।

Rājāi goṇāi / akhaṇḍita tujhe pāyī //1/
Maja ṭhoviyaḷē dvārī / nīca mhaṇoni bāherī //2/
Nārā gondā mahādā viṭhā / ṭhoviyaḷē agravāṭā //3/
Devā kevhā kṣēma deśī / āpulī mhaṇoni janī dāsī //4/

Rājāi and Goṇāi have been at your feet all along.
 You make me stand outside the door; you consider me base.
 Nārā, Gondā, Mahādā and Viṭhā,¹¹¹ for them there are ways to go.
 When will you grant me your concern and call me your servant.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ There is a translation of this verse by Vanita (2005:98) and one by Poitevin and Rairkar (1996:80).

¹⁰⁸ The term *sakhī* denotes a 'female friend' and *sajanī* (*sājanī*) refers to a 'woman friend' (Tulpule 1999:731), 'a [female] friend or lover' (Berntsen 1982–83:157), or 'a mistress, a beloved woman; a woman's confidante or female companion' (Molesworth 1857:731). This line has been translated by Poitevin and Rairkar as 'O Friend! Dear One! It's Janābāi the doe' (1996:80 v.200) but my understanding is that the author is referring to Jñāneśvar as mother (Dhere 2011:214). Consequently, I have taken *ho* as a vocative particle and not a form of the verb *hoṇē* (to be).

¹⁰⁹ The term *pāḍasa* denotes 'a fawn' (Molesworth 1857:503; Tulpule 1999:428) but is applied to a calf or an infant as an endearment according to Molesworth (1857:503) and the term *vatsa* denotes 'a calf' (Molesworth 1857:731). The term *bhakti* is generally taken as 'devotion to' but also denotes belonging to, attachment to, fondness for and so on (Monier Williams 2008), which is why I have translated *bhakti* as 'attachment' in the context of the mother-doe and child-calf.

¹¹⁰ This *abhaṅga* has also been translated by Poitevin and Rairkar (1996:80v.200), Vanita (2005:98) and (Dhere 2011:214).

¹¹¹ This is a reference to Goṇāi and Nāmdev's sons. The point of the verse is that Janābāi is an outsider within Nāmdev's family where she is the servant but moreover that she is not yet on the path of *bhakti* like Nāmdev's sons and is pleading for inclusion.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 67, SSG 1, p.722).¹¹³

ॐॐॐ

येग येग विठागाई । माझे पंढरीचे आई ।१।
भीमा आणि चंद्रभागा । तुझे चरणिंच्या गंगा ।२।
इतुक्यांसहित त्वां बा यावें । माझे रंगुनी नाचावे ।३।
माझा रंग तुझिया गुणी । म्हणे नामयाची जनी ।४।

*Ye ga ye ga viṭhābāi / mājhe paṇḍharīce āi /1/
Bhīmā aṇi candrabhāgā / tujhe caraṇīcyā gaṅgā /2/
Itukyāsahita tvāṅ bā yāvē / mājhe raṅgunī nācāve /3/
Mājhā raṅga tujhiyā guṇī / mhane nāmayācī janī /4/*

Come O, come O, Viṭhābāi, my mother from Paṇḍharī.
The Bhimā and Candrabhāgā are the Gaṅgā at your feet.¹¹⁴
Come with all these; dance in my garden.
Your virtues colour me, says Nāma's Janī.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 71, SSG 1, p.722).¹¹⁵

ॐॐॐ

कां गे निष्ठुर झालीसी । मुक्या बाळातें सांडिसी ।१।
तुज वांचोनियां माये । जीव माझा जावो पाहे ।२।
मी वत्स माझी माय । नये आतां करूं काय ।३।
प्राण धरियेला कंठी । जनी म्हणे देई भेटी ।४।

*Kā ge niṣṭhura jhālīsī / mukyā bālātē sāṅdisī /1/
Tuja vāṅconiyā māye / jīva mājhā jāvo pāhe /2/
Mīvatsa mājhī māya / naye ātā karū kāya /3/
Prāṇa dhariyelā kaṅṭhī / janī mhaṅe deī bheṭī /4/*

Why are you so heartless? I'm your dumb child.
Without you Mother, my soul wants to abandon me.
I am the calf, You are my mother; I don't know what to do now.
I'm holding my breath; Janī says, 'please meet me'.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 74, SSG 1, p.723).¹¹⁶

ॐॐॐ

चिंतनी चित्ताला । लावी मनाच्या मनाला ।१।
उन्मनीच्या मुखा आंत । पांडुरंग भेटी देत ।२।
कवटाळुनी भेटी पोटी । जनी म्हणे सांगुं गोष्टी ।३।

*Cintānī cittālā / lāvī manācyā manālā /1/
Unmanīcyā mukhā ānta / paṇḍuraṅga bheṭī deta /2/*

¹¹² The last part of this line could also read 'when will you call me yours, your servant Janī' or 'when will you call Janī, the servant'.

¹¹³ There is also a translation of this verse by Sellergren (1996:218–219). For a verse relating to Nāmdev's family see Janābāi *abhaṅga* 279 (SSG 1:744).

¹¹⁴ The river Bhimā at Paṇḍharpūr is shaped like a crescent moon (*candra*) and is therefore called the Candrabhāgā (see Novetzke 2005a:113).

¹¹⁵ There is a translation of this verse by Vanita (2005:100).

¹¹⁶ There is a translation of this verse by Vanita (2005:98).

Kavaṭāḷunī bheṭī poṭī / janī mhaṇe sāṅgū goṣṭī /3/

I'm thinking so much that my mind's mind is thinking.
In these happy thoughts Pāṇḍuraṅga comes to meet me.
I embrace him.¹¹⁷ Janī says, 'we conversed'.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 77, SSG 1, p.723).

ॐॐॐॐ

देहाचा पालट विठाबाचे भेटी । जळ लवणा गांठी पडोन ठेली ।१।
धन्य मायबाप नामदेव माझा । तेणें पंढरिराजा दाखविलें ।२।
रात्रंदिवस भाव विठ्ठलाचे पार्यी । चित्त ठायींचे ठायीं मावळलें ।३।
नामयाचे जनी आनंद पै झाला । भेटावया आला पांडुरंग ।४।

*Dehācā pāḷaṭa viṭhābāce bheṭī / jaḷa lavaṇa gāṅṭhī paḍona ṭhēḷī /1/
Dhanya māyabāpa nāmadeva mājhā / teṇē paṇḍharirājā dākhavilē /2/¹¹⁸
Rātrandivas bhāva viṭṭhalāce pāyī / citta thāyīnce thāyī māvaḷalē /3/
Nāmayāce janī ānanda paī jhālā / bheṭāvayā ālā pāṇḍuraṅga /4/*

After meeting Viṭṭhal my body changed completely, water and salt met.¹¹⁹
Nāmdev, my mother and father, is blessed; through him I saw the king of Paṇḍharī.
Day and night my devotion remains at Viṭhobā's feet and my consciousness melts there.
Nāma's Janī seems happy; Pāṇḍuraṅga has come to meet me.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 78, SSG 1, p.723).

ॐॐॐॐ

झाडलोट कारी जनी । केर भरी चक्रपाणी ।१।
पाटी घेऊनिया शिरी । नेऊनियां टाकी दुरी ।२।
ऐसा भक्तिसी भूलला । नीच मामें करूं लागला ।३।
जनी म्हणे विठोबाला । काय उतराई होऊं तुला ।४।

*Jhāḍaloṭa kārī janī / kera bharī cakrapāṇī /1/
Pāṭī gheūniyā śirī / neūniyā ṭākī durī /2/
Aisā bhaktisī bhūlalā / nīca māmē karū lāgalā /3/
Janī mhaṇe viṭhobālā / kayā utarāī hoī tulā /4/*

Janī sweeps briskly. Cakrapāṇī collects the rubbish,
Carries the basket on his head and throws the refuse far away.
He has become infatuated by devotion and is doing lowly chores.

¹¹⁷ The verb *kavaṭāḷane* means 'to embrace' (Tulpule 1999:137). The verb *bheṭane* connotes 'to meet, to have an interview with; to join in close embrace; to encounter, to meet or fall in with' (Molesworth 1857:617). The author seems to be suggesting that s/he embraced the stomach or belly (*poṭī*) of Pāṇḍuraṅga—suggesting s/he was hugging him when they met.

¹¹⁸ The term here may also be *paṇḍharirāyā* meaning 'the darling (*rāyā*) of Paṇḍharpūr'.

¹¹⁹ The idea here is that just as salt dissolves in water and the two become one, there is a union between *jivā* and *śiva*. Janābāi has therefore been flooded with self-realisation and/or become one with God (Personal communication, Veena Dhade, 20th October 2004). A similar idea is expressed in the *Amṛtānubhava* 1.63: सांडूनि मीठपणाचा लोभु । मीठें सिंधुत्वाचा घेतला लोभु । तेवी अहं देऊनि मी शंभु । शांभवी झालो सान्दूनि मिथपणाचा लोभु / miṭhē sindhutvācā lābhū / tevī aham deūni mī śambhu / śāmbhavī jhālō// 'When salt dissolves, it becomes one with the ocean; When my ego dissolved I became one with Shiva and Shakti' (Abhayananda 2000:120); and the *Cāṅgadev Pasasti* 46: लवण पाणियाचा थावो । माजि रिघोनि गेलें पाहो । तंव तेंचि नाही, मा काय घेवो । माप जळा ? *lavaṇa pāṇiyācā thāvo / māji righoni gele pāho / tanva tēci nāhī, mā kāya ghevo / māpa jalā?* 'A grain of salt went to fathom the ocean's depths, But when it became immersed, where did it go? What can it do and what can it measure when it has altogether ceased to exist' (Abhayananda 2000:243).

Janī says, ‘Viṭhobā, how can I repay you?’
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 80, SSG 1, p.723).¹²⁰

ॐॐॐ

एकटी तूं गाणें गासी । दुजा शब्द उमटे पाशी ।१।
कोण गे तुझ्याबरोबरी । गाणे गाती निरंतरी ।२।
पांडुरंग माझा पिता । रखुमाई झाली माता ।३।
ऐशियाच्या घरीं आलें । जनी म्हणे धन्य झालें ।४।

*Ekaṭī tūṅ gāṅē gāsī / dujā śabda umaṭe pāśī /1/
Koṅa ge tujhyābarobarī / gāṅe gātī nīrantarī /2/
Pāṅḍuraṅga mājhā pīta / rakhumāī jhālī mātā /3/
Aiśiyācyā gharī ālē / janī mhaṅe dhanya jhālē /4/*

You sing by yourself; another voice is heard nearby.
‘Who’s singing with you?’ One who sings continuously.
“Pāṅḍuraṅga is my father, Rakhumāī is my mother”.
Janī says, ‘I’ve come home. I am blessed’.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 82, SSG 1, p. 724).¹²¹

ॐॐॐ

जनी डोईनें गांजली । विठाबाई धांविन्नली ।१।
देव हातें बुचडा सोडी । उवा मारीतसे तांतडी ।२।
केश विंचरुनी मोकळे केले । जनी म्हणे निर्मळ झालें ।३।

*Janī ḍoīṅē gāṅjalī / viṭhābāī dhāṅvinnalī /1/
Deva haṭē bucaḍā soḍī / uvā mārītase tāntaḍī /2/
Keśa viṅcarunī mokaḷe kele / janī mhaṅe nirmaḷa jhālē /3/*

Janī’s head is itching. Viṭhābāī runs to her aid.
God unties her hair, crushes the lice quickly.¹²²
She combed her tangled hair free. Janī says, ‘I feel clean’.¹²³
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 83, SSG 1, p.724).¹²⁴

ॐॐॐ

एके दिवशीं न्हावयास । पाणी नव्हते विसणास ।१।
देव धांवोनियां आले । शीतळ उदक घे घे बोले ।२।
आपुल्या हाते विसणी । घाली जनीच्या दोयी पाणी ।३।
माझ्या डोइच्या केशांस । न्हाणे नव्हतें फार दिवस ।४।
तेणें मुरडी देशांस । कां म्हणे उगीच बैस ।५।
आपुल्या हाते वेणी घाली । जनी म्हणे माय झाली ।६।

Eke divaśīṅ nhāvayāsa / pāṅī navhate viṣaṅāsa /1/

¹²⁰ There is a translation of this verse by Vanita (2005:96).

¹²¹ There is a translation of this verse by Pandharipande (2000:176).

¹²² *Bucaḍā* refers to the ‘hair of the head bound up in a...top knot’ (Molesworth 1857:584) or a ‘tangle or snarl in the hair’ (Tulpule 1999:494).

¹²³ Janī combed her matted hair and removed the tangles (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 19th May 2011).
There is a translation of this verse by Vanita (2005:97).

¹²⁴ There is a translation of this verse by Vanita (2005:97).

*Deva dhāṇvoniṣā āle / śīṭaḷa udaka ghe ghe bole /2/
 Āpulyā hate viṣaṇī / ghālī janīcyā doṃī pāṇī /3/
 Mājhyā ḍoicyā kesānsa / nhāṇe navhatē phāra dīvasa /4/
 Teṇē muradī deśānsa / kā mhaṇe ugīca bāisa /5/
 Āpulyā hāte veṇī ghālī / janī mhaṇe māya jhālī /6/*

One bathing day: no tepid water.
 God came running and said ‘take this cold water’.¹²⁵
 Adding cold water to hot he pours water on Janī’s head himself.
 ‘For too long my hair has not been washed’.
 He wrings her hair, says ‘sit quietly!’
 He plaits her hair himself. Janī says, ‘My mother has come’.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 85, SSG 1, p.724).¹²⁶

ॐॐॐॐ

तुळशीचे बर्नी । जनी उकलीत वेणी ।१।
 हार्ती घेऊनियां लोणी । डोई चोळी चक्रपाणी ।२।¹²⁷
 माझे जनीला नाही कोणी । म्हणूनी देव घाली पाणी ।३।
 जनी सांगे सर्व लोकां । न्हाऊं घाली माझा सखा ।४।

*Tuḷaśīce banī / janī ukalīta veṇī /1/
 Hāṭī gheūniyā loṇī / ḍoī colī cakrapāṇī /2/
 Mājhe janīlā nāhī koṇī / mhaṇūnī deva ghālī pāṇī /3/
 Janī sāṅge sarva lokā / nhāū ghālī mājhā sakhā /4/*

Among the basil plants Janī unravels her plaits.¹²⁸
 Cakrapāṇī takes some butter and massages Janī’s head.
 ‘My Janī has no one’, so God pours water.
 Janī tells everyone, ‘My dear friend is washing me’.¹²⁹
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 86, SSG 1, p. 724).¹³⁰

ॐॐॐॐ

साळी सदायास काढी । पुढे जाउनी उखळ झाडी ।१।
 कांडितां कांडिता । शीण आला पंढरीनाथा ।२।
 सर्व अंगीं घाम आला । तेणें पितांबर भिजला ।३।
 पायी पेंजण हार्ती कडीं । कोंडा पांखडुनि काढी ।४।
 हाता आला असे फोड । जनी म्हणे मुसळ सोड ।५।

Sālī sadāyāsa kāḍhī / puḍhe jāunī ukhaḷa jhāḍī /1/

¹²⁵ *Ghe ghe* translates literally as ‘take, take!’

¹²⁶ There is a translation of this verse by Vanita (2005:96).

¹²⁷ The name Cakrapāṇī should probably be written Cakrapāṇī, with a short ‘i’ but the ‘ī’ rhymes better and makes the play on the word *pāṇī* ‘water’ better.

¹²⁸ The term *bana* refers to a ‘grove’ (Molesworth 1857:564; Tulpule 1999:481), a ‘wood’, ‘plantation’ (Molesworth 1857:481) or a ‘garden’ (Tulpule 1999:481). Consequently, the phrase could read ‘In the basil grove’ or ‘in the garden of *tulasī*’.

¹²⁹ It seems as if Viṭṭhal washes both Janī’s head/hair and body at bath time (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 19th May 2011). It is worth noting that loose hair is a symbol of female sexuality. Loose hair can indicate a state of bodily pollution such as menstruation during which time a woman should not oil her hair. In some cases the act of oiling the hair, usually undertaken by unmarried girls or women married to a living husband, may be considered a means of making oneself attractive to the opposite sex. Moreover, loose or dishevelled hair can symbolise a dissolute or even violent state, such as that of the goddess Kali (Fuller 1992:188; Hildebeitel 1981:206, 396).

¹³⁰ There is a translation of this verse by Vanita (2005:97).

*Kāṇḍitā kāṇḍitā / śīṇa ālā paṇḍharīnāthā /2/
 Sarva aṅgī ghāma ālā / teṇē pītāmbara bhījalā /3/
 Pāyī painjāna hātī kaḍī / koṇḍā pāṅkhaḍuni kāḍhī /4/
 Hātā ālā ase phoḍa / janī mhaṇe musaḷa soḍa /5/*

To remove the husk from rice he swept the mortar.
 Pounding vigorously Paṇḍharīnāth became exhausted.
 His entire body drenched in sweat, his yellow *dhoti* became wet.¹³¹
 Anklets on his feet and rings on his hands, he removed the chaff by winnowing.
 On his hand a blister appeared, Janī said, ‘let go of the pestle’.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 87, SSG 1, p.724).¹³²

ॐॐॐ

देव भावाचा लंपट । सोडुनी आला हो वैकुंठ ।१।
 पुंडलिकापुढे उभा । सम चरणांवरी शोभा ।२।
 हातीं चक्र पार्यी वांकी । मुख भक्ताचे अवलोकीं ।३।
 उभा बैसे न सर्वथा । पाहे कोठे भक्तकथा ।४।
 सर्व सुखाचा सागर । जनी म्हणे शारंगधर ।५।

*Deva bhāvācā lampaṭa / soḍunī ālā ho vaikuṅṭha /1/
 Puṇḍalikāpuḍhē ubhā / sama caraṇāvarī śobhā /2/
 Hātī cakra pāyī vāṅkī / mukha bhaktācē avalokī /3/
 Ubhā baise na sarvathā / pāhe koṭhē bhaktakathā /4/
 Sarva sukhācā sāgara / janī mhaṇe śāraṅgadhara /5/*

God values deep devotion. He left heaven and came down [to earth].
 He stood in front of Puṇḍalīk, with well-formed beautiful feet.
 Discus in hand, anklets at his feet, He beheld the devotee’s face.
 He stands erect, never sits down. Witness the story of devotees!
 Janī says, ‘Śāraṅgadhara is the Ocean of all happiness’.¹³³
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 91, SSG 1, p.724).

ॐॐॐ

¹³¹ The *pītāmbara* is the yellow silk *dhoti* or *dhotar* (Marathi)—five to seven yards of cloth that is tied and knotted at a man’s waist and which covers most of the legs—worn by Viṭṭhal and Kṛṣṇa.

¹³² There is a partial translation of this *abhaṅga* by Pandharipande (2000:167) and full translation by Vanita (2005:97–8).

¹³³ Śāraṅgadhara, ‘Bow-holder’, is an epithet for Viṣṇu or one of his incarnations (*avatār*). However, this reference is rather confusing. There are stories connecting both Kṛṣṇa (HV 81.63–4; Matchett 2001:59) and Rāma to a bow. In the *Bhāgavata Purāna*—a text modelled on the *Harivaṃśa*, which is regarded as a supplement (*khila*) to the *Mahābhārata* (Brockington 1998:313ff)—Lakṣmaṇā tells Draupadī how she chose to marry Kṛṣṇa. Lakṣmaṇā states that her father, Bṛhatsena, set up a *svayaṃvara* (‘own choice’) marriage ceremony/contest for her. The contest—similar to the one in which Arjūna won Draupadī (*Mahābhārata, ādi parva*)—required the competitor to shoot a swimming fish through the eye with a bow and arrow. This feat was accomplished by Kṛṣṇa and the couple then married (BhP 83. 17–39; Bryant 2003:353–55). The first book of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Bālakaṇḍa ‘Boyhood’) relates how Rāma breaks the bow given to king Janaka by Śiva during the *svayaṃvara* ceremony/contest and as a result marries Janaka’s daughter Sītā (*Rāmāyaṇa* 65, 66; Goldman 2005:333ff). The *Rāmāyaṇa* also recounts how, after Rāma and Sītā’s wedding, Paraśurāma (the sixth incarnation of Viṣṇu, the ‘warrior Brahmin’) appeared and told Rāma—sometimes referred to as Rāmacandra (Rāma-‘moon’) or Rāma-Daśarathi (son of Daśaratha of Ayodhyā) who is the seventh incarnation of Viṣṇu—the history of the bows. Viṣṇu and Śiva were going to fight a duel, so Viśvakarma (the Architect of the Universe) made a bow for each of them. Śiva was disappointed when Viṣṇu unstrung his bow—the *śiva dhanuśa*—so he gave his bow to Devarāta. This bow was passed on to Janaka and was broken by Rāma. Viṣṇu’s bow went to Rṣika, Jamadagni and finally Paraśurāma. Paraśurāma states that having heard that Rāma had broken Śiva’s bow he wanted to see if Rāma was strong enough to break Viṣṇu’s bow (*śāraṅga*). Rāma proves mighty and Paraśurāma, having been robbed of his strength, departs (*Rāmāyaṇa* 74.1–75.20; see Goldman 2005:380–388). The point of this story is that while both Rāmas are incarnations of Viṣṇu it is Rāma-Daśarathi/Rāmacandra who is declared the mightier asserts Wilkins (2003:168ff). There is a hymn by Tulsīdās—*kabhun tau kar-saroj raghunāyak* (O Lord of Raghus! O Rāma!)—describing this incident (Subramanian 2008:86–7).

यातिहीन चोखामेळा । त्यासी भक्तांचा कळवळा ।१।
त्याचा झाला म्हणीयारा । राहे घरी धरी थारा ।२।
देह बाटविला त्याणें । हासे जनी गाय गाणें ।३।

*Yātihīna cōkhāmeḷā / tyāsī bhaktāncā kaḷavaḷā /1/
Tyācā jhālā mhaṇīyārā / rāhe gharī dharī thārā /2/
Deha bāṭavilā tyāṇē / hāse janī gāya gāṇē /3/*

Casteless Cōkhāmeḷā feels intensely for his devotees.
By staying at home he provides shelter [for his devotees].
He has shared his body, Janī laughs and sings songs.¹³⁴
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 96, SSG 1, p.725).

ॐॐॐ

चोखामेळा संत भला । तेणें देव भुलवीला ।१।
भक्ति आहे ज्याची मोठी । त्याला पावतो संकटीं ।२।
चोख्यामेळ्याची करणी । तेणें देव केला ऋणी ।३।
लागा विठ्ठलचरणीं । म्हणे नामयाची जनी ।४।

*Cōkhāmeḷā santa bhalā / teṇē deva bhulavīlā /1/
Bhakti āhe jyācīmoṭhī / tyālā pāvato sankatī /2/
Cōkhāmeḷā karaṇī / teṇē deva kelā ṛṇī /3/
Lāga viṭṭhalacaranī / mhaṇe nāmayācī janī /4/*

Cōkhāmeḷā is a good *sant*, who has bewitched God.
So great is his devotion, he is blessed in times of trouble.
Through his deeds Cōkhāmeḷā's God is indebted to him.
Go to Viṭṭhal's feet, says Nāma's Janī.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 97, SSG 1, p.725).

ॐॐॐ

जनी म्हणे पांडुरंगा । माझ्या जीवींच्या जीवलगा । विनवितें सांगा । महिमा साधुसंतांचा ।१।
कैसी वसविली पंढरी । काय महिमा भीमातीरीं । पुंडलिकाच्या द्द्वारीं । कां उभा राहिलासी ।२।
कैसा आला हा गोविंद । कैसा झाला वेणुनाद । येउनी नारद । कां राहिला ।३।
कृपा करा नारायणा । सांगा अंतरींच्या खुणा । येऊं दे करुणा । दासी जनी विनवितसे ।४।

*Janī mhaṇe pāṇḍuraṅgā / mājhyā jīvīcyā jīvalagā / vinavitē sāṅgā / mahimā sādhusāntāncā /1/
Kaisī vasavilī paṇḍharī / kāya mahimā bhīmātīrī / puṇḍalikācyā dvārī / kā ubhā rāhilāsī /2/
Kaisā ālā hā govinda / Kaisā jhālā venunāda / yeunīnārada / kā rāhilā /3/
Kṛpā karā nārāyaṇā / sāṅgā antarīcyā khuṇā / yeū de karuṇā / dāsī janī vinavitase /4/*

Janī says, 'Pāṇḍuraṅga, you are my soul mate; I beseech you [tell me of] the greatness of the holy ones.
What's the significance of the Bhīma's river-bank? Why are you standing beside Puṇḍalik's door?
How can Govind be here? How does the sound of the flute float here? Has Nārada come to stay?'¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Cōkhāmeḷā's body does not remain his; everyone gets a part of him because he does so much.

¹³⁵ Nārada, 'Wisdom Giver', is known as the son of Brahma and one of the ten *mūnis* or *ṛṣis*, while in later mythology he is regarded as the friend of Kṛṣṇa. He is credited with the composition of the *Nārada Bhakti Sūtra* (c. twelfth century), which details the worship of Kṛṣṇa. He is regarded as 'an archetypal figure of spiritual devotion' whose mission was 'the dissemination of the teachings of bhakti yoga' according to Prem (1998:3-4). He is usually depicted with a *vīṇā* or *tampura* as his principal act of devotion is to sing the praises of the Lord. Nārada, in this verse, can be understood as the preeminent *bhakta*.

Do me a favour Nārāyaṇā; tell me of the innermost heart'. 'Have pity on me', servant Janī prays.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 104, SSG 1, p.726).¹³⁶

ॐॐॐ

कोणे एके दिवशीं । विठो गेला जनीपार्शीं ।१।
हळूच मागते खायासी । काय देऊं बा मी तुसी ।२।
हार्ती धरून नेला आंत । वाढी पंचामृत भात ।३।
प्रेमसुखाचा ढंकर दिला । जनी म्हणे विठो धाला ।४।

*Koṇe eke divaśī / viṭho gelā janīpāśī /1/
Haḷūca māgate khāyāsī / kāya deū bā mī tusī /2/
Hārtī dharūna nelā ānta / vādhī pañcāmṛta bhāta /3/
Premasukhācā ḍhenkara dilā / janī mhaṇe viṭho dhālā /4/*

One fine day, Viṭho went to Janī.
Quietly He asked her for food to eat. 'Father, what can I give you?'
Holding hands she led him inside, served him *pañcāmṛta* and rice.¹³⁷
Belching with love and satisfaction, Janī says 'Viṭho is sated'.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 116, SSG 1, p.727).

ॐॐॐ

दळण्याच्या मिषें । विठ्ठल सावकार्शें ।१।
देहबुद्धीचें वैरण । द्वाैत खडा रे निसून ।२।
एकलिच गातां । दुजा साद उमटतां ।३।
कोण तुझे बरोबर । साद देतो निरंतरी ।४।
खून कलली नामदेवा । विठ्ठल श्रोता जनीच्या भावा ।५।

*Daḷaṅyācyā miṣē / viṭṭhala sāvakaśē /1/
Dehabuddhīcē vairāṇa / dvaita khaḍā re nisūna /2/
Ekalīca gātā / dujā sāda umaṭatā /3/
Koṇa tujhe barobara / sāda deto nirantarī /4/
Khūṇa kalalī nāmadevā / viṭṭhala śrotā janīcyā bhāvā /5/*

With the excuse of grinding Viṭṭhal comes in slowly.
Body and soul, as the handful of feed, clean the stone of duality.
Alone, she sings; another voice responds.
'Who are you with?' He constantly answers your call.
'Nāmdev, I know the sign'. Viṭṭhal hears Janī's feelings.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 118, SSG 1, p. 727).

ॐॐॐ

काकड आरती । करावया कामळपती ।१।
भक्त मिळाले सकळ । रिते वेखिले देऊळ ।२।
जानेश्वर बोलें । आतां देव काठे गेलें ।३।
ठावें जाहले अंतरीं । देव दळी जनी घरीं ।४।

¹³⁶ There is an excellent recording of this *abhaṅga* by Kishori Amonkar (see Panjari 2013).

¹³⁷ *Pañcāmṛta* is the five nectar like substances—milk, curds, clarified butter, honey and sugar—in which the image of a deity is bathed; a seasoning of chillies, tamarind, coconut milk, molasses and oil; or delicious food (see Molesworth 1857:481; Tulpule 1999:399).

*Kādaḍa āratī / karāvayā kāmaḷapatī /1/
Bhakta miḷāle sakaḷa / ritē vekhilē deūḷa /2/
Jñāneśvara bolē / ātā deva kāṭhē gelē /3/
Ṭhāvē jāhale antarī / deva daḷī janī gharī /4/*

The dawn *āratī* is performed to revere the Lotus-Lord.¹³⁸
All the devotees have gathered: they see the temple empty.
Jñāneśvar says, ‘Now, where has God gone?’
With his mind’s eye he saw God grinding at Janī’s place.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 121, SSG 1, p.727).

ॐॐॐ

जाय जाय राउळसी । नको येऊं आमहांपाशीं ।१।
जाऊं आम्ही बरोबर । झाला तिचा हो चाकर ।२।
तिजसंगें काम करी । एसे जाणा देव हरी ।३।
चहूँ हातीं धुणें केले । जनी म्हणे बरें झालें ।४।

*Jāya jāya rāuḷasī / nako yeū āmhāpāśī /1/
Jāū āmhī barobara / jhālā ticā ho cākara /2/
Tijasāṅgē kāma karī / ese jāṇā deva harī /3/
Cahū hātī dhūṅē kele / janī mhaṅe barē jhālē /4/*

‘Go back to the temple, don’t come with me’.
‘Let’s go together’. He becomes her servant.
He works in union with her; she appreciates God bearing her burdens.
He does the washing with his four hands. Janī says, ‘Well done’.¹³⁹
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 122, SSG 1, p.727).

ॐॐॐ

धुणे घेऊनि कांखेशी । गेली उपवासी ।१।
मार्गें विठ्ठाल धांवला । म्हणे कां टाकिलें मला ।२।
कां गा धांवोनि आलासी । जय जाय राउळासी ।३।
चहूँ हातें धुणे केले । जनी म्हणे बरे झालें ।४।

*Dhūṅe gheūni kāṅkheśī / gelī upavāsī /1/
Māḡē viṭṭhala dhāṅvalā / mhaṅe kā ṭakilē malā /2/
Kā gā dhāṅvoni ālāsī / jaya jāya rāuḷasī /3/
Cahū hātē dhūṅe kele / janī mhaṅe bare jhālē /4/*

Carrying the washing under her arm, Janī leaves without eating.
Viṭṭhal runs behind: ‘Why did you leave me?’
‘Why did you come running? Go back to the temple!’
He does the washing with his four hands. Janī says, ‘Well done!’
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 124, SSG 1, p.727).¹⁴⁰

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¹³⁸ *Kāmaḷapatī*, ‘the Lotus Lord’, is a reference to Viṣṇu as the husband of the goddess Lakṣmī.

¹³⁹ The ‘four hands’ mentioned suggest that because God is using his four hands the work gets done twice as fast. It also suggests that Viṭṭhal is an incarnation of Viṣṇu, as he has four hands which hold the discus (*cakra*), conch (*śaṅkha*), club (*gada*) and lotus (*padma*). The arms at the back indicate Viṣṇu’s presence in the spiritual world and the two arms in front his presence in the physical world. Therefore, the *abhaṅga* may suggest that both the spiritual and physical world interact. This verse, like many others, is metaphorical as it suggests that Janābāi’s work is made bearable by her envisaging or feeling the helping hand of God.

¹⁴⁰ There is a translation of this verse by Pandharipande (2000:165).

जनी जाय शेणासाठी । उभा आहे तिच्यापाठी ।१।
 पितांबराची कांस खोवी । मार्गे चाले जनाबाई ।२।
 गौच्या वेंचूनि बांधिली मोट । जनी म्हणे द्यवी गांठ ।३।
 मोट उचलून डोईवर घेइ । मागे चाले जनी ।४।

*Janī jāya śeṇasāṭhī / ubhā āhe ticyāpāṭhī /1/
 Pitāmbarācī kāmsa kovī / mage cāle janābāī /2/
 Gaucyā vēncūni bāndhilī moṭa / janī mhaṇe dyavī gāṇṭha /3/
 Moṭa ucalūna doīvara gheī / mage cāle janī /4/*

Janī goes to collect cow-dung. He is standing behind her.
 He tucks in his yellow silk *dhoti*. Behind walks Janābāī.
 He gathers cow-dung cakes in a bundle. Janī says, ‘tie the knot’.
 He lifts the bundle and puts it on his head. Behind walks Janī.
 (Janābāī *abhaṅga* 125, SSG 1, p.727–728).

ॐॐॐॐ

एक प्रहर रात्र झाली । फेरी विठ्ठलाची आली ।१।
 नामा म्हणे जनी पाहे । द्द्वारी उभा कोण आहे ।२।
 प्रभा घरांत दाटली । एक सराद सुटली ।३।
 एकमेकां आलिंगन । नामा म्हणे जनी धन्य ।४।

*Eka prahara rātra jhālī / pherī viṭṭhalācī ālī /1/
 Nāmā mhaṇe janīpāhe / dvārī ubhā koṇa āhe /2/
 Prabhā gharānta dāṭalī / eka sarāda suṭalī /3/
 Ekamekā ālingaṇa / nāmā mhaṇe janī dhanya /4/*

The first watch [of the] night begins. Viṭṭhal comes on his usual rounds.
 Nāmā asks Janī to look out: ‘Who is standing at the door?’
 Suddenly there’s an intense light in the house, there’s a single ray.
 The two embrace each other. Nāmā says, ‘Janī is blessed’.
 (Janābāī *abhaṅga* 129, SSG 1, p.728).

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जनी जाय पाणीयासी मार्गे धावें हृषीकेशी ।१।
 पाय भिजो नेदी हात । माथां घागरी वाहात ।२।
 पाणी रांजणांत भरी । सडासारवण करी ।३।
 धुणे धुऊनियां आणी । म्हणे नामयाची जनी ।४।

*Janī jāya pāṇiyāsī māgē dhāvē hṛṣīkeśī /1/
 Pāya bhijō nedī hāta / mātḥā ghāgarī vāhāta /2/
 Pāṇī rāñjanānta bhārī / saḍāsāraṇa karī /3/
 Dhuṇē dhuūniyā āṇī / mhaṇe nāmāyācī janī /4/*

When[ever] Janī goes to fetch water, Hṛṣīkeśa follows behind to help.
 He does not let my feet get wet. He carries the water pots with his own hands.¹⁴¹
 He fills the water jars. He sprinkles water and smears cow-dung [on the yard].
 He even washes the dirty clothes’, says Nāmā’s Janī.
 (Janābāī *abhaṅga* 130, SSG1, p.728).¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ The word *māthā* ‘forehead’ suggests that Viṭṭhal carried the water pots on his head.

जनीनें बोलिलें तैसेंच लिहिलें । साध्य परिसलें तुम्हीं संती ।१।
 अहो ज्ञानदेवा असावें तुम्हां ठावें । येणें काय लहाणीव आणिली आम्हां ।२।
 माझी मज आण सांगतें परमाण । सेवितें चरण तुझे स्वामी ।३।
 जनीचे हो बोल स्वानंदाचे डोल । स्वामि मुखीं बोल दुणावती ।४।
 शुद्ध सत्त्व कागद नित्य करी शाई । अखंडित लिही जनीपार्शी ।५।
 हांसोनि ज्ञानदेवें पिटियेलीं टाळी । जयजयकार सकळीं थोर ।६।

*Janīnē bolilē taisenca lihilē / sādhyā parisalē tumhī santī /1/
 Āho jñānadevā asāvē tumhā thāvē / yeṇē kāya lahāṇīva āṇilī āmhā /2/
 Mājhī maja āṇa sāṅgatē paramāṇa / sevītē caraṇa tujhe svāmī /3/
 Janīce ho bola svānandāce ḍola / svāmi mukhī bola duṇāvātī /4/
 Śuddhā sattva kāgada nitya karī śāī / akhaṇḍita lihī janīpāśī /5/
 Hāsoni jñānadevē piṭiyelī tāḷī / jayajayakāra sakaḷī thora /6/*

Whatever Janī said is what she wrote and that happened because of you *sants*.¹⁴³
 O Jñānadev you should know I feel minuscule because of your greatness.
 I know my limitations; I stay at your feet in your service.
 The words of Janī are words rejoicing in themselves, the *svāmī*'s words increase twofold.
 The ink that you write with makes the paper pure and true; I know that because you've written
 extensively near me.
 Jñānadev laughs and claps his hands; everyone extols and praises [Janī].
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 143, SSG 1, p. 729).

देहभाव सर्व जाय । विदेही सुख होय ।१।
 तया निद्रें जे पहुडले । भवजागृति नाही आले ।२।
 ऐसी विश्रान्ति लाधली । आनंदकळा संचरली ।३।
 त्या एकी एक होतां । दासी जनी कैचि आतां ।४।

*Dehabhāva sarva jāya / videhī sukha hoyā /1/
 Tayā nidrē je pahuḍale / bhavajāgr̥ti nāhī āle /2/
 Aisī viśrānti lādhalī / ānandakaḷā saṅcaralī /3/
 Tyā ekīeka hotā / dāsī janī kaiñci ātā /4/*

When the body dies, the soul experiences happiness.¹⁴⁴
 One who lies down to sleep will not be awakened.¹⁴⁵
 Thus, repose will come to one pervaded with happiness.
 One after the other servant Janī experienced repose and joy.¹⁴⁶
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 146, SSG 1, p.730)

¹⁴² This verse has also been translated by Poitevin and Rairkar (1996:74–5, v.268) and there is a recording of this *abhaṅga* by Kishori Amonkar (see SJisBack 2010d).

¹⁴³ If Janābāi was an historical figure then it is highly unlikely she was literate so it is unlikely Janī wrote down her compositions (Novetzke 2008:78ff) although Kiehnle suggests 'paper' was available at the time (1997b:21).

¹⁴⁴ The happiness due to being freed or liberated is temporary since the soul/self has to obey the consequences of *karma* (Personal Communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 28th February 2011).

¹⁴⁵ This probably refers to the *Bhagavadgītā*: *yā miśā sarva-bhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṃyamī: yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ*, 'What is night for all beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage' (BhG 2.69; see Zaehner 1973:156).

¹⁴⁶ The last line suggests that this was an unexpected experience for Janī.

एके रात्रीचे समयीं । देव आले लवलार्हीं ।१।
सुखशेजे पहुडले । जनीसर्वे गुज बोले ।२।
गुज बोलतां बोलतां । निद्रा आली अवचिता ।३।
उठा उठा चक्रपाणी । उजाडले म्हणे जनी ।४।

*Eke rātrīce samayī / deva āle lavalāhī /1/
Sukhaśeje pahuḍale / janīsavē guja bole /2/
Guja bolatā bolatā / nidrā ālī avacitā /3/
Uṭhā uṭhā cakrapāṇī / ujāḍalē mhaṇe janī /4/*

One particular night, God comes unexpectedly.
Reclining on the bed of happiness, He shares secrets with Janī.
While revealing secrets, He unexpectedly falls asleep.
‘Wake up, wake up Cakrapāṇī, it is dawn’ says Janī.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 147, SSG 1, p.730).¹⁴⁷

ॐॐॐ

ऐसा वर देई हरी । गाई नाम निरंतरी ।१।
पुरवीं आस माझी देवा । जेणे घडे तुझी सेवा ।२।
हेचि आहे माझे मनीं । कृपा करी चक्रपाणी ।३।
रूप न्याहाळूनियां डोळां । मुखीं नाम लागो चाळा ।४।
उदाराच्या राया । दासी जनी लागे पायां ।५।

*Aisā vara deī harī / gāī nāma nirantarī /1/
Puravī āsa mājhī devā / jeṇē ghaḍe tujhī sevā /2/
Hēci āhe mājhe manī / kṛpā karī cakrapāṇī /3/
Rūpa nyāhāḷūniyāṅ ḍoḷā / mukhī nāma lāgo cālā /4/
Uḍārācyā rāyā / dāsī janī lāge pāyā /5/*

‘Let Hari give me a boon: to sing his name eternally.
Satisfy my desire to be of service to you.
This is my will, bless me Cakrapāṇī.
I’m looking at you closely; let me chant your name habitually.
O Generous One’, begs your servant Janī.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 155, SSG, p.731).¹⁴⁸

ॐॐॐ

अळकापुरवासिनी समिप इंद्रायणी । पूर्वसी वाहिनी प्रवाह तेथें ।१।
ज्ञानाबाई आई आर्त तुझे पार्यीं । धांवोनियां येई दुडदुडां ।२।
बहु कासाविस होतो माझा जीव । कनवाळ्याची कीव येऊं द्यावी ।३।
नामयाची जनी म्हणावी आपुली । पार्यीं सांभाळिली मायबापें ।४।

*Aḷankāpuravāsini samipa indrayaṇī / pūrvesī vāhini pravāha tethē /1/
Jñānābāi āi ārta tujhe pāyī / dhānboniyā yeī duḍaduḍā /2/
Bahu kāsāvisa hoto mājhā jīva / kanavāḷyācī kīva yeū dyāvī /3/
Nāmayācī janī mhaṇāvī āpulī / pāyī sambhāḷilī māyabāpē /4/*

¹⁴⁷ This verse has been translated by Poitevin and Rairkar (1996:80, v.285). This *abhaṅga* tells the story retold in BVJ 21.115ff (see below).

¹⁴⁸ Janābāi *abhaṅga* 42 also ends *dāsī janī lāge pāyā*. There is a recording of this verse by Kishori Amonkar.

I am the resident of Alaṅkāpur near the Indrayani, whose current flows from the east.¹⁴⁹
 Mother Jñānābāi anxiously desires your feet, run towards them.¹⁵⁰
 My life is suffocating; take pity please on the one who moans.
 Please make Nāma's Janī your own, take care of me at your feet my parent.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 168, SSG 1, p.732).

ॐॐॐ

वैष्णव तो कबीर चोखामेळा महार । तिजा तो चांभार रोहिदास ।१।
 सजण कसाई बाया तो कसाब । वैष्णव तो शुद्ध एकनिष्ठ ।२।
 कमाल फुलार मुकुंद जोहरी । जिहीं देवद्वारीं वस्ति केली ।३।
 राजाई गोणाई आणि तो नामदेव । वैष्णवांचा राव म्हणवितसे ।४।
 वैष्णवांचरणीं करी ओवाळणी । तेथें दासी जनी शरीराची ।५।

*Vaiṣṇava to kabīra cokhāmeḷā mahāra / tijā to cāmbhāra rohidāsa /1/
 Sajaṇa kasāibāyā to kasāba / vaiṣṇava to śuddha ekaṇiṣṭha /2/
 Kamāḷa phulāra mukkunda joharī / jihī devadvārī basti kelī /3/
 Rājāī goṇāī āṇi to nāmadeva / vaiṣṇavāncā rāva mhaṇavitase /4/
 Vaiṣṇavāncaraṇī karī ovāḷaṇī / tethē dāsī janī śarīrācī /5/*

Kabīr is a Vaiṣṇava; Cokhāmeḷā a *mahār*; third is leather-worker Rohidās.
 Sajaṇ is a butcher, Bāyā is a butcher. A pure Vaiṣṇava is the one who is dedicated.
 Kamāḷ the florist, Mukund the jeweller; they resided at the gates of God.
 Rājāī, Goṇāī and that Nāmdev—[he] can be considered the Vaiṣṇava king.
 At the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas servant Janī does *ovāḷaṇī* with her body.¹⁵¹
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 172, SSG 1, p.733).

ॐॐॐ

धरिला पंढरीचा चोर । गळां बांधोनियां दोर ।१।
 हृदय बंदिखाना केला । आंत विठ्ठल कोंडिला ।२।
 शब्दें केली जवाजुडी । विठ्ठल पार्यीं घातली बेडी ।३।
 सोहं शब्दाचा मारा केला । विठ्ठल काकुलती आला ।४।
 जनी म्हणे वा विठ्ठला । जीवें न सोडीं मी तुला ।५।

*Dharilā paṇḍharīcā cora / gaḷā bāndhoniyaṅ dora /1/
 Hṛdaya bandikhānā kelā / ānta viṭṭhala koṇḍilā /2/
 Śabdē kelī javājūḍī / viṭṭhala pāryī ghātalī beḍī /3/
 Soham śabdācā mārā kelā / viṭṭhala kākulatīālā /4/
 Janī mhaṇe vā viṭṭhalā / jīvē na soḍī mī tulā /5/*

I've caught the thief of Paṇḍharī,¹⁵² with a noose around the neck.
 I've made my heart a prison and captured Viṭṭhal therein.
 I've made fetters of words and shackled Viṭṭhal's legs.

¹⁴⁹ Alaṅkāpur translates literally as 'Jewel-town' and probably refers to Āḷandī. The Indrayani, considered a sacred river, originates at Loṇāvalā (a hill-station south-east of Mumbaī) and runs east through Dehū and Āḷandī to meet the Bhimā river.

¹⁵⁰ Jñānābāi is a feminised form of the name of *sant* Jñāneśvar. The reference to Jñāneśvar indicates that Alaṅkāpur refers to Āḷandī the town associated with Jñāneśvar.

¹⁵¹ The term *śarīra* connotes 'body' but is also a covert term for a woman's vulva according to Molesworth (1857:783). It is significant that Janābāi is doing *ovāḷaṇē* with her body, rather than a ghee lamp, as this mean that she is consecrating the *sants* herself. See Janābāi *abhaṅga* 53 (SSG 1, p.721) for another reference to Janābāi performing *ovāḷaṇē*.

¹⁵² There are references to Kṛṣṇa as 'the thief of the mind' or 'the thief of butter' in the Sūrdās poems (Hawley 1981c; 1984:82–3), which suggests that this is a motif in *bhakti*.

I've reproved him with shouts of 'so 'ham'.¹⁵³ Viṭṭhal fell to his knees.
Janī says, 'Dear Viṭṭhal I won't leave you whatever the cost'.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 180, SSG 1, p.734).¹⁵⁴

This *abhaṅga* has similarities to one attributed to Nāmdev:

7.1. Nāmdev *abhaṅga*

प्रेमफांसा घालूनियां गळां । जित धरीलें गोपाळा ।१।
एक्या मनाची करुनि जोडी । विठ्ठल पायीं घातली बेडी ।२।
हृदय करुनि बंदिखाना । विठ्ठल कोडुनी ठेविला जाणा ।३।
सोहं शब्दें मार केला । विठ्ठल काकुलती जाला ।४।
नामा म्हणे विठ्ठलासी । जीवें न सोडीं सायासी ।५।

*Premaphāmsā ghālūniyāṅ gaḷāṅ / jita dharilēṅ gopālā /1/
Ekyā manācī karūni joḍī / viṭṭhala pāyīṅ ghātālī beḍī /2/
Hṛdaya karūni bandikhānā / viṭṭhala koḍunī thevilā jāṅā /3/
Soham śabdē māra kelā / viṭṭhala kākulatī jāḷā /4/
Nāmā mhaṅe viṭṭhalāsī / jīvēṅ na soḍīṅ sāyāsī /5/*

I've tied the noose of love around Gopāl's neck and I've retained him.
I have shackled my mind and Viṭṭhal's legs.
I've made a prison of my mind and I've locked Viṭṭhal up.
I've bombarded Him with *so 'ham* and I've cowed Viṭṭhal.
Nāmā says, 'Viṭṭhal I'm not going to leave you'.
(Nāmdev *abhaṅga* 1526, SSG 1, p.522).

ॐॐॐॐ

दळूं कांडू खेळूं । सर्व पाप ताप जाळूं ।१।
सर्व जिवामध्यें पाहूं । एक आम्ही होउनी राहूं ।२।
जनी म्हणे ब्रह्म होऊं । ऐसें सर्वाघटीं पाहूं ।३।

*Daḷūṅ kāṅḍūṅ kheḷūṅ / sarva pāpa tāpa jāḷūṅ /1/
Sarva jivāmadhyē pāhūṅ / eka āmhī hounī rāhūṅ /2/
Janī mhaṅe brahma hoūṅ / aisē sarvāṅghaṭīṅ pāhūṅ /3/*

Let's grind, pound and play. Let's burn all sin and turmoil.
Let's see unity among all living beings.¹⁵⁵
Janī says, 'Let's all become Brahman. Let's see all beings unified'.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 181, SSG 1, p.734).¹⁵⁶

ॐॐॐॐ

जोड झाली रे शिवासी । भ्रांत फिटली जिवाची ।१।

¹⁵³ The term *so 'ham* or *soham*—*saḥāham* in Sanskrit (सः He + अहं I)—translates as 'I am He' (Molesworth 1857:868; Tulpule 1999:779) although it may also mean 'Who am I?' (Molesworth 1857:872). In *advaita* Vedānta *so 'ham* is often used as a *mantra* to achieve the highest state of enlightenment, after which the *jīva* merges with *brahma* and becomes *so 'ham* (Tirth 1985:10, 78; Tripathy 2007:19).

¹⁵⁴ This verse is also translated by Sellergren (1996:223–224) and Pandharipande (2000:154ff).

¹⁵⁵ This line suggests that one should see all souls as one despite external differences such as being in different bodies (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 14th May 2011).

¹⁵⁶ This verse has also been translated by Poitevin and Rairkar (1996:72, v.317).

आनंदची आनंदला । आनंद बोधचि बोधला ।२।
 आनंदाची लहरी उठी । ब्रह्मानंदं गिल्लिला पोटी ।३।
 एकपण जेथें पाहीं । तेथें विज्ञप्ति उरली नाही ।४।
 ऐसी सदगुरुची करणी । दासी जनी विठ्ठल चरणी ।५।

*Joḍa jhālī re śivāsī / bhrānta phīṭalī jivācī /1/
 Ānandacī ānandalā / ānanda bodhaci bodhalā /2/
 Ānandācī laharī uṭhī / brahmānandē giṭilā poṭī /3/
 Ekapaṇa jethē pāhī / tethē vidñyapita uralī nāhī /4/
 Aisī sadgurūcī karaṇī / dāsī janī viṭṭhala caraṇī /5/*

I'm conjoined with Śiva and the space in my soul is filled.
 There's happiness even in happiness; the happiness that has to be perceived has been perceived.
 There's a wave of happiness, I've swallowed the omnipotent wave of happiness.
 Wherever unity sees or is seen, the question of representation no longer arises.
 Such are the deeds of the spiritual teacher; servant Janī is at the feet of Viṭṭhal.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 186, SSG 1, p.734).

ॐॐॐॐ

देव खातें देव पितें । देवावरी मी निजतें ।१।
 देव देतें देव घेतें । देवासवें व्यवहारितें ।२।
 देव येथें देव तेथें । देवाविणें नाही रितां ।३।
 जनी म्हणे विठाबाई । भरुनि उरलें अंतरबाहीं ।४।

*Deva khātē deva pitē / devāvarī mī nijatē /1/
 Deva detē deva ghetē / devāsavē vyavahāritē /2/
 Deva yetē deva tethē / devāviṇē nāhiritē /3/
 Janī mhaṇe viṭhābāi / bharūni uralē anatarabāhī /4/*

I eat God, I drink God; I sleep on God.
 I give God, I take God; I deal with God.
 God here, God there; void is not devoid of God.¹⁵⁷
 Janī says, 'Viṭhābāi, no distance remains between the two of us'.¹⁵⁸
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 191, SSG 1, p. 735).¹⁵⁹

ॐॐॐॐ

नित्य हातानें वारावें । हृदय अंतरीं प्रेरित जावें ।१।

¹⁵⁷ The term *viṇē/vinā* means 'without' (Molesworth 1857:758; Tulpule 1999:656) but can also mean 'void of' (Tulpule 1999:798). Consequently, the phrase could be translated as 'void is not without God'. The term *ritā* connotes 'empty' and 'devoid, destitute, wanting, standing or being without' (Molesworth 1857:696; see Tulpule 1999:595). The Sanskrit term *rikta*, from which *ritā* derives, connotes 'empty', 'void', 'devoid or destitute of' and 'without' (Monier Williams 2008).

¹⁵⁸ Viṭhābāi is used as a form of endearment for the deity Viṭṭhal. The term also suggests that the composer of the verse seeks asylum with Viṭṭhal, who is perceived as a mother (Molesworth 1857:757).

¹⁵⁹ In this verse the author is saying that all Janī's actions—eating, drinking, and sleeping—are dedicated to God, as 'there's no place without God'. The *abhaṅga* may be based on a verse from the *Bhagavadgītā*: *yat karoṣi, yad aśnāsi, yaj juhoṣi, dadāsi yat, yat tapasyasi, Kaunteya, tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam*, 'Whatever you do [whatever action you perform], whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice or give away in alms, whatever penance you may perform, offer it up to Me' (BhG 9.27; Zaehner 1973:283). I am grateful to V.P. Kanitkar for this reference. For other translations of the verse see Macnicol (1919:50, v.25), Kolatkar (1982:114), Aklujkar (1999:25), Arun Kolatkar (1982:114, quoted in Sellergren 1996:225), Pandharipande (2000:161) and Vanita (2005:99). Zelliott regards this *abhaṅga* as referring to the void (*ritā*), a theme that is found in the *abhaṅga* attributed to Ābāi (SSG 1:775) but which uses the term *śūnya* (1999a:92).

ऐसा स्वरूपाचा पूर । आला असे नेत्रावर ।२।
स्वरूपाचा पूर आला । पाहतां डोळा झाकुळला ।३।
जनी म्हणे ऐसा पूर । पाहे तोचि रघुवीर ।४।

*Nitya hātānē vārāvē / hṛdaya antarī prerita jāvē /1/
Aisā svarūpācā pūra / ālā ase netrāvara /2/
Svarūpācā pūra ālā / pāhatā ḍoḷā jhākuḷalā /3/
Janī mhaṇe aisā pūra / pāhe toci raghuvīra /4/*

Please settle my life's difficulties through [your] divine hands.
A flood of the form of the Self came onto the eyes.¹⁶⁰
When the inundation came my eyes dipped.
Janī says, 'this kind of flood is the flood of Raghuvīra himself'.¹⁶¹
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 195, SSG 1, p.735).¹⁶²

ॐॐॐॐ

दळितां कांडितां । तुज गाईन अनंता ।१।
न विसंबें क्षणभरी । तुजें नाम जा मुरारी ।२।
नित्य हाचि कारभार । मुखीं हरि निरंतर ।३।
मायबाप बंधुबहिणी । तूं बा सखा चक्रपाणी ।४।
लक्ष लागलें चरणासी । म्हणे नामयाची दासी ।५।

*Daḷitā kāṇḍitā / tuja gāina anantā /1/
Na visambē kṣaṇabharī / tujhē nāma jā murārī /2/
Nitya hāci kārabhāra / mukhī hari nirantara /3/
Māyabāpa bandubahiṇī / tū bā sakhā cakrapāṇī /4/
Lakṣa lāgalē caraṇāsī / mhaṇe nāmayācī dāsī /5/*

While grinding and pounding I'll sing your name Anantā (refrain).¹⁶³
I can't forget your name for a moment Murārī.¹⁶⁴

Saying Hari's name is my daily task,
While grinding and pounding I'll sing your name Anantā.

You are my mother and father, brother and sister, Cakrapāṇī.
I shall contemplate your feet, says Nāma's servant.
While grinding and pounding I'll sing your name Anantā.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 204, SSG 1, p.736).¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ The term *netra* means 'eye' (Tulpule 1999:287) and *avara* connotes 'on this or the nearer side' (Molesworth 1857:47), 'low; inferior to the one Supreme God' (Tulpule 1999:20, 32).

¹⁶¹ Raghuvīra 'Raghu-hero' refers to Rāma. Raghu was an ancient king and Rāma's great-grandfather (Monier Williams 2008).

¹⁶² Lines 2–4 of this *abhaṅga* have been translated by Kiehnle (1997a:188–189) who regards it as an indication that the author was aware of Nāth practices and sees similarities between it and two songs attributed to Jñāneśvar: *svarūpācā pura* (*Lākhoṭā* IV) and *ḍoḷāṃci pāhā ḍoḷā* (*Lākhoṭā* II): [first line missing] 'Such a flood of the one whose nature is the Self (*caitanya*) has come onto the eye (2). The flood of the one whose nature is the Self has come – seeing [it] the eye was dazzled (3). Janī says, the one who sees such a flood is Raghuvīra (Rāma, i.e. God) himself (4)'. The *abhaṅga* probably relates to Janī's God-realisation (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 27th January 2011) and has similarities to *Cāṅgadev Pasasti* 58: जालिया प्रळयीं एकार्णव | अपार पाणियाची धांव | गिळी आपुला उगव | तैसें करी *jāliya pralayī ekārṇava / apāra pāṇiyācī dhāṃva / jīḷī āpulā ugava / taisē karī*// 'The river flows surely towards the sea but when the final Deluge comes, Both rivers and sea are submerged. In the same way, you should devour both "I" and "Thou", For, truly, you are the source of both' (Abhayananda 2000:245).

¹⁶³ Anantā is an epithet meaning 'Eternal One'.

¹⁶⁴ Murārī (*murhārī*), 'Enemy of Murā', is an epithet for Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa.

तुझे चरणीं घालीन मिठी । चाड नाही रे वैकुंठी ।१।
 सर्वभावें गाईन नाम । सखा तूचि आत्माराम ।२।
 नित्य पाय वंदिन माथा । तेणें नासे भवभय व्यथा ।३।
 रूप न्याहाळीन दृष्टी । सर्व सुखें सांगेन गोष्टी ।४।
 दीनानाथा चक्रपाणी । दासी जनी लावी ध्यानीं ।५।

*Tujhe caranī ghālīna miṭhī / cāḍa nāhī re vaikunṭhī /1/
 Sarvabhāvē gāīna nāma / sakhā tūci ātmārāma /2/
 Nitya pāya vandina māthā / teṇē nāse bhavabhaya vyathā /3/
 Rūpa nyāhāḷīna dṛṣṭī / sarva sukhē sāṅgena goṣṭī /4/
 Dīnānāthā cakrapāṇī / dāsī janī lāvī dhyānī /5/*

I will embrace your feet; I have no desire to go to heaven.
 I will sing your name wholeheartedly; you are my friend and soul mate.
 I will touch your feet with my head continuously, through which all fear will be destroyed.¹⁶⁶
 I will observe your form attentively [and] happily tell stories.
 Dīnānāth, Cakrapāṇī,¹⁶⁷ servant Janī stays meditating.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 208, SSG 1, p.736).

आतां भीत नाही देवा । आदि अंत तुझा ठावा ।१।
 झालें नामाचेनि बाळकट । तेणें वैकुंठ पायवाट ।२।
 ज्ञान वैराग्य विवेक बाळें । तें तंव आम्हांसवें खेळे ।३।
 दया क्षमा आम्हांपुढें । जनी म्हणे झाले वेडे ।४।

*Ātām bhīta nāhī devā / ādi anta tujhā ṭhāvā /1/
 Jhālē nāmāceni bāḷakṭa / teṇē vaikunṭha pāyavāṭa /2/
 Jñāna vairāgya viveka bāḷē / tē taṁva āmhāsaveṁ keḷē /3/
 Dayā kṣamā āmhāpuḍhē / janī mhaṇe jhāle veḍe /4/*

O God I am not afraid since you control the beginning and the end.
 I've become strong through chanting; it will lead me along the path to paradise.
 Knowledge, non-attachment and discrimination are children who happily sport with us.
 Janī says, 'through compassion and forgiveness I have gone mad'.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 209, SSG 1, p.737).

आम्ही पातकांच्या राशी । आलों तुझ्या पायांपाशी ।१।
 मना येईल तें तू करीं । आतां तारीं अथवा मारीं ।२।
 जनी म्हणे सृष्टीवरी । एक अससी तू बा हरी ।३।

*Āmhī pātakācya rāśī / ālē tujhyā pāyāmpāśī /1/
 Manā yeīla tē tū karī / ātā tāri athavā māri /2/
 Janī mhaṇe sṛṣṭīvarī / eka asasitū harī /3/*

¹⁶⁵ There is a translation of this verse by Poitevin and Rairkar (1996:70, v.342) and Yardi (2006).

¹⁶⁶ The author may be talking about the fear of the snare of *samsāra*.

¹⁶⁷ Dīnānāth, 'Protector and reliever of the wretched' (Molesworth 1857:414). *Cakrapāṇī*, 'discus bearer', is an epithet for Viṣṇu.

We are an accumulation of sin, thus we have come to your feet.
Do whatever suits you, now save or kill us.
Janī says, ‘Lord of the Universe,¹⁶⁸ you are the only one’.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 211, SSG 1, p.737).¹⁶⁹

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नामयाचें ठेवणें जनीस लाधलें । धन सांपडलें विटेवरी ।१।
धन्य माझा जन्म धन्य माझा वंश । धन्य विष्णुदास स्वामी माझा ।२।
कामधाम माझे विठोबाचे पाय । दिवसनिशीं पाहे हारपली ।३।
माझ्या वडिलांचें दैवत तो हा पंढरिनाथ । तें माझा अर्थ पुरविला ।४।
संसारीचें सुख नेघे माझे चित्तीं । तरीच पुनरावृत्ति चुकविल्या ।५।
नामयाचे जनी आंनद पें झाला हृदयीं बिंबला पांडुरंग ।६।

*Nāmayācē thevaṅē janīsa lādhalē / dhana sāmpaḍalē viṭavarī /1/
Dhanya mājhā janma dhanya mājhā vaṅśa / dhanya viṣṇudāsa svāmī mājhā /2/
Kāmadhāma mājhe viṭhobāce pāya / divasaniśī pāhe hārapalī /3/
Mājhyā vaḍilācē daivata to ha paṇḍharinātha / teṅē mājhā artha puravilā /4/
Saṃsārīcē sukha neghe mājhe citti / tarīca punarāvṛtti cukavilyā /5/
Nāmayāce janī ānanda pēi jhālā / hṛdayī bimbālā pāṇḍuraṅga /6/*

Nāmdev’s deposit has been placed on Janī; wealth is found on the brick.
Blessed is my life and are all the generations of my family, blessed is the servant of Viṣṇu, who is my master.
My work is at Viṭhobā’s feet; day and night I’m lost in their examination.
Pāṇḍharīnāth, Lord of my father, he is the one who has given me meaning.
My mind does not find happiness in *saṃsāra*, no wonder I’ve skipped the next rebirths.
Nāma’s Janī is happy; Pāṇḍuraṅga is etched on the heart.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 222, SSG 1, p.738).

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दोईचा पदर आला खांद्यावरी । भरल्या बाजारीं जाईन मी ।१।
हार्ती घेईन टाळ खांद्यावरी वीणा । आतां मज मना कोण करी ।२।
पंढरिच्या पेठें मांडियेलें पाल । मनगटावर तेल घाला तुम्ही ।३।
जनी म्हणे देवा मी झालें येसवा । निघालें केशवा घर तुझें ।४।

*Doīcā padara ālā khāndyāvarī / bharalyā bājārī jāina mī /1/
Hārtī gheīna ṭāḷa khāndyāvarīvīṇa / ātā mājā manā koṇa karī /2/
Paṇḍharicyā peṭhē māṇḍiyelē pāla / managaṭāvāra tela ghālā tumhī /3/
Janī mhaṅe devā mījhālē yesavā / niḡhālē keśavā ghara tujhē /4/*

The *padar* has slipped onto my shoulder.¹⁷⁰ I don’t give a damn I’ll go to the bazar.¹⁷¹
I’ll take the cymbals in hand, the *vīṇā* on my shoulder. Who can stop me?

¹⁶⁸ The epithet *śṛṣṭīvarī* is a conjunction of *śṛṣṭī* ‘creation’, ‘nature’, or ‘universe’ with *varī* ‘excellent’ or ‘best’.

¹⁶⁹ There is a translation of this verse by Yardi (2006).

¹⁷⁰ The *padar* is the ornamental border at the end of a *sāḍī* (*sārī*) or *dhoti* (Molesworth 1857:488; Berntsen 1982:83). *Padar* also refers to ‘a cloth’ (Tulpule 1999:48), ‘a cloth cover; a screen’ and ‘the end of a garment’ (Tulpule 1999:404). On a spiritual level the *sāḍī* could refer to *māyā* according to Tagare (1993:43). Belwalkar states that in rural Maharashtra the idiom *padar ālā*, which forms part of ‘language in the home’, conveys the idea that a ‘teenage girl is supposed to wear a sari and cover her breast with the *padar*’ during menstruation (1998:173). This could suggest that Janī should not go into the market as she is menstruating.

¹⁷¹ The use of the word bazar may indicate that this verse is an attribution to Janābāi as the word did not come into usage in Marathi until the fourteenth century (Sellergren 1996:235–6, n.17).

In the market of Paṇḍharpūr I'll sell myself.¹⁷² Like the lowest of the low¹⁷³ I'll prostitute myself at your temple.¹⁷⁴
 Janī says, 'Lord, I have become a whore.'¹⁷⁵ Keśava I am setting out for your house'.¹⁷⁶
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 224, SSG 1, p.713).¹⁷⁷

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जात्यावरील गीतासी । दळणमिशें गोविंदासी ।१।
 देह बुद्धीचें वैरण । बरवा दाणा हे निसून ।२।
 नामाचा हो कोळी । गुरुआजेतें मी पाळीं ।३।
 मज भरंवसा नाम्याचा । गजर दासी जनीचा ।४।

*Jātyāvarīla gītāsī / daḷaṇamiśē govindāsī /1/
 Deha buddhīcē vairāṇa / baravā dāṇā he nisūna /2/
 Nāmācā ho koḷī / guruājētetē mī pāḷī /3/
 Maja bharaṃvasā nāmyācā / gajara dāsī janīcā /4/*

My songs on the grindmill for grinding are really for Govind.
 Body and soul, beautiful grains fed to the mill, produce flour.¹⁷⁸
 Nāmdev the weaver:¹⁷⁹ I obey the *guru*'s commands.
 'I have Nāma's confidence', acclaims servant Janī.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 225, SSG 1, p.738).¹⁸⁰

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सुंदर माझें जातें गे फिरे बहुतेकें । ओंव्या गाऊं कौतुकें तूं येरे बा विठ्ठला ।१।
 जिवशिव दोनी खुंटे गे प्रपंचाचे नेटें गे । लावुनी पंचीं बोटें गे तूं येरे बा विठ्ठला ।२।

¹⁷² The verb *pāla māṇḍaṇē* means to 'set up openly the trade of a prostitute' according to Molesworth (1857:512).

¹⁷³ The word used is *managaṭāvāra*: *managaṭā* is a contemptuous term for the low-caste Māṅg; *vāra* means husband or bridegroom (Molesworth 1857:640, 639, 731). This may indicate that it is those most afflicted by poverty who give their wives or daughters up to become temple prostitutes (see Dalrymple 2008).

¹⁷⁴ The word *tela* (oil) is used here. Molesworth states that the verb *tela gheṇē* means 'to devote herself to the temple; to become a strumpet for the use of the worshippers of some idol'. Her intention is indicated by putting some of the oil from the lamp in front of the deity on her head (1857:387). The term *devadāsī*, 'a woman who serves god', is often applied to such women. The word *ghālā* (from *ghālaṇē*) means 'attacking, 'assaulting, falling upon'; 'bringing ruin or heavy mischief upon' (Molesworth 1857:258). This may suggest that the author is saying that s/he will bring ruin upon God by becoming a prostitute. There is no evidence in Yādava records to say whether the custom of dedicating a girl as a *devadāsī* was prevalent in Maharashtra under Yādava rule (or later) as there is little reference to the custom in Maharashtra (Babras 1996:67). However, a scholar and *kīrtankār* told me that Janī's destiny was to be a *devadāsī* (Dada Maharaj Manmadkar, personal communication, 10th July 2006).

¹⁷⁵ The word *yesavā* means 'whore' (Tulpule 1999:577) and derives from the Sanskrit term *veśyā* 'harlot, courtesan, prostitute' (Monier Williams 2008).

¹⁷⁶ This is an important but somewhat threatening statement as Janābāi is a *śūdra* and is denied entrance to the temple. The author/Janābāi may therefore be threatening to enter the temple. See the note attached to Bhāgū Mahārīn (*abhaṅga* 1, SSG 1:1015).

¹⁷⁷ There are translations of this verse by Sellergren (1996:224), Bhagwat: 'I will let my saree slip from my head to the shoulders. Hold my head high and walk into the market-place. Taking cymbals in hand and veena on shoulder I will go. Let me see who forbids me. I have opened a shop in Pandharpur. Jani declares herself a prostitute. Leaving you O God, this "home"' (*Sri Namdev Gatha* 1970:171; Bhagwat 1995:WS26); and Vilas Sarang: 'Cast off all shame, and sell yourself in the market place; then alone can you hope to reach the Lord. Cymbals in hand, a veena upon my shoulder, I go about; who dares stop me? The pallav of my sari falls away (A scandal!); yet will I enter the crowded market place without a thought. Jani says, My Lord, I have become a slut to reach Your home' (Tharu and Lalita 1991:83).

¹⁷⁸ Janābāi *abhaṅga* 118 has a similar phrase.

¹⁷⁹ This phrase is difficult to translate exactly: *nāmācā* could mean the 'repeated Name of God' or 'the repeated Name of Nāmdev' while *koḷī* could refer to either a liquid made from water and tamarind or the caste of fisherman or huntsmen or weavers (Tulpule 1999:175).

¹⁸⁰ Poitevin and Rairkar refer to this verse (1996:71).

सासु आणि सासरा दीर तो तिसरा । ओंव्या गाऊं भ्रतारा तूं येरे बा विठ्ठला ।३।
 बारा सोळा गडणी अवध्या कामिनी । ओंव्या गाऊं बसूनि तूं येरे बा विठ्ठला ।४।
 प्रपंचदळण दळिलें पीठ भरिलें । सासुपुढें ठेविलें तूं येरे बा विठ्ठला ।५।
 सत्त्वाचें आधण ठेविलें पुण्य वैरिलें । पाप तें उत्तं गेलें तूं येरे बा विठ्ठला ।६।
 जनी जातें गाईल कीर्त राहिल । थोडासा लाभ होईल तूं येरे बा विठ्ठला ।७।

*Sundara mājhe jāte ge phire bahutekē / ōvyā gāū kautukē tū yere bā viṭṭhalā /1/
 Jivaśiva donī khunṭe ge prapañce neṭe ge / lāvunī pāñcī boṭe ge tū yere bā viṭṭhalā /2/
 Sāsu āni sāsara dīra to tisarā / ōvyā gāū bhratārā tū yere bā viṭṭhalā /3/
 Bārā soḷā gaḍaṇī āvadhyā kāminī / ōvyā gāū basūni tū yere bā viṭṭhalā /4/
 Prapañca daḷaṇa daḷilē pīṭha bharilē / sāsupuḍhē thevilē tū yere bā viṭṭhalā /5/
 Sattvācē ādhana thevilē puṇya vairilē / pāpa tē uttā gelē tū yere bā viṭṭhalā /6/
 Janī jāte gāīla kīrta rāhila / thoḍāsā lābha hoīla tū yere bā viṭṭhalā /7/*

My beautiful stonemill rotates, singing verses praising you.

You come Viṭṭhal.¹⁸¹

Jīva and Śiva both support of the world;¹⁸² touching all five of my fingers.

You come Viṭṭhal.

Mother-in-law; father-in-law; third, the brother-in-law; singing verses for the husband.

You come Viṭṭhal.

The sixteen confidantes assembled are friends, sitting together singing verses.

You come Viṭṭhal.

Having ground *prapañca*,¹⁸³ gathered the flour, [then] laid it in front of my mother-in-law.

You come Viṭṭhal.

Keeping existence on the boil, making merit my daily diet; my sins have spilled over.

You come Viṭṭhal.

Janī's stonemill will keep singing, your fame will continue; I will gain a little.

You come Viṭṭhal.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 226, SSG 1, p.738).¹⁸⁴

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वैराग्य अभिमानें फिरविलें जाते । म्हणवोनि याते भाव खुंटा ।१।
 संचित मातृका वैरण घातली । अव्यक्ति दळिली व्यक्तव्यक्त ।२।
 नामरूपा आदि दळियेलें सर्व । पीठ भरी देव पंढरीचा ।३।
 नव लहा देव बैसला दळणी । नाही केली जनी नामयाची ।४।

*Vairāgya abhimānē phiravilē jāte / mhaṇavoni yāte bhāva khunṭā /1/
 Sañcīta mātṛakā vairāṇa ghātalī / avyakti daḷilī vyaktavyakta /2/
 Nāmarūpā ādhi daḷiyelē sarva / pīṭha bhārī deva paṇḍharīcā /3/
 Nava lahā deva baisalā daḷaṇī / nāhī kelī janī nāmayācī /4/*

The hand-mill of detachment rotates with pride, therefore hold onto God as much as the handle.¹⁸⁵
 Feed the mill with the grist of accumulated deeds. The Transcendent grinds the visible and invisible.
 Name and form, the cause, is ground completely.¹⁸⁶ The God of Paṇḍharī collects the flour.

¹⁸¹ 'Bā Viṭṭhalā' literally means 'Dad Viṭṭhal' but could also be interpreted as 'Dear Viṭṭhal'.

¹⁸² Jīva and Śiva are ultimately one.

¹⁸³ This line suggests that worldly life (*prapañca*), with all its illusions, is been ground in the grindmill.

¹⁸⁴ There are translations of this verse by Poitevin and Rairkar (1996:86–7, v.154) and Sellergren (1996:220).

¹⁸⁵ The work of grinding is being done with pride but pride is also being ground in the mill of detachment (*vairāgya*).

¹⁸⁶ The term *nāmarūpa* connotes 'name and form' (Monier Williams 2008) and 'name and repute' (Molesworth 1857:454) or *nāmvarūpa* 'fame, renown, glory; also credit, reputation, honorable character or bearing; name and form, personality, individuality, distinct subsistence' (Molesworth 1857:454). The term *ādi* connotes 'the origin or source (of something)', 'a cause' (Tulpule 1999:58), 'source, stock, root, origin; the seat or subject sustaining or the cause or principle originating; the beginning, commencement', 'first, prior, principal, chief' (Molesworth 1857:67).

Amazingly, God himself sits down to grind without Nāma's Janī doing anything.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 227, SSG 1, p.738).

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आम्ही आणि संत संत आणि आम्ही । सूर्य आणि रश्मि काय दोन ।१।
दीप आणि सारंग सारंग आणि दीप । ध्यान आणि जप काय दोन ।२।
शांति आनि विरक्ति विरक्ति आणि शांति । समाधान काय तृप्ति दोन ।३।
रोग आणि व्याधी व्याधि आणि रोग । देह आणि अंग काय दोन ।४।
कान आणि श्रोत्र श्रोत्र आणि कान । य श आणि मान काय दोन ।५।
देव आणि संत संत आणि देव । म्हणे जनी भाव एक ऐसा ।६।

*Āmhī āṇi santa santa āṇi āmhī / sūrya āṇi raśmi kāya dona /1/
Dīpa āṇi sārāṅga sārāṅga āṇi dīpa / dhyāna āṇi japa kāya dona /2/
Śānti āṇi virakti virakti āṇi śānti / samādhāna kāya tṛpti dona /3/
Roga āṇi vyādhī vyādhī āṇi roga / deha āṇi aṅga kāya dona /4/
Kāna āṇi śrotra śrotra āṇi kāna / ya śa āṇi māna kāya dona /5/
Deva āṇi santa santa āṇi deva / mhaṇe janī bhāva eka aisā /6/*

We and the *sants*, the *sants* and us; the sun and its rays, what's the difference?
The flame and the kite, the kite and the flame; meditation and silent chanting, what's the difference?
Peace and detachment, detachment and peace; contentment and satisfaction, what's the difference?
Disease and illness, illness and disease; body and form, what's the difference?
Ear and auditory organ, auditory organ and ear; fame and pride, what's the difference?
'God and the *sant*, the *sant* and God', says Janī, 'these are both the same'.¹⁸⁷
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 243, *Upadeśa* 'Advice', SSG 1, p.740).

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ब्रह्मा वंदी ज्याचे पाय । त्याची यशोदा ते माय ।१।
सामराज्याचा जो दानी । मागे यशोदेसी लोणी ।२।
क्षीरसागर ज्याचे चरणी । त्याला पायावरतें न्हाणी ।३।
देव ब्रह्मांध पालकीं । त्याची टाळू हातें माखी ।४।
शुक सनकादिक योगी । जनी म्हणे दळुं लागी ।५।

*Brahmā vandī jyāce pāya / tyācī yaśodā te māya /1/
Sāmarājyācā jo dānī / māge yaśodesī loṇī /2/
Kṣīrasāgara jyāce caraṇī / tyālā pāyāvaratē nhāṇī /3/
Deva brahmāndha¹⁸⁸ pālakī / tyācīṭālū hatē mākhī /4/
Śuka sanakādika yogi / janī mhaṇe ḍaḷū lāgī /5/*

The mother of the One whose feet are revered by Brahmā is Yaśodā.
The One who grants empires asks Yaśodā for butter.¹⁸⁹
The One who has oceans of milk at his feet is being bathed on someone else's feet.
The One who is the guardian of the cosmos had his head massaged by her hands.¹⁹⁰
'Śuka and Sanaka are celestial devotees',¹⁹¹ says Janī, starting to grind.

¹⁸⁷ Novetzke has translated the final line of this verse as 'God and the *sant*, *sant* and God, Jani says, I believe these are one' (2008:242).

¹⁸⁸ This might be better spelt *brahmāṇḍa* but I am following the rendition of the SSG.

¹⁸⁹ The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* relates how Kṛṣṇa revealed the universe to Yaśodā when he opened his mouth (BhP 10.8.32–45; Bryant 2003:43–44) and stole butter (BhP 10.9.1–21; Bryant 2003:45–7).

¹⁹⁰ The *ṭālū* refers to the sinciput, the front of the skull from the forehead to the crown of the head.

¹⁹¹ Śuka was the son of Vyāsa (the arranger of the *Mahābhārata*) and the preceptor of the Āsuras ('anti-gods' who were opposed to the *devas*). Śuka is regarded as the original narrator of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. He recited the

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 262, SSG 1, p.742).¹⁹²

ॐॐॐॐ

भाव अक्षराची गांठी । ब्रह्मज्ञानानें गोमटी ।१।
ते हे माया ज्ञानेश्वरी । संतजनां माहेश्वरी ।२।
ज्ञानेश्वर मंगळ मुनी । सेवा करी दासी जनी ।३।

*Bhāva akṣarācī gāṅṭhī / brahmadñyānānē gomaṭī /1/
Te he māyā jñāneśvarī / santajanā māheśvarī /2/
Jñāneśvara mangala munī / sevā karī dāsī janī /3/*

Emotion reflected through every word, further reflects the knowledge of Brahman.
That is what the *Jñāneśvarī* is all about; for the *sants* it is the Lord Śiva.¹⁹³
Jñāneśvar is the holy sage in whose service remains servant Janī.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 266, SSG 1, p.743).

ॐॐॐॐ

विवेकसागर । सखा माझा गानेश्वर ।१।
मरोनियां जावें । बा माझ्याच्या पोटा यावें ।२।
ऐसें करीं गा माझ्या भावा । बापा माझ्या ज्ञानदेवा ।३।
जाईन ओवाळेनी । जन्मोजन्मी म्हणे जनी । ४।

*Vivekasāgara / sakhā mājhā gāneśvara /1/
Maroniyā jāvē / bā mājhyācyā poṭhā yāvē /2/
Aisē karī gā mājhyā bhāvā / bāpā mājhyā jñānadevā /3/
Jāina ovāḷenī / janmojanmī mhaṇe janī /4/*

“Ocean of discernment”, my own Jñāneśvar.
Let him die, [then] enter my womb.
Do this for my sake, my father Jñānadev.
I will perform *ovāḷanī* from birth to birth says Janī.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 268, SSG 1, p.743).¹⁹⁴

Bhāgavata to king Parīkṣit, the last member of the Yadu clan, who was undertaking a fast to death that was being witnessed by all the great sages. Sūta heard the *Bhāgavata* from Śuka ‘the greatest sage of them all’ and then related it to the sages (Bryant 2003:7). Sanaka was the eldest of the four mind-born sons of Brahmā (BhP 3.15.12; 3.12.1–33). Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātana and Sanat-Kumāra all refused Brahmā’s request to procreate as they were engaged in meditation of the Impersonal Absolute (BhP 3.12.1–33). They are known as the Kaumāras (‘child’, ‘youth’) or Sanas (‘little’) as they remained celibate boys. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* regards them as *mahājana* ‘great men’ (BhP 6.3.20–21), while the *Śaiva Purāṇa* presents them as *yogis* (Wilson 1840:38, n.14). They are supposed to have recited the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (BhP 3.8.7) and they are thought to have taught Nārada (another of Brahmā’s celibate sons and a great proponent of *bhakti*). They are viewed as eternally liberated souls who impart *bhakti* (BhP 11.12.14). Both Śuka and Sanaka are regarded as immortal celibates who offer didactic support and transmit *bhakti* (Wilson 1840:38; Chalmers 1894:344; Grierson 1909:634, 637, 639; Shulman 1986:115; Dhody 1994:45; Sharma 1998:42; Dhand 2008:39, 68–9). There are a number of Vaiṣṇava sects connected to both Śuka and Sanaka. In 1753 Charandas (1703–1788) started the ‘Śuka’ or ‘Charandasi’ *sampradāya* (Datta 2005:642). Sanaka is regarded as the founder of the Nimbārka *sampradāya* (Sharma 1998:42), which is also known as the Haṃsa *sampradāya*, Kumāra *sampradāya*, Catuḥ Sana *sampradāya* and the Sanakādi *sampradāya*. According to Deleury the Vārkarīs honour both Śuka and Sanaka as great *sants* in the hope that they will intercede on their behalf (1994:125). The verses of a number of *sants* make this point, for example a Tukārām *abhaṅga* translated by Deleury: *tumhī sanakādika santa*, ‘O you Sanaka and other saints’ (SSG 2:1016; 1960:91). The *Jñāneśvarī* (9.464) mentions both Sanaka and Śuka as some of those who attained union with Kṛṣṇa through *bhakti* (Pradhan 1987:225, n. 22 p. 231; Ranade 2003:109).

¹⁹² This *abhaṅga* is from the section entitled *kṛṣṇajanma, bālakṛīḍā va kālā* ‘Kṛṣṇa’s Birth, Youthful Play & “Rice-curd”’ (SSG 1, p.742). Dhery states the Vārkarī *sants* were captivated by the child form of Kṛṣṇa who they regarded as ‘a symbol of the supreme Absolute (Brahman)’ (2011:4).

¹⁹³ Māheśvar is an epithet for Śiva but *māheśvarī* could mean ‘abode of the Great Lord’ (Monier Williams 2008).

मायेहूनि माय मानी । कारी जिवाची ओंवाळणी ।१।
 परलोकीचें तारूं । म्हणे माझा ज्ञानेश्वरू ।२।
 वित्त गोत चित्त पाहें । सत्य वंदी गुरुचे पाय ।३।
 पतिव्रते जैसा पती । जनी म्हणे सांगों किती ।४।

*Māyehūni māya mānī / kāri jivācī ōvāḷaṇī /1/
 Paralokīcē tārū / mhaṇe mājhā jñāneśvarū /2/
 Vitta gota citta pāhē / satya vandī guruce pāya /3/
 Pativrate jaisā patī / janī mhaṇe sāṅgō kiṭī /4/*

Compassionate Mother, respect one who does self-consecration.
 My Jñāneśvar is like a ferry to the other world.
 The mind seeks possessions and relatives but truly worships the *guru*'s feet.
 Janī says, 'How much can I say? A devoted wife has a devoted husband'.¹⁹⁵
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 269, SSG 1, p. 743).¹⁹⁶

ज्ञानेश्वर अभंग बोलिले ज्या शब्दां । चिदानंद बाबा लिही त्यांस ।१।
 निवृत्तीचे बोल लिहिले सोपानें । मुक्ताईचीं वचनें ज्ञानदेवें ।२।
 चांगयाचा लिहिणार शामा तो कांसार । परमानंद खेचर लिहित होता ।३।
 सांगे पूर्णानंद लिही परमानंद । भगवंत भेटी आनंद रामानंद ।४।
 सांवत्या माळ्याचा काशिबा गुरव । कर्म्याचा वसुदेव काईत होता ।५।
 चोखामेळ्याचा अनंतभट्ट अभ्यंग । म्हणोनी नामयाचे जनीचा पांडुरंग ।६।

*Jñāneśvara abhaṅga bolile jyā śabda / cidānanda bābā lihī tyāsa /1/
 nivṛttīce bolalihile sopānē / muktāīcī vacanē jñānadevē /2/
 cāṅgayācā lihiṅāra śāmā to kāmśārai / paramānand khecara lihita hotā /3/
 sage pūrṇānanda lihī paramānanda / bhagavanta bheṭī ānanda rāmānanda /4/
 sāmvatya mālyācā kāśibā gurava / karmyācā vasudeva kāīta hotā /5/
 cokhāmeḷyācā anantabhaṭṭa abhyāṅga / mhaṇonī nāmayācī janīcā pāṇḍuraṅga /6/*

Cidānanda Baba wrote down the words of the verses which Jñāneśvar spoke.
 Nivṛtti's words were written by Sopān and Muktābāi's sayings by Jñānadev.
 Cāṅga's scribe was Śāmā the metal worker and Khecar wrote for Paramānanda.
 What Pūrṇananda said, Paramānanda wrote; he found Bhagavanta when he happily met Rāmānanda.¹⁹⁷
 Sāvātā the gardener's [scribe] was Kāśibā Gurava; Kūrma's scribe was Vasudeva.
 Ananta Bhaṭṭ [wrote down] Cokhāmeḷā's songs and finally Pāṇḍuraṅga [wrote] for Nāma's Janī.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 271, SSG 1, p. 743).¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ There was a slightly different version of this verse at Marathi World <<http://marathiworld.com/abhaṅga>> (Janabai abhaṅga 16 'Veeveksagar sakha maaza dnyaneshwar', accessed 11th December 2013). *Jñānācā sāgara/ sakhā mājhā jñāneśvara /1/ Maroniyā jāvē / bā mājhā poṭā yāvē /2/ Aisē karīmājhā bhāvā/ sakhā mājhā jñānadevā /3/ Jāve vovāḷunī/ janmojanmī dāsī janī/4/* "Ocean of knowledge", my companion Jñāneśvar. Let him die, [then] enter my womb. Do this for my sake, in friendship my Jñānadev. I will perform *ovāḷaṇī* from birth to birth [says] *dāsī* Janī?. This verse uses *vovāḷunī*, which is probably a corruption of *ovāḷaṇē*, to move a lamp in a circular motion in front of a deity or person so as to remove evil and in consecration (Molesworth 1831:122).

¹⁹⁵ The final phrase could read 'Some say that a devoted wife has a devoted husband'.

¹⁹⁶ Jñāneśvar is considered as a mother (*māulī, māvalī*) by Vārkarīs so the first line of the verse may be a reference to him. The verse suggests that one is ferried across the river to the future world (heaven or liberation) by ridding oneself of evil or by consecrating oneself.

¹⁹⁷ Bhagavanta is an epithet for the Supreme Being, God (Molesworth 1857:598); 'the divine or adorable one', Kṛṣṇa (Monier Williams 2008).

गोणार्इने नवस केला । देवा पुत्र देई मला ।१।
 ऐसा पुत्र देई भक्त । ज्याला आवडे पंढरीनाथ ।२।
 शुद्ध देखोनियां भाव । पोटीं आले नामदेव ।३।
 दामशेटी हरुषला । दासी जनीनें ओवाळिला ।४।

*Goṇāinē navasa kelā / devā putra deī malā /1/
 Aisā putra deī bhakta / jyālā āvaḍe paṇḍharinātha /2/
 Śuddha dekhoniyā bhāva / poṭī āle nāmadeva /3/
 Dāmaśeṭī haruṣalā / dāsī janinē ovāḷilā /4/*

Goṇāi made a vow:¹⁹⁹ ‘God give me a son.
 Give a son to your devotee who likes Paṇḍharināth’.
 Her unalloyed faith observed: from her womb came Nāmde
 Dāmāśeṭī was delighted; servant Janī waved the tray of lamps.²⁰⁰
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 278, SSG 1, p.744).

गोणार्इ राजार्इ दोघी सासू सुना । दामा नामा बाप लेंक ।१।
 नारा विठा गोंदा महादा चवघे पुत्र । जन्मले पवित्र त्याचे वंशी ।२।
 लाडार्इ गोडार्इ येसार्इ साखरार्इ । चवघी सुना पाहीं नामयाच्या ।३।
 लिंबार्इ ति लेकी आऊबार्इ बहिणी । वेडीपिशी जनी नामयाची ।४।

*Goṇāi rājāi doghī sāsū sunā / dāmā nāmā bāpa leṅka /1/
 Nārā viṭhā goṇḍā mahādā cavaghe putra / janmale pavitra tyāce vaṃśī /2/
 Lāḍāi goḍāi yesāi sākharāi / cavaghī sunā pāhī nāmāyācyā /3/
 Limbāi tī lekī āūbāi bahiṇī / veḍīpiśī janī nāmāyācī /4/*

Goṇāi and Rājāi are mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; Dāmā and Nāmā are father and son.
 Nārā, Viṭhā, Goṇḍā and Mahādā are the four sons; a gift born into the holy family.
 Lāḍāi, Goḍāi, Yesāi and Sākharāi are the four daughters-in-law who look after Nāmdev.
 Limbāi is the daughter, Āūbāi is the sister and Nāmā’s Janī is the empty-headed dolt.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 279, SSG 1, p. 744).²⁰¹

त्या निद्रेजं निजले। भाव जागूती नाही आले।।
 ऐसी विश्रांती लाधली। आनंद कळा संचरली।।
 तेथ स्वांग सुखी झाले। लिंगदेह विसरले।।
 त्या एकी एक होता। दासी जनी नाही आता।।

*Tyā nidrejā nijale / bhāva jāgūtī nāhī āle//
 Aisī viśrāntī lādhalī / ānanda kalā sancaralī//*

¹⁹⁸ For a translation and discussion of this verse see Novetzke (2008 70, 259 n.8; 78, 260 n.9).

¹⁹⁹ The word *navas* refers to ‘a vow to a god often involving the promise of an offering in return for a request granted’ (Berntsen 1975:75).

²⁰⁰ The verb *ovāḷaṇē* means ‘to wave a tray of lamps in front of a deity or person’ (Berntsen 1975:18).

²⁰¹ There is a translation of this verse by Jayant Karve in Zelliott (1999:418–19), which Zelliott states is by Nāmdev and that includes a fifth line: ‘Everyone has sung abhaṅgas —Nama says, God has fulfilled us all’. Zelliott states that the *abhaṅga* is number 56 in the SSG collected by Sākharē and edited by Joshi, Pune 1967 (1923). However, I can find no mention of this verse in relation to Nāmdev in the 2005 edition by Gosāvī.

*Tetha svāṅga sukhī jhāle / lingadeha visarale//
Tyā ekī eka hotā / dāsī janī nāhī ātā//*

Whoever sleeps won't have a feeling of emotion.
I went into such a trance that there were waves of happiness within me.
There my body experienced eternal happiness, the subtle body was forgotten.
Now it is one to one [with God], there's no more servant Janī.
(Janābāi *abhāṅga* 284, *Śāsakīya Nāmdev Gāthā*; Shrotriya 1992:65)

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अपूर्व कोणे एके कार्ळी । देव सभेच्या मंडळी ।१।
करी त्रैलोक्यभ्रमणा । करी वाहे ब्रह्मवीणा ।२।
देती सर्वही सन्मान । सिद्ध साधू योगी जन ।३।
सांगे अपूर्व कहाणी । म्हणे नामयाची जनी ।४।

*Apūrva koṇe eke kāḷī / deva sabhecyā maṇḍalī /1/
Karī trailokyabhramaṇā / karī vāhe brahmavīṇā /2/
Deṭī sarvahī sanmāna / siddha sādhu yogi jana /3/
Sāṅge apūrva kahāṇī / mhaṇe nāmayācī janī /4/*

Once upon a time there was an assembly at the [celestial] court of God.
The narrator wandered the universe,²⁰² carrying a lute.²⁰³
There was one who respected all *siddhas*, *sādhus*, *yogīs* and men.
'This is the remarkable story [of Hariścandra]', says Nāma's Janī.
(Janābāi *abhāṅga* 294, 'The story of Hariścandra', SSG 1, p.723).²⁰⁴

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मध्यरात्री ऋषिसहित । वना आले अकस्मात् ।१।
पंडुसुत जामे झाले । ऋषि समस्त वंदिले ।२।
धर्म भीमाकडे पाहे । सत्त्वहानि होत आहे ।३।
द्रौपदीने धावा केला । देव जेवितां उठिला ।४।
ऋषि तृप्त केले वर्नी । म्हणे नामयाची जनी ।५।

²⁰² The exact meaning of this phrase is unclear. *Karī* could be interpreted as 'an elephant' suggesting that 'an elephant wandered the universe', which connects with the story of the hermit Gautama who raised a baby elephant (Mbh 13.102ff). However, I am inclined to interpret *karī* as a derivative of *kathekarī*, 'a narrator of legends' or 'a story teller' (Molesworth 1857:132).

²⁰³ It is likely that the figure described is Nārada, the celestial *ṛṣi*, as he is carrying the *brahmavīṇā* (see BVJ 14.141; Abbott 1996:224) and because he has a connection with the Hariścandra story. The *brahmavīṇā* is a kind of lute (*vīṇā*). The *vīṇā* was probably current until the 15th century but as it was difficult to play it ceased to be performed (Wrazen 1986:36; Tewari 1977:153). The *brahmavīṇā* may now be known as the *vicitra-vīṇā* or the *batta bīn* (Misra 1996). A form of the *brahmavīṇā*, called *tali aeinla*, is still used in Orissa (see Digambra 2008). For a discussion on the parallel of the human body to the *vīṇā* in yogic philosophy see Subramanian (1985:14 ff.).

²⁰⁴ 'The story of Hariścandra' is told by Janābāi in twenty-two consecutive verses in the *Śrīsakalasantaḡāthā* (SSG 1, v.294–316:723–752). Hariścandra, 'Having Golden Splendour', was a king who was raised to *svaraga* (the heaven or transitory place for righteous souls before *mokṣa*) with his subjects as a reward for piety (Molesworth 1857:888). The story first appears in Sanskrit in the *Mahābhārata* (2.12.1ff), *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (9.7.7–25), *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (7.1–61; 8.1–130, 174, 217–221, 239–254) and the *Padma Purāṇa* (1.7–9). Nārada advises Hariścandra in these stories. There is an incomplete version of the Hariścandra story in the Nāmdev *gāthā* (v. 2104, SSG 1:603) but it seems that this story is not widely accepted as part of the Nāmdev corpus. Moreover, Janābāi's rendition is 'more coherent, organized and complete' states Deshmukh (2006). For the story in English see 'Hariścandra and Viśvāmṛita' (Dimmitt and Buitenen 1978:273–286). For a discussion of the Hariścandra legend see Sathaye (2009). The Janābāi story is also discussed by Deshmukh in her paper 'Taramati's Satyagraha: The Radical Feminine in Janabai's *Harisandra Akhyani*' (2006). I am grateful to the author for providing me with a copy of her article.

*Madhyarātrī ṛṣisahita / vanā āle akasmāta /1/
 Paṇḍusuta jāme jhāle / ṛṣi samasta vandile /2/
 Dharma bhīmākaḍe pāhe / sattvahāni hota āhe /3/
 Draupadīnē dhānvā kelā / deva jevitā uṭhilā /4/
 Ṛṣi tṛpta kele vanī / mhaṇe nāmayācī janī /5/*

Due to the ṛṣi a calamity struck the forest at midnight.
 Paṇḍu's children gathered; the ṛṣi revered.
 Dharma glances at Bhīmā, righteousness is being damaged.
 Draupadī cried for help, God left his meal unfinished.
 He satisfied the sage in the forest, says Nāma's Janī.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* 318, SSG 1, p.752).²⁰⁵

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पुण्यवंत पाताळ लोकी नेला । दरिद्री तो भाग्यवंत केली । चोरट्याचा बहुमान वाढविला । कीर्तिवानाचा अपमान
 केला ।१। धुंद झाला तुझा दरबार ।धु।
 वैरियासी दिधली मोक्षसिद्धि । कपटिया दिधली महानिधी । सेवकाच्या दुंगा न मिळे चिंघी । चाळकासी त्रैलोक्य
 भावे वंदी ।२।
 पतिव्रता ती वृथा गुंतविली । वेश्या गणिका ती सत्यलोका नेली । केळी स्वकुळा लावियेली । यादववृंदा ही गोष्ट वरी
 नाही केली ।३।
 सत्ववानाचा बहु केला छळ । कीर्तिवानाचे मारियेलें बाळ । सखा म्हणविसी त्याचें नासी बळ । जनी म्हणे मी जाणे
 तुझे खेळ ।४।

*Puṇyavanta pātāla lokī nelā / daridrī to bhāgyavanta kelī / coraṭyācā bahumāna vāḍhaviḷā / kīrtivānācā
 apamāna kelā /1/ Dhunda jhālā tujhā darabāra / dhrupad/
 Vairiyāsī didhalī mokṣasiddhi / kapaṭiyā didhalī mahānidhī / sevakācyā duṅgā na miḷe cinghī / cāḷakāsī
 trailokya bhāve vandī /2/
 Pativratā tī vṛthā guntavilī / veśyā gaṇikā tī satyalokā nelī / keḷī svakuḷā lāvīyelī / yādavavṛndā hī goṣṭa
 varī nāhī kelī /3/
 Satvavānācā bahu kelā chala / kīrtivānāce māriyelē bāḷa / sakhā mhaṇavisī tyācē nāsī baḷa / janī mhaṇe
 mī jāne tujhe kheḷa /4/*

Those with spiritual merit are sent to hell. The poor are made weary. Thieves are inundated with honour.
 The illustrious are dishonoured.
 You grant the greedy and indifferent an audience (refrain).²⁰⁶
 Your enemies are granted liberation. Fraudsters are enriched. Servants must choose between poor cloth
 and rags.²⁰⁷ Pranksters are loved and adored in the three worlds.

²⁰⁵ This *abhaṅga* refers to an incident in the *Mahābhārata* (Book 3, *Vana Parva*, 'The Forest'; *Draupadī Harana Parva*) in which the sage Durvās visits the Pāṇḍavas in the forest. Durvās was known for his quick temper and was thus treated with reverence wherever he went. While in exile in the forest the Pāṇḍavas were all fed by the means of the *akṣayapātra* (the inexhaustible vessel), which was depleted once Draupadī had eaten. As Draupadī had just eaten when Durvās arrived she had no food left to serve the sage. [The brothers Dharma and Bhīmā glance at each other concerned that *sattva* will be damaged if they cannot offer Durvāsa hospitality]. While Durvāsa and his retinue were away bathing in the river Draupadī prays to Kṛṣṇa for aid. Kṛṣṇa appears immediately and asks her for food. Draupadī says she had none to give him and that she has prayed to him because she had no food! Kṛṣṇa then asks her to bring him the *akṣayapātra* and finding a grain of rice and a piece of vegetable in the vessel declares himself satisfied. Thus, the hunger of Durvāsa and his disciples is satisfied and they leave without returning to the hermitage and offending the Pāṇḍavas by declining their hospitality (see Ganguli 2008; also see van Buitenen 1973–1978). In having Kṛṣṇa come to their aid the author may be empathising with Draupadī or putting themselves in Draupadī's shoes. The author may also be expressing aspects of Kṛṣṇa as a means of chanting the names of god, which is one of the major practises of *bhakti*. Bahiṇābāi also refers to this incident (*abhaṅga* 400; Abbott 1985:122, २७२; Kolhārkar 1926:82).

²⁰⁶ The presence of a *dhrupad* indicates affiliation with a singing tradition asserts Callewaert (1989:56).

²⁰⁷ The cloth (*duṅgā*) mentioned probably derives from *doṅgarī* 'a term originally for the common Country-cloth', which applies to poor and low-priced cotton cloth in general (Molesworth 1857:354).

The dutiful wife is engaged fruitlessly. The dancing girl and courtesan are conducted to the highest heaven. Your own people are displaced. The full story of the many Yādavas is not told. The virtuous are persecuted. The children of the illustrious are killed. Friends [who] are made to say oblations to you are corrupt. Janī says, ‘I know your game’.²⁰⁸
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 336, SSG 1, *Padē*, p.754).²⁰⁹

ॐॐॐ

अहो मांडियला खेळ । बुद्धि रंग बुद्धिबाळ ।१।
कैचा शह आला । प्याद्याखालीं फरजी मेला ।२।
शहबाजू झाली । जनी म्हणे मात केली ।३।

*Aho māṇḍiyalā kheḷa / buddhi raṅga buddhibāḷa /1/
Kaiñcā śaha ālā / pyādyākhālī pharajīmelā /2/
Śahabājū jhālī / janī mhaṅe māta kelī /3/*

The game has been laid out; the player’s judgement colours the game.
The King marched; the pawn trampled the Queen.
The King’s side won, Janī says ‘its checkmate’.
(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 345, SSG 1, p.756).²¹⁰

ॐॐॐ

उठा पांडुरंगा प्रभातसमयो पातला । वैष्णवांचा मेळा गरुडपारीं पातला ।१।
वाळवंटापासूनि महअद्वारापर्यंत । सुरवरांची दाटी उभे जोडूनि हात ।२।
शुकसनकादिक नारद तुंबर भक्तांच्या कोटी । कवाडाआडूनि पाहताती जगजेठी ।३।
सुरवरांचीं विमाने गगनीं दाटलीं सकळ । रखुमाबाई माते वेगी उठवा घननीळ ।४।
रंभादीक नाचती उभ्या जोडुनि हात । त्रिशूळ डमरू घेउनि आला गिरजेचा कांत ।५।
पंचप्राण आरत्या घेऊनियां देवस्त्रिया येती । भावें ओवाळिती राही रखुमाईचा पती ।६।
अनंत अवतार घेसि भक्तकारणें । कनवाळु कृपाळु दीनालागीं उद्धरणें ।७।
चौयुगांचा भक्त नामा उभा कीर्तनी । पाठोमागें डोळे झांकुनी उभी ते जनी ।८।

*Uṭhā pāṇḍuraṅgā prabhātasamayo pātālā / vaiṣṇavāncā meḷā garuḍapārī pātālā /1/
Vāḷavanīpāsūni mahādvārāparyanta / suravarāñcī dāṭī ubhe joḍūni hāta /2/
Śukasanaśakādikā nārada tumbara bhaktāñcā koṭī / kavāḍā āḍūni pāhatāṭī jagajethī /3/
Suravarāñcī vimānē gaganī dāṭalī sakaḷa / rakhumābāī mate vegī uṭhavā ghananīḷa /4/
Rambhādīka nācatī ubhyā joḍuni hāta / triśūḷa damarū gheuni ālā girajecā kānta /5/
Pancaprāṇa āratyā gheūniyā devastriyā yetī / bhāvē ovāḷīṭī rāhī rakhumāīcā patī /6/
Ananta bhaktakāraṅē / kanavāḷu kṛpāḷu dīnalāgī uddharaṅē /7/
Cauyugāncā bhakta nāmā ubhā kīrtanī / pāṭhīmāgē ḍoḷe jhāṅkunī ubhī te janī /8/*

Arise Pāṇḍuraṅgā, it is dawn:²¹¹ your devotees have gathered near the Garuḍa shrine.²¹²
From the river bank to the main door, gods throng offering homage with palms joined.²¹³

²⁰⁸ This contradictory verse suggests that God works in mysterious ways (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 14th May 2011).

²⁰⁹ A *pada* is a short rhymed sung poem.

²¹⁰ This is the Janābāi *kūṭ* (enigmatic) *abhaṅga*. The author may be implying that Janī is the King’s pawn trampled by the queen. There is a suggestion that life is a game of chance which Janābāi has won or conquered as she was on the king’s side and God is thus the one who conquers life.

²¹¹ This could also read ‘Wake up Pāṇḍuraṅgā, it is daybreak’ (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 21st March 2011).

²¹² Garuḍa, the eagle, is the vehicle of Viṣṇu. He is associated with the sun and is, according to Monier Williams (2008), considered the personification of dawn. The *garuḍapāra* may be a ‘stone platform with a shrine of Garuḍa’ (Tulpule 1999:196) or an ‘eagle-shaped platform found in Vaishnava temples’ (Nukala 2014).

Devotees like Śuka, Sanaka, Nārada, Tumburu, and millions of others, look at Jagajethī from behind the gate.²¹⁴

The chariot of the gods completely fills the sky; Mother Rakhumābāi quickly awakens god.²¹⁵

Rambhā²¹⁶ dances with both palms joined. Girijā's husband²¹⁷ has come with his trident and drum.²¹⁸

The consorts of the gods wave *aratī* lamps infused with vital airs,²¹⁹ with living flame and deep devotion they greet Rakhumābāi's husband.²²⁰

Ananta takes form for his devotees,²²¹ and through his compassion liberates the lowly.

Nāmā, your devotee in all four ages,²²² stands for the discourse; behind him stands Janī swaying with her eyes closed.²²³

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 347, SSG 1, p.756).²²⁴

²¹³ The verb *jodaṅē* means to put together, join, and unite; to lay or place equally together, to lie along or alongside (Molesworth 1857:323) thus the 'joined palms' refer to *namaskāra*.

²¹⁴ The epithet Jagajethī is derived from *jagata* 'world, universe' and *jyeṣṭha* 'greatest, eldest' (Molesworth 1857:301; Monier Williams 2008) and refers to 'the greatest or strongest man in the world' (Tulpule 1999:248).

²¹⁵ There is a suggestion that Rakhumābāi awakens Viṭṭhal by ringing something loudly as *ghananīla* or rather *ghanānā* connotes 'with a loud ringing, clanking, clanging, twang, or jingle' (Molesworth 1857:253).

²¹⁶ Rambhā is an *apsarā* or a courtesan from *svaraga* (Indra's paradise). She is a 'celestial woman who is both closely connected with water (hence often translated as "nymph") and a dancer in the harem of the king of gods' states Doniger (2005:42). She was the wife of Nalakūbara and was carried off/raped by Rāvaṇa (Doniger 1999:9). She is considered the most beautiful woman of Indra's paradise and a form of the goddess Lakṣmī (Monier Williams 2008). For more on Rambhā see Doniger (2005:42ff; 1999:9ff), Rosen (1984:283, 286), Rajan (2000:108–110) and Hopkins (1932:319).

²¹⁷ Girijā 'mountain-born' is a name for Śiva's wife Pārvaī as the daughter of the personified Himālaya (Monier Williams 2008).

²¹⁸ The *ḍamarū* is a sacred drum, shaped like an hour-glass, used by Śiva and Buddhist monks to accompany chanting (see Bender 1985:392; Reck 1982).

²¹⁹ *Pañcaprāṇa* are the 'five vital airs' or forces of the human body: *samāna* ('navel', it circulates aiding digestion), *udāna* ('throat', it rises upwards), *prāṇa* ('breath'), *apāna* ('anal', it travels downwards) and *vyāna* (that circulates or is diffused through the body) (Molesworth 1857:481).

²²⁰ The *kākaḍārātī*, the 'dawn' *aratī*, is named after the lamp with a coarse cloth wick (*kākaḍā*) that is used. It begins at three in the morning with the temple trumpeter calling to inform the attendants to gather in the sixteen-pillared hall. When everyone has gathered, the *baḍvā* responsible enters the temple with the key to the four-pillared room (the outer-sanctum). He prays in front of the door for the deity to awake, then opens the door, enters the bedroom recess and removes the food offerings from the previous day. The other attendants then enter the room, except for the *haridāsa* who remains in the sixteen-pillared hall with those admitted to see the *aratī*. Nobody is allowed to enter the four-pillared hall unless they have recently bathed. The *puja* begins when everyone has gathered. The *pujārī* washes the feet of the image in milk and water carried by the *paricāraka* (assistant, attendant). The *pujārī* then replaces all the garlands and flowers put on the deity the previous day, offers incense, lamps and food. The *paricāraka* gives the *pujārī* the *kākaḍā* brought by the *baḍvā* and the *pujārī* waves it in front of the deity from head to foot. While the waving is being done, the *haridasa* sings suitable songs in the sixteen-pillared hall. When the song is over the *baḍvā* gives the *pujārī* a cup with fresh butter (*lonī*) and sugar, which the *pujārī* offers to the deity and puts in the deity's mouth. A metal lamp filled with clarified butter (*nirañjana*), and lighted camphor, is waved in front of the image while the *haridasa* sings. When this singing is over the *aratī* concludes with the audience throwing flowers at the image and the priest giving them *tīrtha* (holy water), *prasāda* (blessed food) and the flowers of the old garlands. After this the *pañcāmṛtapujā*, bathing the deity in five substances, begins (Deleury 1994:65–69). According to Datta the Vārkaṛīs perform an *aratī*, 'a really grand performance on a mass scale', on *āṣāḍhī ekādaśī* and cry 'jaya deva, jaya deva, jaya panduranga' before the *aratī* to Viṭṭhal is performed (2006:225).

²²¹ The epithet Ananta, 'Eternal', refers to Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. However, the word *ananta* means 'innumerable', consequently the phrase suggests that God incarnates himself countless times for the sake of his devotees.

²²² The *kaliyuga* is regarded as the age of discord or darkness.

²²³ The last phrase of this line raises the issue of Janābāi's location. If she was behind Nāmdev while he performed a *kīrtan* then she was in front of the audience and therefore visible (to some extent). This is significant for it suggests that Janī, a woman, might have formed part of the phalanx of musicians and singers that accompanied the *kīrtankār*. It is worth noting that in *abhaṅga* 224 (SSG 1:713) the author declares that Janī will take up the *vīṇā*, which may suggest Janābāi was a *kīrtankārī*. Janābāi's location may also indicate her status as Nāmdev's follower and/or disciple. However, the physical placement of Janābāi behind Nāmdev might indicate that a *santakaviyatrī* is perceived as not inhabiting the forefront and as an adjunct to a male *sant*. However, if one reads the phrase as 'at the back, swaying with her eyes closed stands Janī' then Nāmdev would be out-front and centre-stage as the *kīrtankār*, while Janī would have been invisible to the audience. The depiction of Janī with her eyes closed implies that she was absorbed in devotion (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 21st March 2011). The verb *ḍolanē* 'to sway in appreciation or wonder' (Tulpule 1999:286) implies Janī is engrossed in and 'enraptured' by the *kīrtan* and *bhakti* (Novetzke 2008:97). The swaying to music as part of *kīrtan* and *bhakti* remains commonplace.

²²⁴ Various translations of this verse are available online although they do not concur with the SSG (see Patel 2008).

धन्य सर्व काळ धन्य तो सुदिन । धन्य हा निधान ज्ञानदेव ।१।
 बारा शतें अठरा दुर्मुख संवत्सर । तिथी गुरुवासर त्रयोदशी ।२।
 ऋतु कृष्णपक्ष कार्तिक मास । बसे समाधीस ज्ञानराव ।३।
 नामयाची जनी लागतसे चरणी । ज्ञानेश्वरी ध्यानीं जपतसे ।४।

*Dhanya sarva kāla to sudina / dhanya hā nidhāna jñānadeva /1/
 Bārā śatē aṭharā durmukha saṃvatsara / tithī guruvāsara trayodaśī /2/
 Ṛtu kṛṣṇapakṣa kārtika māsa / base samādhīsa jñānarāva /3/
 Nāmayācī janī lāgatase caraṇī / jñāneśvarī dhyānī japatase /4/*

Blessed was that time, blessed was that day; blessed the treasure, Jñānade²²⁵
 The year twelve hundred [and] eighteen,²²⁶ a lunar Thursday, the thirteenth day of the lunar fortnight.²²⁷
 The fortnight of the waning moon,²²⁸ the month of *kārttik*; the king of knowledge experienced *samādhi*.²²⁹
 Nāma's Janī touches his feet, meditatively repeating the *Jñāneśvarī*.

(Janābāi *abhaṅga* 43, *Santa janābāice aprakāśita abhaṅga saṃhitā*, 'The collection of *sant* Janābāi's unpublished *abhaṅgas*', SSG 2, p.1400).²³⁰

आम्ही बळवंताच्या दासी । कोण गर्भवास सोसी ।१।
 करूं यमासी ताडण । आमुचा धनी नारायण ।२।
 जनी म्हणे हरी । पाप उरों नेदी उरी ।३।

*Āmhī baḷvantācyā dāsī / koṇa garbhavāsa sosī /1/
 Karū yamāsī tāḍaṇa / āmūcā dhanī nārāyaṇa /2/
 Janī mhaṇe harī / pāpa urō nedīurī /3/*

We are Baḷavant's²³¹ servants; who will bear this pregnancy?
 We will fight Yama, our husband is Nārāyaṇa.
 Janī says, 'Hari let sin be left [behind], let your support remain'.
 (Janābāi *abhaṅga* x; 'Aamhee balwantachya dasee', Marathi World.).

8. *Soyarābāi*²³²

²²⁵ This verse uses Jñānadev, 'Lord of Knowledge' and Jñānarāva, 'King of Knowledge' as epithets for Jñāneśvar.

²²⁶ The year *śake* 1218 would be 1296 C.E.

²²⁷ Although the Marathi in SSG 2 states *guruvāsara trayodaśī* (guru-day thirteen) I have interpreted this as *guruvāra trayodaśī* (Thursday the thirteenth) and translated it thus. What the verse makes clear is that the day of Jñāneśvar's *samādhi* was an auspicious one.

²²⁸ The literal translation for *ṛtu kṛṣṇapakṣa* is 'the season of the dark half of the month'.

²²⁹ Deleury states that 'in yogic terminology' *samādhi* is 'the final union with or absorption in the absolute self; enstasis. Hence, in bhakti, the final absorption of a bhakta in his God when he dies, hence the memorial (stone) set up where he died' (1994:221). Jñāneśvar is widely accepted as having interred himself at Alandi (see Abhyānanda 2000:93–94; Inamdar & Deshpande 1999:24–25 and Ranade 2003:43–44).

²³⁰ There are forty-three 'unpublished' Janābāi compositions in the second volume of the SSG (Gosāvi 2005). This verse comes under the sub-heading *hindī ko marāṭhī santō kī denā* (1957) *madhīla abhaṅga* "Hindi-Marathi Contribution" (1957) Middle *Abhaṅga*.

²³¹ *Baḷavanta* or *baḷavān* meaning 'strong, powerful, or mighty' (Molesworth 1857:569) is an epithet for Hanumān.

²³² There are sixty-two *abhaṅgas* attributed to Soyarābāi in the SSG (1:998–1004) and I have translated fourteen of these verses including those underlined of the nine *abhaṅgas* translated by Zelliott: (5) *avadhā raṅga eka jhālā*, 'All colours have merged into one' (2005:165); (6) *dehāsī vitāla mhanatī*, 'A body is unclean, they say, only the soul is untainted' (2005:159); (17) *garjatī nācatī ānnadē ḍolatī*, 'They shout, they dance, they sway in joy' (2005:165); (28) *kā bā udāsa maja kelē*, 'Why have you saddened me so?' (2005:159); (37) *nāmācā bharaṅvasā mānilāse sār* 'I have

हीन मी काय वानू देवा । तुम्हीं केशवा उदार ।१।
करा माझें समाधान । दाखवा चरण आपुले ।२।
लोटलेंसे महा नदी । नाही शुद्धी देहाची ।३।
बुडत्यें काढावें बाहेरी । म्हणे चोख्याची महारी ।४।

*Hīna mī kāya vānū devā / tumhī keśavā udāra /1/
Karā mājhē samādhāna / dākhavā caraṇa āpule /2/
Loṭalēse mahā nadī / nāhī śuddhī dehācī /3/
Buḍatyē kāḍhāvē bāherī / mhaṇe cokhyācī mahārī /4/*

I am base, You have given me a coloured body, Keśava the generous!²³³
Please gratify me by showing me your feet.²³⁴
Even after the river floods over me, I know my body is not pure.
'Please save the drowning ones', says Cokhā's Mahārī.²³⁵
(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 3, SSG 1, p.998).

ॐॐॐ

नाही उरली वासना । तुम्हां नारायणा पाहतां ।१।
उरला नाही भेदाभेद । झालें शुद्ध अंतर ।२।
विटाळाचें होतें जाळें । तुटलें बळें नामाच्या ।३।
चोंदेहाची तुटली दोर । म्हणे चोख्याची महारी ।४।

*Nāhī uralī vāsanā / tumhā nārāyaṇa pāhatā /1/
Uralā nāhī bhedābheda / jhālē śuddha antara /2/
Viṭālācē hotē jāḷē / tuṭalē bālē nāmācyā /3/
Caū dehācī tuṭalī dora / mhaṇe cokhyācī mahārī /4/*

Once I have seen you Nārāyaṇa there are no more desires.²³⁶
There is no more discrimination; my mind has become pure.
There was a net of evil, it has ceased on the strength of your Name.
The ties to the four bodies have been broken, says Cokhā's Mahārī.
(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 4, SSG 1, p.998).

ॐॐॐ

देहासी विटाळ म्हणती सकळ । आत्मा तो निर्मळ शुद्धबुद्ध ।१।
देहीचा विटाळ देहीचा जन्मला । सोवळा तो झाला कवण धर्म ।२।

relied on the Name'; (19) *pandharīce brāhmanē cokhyāsī āratī*, 'The Brahmins of Paṇḍharī harassed Cokhā' (2005:160); (43) *sukhācē hē nāmma āvaḍīnē gavāḍē*, 'Sing this joyous Name lovingly' (2005:158); (10) *vāugē gharadāra vāugā saṃsāra*, 'House and home are meaningless' (1999:421; 2005:164), and (1) *yeī yeī garuḍadjavakā*, 'Come, come you who bear the flag of Garuda' (2005:158).

²³³ The term *kāya* is an interrogative but also means 'the body' (Tulpule 1999:152; Vaze 1911:95). One can imagine that the author is being ironical when s/he describes the deity as generous for making him/her a low caste person. A similar statement is made in Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 35 (see below).

²³⁴ The term *samādhāna* means 'contentment, satisfaction, pleased quiescence of mind; rest, relief, ease, the feeling consequent on the removal or cessation of pain, anxiety, or affliction' (Molesworth 1857: 826; Vaze 1911:537), while *samādhāna karaṇē* means 'to satisfy; to please' (Tulpule 1999:706). However, *samādhāna* also refers to 'restraining of the mind from external objects and fixing of it steadfastly in contemplation' (Molesworth 1857:826) or 'religious meditation, profound absorption or contemplation' (Monier Williams 2008). Consequently, the author could also be suggesting that s/he is absorbed in meditation at/of the Lord's feet.

²³⁵ The last two lines suggest that a ritual bath or bathing does not remove the taint of 'untouchability' (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 27th January 2011).

²³⁶ The term *vāsanā* refers to 'the *dying* desire, the last and earnest longing of the departing soul' (Molesworth 1857:751).

विटाळावांचोनी उत्पत्तीचें स्थान । कोण देह निर्माण नाहीं जर्गी ।३।
 म्हणुनी पांडुरंगा वानितसे थोरी । विटाळ देहांतरीं वसतसे ।४।
 देहाचा विटाळ देहीं निर्धारिं । म्हणतसे महारी चोखियाची ।५।

*Dehāsī viṭāla mhaṇatī sakaḷa / ātmā to nirmaḷa śuddhabuddha /1/
 Dehīcā viṭāla dehīcā janmalā / sovaḷā to jhālā kavaṇa dharma /2/
 Viṭāḷāvāconī utpattīcē sthāna / koṇa deha nirmāṇa nāhī jagī /3/
 Mhaṇūnī pāṇdhuraṅgā vānitase thorī / viṭāḷ dehātārī vasatase /4/
 Dehācā viṭāḷa dehīca nirdhārī / mhaṇatase mahārī cokhiyācī /5/*

A body is unclean, they say, but the soul is clean and aware.
 The body's pollution arises through menstruation, birth, death and touch. What kind of *dharma* makes the
 Brahmin pure in body?²³⁷
 Nobody is born without becoming polluted.²³⁸
 Therefore, praise Pāṇḍuraṅga: impurity resides within the body.
 'The body's pollution lies within the body', says the Mahārī of Cokhā with confidence.
 (Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 6, SSG 1, p. 999).²³⁹

ॐॐॐ

शीण वाटतसे मना । नारायणा न पाहतां ।१।
 वांया आचार विचार । सदा मलीन अंतर ।२।
 सोंगाचें तें सोंग । दावी रंग कथेचा ।३।
 परधनीं सदा मन । वरी दावितसे डोलून ।४।
 ऐसा न रतो दुराचारी । म्हणे चोख्याची महारी ।५।

*Śīṇa vāṭatase manā / nārāyaṇā na pāhatā /1/
 Vāyā ācāra vicāra / sadā malīna āntara /2/
 Soṅgācē tē soṅga / dāvī raṅga kathecā /3/
 Paradhaniṅ sadā mana / varī dāvitase ḍolūna /4/
 Aisā na rato durācārī / mhaṇe cokhiyācī mahārī /5/*

My mind feels dejected if I can't look at Nārāyaṇa.
 Good behaviour and thoughts don't help, I am forever stained.
 The pretence of a pretender reveals the meaning of the story.
 One who always thinks of another's wealth but conceals his envy:
 'Such a man is immoral', says Cokhā's Mahārī.
 (Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 8, SSG 1, p.999).²⁴⁰

²³⁷ *Sovaḷā* 'auspicious' refers particularly to pure, clean and holy Brahmins who, having attained a state of cleanliness by ablution or purificatory ceremony, would be rendered unclean by the touch of impure persons or things. The term is also applied to those regarded as uncontaminated or undefiled (by any bad action) or to anyone who, by purification, is fit for everything (Molesworth 1857:868). This line refers to the idea that while a Brahmin's spiritual pollution can be removed by a purificatory bath, a low caste person (particularly one who deals with human excrement or dead animals) remains in a permanent state of spiritual pollution even after bathing (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 22nd March 2011).

²³⁸ This line suggests that because we are all born in the same way (in blood) we are all equally polluted.

²³⁹ There are some similarities with a verse attributed to Ravidās (दूध त बछरै थनहु बिटारिओ), which relates to ritual purity. 'Mother, she asks, with what can I worship?| All the pure is impure. Can I offer milk?| The calf has dirtied it in sucking its mother's teat.| Water, the fish have muddied; flowers, the bees—| No other flowers could be offered than these.| The sandalwood, where the snake has coiled, is spoiled.| The same act formed both nectar and poison.| Everything's tainted—candles, incense, rice—| But still I can worship with my body and my mind| and I have the guru's grace to find the formless Lord.| Rituals and offerings—I can't do any of these.| What, says Ravidās, will you do with me?' (Translation by Hawley 2005:40–41; Simh 1977:195, *pad* 13). The verse attributed to Soyarābāi offers a direct challenge to untouchability.

²⁴⁰ The author seems to be suggesting that, like a licentious man who thinks about another man's wife, s/he is immoral if s/he does not dwell on Nārāyaṇa.

उपजतां कर्ममेळा । वाचे विठ्ठल सांवळा ।१।
 विठ्ठल नामाचा गजर । वेगें धांवे रुक्मिणीवर ।२।
 विठ्ठल रुक्मिणी । बारसें करी आनंदानीं ।३।
 करी साहित्य सामुग्री । म्हणे चोख्याची महारी ।४।

*Upajatā karmameḷā / vāce viṭṭhala sāmvaḷā /1/
 Viṭṭhala nāmācā gajara / vegē dhāmve rukmiṇīvara /2/
 Viṭṭhala rukmiṇī / bārasē karī ānandānī /3/
 Karī sāhitya sāmugrī / mhāṇe cokhyācī mahārī /4/*

‘Karmameḷā was born: a promise from black Viṭṭhal.²⁴¹
 Viṭṭhal’s Name acclaimed. Rukmiṇī’s husband comes running.
 Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī perform the naming ceremony joyfully²⁴²
 With all the necessary materials’, says Cokhā’s Mahārī.
 (Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 14, SSG 1, p. 999).²⁴³

पंढरीचे ब्राह्मणे चोख्यासी छळीलें । तयालार्गीं केलें नवल देवें ।१।
 सकळ समुदाव चोख्याचे घरीं । ऋद्धी सिध्दी द्वारीं तिष्ठताती ।२।
 रंगमाळा सडे गुढीया तोरणें । आनंद कीर्तन वैष्णवाचे ।३।
 असंख्य ब्राह्मण बैसल्या पंगती । विमानीं पाहती सुरवर ।४।
 तो सुखसोहळा दिवाळी दसरा । वोवाळी सोयरा चोखीयासी ।५।

*Pandharīce brāhmaṇē cokhyāsī caḷīlē / tayālārgī kelē navala devē /1/
 Sakaḷa samudāva cokhiyāce gharī / ṛddhī sidhdī dvārī tiṣṭhatātī /2/
 Raṅgamālā saḍe guḍhīyā toraṇē / ānanda kīrtana vaiṣṇavāce /3/
 Asāṅkhya brāhmaṇa baisalyā paṅgatī / vimānī pāhatī suravara /4/
 To sukhasohaḷā divāḷī dasarā / vovāḷī soyarā cokhiyāsī /5/*

All the Brahmins of Paṅdharpūr were cruel to Cokhā; God was astonished.
 The whole community is at Cokhā’s home; wealth and accomplishments remain at the door.
 Beautiful *raṅgamālā*, *guḍhī* at the door—a Vaiṣṇava *kīrtan* is proceeding happily.²⁴⁴
 Innumerable Brahmins are sitting for *paṅgatī* while great souls look down from above.²⁴⁵
 This happy occasion is equal to *divāḷī* or *dasarā*, Cokhā’s Soyarā does *ovāḷī*.²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ This line could also be interpreted ‘when faced with the fruits of one’s actions [*karmameḷā*] speak the name of black Viṭṭhal’ (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 14th May 2011).

²⁴² The term *bārasē* refers to the naming ceremony on the twelfth day of a child’s life (Tulpule 1999:488; Molesworth 1857:576).

²⁴³ This *abhaṅga* has been translated by Zelliott (1999a:94; 2005:150).

²⁴⁴ *Raṅgamālā* are patterns drawn on the ground at the entrance to buildings, for festive occasions, with *rāṅgoḷī* ‘coloured powders’ (Molesworth 1857:678, 688). The patterns are commonly known as *rāṅgoḷī*. *Guḍhī* refers to a pole that is usually wrapped with cloth and hung with mango leaves and marigold flowers, which is erected before the door to a house (Molesworth 1857:238). The presence of the *raṅgamālā* and the *guḍhī* indicate that a special event is taking place.

²⁴⁵ *Paṅgatī* refers to a row of diners and indicates commensality, companionship and fellowship (Tulpule 1999:431; Molesworth 1857:480). The fact that numerous Brahmins are being fed indicates an auspicious occasion.

²⁴⁶ *Divāḷī* ‘a row of lamps’ is the festival of lights held at the end of Āśvin (September-October) and the first two days of Kārtik (October-November). It is held in honour of Viṣṇu (commemorating his destruction of the demon Narak) and to propitiate Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune and beauty, who is Viṣṇu’s wife (Molesworth 1857:414; Monier Williams 2008). *Dasarā* is the tenth day of the festival of *Navarātri*. During the nine nights (*navarātra*) and ten days of the festival images of the goddess Śakti/Devī are worshipped. *Dasarā* celebrates the day Rāma marched against the demon Rāvaṇa, indicating the victory of good over evil. The images of Devī, which have been worshipped

(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 19, SSG 1, p.1000).²⁴⁷

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पंच महापातकी विश्वासघातकी । राम नामें सुखी विश्वजन ।१।
महा पापराशी वाल्हा तो तारिला । उद्धार तो केला गणिकेचा ।२।
पुत्राचिया नामें वैकुंठाची गती । अजामेळा मुक्ती हरीनामें ।३।
नामेंची तरले नर आणि नारी । म्हणतसे महारी चोखियाची ।४।

*Pañca mahāpātakī viśvāsaghātakī / rāma name sukhī viśvajana /1/
Mahā pāparāśī vālhā to tārilā / uddhāra to kelā gaṇikecā /2/
Putrāciyā nāmē vaikuṅṭhācī gatī / ajāmeḷā muktī harīnāmē /3/
Nāmēcī tarale nara āṇi nārī / mhaṇatase mahārī cokhiyācī /4/*

For those guilty of five great sins²⁴⁸ and breach of faith, Rāma's Name saves.
It saved the great sinner Vālhā.²⁴⁹ It rescued the harlot.
The son's name sent him to paradise: Ajāmeḷā was liberated by the Name.
'The Name saves men and women', says the Mahārī of Cokhā.
(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 22, SSG 1, p. 1000).

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सलगीनें बहु बोलिलें उत्तर । परी तुम्ही उदार मायबाप ।१।
उदार तों तुम्ही तिही लोकीं किर्ति । म्हणोनी कमलापती शरण आहे ।२।
रंजले गांजलें मोकारिती धांवा । त्यांच्या धावण्यासी धांवा मायबापा ।३।
सोयरा म्हणोन दंडवत घाली । तूं नाय माउली पांडुरंगा ।४।

*Salagīnē bahu bolilē uttara / parī tumhī udāra māyabāpa /1/
Udāra tō tumhī tihī lokī kirti / mhaṇonī kamalāpatī śarana āhe /2/
Rañjale gāñjalē mokāritī dhāmvā / tyāñcyā dhāvanyāsī dhāmvā māyabāpa /3/
Soyarā mhaṇon daṇḍavata ghālī / tū nāya māulī pāṇḍuraṅgā /4/*

I speak with unbecoming familiarity but you are a forgiving parent.
Your generosity is famous across the three worlds; therefore I seek refuge with the Lotus-Lord.
The afflicted and miserable seek refuge with you. Please run to their aid, our mother and father.
Soyrā prostrates herself.²⁵⁰ 'You are our leader and mother, Pāṇḍuraṅgā'.
(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 31, SSG 1, p. 1001).

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हीन दीन म्हणोनी कां गा मोकलिलें । परी म्यां धरिलें पदरीं तुमच्या ।१।
आतां मोकलितां नव्हे नित बरी । थोरा साजे थोरी थोरपर्णे ।२।
शरण आलिया दावितसां पाठी । काय थोर गोष्टी वानूं देवा ।३।

over the previous nine nights, are then thrown into the river (Molesworth 1857:405). *Ovāḷī* (*ōvāḷaṅē*, *ōvāḷla*) means to move a lamp in a circular motion in front of a deity or person in order to remove evil or trouble and in offering or consecration (Molesworth 1857:122).

²⁴⁷ This verse has also been translated by Zelliott (1999a:97; 2005:160).

²⁴⁸ The five great sins or crimes (*mahāpātaka*) are: killing a Brahman (*brahmahatyā*), stealing gold (*survaṇa-steya*), drinking spirits (*surāpāna*), adultery with one's spiritual teacher or incest with one's mother (*gurutaḷpagamana*), and associating with anyone who has committed the previous four crimes (*tatsamsarga*).

²⁴⁹ Vālhā refers to Vālmīki. For a discussion on this theme see Leslie 2003. For a verse with a similar theme see Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 12 (SSG 1:919).

²⁵⁰ The term *daṇḍavata* refers to the full body prostration and the form of greeting given to Brahmins by lower caste persons.

सोयरा म्हणे अहो पंढरीनिवासा । तुमचा तो ठसा त्रिभुवर्नी ।४।

*Hīna dīna mhaṇonikā gā mokalillē / parīmyā dharilē padarī tumcyā /1/
Ātā mokalitā navhe nīta barī / thorā sāje thorī thorapaṇē /2/
Śaraṇa āliyā dāvitasā pāthī / kāya thora goṣṭī vānū devā /3/
Soyarā mhaṇe aho paṇḍharīvāsā / tumacā to ṭhasā tribhuvanī /4/*

I'm base and lowly, is that why you won't set me free? Nevertheless, I hold onto your *padar*.²⁵¹
It's not good ethics to ignore me; a great person should act according to his greatness.
I seek protection so show support.²⁵² What a great thing to be given colour!²⁵³
Soyrā says, 'O resident of Paṇḍharpūr you have left your imprint on the three worlds.'²⁵⁴
(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 35, SSG 1, p.1001)

ॐॐॐॐ

नामैचि पावन होती जर्गी जाण । नाम सुलभ म्हणा विठोबाचें ।१।
संसार बंधनें नामैचि तुटती । भुक्ति आणि मुक्ति नामापासीं ।२।
नाम हें जपतां पाप ताप जाय । अनुभव हा आहे जनामाजी ।३।
नामाचा गजर वाचें जो उच्चारी । म्हणतसे महारी चोखियाची ।४।

*Nāmēci pāvana hotī jagī jāṇa / nāma sulabha mhaṇā viṭhobācē /1/
Saṃsāra bandhanē nāmēci tuṭatī / bukti āṇi mukti nāmāpāsī /2/
Nāma hē japatāṅ papa tāpa jāya / anubhava hā āhe janāmājī /3/
Nāmācā gajara vācē jo uccārī / mhaṇatase mahārī cokhiyācī /4/*

The Name purifies, know this to be true, saying Viṭhobā's name is easy.
The Name breaks the ties of *sansār*. Enjoyment and liberation are achieved through the Name.
The Name conquers sin and oppression. People experience this.
'Proclaim the Name, utter it out loud', says the Mahārī of Cokhā.
(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 41, SSG 1, p. 1001).

ॐॐॐॐ

कळिकाळ कांपे नाम उच्चारितां । विठ्ठल म्हणतां कार्यसिद्धी ।१।
त्रिअक्षरीं जप सुलभ सोपारा । वाचे तो उच्चारा सर्वकाळ ।२।

²⁵¹ The *padar* is the ornamental border at the end of a *sāḍī* (*sārī*) or *dhoti* (Molesworth 1857:488; Berntsen 1982:83). *Padar* also refers to 'a cloth' (Tulpule 1999:48), 'a cloth cover; a screen' and 'the end of a garment' (Tulpule 1999:404). The term also has references to 'being under the care or protection of', 'to supplicate abjectly and earnestly' (Molesworth 1857:488) or 'to take refuge with' (Tulpule 1999:404). In this instance one can imagine the author taking hold of the fold in the *dhotar* that covers Viṭhobā's loins. However, as a *mahār*, Soyarābāi would have been forbidden to enter the temple, which suggests this verse refers to a metaphorical grasp of the *dhotar* as a means of taking refuge or seeking protection.

²⁵² The term *pāthī* is derived from *pāṭha* (back) and in this context refers to 'aid, support, [or] backing' (Molesworth 1857:502).

²⁵³ The term *vāna* derives from *vaṇa* or *varṇa* meaning 'colour' (Molesworth 1857:446, 746) or 'caste' (Tulpule 1999:625), which suggests that the author is referring to their low caste status in an ironical manner.

²⁵⁴ This may refer to the three strides of Viṣṇu where Viṣṇu's steps encompassed the earth, heaven and beyond. See *R̥g Veda* 1.154 (Doniger 1981:225–227), 1.22.16, 17; 6.49.13; and 7.100.3. For discussions on this topic see Kuiper (1962), Wayman (1965:316ff), Sircar (1971:2ff), Knife (1972), Soifer (1991), Hoek (1992), Kinnard (2000) and Keith (2007). The line may also refer to the imprints of Viṣṇu's feet (*viṣṇupada*) that, according to the Śrīdhar's *Pāṇḍuranga-Māhātmya* are found at Veṇunāda (VI. A. 9; Raeside 1965:18; see Rājāi *abhaṅga* 1326, SSG:491) and Gopalpur near Paṇḍharpur. According to Śrīdhar the site of Gopalpur is as good as Gayā (VI.B. 1; Raeside 1965:19) the most well-known of the sacred sites where the *viṣṇupada* are worshipped. The Soyarābāi verse may therefore be referring to the Vedic myth of Viṣṇu's all-encompassing strides and connecting it with the *viṣṇupada* at Gopalpur. The verse may also be drawing attention to the pervasive and benevolent nature of Viṣṇu as he was regarded as having taken the three steps for the benefit of humanity (RV 6.49.13). However, the author may also be making an ironical statement about caste being imprinted on each person.

भवताप श्रम हरे भवव्यथा । आन नका पंथा जाऊं कोणी ।३।
नामाचा विश्वास दृढ धरा अंतरीं । म्हणतसे महारी चोखियाची ।४।

*Kalikāla kāmpe nāma uccāritā / viṭṭhala mhapatā kāryasiddhī /1/
Triakṣarī japa sulabha sopārā / vāce to uccārā sarvakāla /2/
Bhavatāpa śrama hare bhavavyabhā / āna nakā panthā jāū koṇī /3/
Nāmāca viśvāsa dṛḍha dharā antarī / mhaṇatase mahārī cokhiyācī /4/*

Death trembles when the Name is uttered; saying Viṭṭhal leads to fulfilment.²⁵⁵
The three syllable repetition is easily achieved: repeat it at all times.²⁵⁶
It removes life's sorrow and strife: don't follow any other path.
'Have faith in the Name and hold on to it within', says the Mahārī of Cokhā.
(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 47, SSG 1, p. 1003).

ॐॐॐ

बहुतां परी वानितसें देवा । न कळे केशवा कांही मज ।१।
सेवा कैसी करूं काय ध्यान धरूं । न कळे साचार कांही मज ।२।
कैसी ती भक्ति करावी देवा । न कळे कांहीं हेवा दुजा मज ।३।
तुमच्या उच्छिष्टाची आस निर्धारिं । म्हणतसे महारी चोखियाची ।४।

*Bahutā parī vānitasē devā / na kaḷe keśavā kāhīmaja /1/
Sevā kaisī karū kāya dhyāna dharū / na kaḷe sācāra kāhī maja /2/
Kaisī tībhakti karāvī devā / na kaḷe kāhī hevā dujā maja /3/
Tumacyā ucchiṣṭācī āsa nirdhārī / mhaṇatase mahārī cokhiyācī /4/*

There are many ways to pray to you but O Keśava I don't understand anything.
How do I serve, what should my thoughts be? I don't understand what is true.
I don't know how to perform devotion; I have no other desire apart from seeing you.
'I am determind [to gain] your leavings',²⁵⁷ says Cokhā's Mahārī.
(Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 55, SSG 1, p.1003).

ॐॐॐ

आजि माझा सर्व पुरवा नवस । देखिलें पायांस विठोबाच्या ।१।
अनंता जन्मांचें फिटलें सांकडें । कोंदाटलें पुढें रूप त्याचें ।२।
आठवीत होतें गोमटीं पाउलें । तोंचि देखियेलीं विटेवरी ।३।
आनंद नसमाय मनाचे अंतरीं । म्हणतसे महारी चोखियाची ।४।

*Āji mājhā sarva puravā navasa / dekhilē pāyasa viṭhobācyā/1/
Anantā janmāncē phiṭalē sāṅkaḍē / kondaāṭalē puḍhē rūpa tyācē /2/
Āṭhavīta hotē gomaṭī pāulē / tonci dekhīyelī viṭevārī /3/
Ānanda nasamāya manāce antarī / mhaṇatase mahārī cokhiyācī /4/*

²⁵⁵ *Kalikāla* can be interpreted as 'the age of *kaḷi* (vice)' but it can also be personified as Death.

²⁵⁶ The sacred and mystical syllable ॐ has three phonetic elements, *a+u+m* and a silent fourth element. *Aum* is first mentioned in the *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā*. In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (1.8.1) *aum* is identified with Brahman and in the *Māṅḍūkya Upaniṣad* (1–12) *aum* is identified with Brahman as well as the structure of the cosmos (Radhakrishnan 2004:535, 693–705). In the *Bhagavadgītā* (8.13) the supreme deity is equated to *aum* and Brahman (Zaehner 1973:265). For further discussion see Killingly 1987 and Beck 1993 (42ff).

²⁵⁷ The term *ucchiṣṭa* connotes 'left, rejected, left of a meal; leavings; fig. Used and left,' (Molesworth 1857:87), 'leavings, fragments, remainder (especially of a sacrifice or of food)' (Monier Williams 2008) and 'leavings considered as *prasāda*' (Tulpule 1999:297). Zelliott translates Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 32 as saying 'I will accept your leftovers' and this *abhaṅga* as saying 'I can only wish for your discarded food' (2005b:160). Zelliott states that the image of gladly receiving God's leftover food is a Mahārī reference (2010:82). Mahīpati states that Janī ate Viṭṭhal's leavings in the BVJ (21.60).

Fulfil my votive prayer. I look at your feet Viṭhobā.
 I was liberated from the shackles of innumerable previous births when I pushed myself in front of Him.
 I kept thinking of those feet, which I finally saw on a brick.
 ‘My mind cannot contain the happiness’, says Cokhā’s Mahārī.
 (Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 57, SSG 1, p.1004).

ॐॐॐ

पुसोनी सर्वासी निर्मळा निघाली । येऊनी पोहंचली मेहुणपूरी ।१।
 सर्वकाळ छंद वाचें नाम गाय । आठवीत आहे चोखियासी ।२।
 म्हणे विठोबा मागणें आहे तुज । तुझे भक्तराज सांभाळीं तूं ।३।
 सोयरा म्हणे ऐसा सुखाचा सोहळा । भोगी अवलीला निर्मळा ती ।४।

*Pusonī sarvāṁsī nirmaḷā niḡhālī / yeūni pōhacalī mehuṅapūrī /1/
 Sarvakāḷa chanda vācē nāma gāya / āṭhavīta āhe cokhiyāsī /2/
 Mhaṅe viṭhobā māgaṅē āhe tuja / tujhe bhaktarāja sāmbhāḷī /3/
 Soyarā mhaṅe aisā sukhācā sohaḷā / bhogī avalīlā nirmaḷā tī /4/*

Taking leave of everyone, Nirmaḷā set out and soon reached Mehuṅpūrī.
 ‘He spent every moment recalling the Name’. Cokhā is thus remembered.
 Calling, ‘Viṭhobā, protect and take care of your excellent devotees’.
 Soyarā says, ‘Nirmaḷā the festivities are to be enjoyed.’²⁵⁸
 (Soyarābāi *abhaṅga* 62, SSG 1, p. 1004).

9. *Nirmaḷābāt*²⁵⁹

मज नामाची आवडी । संसार केला देशधडी ।१।
 सांपडले वर्म सोपें । विठ्ठल नाम मंत्र जपें ।२।
 नाही आणिक साधन । सदा गाय नारायण ।३।
 निर्मळा म्हणे देवा । छंद येवढा पुरवावा ।४।

*Maja nāmācī āvaḍī / saṁsāra kelā deśadhaḍī /1/
 Sāmpaḍale varma sopē / viṭṭhala nāma mantra japē /2/
 Nāhī āṅhika sādhanā / sadā gāya nārāyaṇa /3/
 Nirmaḷā mhaṅe devā / chanda yevaḍhā puravāvā /4/*

I’m fond of the Name. Wandering wretchedly somehow I existed.
 I discovered a remedy: chanting the Name of Viṭṭhal.
 There is no other means except constantly singing the name of Nārāyaṇa.
 Nirmaḷā says, ‘O God, please support this hobby of mine’.
 (Nirmaḷā *abhaṅga* 6, SSG 1, p. 1009).

ॐॐॐ

वडील तूं बंधु असोनी अविचार । केला कां निर्धार सांग मज ।१।
 न पुसतां दां बा आलासि धांवत । विहनी आकांत करतील कीं ।२।

²⁵⁸ The term *bhogī* also refers to the day before *narakaturdaśī*, the fourteenth day of Āśvin (September–October), the day when Viṣṇu killed the demon Narak, and the second day of the festival of *divālī* (Molesworth 1857:450, 279). The line could therefore read: ‘Soyarā says, ‘Nirmaḷā, the festivities will be on the thirteenth’.

²⁵⁹ The SSG has twenty-four *abhaṅgas* attributed to Nirmaḷā of which I have translated six (underlined) and Zelliott has also translated six: (21) *ājivarī tumhī tayāsī pālilē* (2005:161–62); (9) *anantā janmācē sukṛta padarī* (2005:162–63); (1) *cahūnkaḍe devā dāṭalā vaṅavā* (2005:163–64); (5) *krpecyā sāgarā parisā ninavaṅī* (2005:163); (10) *parāmartha sādhvā bolatī yā goṣṭī* (2005:162); (23) *tumcā bharavasā dharonī mānasī* (2005:161).

येरु म्हणे विठु पुरविल सामोगी । भार तयावरी घातिलासे ।३।
निर्मळा म्हणे ही बरी नोहे गोष्टी । विठोबासी कष्टी करणें काज ।४।

*Vaḍṭila tū bandhu asonī avicāra / kelā kã nirdhāra sãᅅga maja /1/
Na pusatã dã bã ālāsi dhāvata / vihanī ākãnta karatīla kī /2/
Yeru mhaᅇe viᅇhu puravila sãmogrī / bhāra tayāvarīghātīlāse /3/
Nirmaᅇā mhaᅇe hī barī nohe goᅇᅇᅇ / viᅇhobāsī kaᅇᅇᅇ kãja /4/*

‘You are my elder brother yet you acted thoughtlessly. Tell me why did you act with such determination? Why did you come running without even asking, wouldn’t sister-in-law be grieving for you?’
He says, ‘Viᅇho will provide all necessities, the burden is his’.
Nirmaᅇā says, ‘making this Viᅇᅇhal’s business is not the right thing to do’.
(Nirmaᅇā *abhaᅅga* 14, SSG 1, p. 1010).²⁶⁰

ॐॐॐॐ

चोखया म्हणे निर्मळेसी । नाम गायें अहर्निशीं ।१।
तेणें संसारा सुखाचा । इह परलोक साचा ।२।
साधन हेंचि थोर असे । शांति क्षमा दया वसे ।३।
ऐकतांचि आनंदली । निर्मळा म्हणे मिठी चरणीं घाली ।४।

*Cokhayā mhaᅇe nirmaᅇesī / nāma gāyē aharnišī /1/
Teᅇᅇ saᅇsāra sukhācā / iha paraloka sācā /2/
Sādhana hēci thora ase / śānti kᅇamā dayā vase /3/
Aikatānci ānandalī / nirmaᅇā mhaᅇe miᅇᅇᅇ caranī ghālī /4/*

Cokhā tells Nirmaᅇā, ‘chant the Name [of God] ceaselessly. Consequently familial life will be happy and you will attain the heavens. The ways to accomplish this are through peace, forgiveness and sympathy’.
Hearing this she was filled with joy. Nirmaᅇā says, ‘Embrace the feet’.²⁶¹
(Nirmaᅇā *abhaᅅga* 16, SSG, p.1010).

ॐॐॐॐ

कां बा पंढरिराया मोकलिलें मज । नाठवेचि मज दुजें कांहीं ।१।
मज तंव असे पायांसवे चाड । आणिक कैवाड कांहीं नेणें ।२।
चोखियासी सुख विश्रांति दिधली । माझी सांड केली दिसतसे ।३।
निर्मळा म्हणे तुम्ही तों सुजाण । माझा भाग शीण कोण वारी ।४।

*Kã bã paᅇᅇharirāyā mokalilē maja / nãthaveci maja dujē kãᅇᅇ/1/
Maja tãva ase pãyãᅇsave cãᅇa / āᅇika kaivãᅇa kãᅇᅇ neᅇᅇ /2/
Cokhiyãsī sukha viᅇrãnti didhalī / mãᅇᅇᅇ sãᅇᅇa kelī diastase /3/
Nirmaᅇā mhaᅇe tumᅇᅇ tō sujãᅇa / mãᅇᅇᅇ bhãga śᅇᅇa koᅇa vãrī /4/*

King of Paᅇᅇharpūr why have you ignored me? I can’t think of anyone else but you. I desire to touch your feet; I have no wicked intentions.
You have given Cokhā peace and happiness yet it looks like you’ve forgotten me.
Nirmaᅇā says, ‘you are knowledgeable. Will you relieve my weariness?’
(Nirmaᅇā *abhaᅅga* 19, SSG, p.10011).

²⁶⁰ The Nirmaᅇā *abhaᅅgas* 12–16 tell the story of Karmameᅇā’s birth and describes Cokhāmeᅇā as a useless husband (see Zelliott 1999a:94–95; 2005:149–155). A Nāmdev *abhaᅅga* (2353, SSG 1:688–89)—*cokhobācī kãntã ase tī garbhīᅇa* ‘Cokhāmeᅇā’s wife was pregnant’—completes the story and a condensed translation is provided by Zelliott (1999a:95–6).

²⁶¹ It is unclear to whose feet the author is referring.

आजिवरी तुम्हीं तयासी पाळिलें । अपराध साहिले चोखियाचे ।१।
 तयाचिया पाठी आमुचा कंटाळा । आला कां दयाळा सांगा मह ।२।
 हीनदीन मी पातकांची राशी । शरण पायांसी जीवें भावें ।३।
 निर्मळा म्हणे तुम्ही तो दयाळ । म्हणोनी सांभाळ करा माझा ।४।

*Ājivarī tumhī tayāsī pāḷilē / aparādha sāhile cokhiyāce /1/
 Tayāciyā pāṭhī āmucā kaṭāḷā / ālā kā dayāḷā sāngā maha /2/
 Hīnadīna mī pātakācī rāśī / śaraṇa pāyāsī jīvē bhāvē /3/
 Nirmaḷā mhaṇe tumhī to dayāḷa / mhaṇonī sāmbhāḷa karā mājhā /4/*

Until today you've taken care of him and tolerated all Cokhā's faults.
 You've always been at his back but tell me are you tired of us?
 Base and lowly, I am a mass of sin [but] seek refuge at your feet with heart and soul.
 Nirmaḷā says, 'you are the compassionate one, so please take care of me'.
 (Nirmaḷā *abhaṅga* 21, SSG, p.1011).²⁶²

तुमचा भरवसा धरोनी मानसीं । दृढ पायांसी शरण आलें ।१।
 आतां कळेल तो करावा विचार । मी आपुला भार उतरिला ।२।
 मांडीवरी मान ठेविली संपूर्ण । पुढील कारण जाणोनियां ।३।
 निर्मळा म्हणे तारा अथवा मारा । तुमचं तुम्ही सारा बोझें आतां ।४।

*Tumcā bharavasā dharonī mānasī / dṛḍha pāyāsī śaraṇa ālē /1/
 Ātā kaḷela to karāvā vicāra / mīāpulā bhāra utarilā /2/
 Māṇḍīvarī māna ṭhevīlī sampūrṇa / puḍhīla kāraṇa jāṇoniyā /3/
 Nirmaḷā mhaṇe tārā athavā mārā / tumcā tumhī sārā bojhē ātā /4/*

I am sure of you; resolutely I surrender to your feet.
 Now, do what you think is right; I have unburdened myself.
 I've put my head in your lap; I know what the future holds.
 Nirmaḷā says, 'either save me or kill me; my whole burden is now yours'.
 (Nirmaḷā *abhaṅga* 23, SSG 1, p. 1001).

10. *Bhāgū Mahārīṇ*²⁶³

आलों तुझ्या दर्शनासी । भेट द्यावी बा आम्हांसी ।१।
 सर्व संत हो राउळीं । मी रे एकटी नळमळी ।१०।
 करुणा आईक विठाई । मज बाळा भेटी देई ।२।
 देव आले ह बाहेरी । मज नेले खांद्यावरी ।३।
 भागु म्हणे भेट झाली । माझी चिंत ही हारली ।४।

*Ālō tujhyā darśanāsī / bheṭa dyāvībā āmhāsī /1/
 Sarva santa ho rāuḷī / mīre ekaṭī naḷamaḷī /dhrūpada/*

²⁶² This verse has been translated by Zelliott (2005:161–62).

²⁶³ The life story (*caritra*) of Bhāgū Mahārīṇ, which comprises three lines in SSG (1:816), states she was born in the *mahār* community, found her life enriched by devotion to the Lord and flourished as a poet; that her dates and life story are unknown, and that only two of her *abhaṅgas* are included in N.G. Joshi's *Prācīna Gītabhāṇḍāra* 'Treasury of Ancient Songs': *tujā asatā maja gañjīti* and *ālō tujhyā darśanāsī* [*abhaṅgas* 4 and 1]. It is believed that Bhāgū Mahārīṇ was a contemporary of the *mahār* Cokhāmeḷā (Shrotriya 1992).

*Karuṇā āṅka viṭhāi / maja bālā bheṭidei /2/
Deva āle ha bāheri / maja nele khāndyāvarī /3/
Bhāgu mhaṇe bheṭa jhālī / mājhi cintā hī hāralī /4/*

‘I’ve come to see you, please come and meet me.
All the *sants* are in the temple; I alone am pining outside (refrain).²⁶⁴
Listen to my desperate plea Viṭhāi; meet me, your child’.
God came outside, picked me up on his shoulders.
Bhāgū says, ‘He granted me a meeting; my worries have now ended’.
(Bhāgū *abhaṅga* 1, SSG 1, p. 1015).²⁶⁵

ॐॐॐ

काज नाही हो जनासी । रिझवावें त्या देवासी ।१।
जन हांसतील मज । आतां जातें मी निर्लज्ज ।ध०।
मार्गे पुढें नाही कोणी । सख्या विठ्ठलावांचुनी ।२।
अनायाचें करितो काज । म्हणोनी भरोसा आहे मज ।३।
भागु म्हणे झाले निर्भई । आहे माझी विठाई ।४।

*Kāya nāhī ho janāsī / rijhavāvē tyā devāsī /1/
Jana hāsatīla maja / ātā jāṭē nīrlajja /dhrūpada/
Māgē puḍhē nāhī koṇī/ sakhyā viṭṭhalāvāncunī /2/
Anāyācē karito kāya / mhaṇonī bharosā āhe maja /3/
Bhāgu mhaṇe jhāle nirbhāi / āhe mājhi viṭhāi /4/*

People have no other task than to please God.
People may laugh at me now that I go about shamelessly (refrain).
There’s no one around me apart from my friend Viṭṭhal.
He will deal with injustice, which is why I’ve put my trust in Him.
Bhāgū says, ‘I’ve become fearless, because of my Viṭhāi’.
(Bhāgū *abhaṅga* 2, SSG 1, p.1016).

ॐॐॐ

कृपेच्या सागरा । मायबापा ज्ञानेश्वरा ।१।
देहेभाव हे सोडून । बा माझे धरा ध्यान ।ध०।
जेणें पाषाण तारिले । मुखें पशु वेद बोले ।२।
भिंती चालविली । ऐसी कृपाळु माऊली ।३।
ऐसा कृपाळु भक्तांचा । मायबाप हा आमुचा ।४।
विश्रांतीचा ठाव । भागु म्हणे जानादेव ।५।

*Kṛpecyā sāgarā / māyabāpā jñāneśvarā /1/
Dehebhāva he soḍūna / bā mājhe dharā dhyāna /dhrūpada/
Jeṇē pāṣāṇa tārile / mukhē paśu veda bole /2/*

²⁶⁴ The *dhrupad* indicates affiliation with a singing tradition states Callewaert (1989:56).

²⁶⁵ This verse has also been translated by Zelliott (2005:31–2): ‘We have come for Your darshan, please meet us. | All the saints are inside the temple. | I am alone outside, pining. | Oh Mother Vithu, listen to my plea. | I am a poor girl, please meet me. | God came outside and took me in on Her shoulder. | Says Bhaga, I met God and my fears disappeared’. Zelliott remarks that the verse is ‘reminiscent of the south Indian story of Triuppan Alvar being carried into the temple (2005:31). For Zelliott the significance of this verse lies in the fact that it describes God, male or female, carrying an ‘untouchable’ into the temple on his shoulders (2005:32). There is also a connection with the story of Cokhā being led by the hand into the temple by Viṭṭhal (BVJ 23:6ff, Abbott 1996:377–84). The Vārkarī *sampradāya* profess the notion that everyone is equal before God irrespective of caste but this did not apply to so-called ‘untouchables’ until 1947 when Sane Guruji undertook a fast unto death in front of the temple in Pandharpur.

*Bhintī cālavilī / aisī kṛpāḷu māūlī /3/
Aisā kṛpāḷu bhaktāncā / māyabāpa hā āmucā /4/
Viśrāntīcā ṭhāva / bhāgu mhaṇe jñānādeva /5/*

The Ocean of Blessedness, my mother-and-father Jñāneśvar.
No longer conscious of my physicality. Father, take care of me (refrain).
The Desert Conqueror made a creature chant the Vedas.
He made the wall move, such is the blessed mother.
His devotees bless him; he is our mother-and-father.
He is the ultimate refuge. Bhāgū says, 'Jñānadev'.
(Bhāgū *abhaṅga* 3, SSG 1, p.1016).

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तुज असतां मज गांजिति जन । मग काय जिणे देवा तुज्जे ।१।
अनाथांचा नाथ ऐसें म्हणविसी । करुणा कैसी नये तुज ।ध०।
अनाथ म्हणऊनी धरियेलें दूर । मग कैसा दातार म्हणविसी ।२।
भारा म्हणे मज न सोडवावें आतां । पावे कृपावंता पांडुरंगा ।३।

*Tujā asatā maja gañjīti jana / maga kāya jiṇē devā tujhē /1/
Anāthāncā nātha aisē mhaṇavisī / karuṇā kaisīnaye tuja /dhrūpada/
Anātha mhaṇūnī dhariyelē dūra / maga kaisā dātāra mhaṇavisī /2/
Bhārā mhaṇe maja na soḍavāvē ātā / pāve kṛpāvantā pāṇḍuraṅgā /3/²⁶⁶*

In your presence people harass me. O God, what can you do?
Friend of the Friendless, why can't you take pity on me (refrain)?
Orphaned, I'm kept at arm's length. How can you be called generous?
Bhāgū says, 'don't release me, please deliver me compassionate Pāṇḍuraṅga'.
(Bhāgū *abhaṅga* 4, SSG 1, p.1016).

ॐॐॐॐ

मी रे अपराधी मोठी । मज घालावें बा पोटी ।१।
मी रे तान्हुलें अज्ञान । म्हणूं कां देऊं नये स्वन ।ध०।
अवध्या संतां तूं भेटसी मी रे येकली परदेशी ।२।
भागु म्हणे विठोसी । मज धरावे पोटीसी ।३।

*Mīre aparādhī moṭhī / maja ghālāvē bā poṭī /1/
Mīre tānhulē adhyāna / mhaṇū kā dēū naye svana /dhrūpada/
Avadhya santā tū bhetasī / mīre yekalī paradēśī /2/
Bhāgu mhaṇe viṭhosī / maja dharāve poṭisī /3/*

'I'm a great transgressor, please overlook my offense.'²⁶⁷
I'm an ignorant suckling, is that why you won't talk to me? (refrain)
You met all the other *sants*. Why am I the only stranger?'²⁶⁸
Bhāgū says, 'Viṭho, please hold me close'.
(Bhāgū *abhaṅga* 5, SSG 1, p.1016).²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ The SSG has *bhārā* 'a load, bundle, fagot, or pack' but Bhāgū may be more accurate.

²⁶⁷ The term *poṭī* denotes 'stomach', 'belly' or 'womb' but the verb *poṭī ghālanē* connotes 'to overlook (an offense)...' (Molesworth 1857:530).

²⁶⁸ The term *paradēśī* denotes 'a foreigner' (Molesworth 1857:488) or 'a refugee' (Tulpule 1999:407).

²⁶⁹ The SSG is confused about which Bhāgū composed these *abhaṅgas*. However, the verses attributed to Bhāgū Mahārīn all have a refrain (*dhrupad*) while the only other verse attributed to Bhāgubāi has no *dhrupad*.

11. *Kānhopātrā*²⁷⁰

शिव तो निवृत्ति विष्णु ज्ञानदेव पाही । सोपान तो ब्रह्मा मूळ माया मुक्ताई ।१।
धन्य धन्य धन्य धन्य निवृत्तिराया । धन्य ज्ञानदेव सोपान सखया ।२।
प्रत्यक्ष पैठणी भटां दाविली प्रचिती । रेडियाचे मुखें वदविली वेदश्रुती ।३।
चौदाशें वरूषांचे तप्ती तीर रहिवासी । गर्व हरविला चालविले भितीशी ।४।
धन्य कानहोपात्रा आजी झाली भाग्याची । भेटी झाली ज्ञानदेवाची ह्मणुनिया ।५।

*Śiva to nivṛtti viṣṇu jñānadeva pāhī / sopāna to brahmā mūla māyā muktāi /1/
Dhanya dhanya dhanya dhanya nivṛtirāyā / dhanya jñānadeva sopāna sakhayā /2/
Pratyakṣa paiṭhaṇī bhāṭāṅ dāvili pracitī / reḍiyāche mukhē vadavili vedasrutī /3/
Caudāsē varūṣāṅcē taptī tīra rahivāsī / garva haravilā cālavile bhitiśī /4/
Dhanya kānahopātrā ājī jhālī bhāgyācī / bheṭī jhālī jñānadevācī hmaṇuniyā /5/*

Nivṛtti is Śiva, Jñānadev is Viṣṇu, Sopān is Brahmā, and Muktāi is Māyā.²⁷¹
Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed Nivṛtti;²⁷² blessed Jñānadev and Sopān.
The Brahmans from Paithan realised [their greatness] when the buffalo recited the Vedas.
The fourteen-thousand-year-old sage conducting *tapas*,²⁷³ living on the [river] bank, lost his pride because
the four made the wall move.
Blessed is Kānhopātrā, because she could meet Jñānade
(Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 2, SSG 1, p.918).²⁷⁴

ॐॐॐॐ

जीवींचे जीवलगे माझे कृष्णाई कान्हाई । सांवळे डोळसे करुणा येऊंदे कांहीं ।१।
आला अपवाद याती संबंध लौकीक पाही । सांवळे डोळसे करुणा येऊंदे कांहीं ।३।
दीनोद्धार ऐसे वेद शास्त्रें गर्जती पाही । सांवळे डोळसे करुणा येऊंदे कांहीं ।४।
शरण कान्होपात्रा तुजला वेळोवेळां पाही । सांवळे डोळसे करुणा येऊंदे कांहीं ।५।

*Jīvēce jīvalage mājhe kṛṣṇāi kānhāi / sāmvaḷe ḍoḷase karuṇā yeūnde kāmhī /1/
Ālā apavāda yāti sambandha laukīka pāhī / sāmvaḷe ḍoḷase karuṇā yeūnde kāmhī /2/²⁷⁵
Dīnodhāra aise veda śāstrē garjati pāhī / sāmvaḷe ḍoḷase karuṇā yeūnde kāmhī /3/
Śaraṇa kānhopātrā tujalā veḷoḷeḷā pāhī / sāmvaḷe ḍoḷase karuṇā yeūnde kāmhī /4/*

Love of my life, Kṛṣṇa-Kānhāi,²⁷⁶
Show compassion in those dark eyes.
My caste is reviled, my reputation's tarnished;
Show compassion in those dark eyes.
The Vedas and Śāstras proclaim you save the wretched.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁰ There are twenty-three Kānhopātrā *abhaṅgas* in the SSG and I have translated twelve, five of which have been translated previously: *janmātaricē sukṛta ājī phalāsī ālē* (Sellergren 1996:231), *jīvēce jīvalage mājhe kṛṣṇāi kānhāi* (Sellergren 1996:227–228), *patita pāvana hmanaviśī ādhī* (Sellergren 1996:229), *patita tū pāvānā* (Sellergren 1996:227; Tulpule 1979:347), *śiva to nivṛtti viṣṇu jñānadeva pāhī* (Sellergren 1996:233). Kānhopātrā's life was the subject of a drama *Sant Kanhopatra* (1931) and a film *Kanhopatra* (1937) directed and written by Bhalji Pendharkar. For more information on Kānhopātrā see 'Mangalwedha: Shri Sant Kanhopatra' (2011), [online article], available at <<http://www.mangalwedha.com/2009/07/shri-sant-kanhopatra.html>> [accessed 11th December 2013].

²⁷¹ Muktāi is *mūla/mūla* Māyā, which can be interpreted as the 'original Māyā', 'progenitor Māyā' or 'principal Māyā' (Molesworth 1857:662; Berntsen 182:121).

²⁷² Nivṛtti is designated 'Nivṛtirāyā' and *rāyā* like *rāvā* or *rājā* means 'king' and is attached to names as an honorific title (Molesworth 1857:693).

²⁷³ This is a reference to Cāṅgadev.

²⁷⁴ This verse has also been translated by Sellergren (1996:233).

²⁷⁵ The term *apavāda* refers to 'scandal', 'malicious gossip' (Tulpule 1999:21), an 'unjust imputation' and 'censure' (Molesworth 1857:34).

²⁷⁶ Kānhaiyā is an epithet for Kṛṣṇa as playful, sportive and joyful (Molesworth 1857:133).

Show compassion in those dark eyes.
Seeking refuge Kānhopātrā falls at your feet, again and again,²⁷⁸
Show compassion in those dark eyes.
(Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 4, SGG 1, p.918).²⁷⁹

ॐॐॐ

अगा वैकुंठीच्या राया । अगा विठ्ठल सखया ।१।
अगा नारायणा । अगा वसुदेवनंदना ।२।
अगा पुंडलीक वरदा । अगा विष्णु तू गोविंदा ।३।
अगा रखुमाईच्या कांता । कान्होपात्रा राखी आतां ।४।

Agā vaikunṭhī rāyā / agā viṭṭhal sakhayā /1/
Agā nārāyaṇā / agā vasudevanandanā /2/
Agā puṇḍalīka varadā / agā viṣṇu tū govindā /3/
Agā rakhumāicyā kāntā / kānhopātrā rākhī ātā /4/

O King of Vaikuṅṭh; O companion Viṭṭhal.
O Nārāyaṇā; O Vasudev's son.
O Puṇḍalīk's boon granter; O Viṣṇu you [are] Govind.
O Rakhumā's husband,²⁸⁰ Kānhopātrā begs to be protected.²⁸¹
(Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 6, SSG 1, p.918).²⁸²

ॐॐॐ

पतित तू पावना । म्हणविसी नारायणा ।१।
तरी सांभाळी वचन । ब्रीद वागविसी जाण ।२।
याती शुद्ध नाही भाव । दुष्ट आचरण स्वभाव ।३।
मुखी नाम नाही । कान्होपात्रा शरण पायी ।४।

*Patita tū pāvanā / mhaṇavisī nārāyaṇā /1/*²⁸³
Tarī sām̐bhālī vacana / brīda vāgavisī jāṇa /2/
Yātī śuddha nāhī bhāva / duṣṭa ācaraṇa svabhāva /3/
Mukhī nāma nāhī / kānhopātrā śaraṇa pāyī /4/

²⁷⁷ The term *dīnodvāra* connotes 'salvation or deliverance of the meek and humble' or 'saviour of the meek and humble' (Molesworth 1857:414). Consequently, the author could be using the term as an epithet for the deity and/or asking for salivation as a wretched suppliant.

²⁷⁸ The Sanskrit term *śaraṇa* means 'place of shelter', 'refuge, protection, refuge with; to go to any one for protection, to seek refuge with' (Monier Williams 2008) while in Marathi the term is defined as 'a refuge' (Tulpule 1999:690) or 'protection' (Vaze 1911:514). There are a number of related terms: *śaraṇāgata* 'that is come seeking refuge or protection, a refugee, an appellant' (Molesworth 1857:782; Vaze 1911:514), *śaraṇa jāṇē* 'to surrender' (Berntsen 1982:145), *śaraṇa asaṇē* 'to be a supplicant for protection', *śaraṇa yeṇē* 'to come as a supplicant for protection' (Vaze 1911:514).

²⁷⁹ The final refrain could include the suggestion that Viṭṭhal saves or rescues Kānhopātrā. For another translation see Sellergren (1996:227–228).

²⁸⁰ Rakhumāī, 'Mother Rukmiṇī', is an epithet for Viṭṭhal's wife.

²⁸¹ This verse uses different epithets for God so one can imagine the author saying 'O God, O God, O God, O God' as a desperate plea for help. The verb *rākhaṇē* means 'to keep, preserve, protect, guard; to keep or save; to hold back or hold in; to reserve or withhold; to retain or keep back' and 'to hold as one's concubine or as one's paramour, to keep' (Molesworth 1857:687). The author of this *abhaṅga* may be playing with words and implying Kānhopātrā's supposed status as a courtesan.

²⁸² This *abhaṅga* has been recorded by Tukaram Gosavi, 'Nathanchi Abhanga Vaani', 2003.

²⁸³ This should probably read *patitapāvana*, 'Purifier and restorer of the fallen' (Molesworth 1857:48). Marathi World (Kanhopatra abhanga 3 'Patita tu pavana') has the first two lines as पतित तू पावना । म्हणविसी नारायणा ।१। तरि सांभाळी वचन । ब्रीद म्हणविसी जाण ।२। *Patita tū pāvanā/ mhaṇavisī nārāyaṇā /1/ Tari sambhālī vacana / brīda mhaṇavisī /2/*

You are named 'Purifier and restorer of the fallen', Nārāyaṇā.
 Keep your promise, acknowledge your vow.
 My caste is unclean, I lack faith; my behaviour and character are vile.
 No Name on the tip of my tongue. Kānhopātrā seeks the protection of your feet.
 (Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 7, SSG 1, p.918).²⁸⁴

ॐॐॐ

माझें माहेर पंढरी । सुखें नांदु भीमातीरीं ।१।
 येथें आहे माय बाप । हरे ताप दुरुशनं ।२।
 निवारिली तळमळ चिंता । गेली व्यथा अंतरींची ।३।
 कैशीं विटेवरी शोभली । पाहुनि कान्होपात्रा धाली ।४।

*Mājhē māhera paṇḍharī / sukhē nāndu bhīmātīrī /1/
 Yethē āhe māya bāpa / hare tāpa daruśanē /2/
 Nivārilī taḷamaḷa cintā / gelī vyathā antarīcī /3/
 Kaiśī viṭevārī śobhalī / pāhuni kānhopātrā dhālī /4/*

My refuge is Paṇḍharī,²⁸⁵ happily I'll dwell on the banks of the Bhīmā.
 This is where my parents are; my anguish will end after seeing [God].
 My agitation and anxiety have been removed, my agony has passed.
 How radiant He looks upon the brick;²⁸⁶ Kānhopātrā is satisfied.
 (Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 8, SSG 1, p.918).

ॐॐॐ

माझ्या जीवींचें जीवन । तो विठ्ठल निधान ।१।
 उभा असे विटेवरी । वांटी प्रेमाची सीदोरी ।२।
 आलीयाची धनी । निवारितो चक्रपानी ।३।
 भेटा दयेच्या सागरा । विनवितसे कान्होपात्रा ।४।

*Mājhyā jīvīcē jīvana / to viṭṭhala nidhāna /1/
 Ubhā ase viṭevārī / vāṅṭī premācī sīdorī /2/²⁸⁷
 Ālīyācī dhanī / nivārito cakrapānī /3/
 Bheṭā dayecyā sāgarā / vinavitase kānhopātrā /4/*

The life of my life is my treasure Viṭṭhal;
 Standing on the brick, lovingly distributing provisions.
 Cakrapānī, turn back the master of your friend.²⁸⁸
 'Embrace me Ocean of mercy', implores Kānhopātrā.
 (Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 9, SSG 1, p.918).

²⁸⁴ This verse is quoted and translated in Tulpule (1979:347) and translated by Sellergren (1996:227). The verse also has some similarities with Kānhopātrā *abhaṅgas* 10, (SSG 1:918) and 20 (SSG 1:919).

²⁸⁵ The term *māher* refers to a girl's natal home as opposed to that of her husband's parents. Consequently, it is seen as a place of refuge, asylum or rest (Molesworth 1857:651). In this context the phrase can therefore mean that Pandharpur is Kānhopātrā's natal home and/or her refuge.

²⁸⁶ This is an epithet for Viṭṭhal (see Janābāi *abhaṅga* 91, SSG 1:724).

²⁸⁷ The term *sīdorī* should be *śīdhori* (*śīddh + dorī*, cord of the slung basket or pot): 'victuals or dressed provisions (as carried on a journey, taken or sent to the fields or another's house)'; 'victuals (given by women to Brahmans, especially in the rainy season)'; 'victuals (given to a stranger or child in order to obtain *punya* or merit)' (Molesworth 1857:789), 'a lunch packet for a journey' (Tulpule 1999:691, 749) or 'food taken on a journey' (Berntsen 1982:146).

²⁸⁸ The word *ālī* refers to 'a female friend or companion; a confidante' (Molesworth 1857:75) or 'a woman's female friend' (Tulpule 1999:70). Consequently, the author is probably female and referring to the deity as her female friend. It is possible that 'master' (*dhanī*) refers to the king who attempted to take Kānhopātrā from Pandharpur but the term may imply that the author has a master whose control s/he wishes to thwart.

दीन पतित अन्यायी । शरण आल्यें विठाबाई ।१।
मी तो आहे यातीहीन । नकळे कांहीं आचरण ।२।
मज अधिकार नाही । भेटी देई विठाबाई ।३।
ठाव देई चरणापाशी । तुझी कान्होपात्रा दासी ।४।

*Dīna patita anyāyī / śaraṇa ālyē viṭhābāi /1/
Mī to āhe yātihīna / na kaḷe kāmhī ācaraṇa /2/
Maja adhikāra nāhī / bheṭī deī viṭhābāi /3/
Ṭhāva deī caraṇāpāśī / tujhī kānhopātrā dāsī /4/*

Lowly, fallen, unrighteous; I seek your protection Viṭhābāi.²⁸⁹
I am low caste and do not know how to behave.
I have no authority;²⁹⁰ please meet me Viṭhābāi.
Give me a place at your feet; I am your servant Kānhopātrā.
(Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 10, SSG 1, p.918).

अंबऋषीसाठी । जन्म घेतले जगजेठी ।१।
वागवी भक्तांचा आभार । ऋणी झाला निरंतर ।२।
अर्जुनोच रथीं बैसे । त्याचे घोडे धूतसे ।३।
लाज सांडी ऋषीकेशी । कान्होपात्रा तुझी दासी ।४।

*Ambarṣīsāthī / janma ghetale jagajethī /1/
Vāgavī bhaktāncā ābhāra / ṛṇī jhālā nirantara /2/+
Arjunoca rathī baise / tyāce ghode dhūtase /3/
Lāja sāṇaḍī ṛṣīkeśī / kānhopātrā tujhī dāsī /4/*

For Ambarṣī's sake, Jagajethī took form.²⁹¹
He bears his devotees burdens; he is continually indebted.
Sitting in Arjūna's chariot, He used to wash his horses.²⁹²
Cast away shame 'Lord of the Senses',²⁹³ Kānhopātrā is your servant.
(Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 11, SSG 1, p.919).

²⁸⁹ For a similar theme see Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 7 (SSG 1:918).

²⁹⁰ The term *adhikāra* has numerous connotations: 'authority; right' (Berntsen 1982:3), 'spiritual authority arising from devotion to God' (Tulpule 1999:12), and 'an office, post, place; right, title, authority; province, proper office or business: also authority; right of action; subject, theme, matter proposed or contemplated; rule, government, exercising or holding authority' (Molesworth 1857:25).

²⁹¹ The verse uses the epithet *jagajethī*, formed from *jagata* 'the world or universe' and *jyeṣṭha* 'greatest, best' (Molesworth 1857:301, 326), which means 'the greatest and strongest man in the world' (Tulpule 1999:248). This epithet is also used in compositions attributed to Jñāneśvar and Nāmdev (Tulpule 1999:164,248, 355, 427, 463, 623). The story of Ambarṣī, a great devotee of Viṣṇu, and his confrontation with the sage Durvās is found the BhP (9.4.15ff). A different version of the story is supposedly in the *Śiva Purāṇa* but I have been unable to find an exact reference. A summary of the story, with Sanskrit, transliteration and translation is given by Jaishree (2010). There is a story in relation to the Aaduturai Perumaal Temple, at Thirukkoodalur near Kumbakonam, in Tamil Nadu (PRabhu 2007). There is also a Jain story relating to Ambarṣī (Āvaśyaka commentaries II 196:5–14; Balbir 1993:55–56).

²⁹² This is a reference to Kṛṣṇa, who tended the horses as Arjūna's charioteer. The verse is making the point that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, served Arjūna as an example to people.

²⁹³ *Ṛṣīkeśa*, 'Lord of the senses' (Monier-Williams 2008) or 'Lord of the senses and of the heart' (Abbott 1996, 2:452) is an epithet for Viṣṇu. The story is that Viṣṇu appeared to the sage Raibhya, as a result of his austerities, in the form of *ṛṣīkeśa*.

ज्याचें घेतां मुखीं नाम । धाकी पडे काळ यम ।१।
 ऐशी नामाची थोरी । उद्धरिलें दुराचारी ।२।
 नष्ट गणिका अजामेळ । वाल्मिकी झाला तो सोज्वळ ।३।
 ऐशी नाम माळा । कान्होपात्रा ल्याली गला ।४।

*Jyācē ghetā mukhī nāma / dhākī paḍe kāḷa yama /1/
 Aiśī nāmācī thorī / uddharilē durācārī /2/
 Naṣṭa gaṇikā ajāmeḷa / vālmikī jhālā to sojvaḷa /3/
 Aiśī nāma māḷā / kānhopātrā lyāli gala /4/*

The one who knows your Name by heart threatens Death.
 Hurray! Your great Name has delivered even the wicked.
 A ruined harlot, Ajāmeḷa and Vālmikī all became pure.²⁹⁴
 Hurray! Kānhopātrā's neck is decorated with a garland of your Names.
 (Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 12, SSG 1, p.919).²⁹⁵

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घ्यारे घ्यारे मुखीं नाम । अंतरीं धरोनियां प्रेम ।१।
 माझा आहे भोळा बाप । घेतो ताप हरोनी ।२।
 आपुलिया नामासाठी । धांवे संकटीं लवलाहे ।३।
 घ्यारे घ्यारे अनुभव । कान्होपात्राचा माधव ।४।

*Ghyāre ghyāre mukhī nāma / antarī dharoniyā prema /1/
 Mājhā āhe bhoḷā bāpa / ghetto tāpa haronī /2/
 Apuliyā nāmāsāthī / dhāmvē saṅkaṭī lavalāhē /3/
 Ghyāre ghyāre anubhava / kānhopātrācā mādhava /4/*

Chant the Name by heart, with love from within.
 My Father is trusting; he removes all oppression.
 Through chanting Names, difficulties will quickly disappear.
 Experience Him yourself. He is Kānhopātrā's Mādha
 (Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 14, SSG 1, p.919).

ॐॐॐॐ

जन्मांतरिचें सुकृत आजी फळासी आलें । म्हणोनी देखिले विठ्ठलचरण ।१।
 धन्य भाग्य आजी डोळियां लाधल । म्हणुनी देखिले विठ्ठलचरण ।२।
 धन्य चरण माझे या पंथी चालिले । म्हणुनी देखिले विठ्ठलचरण ।३।
 येऊनियां देहासी धन्य झाले । म्हणुनी देखिले विठ्ठलचरण ।४।
 घाली गर्भवासा कान्होपात्रा म्हणे । जन्मोजन्मीं देखेन विठ्ठलचरण ।५।

*Janmātaricē sukṛta ājī phalāsī ālē / mhaṇonī dekhile viṭṭhalacaraṇa /1/
 Dhanya bhāgya ājīḍoḷiyā lādhalā / mhaṇonī dekhile viṭṭhalacaraṇa /2/
 Dhanya caraṇa mājhe yā panthī cālile / mhaṇonī dekhile viṭṭhalacaraṇa /3/
 Yeūniyā dehāsīdhanya jhāle / mhaṇonī dekhile viṭṭhalacaraṇa /4/
 Ghālī garbhavāsā kānhopātrā mhaṇe / janmojanmī dekhena viṭṭhalacaraṇa /5/*

The virtuous actions of all my lives have borne fruit today;

²⁹⁴ The word *sojvala* means 'shinning, brilliant, bright, sparkling, and glittering' as well as 'glossy' from burnishing or polishing (Molesworth 1857: 868; see Tulpule 1999:775).

²⁹⁵ There is a translation of this verse by Sellergren (1996:232) and Ranade (2003:208).

That's why I saw the feet of Viṭṭhal.²⁹⁶
 Happily, I realised my good fortune today;
 That's why I saw the feet of Viṭṭhal.
 Blessed are my feet that have followed this *panth*;
 That's why I saw the feet of Viṭṭhal.
 By coming here my body has been blessed;
 That's why I saw the feet of Viṭṭhal.
 Kānhopātrā says, 'enclose me in your womb,'²⁹⁷
 so as to see the feet of Viṭṭhal from birth to birth'.²⁹⁸
 (Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 20, SSG 1, p.919).²⁹⁹

ॐॐॐ

पतित पावन ह्मणविसी आधी । तरी कां उपाधी भक्तामार्गे ।१।
 तुज्जे ह्मणवितां दुज्जे अंगसंग । उणेपणा सांग कोणाकडे ।२।
 सिंहाचे भातुके जंबुक पे नेता । थोराचिया माथां लाज वाटे ।३।
 म्हणे कान्होपात्रा देह समर्पणे । करावा जतन ब्रीदासाठीं ।४।

*Patita pāvana hmaṇavisī ādhī / tarikā upādhi bhaktāmāgē /1/
 Tujhē hmaṇavitā dujē aṅgasaṅga / unepaṇā sāṅga koṇākade /2/
 Siṃhāce bhātukē jambuka paī netā / thorāciyā māthā lāja vāṭe /3/
 Mhaṇe kānhopātrā deha samarpaṇē / karāvā jatana brīdāsāṭhī /4/*

If you are called 'Purifier and restorer of the fallen', then why is this devotee still agitated?³⁰⁰
 I am your other half. Whose fault is it if I am subjected to another?
 When the jackal takes the lion's food,³⁰¹ the great should be ashamed.
 Says Kānhopātrā, 'I offer my body, protect me on account of your office.'³⁰²
 (Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 22, SSG 1, p.920).³⁰³

नको देवराया अंत पाहू आतां । प्राण हा सर्वथा फुटो पाहे ।१।
 हरिणीचें पाडस व्याघ्रे धरियेलें । मजलागीं जाहलें तैसें देवा ।२।
 तुजविण ठाव न दिसे त्रिभुवनीं । धावे वो जननी विठाबाई ।३।
 मोकलोनी आस जाहले मी उदास । घेई कान्होपात्रा हृदयांत ।४।

²⁹⁶ This refrain stresses the fulfilment of constant devotion (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 27th January 2011).

²⁹⁷ The term *garbha* means 'a foetus or an embryo; pulp, pith, kernel, marrow, heart, interior portion or the essence, moral, sum, substance; Surface or space included, area; the middle, the exact centre; meaning or import; the interior or inside: e. g. the womb; the belly; an inner apartment; a lying-in-chamber; the adytum of a temple' (Molesworth 1857:225) while the term *garbhavāsa* refers to 'dwelling in the womb; i.e. undergoing formation and being in the womb' (Molesworth 1857:227).

²⁹⁸ The author appears willing to continue being reborn so that s/he can see Viṭṭhal's feet.

²⁹⁹ For another translation see Sellergren (1996:231).

³⁰⁰ This first line of this verse is similar to that of Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 7 (SSG 1:918).

³⁰¹ The word *bhātukē* denotes 'food; a snack; a light repast' (Tulpule 1999:513; see Molesworth 1857:607). The term *jambuka* (*jambūka*) is a Sanskrit one referring to 'a jackal' or 'low man' (Monier Williams 2008; see Molesworth 1857:307). There are numerous folktales featuring a jackal and lion, for example *Pañcatantra* 4.1 'The Ass without Ears or a Heart' (Olivelle 1999:152–54). The jackal is regarded as the meanest of animals; greedy, deceitful and cunning (see Gupta 1975:243–44; van Damme 1995:48–50). The jackal is thus 'the typical minister (craft is a characteristic of both), appearing always when there is a lion king. The contempt for the jackal is implicit whenever it is mentioned' asserts Olivelle (1999:xxiv). The lion is 'the king of the world, the king of all the animals' and he is 'noble and brave, but can be arrogant, proud and foolish' according to Olivelle (1999:xxiv). It is possible that the jackal refers to the 'evil man' (*durācārī*) who Mahīpati says told the king (the lion) that Kānhopātrā was in Pandharpur (BVJ 39.25ff; Abbott 1996:80ff).

³⁰² The term *brīdā* (*birīda*, *birada*, *brīda*, *biruda*, *biradāṭa*) denotes 'a forte; a title; a badge proclaiming one's excellence in a particular field of expertise' (Tulpule 1999:502; see Molesworth 1857:582).

³⁰³ For another translation see Sellergren (1996:229). Sellergren states that the comparison made between Kānhopātrā and the food of wild animals is one that appears in songs attributed to women saints such as Āṇḍāl (1996:230).

*Nako devarāyā anta pāhū ātā / prāṇa hā sarvathā phuṭō pāhe /1/
 Hariṇīcē pādasa vyāghre dhariyelē / majalāgī jāhalē taisē devā /2/
 Tujaviṇa ṭhāva na dise tribhuvanī / dhāve vo janānī viṭhābāi /3/
 Mokalonī āsa jāhale mī udāsa / gheī kānhopātrā hṛdayānta /4/*

O Lord God, please don't test me; my breath is leaving me.³⁰⁴
 I feel like a doe caught by a tiger, O God.³⁰⁵
 Apart from You, I see nothing in the three worlds; please come to our aid Viṭhābāi.
 There's no hope so I'm sorrowful; please take Kānhopātrā into your heart.³⁰⁶
 (Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* x).³⁰⁷

12. *Bhāgūbāi*³⁰⁸

मी रे अपराधी मोठी । मज घालावें बा पोटी ॥
 मी तान्हुलें अज्ञान । म्हणू का देऊ नये स्तन ॥
 अवध्या संतां तूं भेटसी । मी रे एकली परदेशी ॥
 भागू म्हणे विठोबासी । मज धरावें पोटासी ॥³⁰⁹

*Mī re aparādhi mothī / maja ghālāvē bā poṭī /1/
 Mī tānhulē adhyāna / mhaṇū kā deū naye stana /2/
 Avadhya santā tū bheṭasī / mī re ekalī paradeśī /3/
 Bhāgū mhaṇe viṭhobāsī / maja dharāvē poṭāsī /4/*

I'm a great transgressor, please overlook my offense.³¹⁰
 I'm an ignorant suckling, is that why you won't talk to me? (refrain)
 You met all the other *sants*. Why am I the only stranger?³¹¹
 Bhāgū says, 'Viṭhobā, please hold me close'.
 (Bhāgūbāi, *abhaṅga* SSG 2, p. 1389).³¹²

³⁰⁴ The first line of this verse could also read 'Don't, Oh God, put me to the test; my life is falling apart'.

³⁰⁵ The term *hariṇī* denotes 'a doe' but also refers to 'one of the four kinds of beautiful women' (Monier Williams 2008; Molesworth 1857:888).

³⁰⁶ The last part of this phrase could also be translated as 'please clasp Kānhopātrā to your bosom'. The verse presents Kānhopātrā as yearning for *mukti*.

³⁰⁷ This famous verse is thought to be Kānhopātrā's final composition. I have taken the Marathi from Marathi World (Kānhopatra *abhaṅga* 1 'Nako devrayaa anta pahu aata'). This verse has been set to music and sung by Hridaynath and Lata Mangeshkar for the film *Sādhi Māṇas* (1965), see dipiaarmarathi (2008b). The verse was set to music by K. S. Inamdar and sung by Sanjeev Chimmalgi for the film *Not Only Mrs. Raut* (2003). Inamdar has outlined the differences between his version of the verse and that by Mangeshkar in his blog (2006). The text presented by Inamdar differs slightly from the 'Marathi World' text: *ho* rather than *vo* in the third line. To hear the Inamdar song go to <<http://www.archive.org/details/KaushalS.InamdarNakoDevaraya>> [accessed 19th September 2010]. For the film clip see: Rajshri (2011) 'Nako Devraaya (Not Only Mrs. Raut) – Marathi', [online video] uploaded 03/03/2011, available at: <<http://dai.ly/xhclgy>> [accessed 11th December 2013]. The verse has also been sung by Shreya Ghosal in *Gaani Anandagananchi*.

³⁰⁸ Bhāgūbāi's life story (SSG 2:1389) states that when Tukārām 'flew to heaven' his children were young so they did not know how unique their father Tukaram was. The children lived with their grandparents for twenty-five years and only heard of their father's fame. It is possible that they composed some *abhaṅgas*, which can be inferred from the *Tukārāmtātyā* edited by Kānhoba—Tukārām's older brother—Bhāgūbāi and Tukārām's posthumous disciple Niḷobā. There are two *abhaṅgas* by Bhāgūbāi in Niḷobā's *abhaṅga gāthā*, showing her desperate plea for Viṭṭhal to give her *darśan*.

³⁰⁹ This is the text provided in the SSG for Bhāgūbāi's *abhaṅga* and there are a few subtle differences with that of the verse said to be by Bhāgū Mahārīṇ.

³¹⁰ The term *poṭī* denotes 'stomach', 'belly' or 'womb' but the verb *poṭī ghālaṇē* means 'to overlook (an offense)...' (Molesworth 1857:530).

³¹¹ The term *paradeśī* denotes 'a foreigner' (Molesworth 1857:488) or 'a refugee' (Tulpule 1999:407).

³¹² Shrotriya presents this verse as being by both Tukārām's daughter Bhāgūbāi (1992–3:50) and Bhāgū Mahārīṇ (1992–3:79). The SSG is also confused about which Bhāgū composed which *abhaṅgas*. However, the other four verses attributed to Bhāgū Mahārīṇ each have four lines with a refrain (*dhrupad*).

साधूचा संग धरीरे । श्रीहरी स्मरणीं रंगली बाणी ॥
 भक्ती धरी दृढ काम त्यजी रे । साधूचा संग धरीरे ॥
 मायाजाळे हें मृगजळ पाहे । गुंतसी परी जती नाही बरीरे ॥
 दुस्तर डोहीं बुडसी पाही । तारूं हें विठ्ठलनाम धरी रे ॥
 कीर्तनरंगी होसी अभंगी । भागु बघ तुज नमन करी रे ॥

*Sādhūcā saṅga dharīre / śrīharī smaraṇī raṅgalī bāṇī /1/
 Bhaktī dharīḍha kāma tyajīre / sādūcā saṅga dharīre /2/
 Māyājāḷe hē mṛgajāḷa pāhe / guntasī parī jatī nāhī barīre /3/
 Dustara dohī buḍasī pāhī / tāṛū hē viṭṭhalanāma dharīre /4/
 Kīrtanaraṅgī hoṣī abhaṅgī / bhāgu bagha tuja namana karīre /5/*

Cultivate the company of saints; immerse yourself in the delight of reciting the names of the Lord.³¹³
 Hold fast to devotion, forsake all other acts; cultivate the company of saints.
 Behold a mirage—the net of illusion; become entangled and there's no progress.³¹⁴
 You'll be sunk. Turn to the ferry that is Viṭṭhal's name.³¹⁵
 Delighting in *kīrtan* and *abhaṅga*, see how Bhāgu pays you homage.
 (Bhāgūbāi *abhaṅga* SSG, p.1389).

13. Gaṅgabāi

सर्व करी देवाधिदेव । त्यास नेणती मानव ॥
 वाहती देह अभिमान । देव सर्व काही जाणे ॥
 अहंपणे आता । देव न दिसे सर्वथा ॥
 अहंकर्ता जो मी म्हणे । तेणे केली आपुली हानी ॥
 चाले देवासी भिऊन । गुप्त म्हणे तोचि धन्य ॥

*Sarva karī devādhideva / tyāsa neṇatī mānava //
 Vāhatī deha ābhimāna / deva sarva kāhī jāṇe //
 Ahampane ātā / deva na diṣe sarvathā //
 Ahamkartā jo mī mhaṇe / teṇe kelī āpulī hānī //
 Cāle devāsī bhiūna / gupta mhaṇe toci dhanya //*

The God of gods does everything, yet mankind is ignorant.
 The body flows with pride. God is omniscient.
 Egoism prevents one from seeing God's omnipresence.
 Egoism, so I say, is self detrimental.
 One who is God-fearing, Gupta says, 'he is blessed'.
 (a; From Bhāve 1919:449, quoted in Shrotriya 1992–3:48).

माता पिता त्राता अरि पुत्रभ्राता । गुरुवीण आता नाही दुजा ॥
 पशु पक्षी याती गुरुरूप भासती । ऐसी ज्यासी शिथती तोचि जाणे ॥
 वृक्षवल्ली पाही अणुरेणु तेही । गुरुविण नाही रिते कोठे ॥

³¹³ Śrī Hari is an epithet for Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa.

³¹⁴ The term *māyājāḷe* refers to *māyā* 'the net of Illusion' (Molesworth 1857:647). This line suggests that it is easy to get caught up in the illusory appearance of the universe but that in so doing spiritual progress is limited.

³¹⁵ The term *tārū* or *tārūm* denotes 'a ship, a boat' (Molesworth 1857:876) or 'a float' (Tulpule 1999:300) but according to Molesworth the term derives from *tara* 'a ferry-boat, a raft or float; a ferry' (1857:367).

एकसा गुरुराज भज पूर्ण व्यापक । गुप्त गोले रंक राजसम ॥

Mātā pitā trātā ari putrabhrātā / guruvīṇa ātā nāhī dujā //
Paśu pakṣī yāti gururupa bhāsati / aisi jyāsi śithatī toci jāṇe //
Vrkṣavallī pāhī anureṇu tehī / guruvīṇa nāhī rite koṭhe //
Aikasā gururāja bhaja pūrṇa vyāpaka / gupta gole raṅka rājasama //

A mother, father, protector, enemy, son or brother, are all less important than the Guru.³¹⁶
Animals, birds and castes are really the Guru in different forms. He who thinks thus knows the secret.
Trees, creepers and minute particles are all contained in the Guru.
'Follow such an all-pervading Guru who treats kings and paupers equally', says Gupta.
(b; quoted in Shrotriya 1992–93:48).

14. *Bahiṇābāi*³¹⁷

विठू माझा लेंकुरवाळा । संगें लेंकुरांचा पाळा ॥
तुका घेतो कडियेवरी । नामा करांगुळी धरी ॥
एकनाथ खांद्यावरी । कबिरातें हातीं धरी ॥
गोरा कुंभार मांडीवरी । चोखा जिवा बरोबरी ॥
पुढें चाले ज्ञानेश्वर । मार्गे मुक्ताबाई सुंदर ॥
बहिणी म्हणे बा गोपाळा । करिसी भक्तांचा सोहाळा ॥

Viṭhū mājhā lenkuravāḷā / saṅgē lenkurāncā pāḷā //
Tukā ghetto kaḍiyevārī / nāmā karāṅguḷī dharī //
Ekanātha khāndyāvārī / kabirātē hātī dharī //
Gorā kumbhāra māṇḍīvārī / cokhā jivā barobarī //
Puḍhē cāle jñāneśvara / māgē muktābāi sundara //
Bahiṇī mhaṇe bā gopāḷā / karisī bhaktāncā sohālā //

Viṭhū is my family-man, with him come a troop of children.
Tukā carried on the hip; Nāmā holding the little finger.
Eknāth on his shoulders, Kabīr holding his hand.
Gorā the potter at his thigh. Cokhā in his heart.
In the lead walks Jñāneśvar, behind walks beautiful Muktābāi.
Bahiṇī says, 'Gopāl, you have brought all the *sants* together'.
(Bahiṇābāi *abhaṅga* 546, Kolhārkar 1926:112).³¹⁸

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संतकृपा झाली । इमारत फळा आली ।१।
ज्ञानदेवें रचिला पाया । उभारिलें देवालया ।२।
नामा तयाचा किंकर । तेणें रचिलें तें आवार ।३।
जनार्दन एकनाथ । खांब दिधला भागवत ।४।
तुका झालासे कळस । भजन करा सावकाश ।५।
बहिणी म्हणे फडकती ध्वजा । निरूपणा केलें बोजा ।६।

Santakṛpā jhālī / imārata phaḷā ālī /1/
Jñānadevē racilā pāyā / ubhārilē devālayā /2/

³¹⁶ *Guruvīṇa* has been translated as 'without *guru*' by Kiehnle (1997:43, 43) and 'without a *guru*' by Vaudeville (1987:225 n.28).

³¹⁷ Aklujkar has translated *abhaṅgas* 63, 64 and 70 from the *Bahiṇābāicā gātha* in full, and 33, 60 and 68 in part, while referring to *abhaṅgas* 39 and 41 (1999:27–8; 2005:122).

³¹⁸ Gopāla is an epithet for Kṛṣṇa. This verse is akin to one attributed to Janābāi (*abhaṅga* 30, SSG 1:718).

*Nāmā tayācā kiṅkara / teṅṅe racilē tē āvāra /3/
 Janārdana ekanātha / khāmba didhalā bhāgavata /4/
 Tukā jhālāsē kaḷasa / bhajana karā sāvakāśa /5/
 Bahiṅī mhaṅe phaḍakatī dhvajā / nirūpaṅā kelē bojā /6/*

The *sants* bestowed their favour [and] the building came to fruition.
 Jñānadev laid the foundations and erected God's house.
 Nāmā, your servant, he formed the enclosure.³¹⁹
 Janārdan's Eknāth erected its pillar through his *Bhāgavata*.³²⁰
 Tukā became the pinnacle. Sing the *bhajan* slowly.
 Bahiṅī says, 'the flag flutters; this is an honest account'.
 (Bahiṅābāi *abhaṅga* 32, SSG 2, p.1157).³²¹

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जरा मृत्यु भय सर्वशीं समान । तरी ते ब्राह्मण म्हणों कैसे ।१।
 यालागीं विवेक धरोनी मानसीं । ब्राह्मण पदासी वोळखावें ।२।
 मातापितयाच्या जाळिलें शरीरा । ब्रह्महत्या नरा केविं नोहे ।३।
 बहिणी म्हणे देह ब्राह्मण तो नव्हे । विवेक-वैभवं विचारितां ।४।

*Jarā mṛtyu bhaya sarvāśī samāna / tarīte brāhmaṅa mhaṅō kaise /1/
 Yālāgī vīveka dharonī mānasī / brāhmaṅa padāsī voḷakhāvē /2/
 Mātāpitayācyā jāḷilē śarīrā / brahmahatyā narā keviṅ nohe /3/
 Bahiṅī mhaṅe deha brāhmaṅa to navhe / vīveka-vaibhavē vicāritā /4/*

Old age, death and fear are alike in every respect for everyone; yet, how can they differentiate a Brahman?
 Thus, the mind must be engaged in discernment and know the meaning of the word *brāhmaṅa*.³²²
 A man burns the bodies of his parents. Why shouldn't he be considered a Brahman-killer?³²³
 Bahiṅī says, 'the body is not the Brahman, as established by great spiritual insight.
 (Bahiṅābāi *abhaṅga* 414; Kolharkar 1926:84).³²⁴

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आतां वर्ण हाची ब्राह्मण म्हणावा । तरी तो अनुभवा नये कांहीं ।१।
 ब्रह्मण वेगळा वर्णाही अतीत । पहातां निश्चित भासतसे ।२।
 श्वेत तो ब्राह्मण क्षत्रिय आरक्त । वैश्य वर्ण पीत नाहीं ऐसें ।३।
 कृष्ण वर्ण शूद्र नाहीं ऐसा भेद । आयुष्याचा बांध सारिखाची ।४।
 बहिणी म्हणे वर्ण ब्राह्मण तो नव्हे । विवेचुनि पाहें मनामार्जी ।५।

³¹⁹ The word *āvāra* also refers to a temple courtyard (Tulpule 1999:408), which fits with the temple foundations laid by Jñāneśvar.

³²⁰ This is a reference to Eknāth's commentary on the eleventh chapter of the *Bhāgavata Purāṅa*. For more on this see Abbott (1927), Ranade (2003:228ff), Zelliott (1980; 1987:94), Tulpule (1979) and Deming (1931).

³²¹ This *abhaṅga* may originally have been devised by Tukārām (Zelliott 1987:92; Rigopoulos 1998:159n.17; Eaton 2005:151n.53; Omvedt and Patankar 2012:49n.1) as a version of it appears in an edition of Tukārām *abhangas* (Paṅasīkar 1968, *abhaṅga* 4488). This *abhaṅga* has also been translated by Abbott (1929:114, v. 229) and Omvedt and Patankar (2012:14).

³²² The word *brāhmaṅa* refers to Brahmans, the first of the twice-born classes and the four divisions of the Hindu body, one considered to have divine knowledge or sacred/divine power, a priest. The term also refers to white, pure, and fair (Molesworth 1857:598).

³²³ This suggests that if the body that makes a Brahman then the son lighting the funeral pyre would be a Brahman-murder. The murder of a Brahman is considered a heinous crime according to orthodox Hinduism. It is regarded as one of the five great crimes along with stealing gold, drinking spirits, adultery with the wife of a spiritual teacher or incest with one's mother, and associating with anyone who has committed such crimes (Molesworth 1857:637).

³²⁴ For another translation see Abbott (1985:126).

*Ātā varṇa hācī brāhmaṇa mhaṇāvā / tarīto anubhavā naye kāhī /1/
 Brahmaṇa vegalā varṇāhī atīta / pahātā niścata bhāsatase /2/
 Śveta to brāhmaṇa kṣatriya ārakta / vaiśya varṇa pīta nāhī aisē /3/
 Kṛṣṇa varṇa śūdra nāhī aisā bhega / āyusyācā bāndha sārīkhācī /4/
 Bahiṇī mhaṇe varṇa brāhmaṇa to navhe / vivecūni pāhē manāmājī /5/*

Now, a Brahman may consider himself pure due to his caste but that is not demonstrated by experience.³²⁵
 Careful consideration will show that a true Brahman is without colour.³²⁶

A Brahman is not white, a *kṣatriya* red or a *vaiśya* yellow.

As a *śūdra* is not black there can be no divisions; in life everyone is appointed equal.

Bahiṇī says, 'caste does not make a Brahman. May your mind be certain of this'.³²⁷

(Bahiṇābāi *abhaṅga* 415; Kolharkar 1926:84).³²⁸

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फूल बिना फल । जल बिना अंकुर । बिनपुरुष नही छाया ॥
 जलबिन कमलिनी रविबिन तेज आगे नहां सब आया ॥
 तरु ताहां बीज । बीज नहां तरु है । दीपके पास प्रकाश ॥
 नर नाँही नारी..पुण्य ताहा आविनाश ॥
 बहेणि कहे जिसकु हरी आवे वोहि है पुण्यकी रास ॥
 शांती क्षमा उसके घर सोवे । सवही संपति दास ॥

*Phūla binā phala / jala binā aṅkura / binapuruṣa nahī chāyā //
 Jalabina kamalinī ravibina teja āge nahā saba āyā //
 Taru tāhā bīja / bīja nahā taru hai / dīpake pāsa prakāśa //
 Nara nāhī nārī...puṇya tāhā āvināśa //
 Baheṇī kahe jisaku harī āve vohi hai puṇyakī rāsa //³²⁹
 Śāntī kṣamā usake ghara sove / savahī sampati dāsa //*

Fruit without flower, buds without water; without man there can be no shelter.

Lotus without water, light without sun, one cannot exist without the other.

Where there is a tree there is seed and where there is a lamp there is light.

Where there is a man there is a woman, where there is a blessing there is permanence.

Bahiṇī says, 'wherever Hari is that's the zodiac of blessing, at his home peace and forgiveness sleep while wealth is the servant'.³³⁰

(Bahiṇābāi 'Hindi' *pad*, Jāvaḍekar 1979 no. 395; quoted in Shrotriya 1992:37).

15. Viṭhābāi

पंढरपुरी गेले प्राथिले विठ्ठला । चिदंबर कोण सांगे मला ॥
 रात्री हो दृष्टांती विठ्ठल सांगाती । रूप होवोनी बोलती चिदंबराचे ॥
 मीच अवतरीलो चिदंबर रूपे । जावे तुवा तेथे कर्नाटक ॥
 विठाबाई म्हणे आनंद निघाले । कुदगोळी आले स्वामी जवळी ॥

*Paṇḍharapurī gele prārthale viṭṭhalā / cidambara koṇa sāṅge malā //
 Rātrī ho drṣṭāntī viṭṭhala sāṅgātī / rūpa hovanī bolatī cidambarāce //*

³²⁵ In other words the purity of Brahmins is not due to the caste (*varṇa*) into which they are born. The word *varṇa* means 'colour' (race, species, kind, sort, quality; hue, tint); 'class', 'order', 'tribe', or 'caste' (Molesworth 1857:735; Monier Williams 2008).

³²⁶ This line could also read 'Brahmins are without colour; careful consideration will show this is true'.

³²⁷ This last part of this statement could read 'let your mind prove discriminating'.

³²⁸ For another translation see Abbott (1985:127).

³²⁹ There are other verses 'signed' *bahiṇī kahe* in the section marked *padē-gauḷaṇī* in Kolharkar (1926:115–121).

³³⁰ The word *bahen*, like *bahin* or *bahīṇa* means 'sister'.

Mīca avatarīlo cidambāra rūpe / jāve tuvā tethe karnāṭaka //
Viṭhābāi mhaṇe ānanda nighāle / kudagoḷi āle svāmī javaḷi //

I went to Paṇḍharpūr to pray to Viṭṭhal and he told me of Cidambar.
During the night Viṭṭhal came to me in a vision, he spoke to me in the form of Cidambar.
'I've been reincarnated Cidambar's form, please go to Karnāṭaka.
Viṭhābāi says, 'I left in happiness, I came close to the *svāmī* of Kudagoḷ'.'³³¹
(Āvaḷikar 1964 quoted in Shrotriya 1992:57).

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का न ये करुणा स्वामी ब्रह्मपूर्णा । कृपेचा तू राणा म्हणवीसी ॥
धावा करीतो स्वामी रात्रीस तूझे । का न ये रे माझे करुणा तुला ॥
विठाबाईचा अंत जवळी आला स्वामी । कुठे गेला तुम्ही चिदंबरा ॥

Kā na ye karūṇā svāmī brahmapūrṇā / kṛpecā tū rāṇā mhaṇāvīsī //
Dhāvā karīto svāmī rātrīs tūjhe / kā na ye re mājhe karūṇā tulā //
Viṭhābāi anta javaḷi ālā svāmī/ kuṭhe gelā tumhī cidambarā //

Why aren't you compassionate Svāmī Brahmapūrṇā?³³² You are considered the king of mercy.
Day and night I run toward you *svāmī*. Why don't you feel compassion towards me? Viṭhābāi's end is
nearing *svāmī*. Where have you gone Cidambar?
(Āvaḷikar 1964:223 quoted in Shrotriya 1992:54).

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कलियुगी हो नामापेक्षा मोठे नाही । योग माग यज्ञ ऋणतुल्य ॥
योग माग वर्ज करी । नाम वीदेही हो धरी ॥
नादबिंदु नको पाही । इडा पिंगळा नको काही ॥
ब्रह्मरंध्र नको शोधु । आसन नको कधी घालु ॥
नको भ्रमर गुंफा पाही । नको चवद चक्र काही ॥
हृदई कमळ आठऊ । कुंडलिनी नको शोधू ॥
यम अहो जाता भागवतामदे मुख्य । नाम म्हणता सख्य होते त्यासी ॥

Kaliyugī ho nāmāpekṣā moṭhe nāhī / yoga yāga yadṅya ṛṇatulya //
Yoga yāga varja karī / nāma vīdehīho dhārī //
Nādabindu nako pāhī / idā piṅgaḷā nako kāhī //
Brahmarandhra nako śodhu / āsana nako kadhī ghālu //
Nako bhramara gumphā pāhī / nako cavada cakra kāhī //
Hṛdaī kamaḷa āṭhū / kuṇḍalinī nako śodhū //
Yama aho jātā bhāgavatāmade mukhya / nāma mhaṇatā sakhya hote tyāsī //

In this age of darkness there is nothing greater than chanting the Name; *yoga*, sacrifice, oblation or
obligation are unimportant.³³³

Avoid *yoga* and sacrifice. Chanting the Name will free the soul.
Set aside *nādabindu*.³³⁴ Avoid the channels of the vital spirit.³³⁵

³³¹ There is a place called Kundgoḷ in the Dharwad district of Karnataka, which is the home of the Shambuliṅga temple honouring Śiva and Pārvaṭī.

³³² *Svāmī brahmapūrṇā*—a conjunction of *svāmī* (master, lord) *brahma* (divine substance; marvel, mystery, enigma) and *pūrṇā* (complete, entire; perfect, adept)—could translate as 'Lord of complete mystery' but it might also mean 'Lord of Brahmapūr'.

³³³ *Ṛṇa* can mean 'duty', 'obligation' and 'debt'. Traditionally a Brahman is said to owe three debts—studying the Vedas, sacrifice to and worship of the gods, and the procreation of a son—although benevolence to humanity and hospitality to guests are also considered 'debts' (Monier Williams 2008).

Do not search for Brahman, nor perform yogic postures.³³⁶
 Do not seek a beehive in a cave, nor seek the *cakras* in yogic exercise.³³⁷
 Do not see a lotus in your heart, nor seek the *kuṇḍalinī*.³³⁸
 Yama is Bhagavān's chief devotee. Keep chanting the Name and you'll make friends with him.³³⁹
 (Āvaṅkar 1964, quoted in Shrotriya 1992–93:54).

16. *Sakhūbā*³⁴⁰

आनंदाची दिपवाळी । घरी बोलवा वनमाळी । घालीते मी रंगोळी । गोविंद गोविंद ॥१॥
 सुंदर माझ्या घरात । आत्मा हा नांदत । चंद्रसूर्य दारात । गोविंद गोविंद ।१।
 दळण दळिले मंदिर । विष्णू यावे लौकरी । चित्त माझे शुद्ध करी । गोविंद गोविंद ।२।
 रावणासी मारोनी । सीता आणिली घरी । बिभीषण राज्य करित । गोविंद गोविंद ।३।
 अंजनीच्य उदरी । मारुती ब्रह्मचारी । येशवदेच्या मांडीवरी । गोविंद गोविंद ।४।
 वैकुंठीचा राणा । चन्द्रभागेवरी आला । पुंडलिकाचा भाव पाहुनी । उभा तो राहिला ।५।
 पुंडलिक भक्त बळी । त्याने आणिला वनमाळी । विटेवरी दिसली । मूर्ती ती सावळी ।६।
 सावळा तो वनमाळी । भक्तिसी भुलला । पुंडलिकाचा बाजार । दृष्टीने पाहिला ।७।
 विठ्ठल माझा सखा । ओव्या मी गाईन । देऊळासी जाईन । हरिला पाहीन ।८।
 विठ्ठल माझे गनगोत । आराध्य दैवत । विठ्ठलाच्या चरणी सखू । झाली मनोरथ ।९।

Ānandācī dipavāḷī / gharī bolavā vanamāḷī / ghālīte mī raṅgoḷī / Govinda Govinda // dhṛ //
Sundar mājhyā gharāta / ātmā hā nāndata / candra-sūrya dārāta / Govinda Govinda / 1 /
Daḷaṇa daḷile mandiri / viṣṇū yāve laukarī / citta mājhe śuddha karī / Govinda Govinda / 2 /
Rāvaṇāsī māronī / sītā āṇilī gharī / bibhīṣaṇa rājya karita / Govinda Govinda / 3 /
Anjanīcya udarī / mārūtī brahmacārī / yeśavadecyā māṅḍīvarī / Govinda Govinda / 4 /
Vaikunṭhīcā rāṇā / candrabhāgevarī ālā / puṇḍalikācā bhava pāhunī / ubhā to rāhilā / 5 /
Puṇḍalik bhakta baḷī / tyāne āṇilā vanamāḷī / viṭevārī disalī / mūrtī tī rāhilā / 6 /
Sāvāḷā to vanamāḷī / bhaktisī bhulalā / puṇḍalikācā bājār / drṣṭīne pāhilā / 7 /
Viṭṭhal mājhe sakhā / ovyā mī gāina / deūḷāsī jāina / harilā pāhina / 8 /
Viṭṭhal mājhe ganagota / ārādhyā daivata / viṭṭhalācya caranī sakhū / jhālī manoratha / 9 /

Happy festival of lights; to invite Vanamāḷī³⁴¹ into the house I draw *raṅgoḷī*.³⁴² Govind, Govind!
 (Refrain).

³³⁴ *Nāda* is formed of *nāda* (sound; reverberating sound; subtle, inarticulate sound) and *bindu*, the dot or nasal character over a word (*anusvāra*)—said to be of great mystical importance—and/or the central or focal point (Monier Williams 2008; Molesworth 1857; Singh 1991). Both *nāda* and *bindu* are manifestations of Śakti (Gupta 1972:100, v.22–24). In *Kuṇḍalinī* Yoga *bindu*, as nasal resonance, is the rise of *prāṇic* energy in the form of vibration. Singh states that ‘the energy of the *bindu* appears as a point of light in the middle of the eye-brows’ (1991:xliv). The *bindu* is transformed into *nāda*, the mystical resonance that extends from the summit of the head (*nāda* *bindusthāna*) through the central channel of the body (Singh 1991:xliv). For further discussions on *bindu* see Avalon (1974), Singh (2004) and Krishnaraj (2001).

³³⁵ In Yoga *idā* (tubular vessel) is the channel of the vital spirit on the right side of the body, and *piṅgalā* is the channel on the left side of the body.

³³⁶ The use of the word *āsana* suggests the physical spreading of the body and performance of *yogic* postures.

³³⁷ The reference to bees in a cave suggest the ‘after-sounds’ of the mystical syllable (*auṃ*) that continue to reverberate in the skull or inner self (Beck 1995:112, 73). In *yoga* there are six *cakras* (wheels, circles, depressions) that form anatomical divisions of the body along a central axis connecting the trunk with the crown of the head. Interestingly, there is a *Mīrā* poem that refers to sitting in a cave in a yogic pose (see Hawley 2002:303).

³³⁸ *Kuṇḍalinī* ‘snake’ is the corporeal energy that lies coiled at the base of spine and which, awakened by *yoga*, rises up the central channel piercing each *cakra* until it reaches the crown of the head and gains blissful union with Śiva.

³³⁹ This means that one makes friends with Yama and so gains liberation.

³⁴⁰ There is only one composition in the SSG attributed to Sakhū (SSG 2:1396), despite the fact that Bhavalkar states there are no extant Sakhū compositions (1996:241). Bhavalkar provides a women’s folk song about Sakhū, which she memorized after hearing it from her mother: ‘On the bank of the Kṛṣṇa, in the town of Karhād there was a holy settlement called Brahmapurī. An evil Brāhman lived there; What great fortune for his daughter-in-law, Sakhū!’ (1996:241, 252 n.7).

³⁴¹ Vanamāḷī is an epithet for Kṛṣṇa meaning ‘the one who wears the garland of forest-flowers’.

In my family my soul rejoices; moon [light] and sun [light] adorn my threshold; Govind, Govind!
 Grinding the grist,³⁴³ Viṣṇu should arrive and purify my mind. Govind, Govind!
 Rāvaṇa died, Sītā went home and Bibhīṣaṇa became king. Govind, Govind!³⁴⁴
 Mārūtī, the celibate student, was born from Anjana's womb; baby Kṛṣṇa lay on Yaśodā's lap. Govind,
 Govind!³⁴⁵

The king of heaven came to the Candrabhāga in recognition of Puṇḍalik's faith; standing erect He waited.
 The *bhakta* Puṇḍalik was doing his duty;³⁴⁶ he couldn't be bothered with Vanamāli; thus, He appeared on
 the brick.

Dark-skinned Vanamāli was captivated by Puṇḍalik's devotion; he had seen Puṇḍalik's chaotic life with
 his own eyes.

Viṭṭhal is my friend; I will sing *ovīs* and shall go to the temple to see Hari.

Viṭṭhal is my family, [our] household-deity; Viṭṭhal's feet are Sakhū's heart's desire.
 (Sakhūbāi *pada*, SSG 2, p.1396).

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जनाई मुक्ताई नेसल्या रेशामी लुगडी । रिंगाणामध्ये विठोबा खेळतो फुगडी ।धू।³⁴⁷
 पहिल्या दिवशी नामदेव आले । फुगडी खेळत रंगुन गेले ।१।
 रहिले न भान तळ्च्य दगडी । रिंगाणामध्ये विठोबा खेळतो फुगडी ।२।
 दुसऱ्या दिवशी आले तुकोबा । फुगडीच्या फुगडीला खेळाला आलीया शोभा ।३।
 फू बाई फू म्हणाय्या मुख उधडी । रिंगाणामध्ये विठोबा खेळतो फुगडी ।४।
 तिस्च्या दिवशी आल्या रखुमाबाई । फुगडीची काय सांगू लवलाही ।५।
 खेळता खेळता इर्लियाची बुगडी । रिंगाणामध्ये विठोबा खेळतो फुगडी ।६।
 चोथ्या दिवशी जनाई-मुक्ताई आली । सखु खेळत दमुन गेली ।७।
 विठु नामाची टाळी वाजली नगरी । रिंगाणामध्ये विठोबा खेळतो फुगडी ।८।
 जनाई मुक्ताई नेसल्या रेशामी लुगडी । रिंगाणामध्ये विठोबा खेळतो फुगडी ।धू।

Janāi muktāi nesalyā reśāmī lugadī / riṅgaṇāmadhye viṭhobā khelato phugaḍī /dhrupada /³⁴⁸
Pahilyā divaśī nāmadeva āle / phugaḍī yā khelāta raṅgūna gele /1/
Rahile na bhāna taḷcyā dagaḍī / riṅgaṇāmadhye viṭhobā khelato phugaḍī /2/
Dusaryā divaśī āle tukobā / phugaḍīcyā phugaḍīlā khelālā āliyā śobhā /3/
Phū bāi phū mhaṇāyā mukha udhaḍī / riṅgaṇāmadhye viṭhobā khelato phugaḍī /4/
Tiscyā divaśī ālyā rakhumābāi / phugaḍīcī kāya sāṅgū lavalāhī /5/
Khelātā khelātā irliyācī bugaḍī / riṅgaṇāmadhye viṭhobā khelato phugaḍī /6/
Cothyā divaśī janāi-muktāi āli / sakhū khelāta damūna gelī /7/
Viṭhū nāmācī ṭālī vājālī nagarī / riṅgaṇāmadhye viṭhobā khelato phugaḍī /8/
Janāi muktāi nesalyā reśāmī lugadī / riṅgaṇāmadhye viṭhobā khelato phugaḍī /dhrupad /

³⁴² A Vārkarī housewife is meant to beautify the courtyard (*aṅgaṇa*, *cauka*) with *rāṅgoḷī* (More 1998:209) and these designs are considered 'vehicles of self-expression for a woman' according to (Pawar 1998:xii).

³⁴³ The word *māṅdirē* (or *māṅjarī*) refers to "cat's eyes": 'the two loops or eyelets appended to the fixed post of a churning apparatus, and through which the churn staff descends' (Molesworth 1857:643).

³⁴⁴ Bibhīṣaṇa or Vibhīṣaṇa was Rāvaṇa's righteous younger brother who repudiated Rāvaṇa and joined Rama after his advice to Rāvaṇa to return Sītā to Rama was ignored.

³⁴⁵ Ajñāna was Mārūtī/Hanuman's mother (see Enthoven 1989:22; Lutgendorf 2007 and Vanamali 2010). The 'circle' could refer to either the hand-mill (*gharaṭa*) or the group of women who are gathered in a 'circle' and who are singing as they perform tasks like grinding.

³⁴⁶ The word *baḷī* connotes 'strong', 'powerful', 'sacrifice', 'oblation' or 'religious offering' (Molesworth 1857:569; Tulpule 1999:484). In this context it refers to Puṇḍalik performing his religious "sacrifice" and caring for his parents.

³⁴⁷ The song was sung by Caturabai Naravate (40) and Vatsalabai Sakhare (65), who were part of the Sant Ganga Maharaj *diṅḍī* (no. 5/93) from Pokharnī (Parbhani district) on 20th June 2006 during the lunch break while the *diṅḍī* travelled from Ālandī to Pune. There are two *phugaḍīs* attributed to Bahiṅbāi (Kolhārkar 1926:125–126, v.589–90) and these include a *dhrupad* (refrain).

³⁴⁸ The *drupada* (refrain) sung by the audience often gives the main idea of the song with words that are easily remembered, sometimes the metre of the refrain differs from the rest of the verse asserts Kiehnle (1997a:20). Moreover, a *drupada* indicates affiliation with a singing tradition states Callewaert (1989:56).

Janāī and Mukṭāī are wearing silky *lugaḍīs*,³⁴⁹ in the *riṅgaṇa* Iṭhobā plays *phugaḍī*.³⁵⁰

The first day Nāmdev immersed himself in playing *phugaḍī*.
Lost in playing he didn't realise there were stones beneath their feet.
In the *riṅgaṇa* Iṭhobā plays *phugaḍī*.

Janāī and Mukṭāī are wearing silky *lugaḍīs*, in the *riṅgaṇa* Iṭhobā plays *phugaḍī*.

The second day Tukobā came and graced the *phugaḍī*.
While playing he said 'phu bai phu'.
In the *riṅgaṇa* Iṭhobā plays *phugaḍī*.

Janāī and Mukṭāī are wearing silky *lugaḍī*, in the *riṅgaṇa* Iṭhobā plays *phugaḍī*.

On the third day Rakhumābāī came to play,
How can I describe how great the *phugaḍī* was?
While playing her *bugaḍī*³⁵¹ was lost.
In the *riṅgaṇa* Iṭhobā plays *phugaḍī*.

Janāī and Mukṭāī are wearing silky *lugaḍī*, in the *riṅgaṇa* Iṭhobā plays *phugaḍī*.

On the fourth day Janī and Mukṭāī both came to play.
Sakhū tired while playing.
Viṭhū's name was heard throughout the town.
In the *riṅgaṇa* Iṭhobā plays *phugaḍī*.

Janāī and Mukṭāī are wearing silky *lugaḍī*, in the *riṅgaṇa* Iṭhobā plays *phugaḍī*.³⁵²

³⁴⁹ A *lugaḍī* is a nine-yard *sārī* (*sāḍī*) worn by women.

³⁵⁰ The village women sang 'Iṭhobā' rather than the more formal 'Viṭhobā'. *Phugaḍī* is a dance, in which two or more people cross their arms, hold hands and spin or reel in a circle keeping time to the movements by puffing *phu* with the mouth (Molesworth 1857:554).

³⁵¹ A *bugaḍī* is an ear ornament.

³⁵² During a *pūjā* the deity is invoked and treated as a human guest. Various *upacāra* (offerings; of which there are sixteen) are presented to the image. In this verse Viṭhobā not only joins in the fun and plays *phugaḍī* but acts as the human guest (Personal communication, V.P. Kanitkar, 27th January 2011).

APPENDIX C:

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE *BHAKTAVIJAYA* BY MAHĪPATI

1. *Bhaktavijaya 21: Janābāi*

Homage to sacred Gaṇeśa. Victory to the Dweller on the ocean of milk (*kṣīrabdhivāsā*),¹ who reclines on Śeṣa (*śeṣaśayanā*), who assumes the body (*līlāvighrahī*), the husband of Rukmiṇī (*rukmiṇīramaṇā*),² manifest in your own form (*saguṇasvarūpā*), Ornament of your devotees (*bhaktabhūṣaṇā*), a treasure of virtue (*guṇanidhānā*), O Viṭṭhal (1).³ Victory to you who has taken infinite incarnations, who is the form of consciousness (*caitanya rūpā*), the home of compassion (*karuṇālayā*), protector of the gods (*amarapālakā*), Lord of Paṇḍharī who removes the illusions of your devotees (2). Victory! Victory to you who is all-pervading (*vyāpakasarvā*), the Protector of Gajendrā (*gajendrārakṣaka*), Lord of Heaven (*vaikuṇṭhanātha*), none except you can comfort your own devotees (3). Victory! Victory to you Heart-mover (*cittacālakā*), Cloud of intelligence (*caitanya ghanā*), Supporter of your devotees (*bhaktakaivārī*), Demon-slayer (*asūradamanā*), Puṇḍalik's boon-granter (*puṇḍalikavaradā*), Rukmiṇī's lover (*rukmiṇīramaṇā*), Life of the world (*jagajīvana*), Pāṇḍuraṅga (4). You are Brahma's father,⁴ all-doing yet not acting, there is nowhere so small as an atom that is without you (5). Have mercy on me now [and] through [me] narrate the stories of your devotees. Apart from you, Lord of the world (*jagannātha*), I am friendless (6). The preceding chapter told the remarkable story of God's servant Paramānand Jogā. His actions were very spirited; he was definitely a religious student (7). The famous Śiva devotee, Naraharī, was made to contemplate Him. Then Cakrapāṇī tormented Nāma and tested his mind (8).

One day when Paṇḍharī was filled with pilgrims, during the month of Kārtik, a girl⁵ suddenly arrived at the great door [of the temple] (9). She said to her parents, 'I will remain here forever; I shall not return with you to your house now' (10). Everyone who heard the girl's words was surprised. They said, 'being only seven years old how has she attained knowledge?' (11). [Her] mother and father were greatly distressed but she would not listen to their words. When the Lord regards one with a compassionate eye, love grows within (12). Thus, seeing her resolve her elders were content. They left their daughter at the great door [of the temple] and returned to their own place (13). When Nāma beheld the girl compassion welled up within him. He said, 'Who are you sitting here alone without your parents and in a strange

¹ Janābāi *abhaṅga* 262.3 refers to 'oceans of milk' (*kṣīrasāgara*), see Appendix B.

² The term *ramaṇa* used here and below means both 'husband' and 'lover' (Molesworth 1857:608; Monier-Williams 2008).

³ Janābāi *abhaṅgas* 3, 78, 118, 124, 129 and 180 refer to Viṭṭhal, see Appendix B.

⁴ Mahīpati uses the phrase *virīñcicāpitā*: *virīñci* refers to *brahmā* (Molesworth 1857:762; Monier Williams 2008) and *pitā* to 'father' (Tulpule 1999:445).

⁵ In Marathi the term *kumarī* connotes 'an unmarried girl or daughter' (Tulpule 1999:164) and *kumārīkā* connotes 'an unmarried girl, from ten to twelve years old: also a young virgin' (Molesworth 1857:174). In Sanskrit the term *kumārī* connotes 'a young girl, one from ten to twelve years old, maiden, daughter' and 'any virgin up to the age of sixteen or before menstruation has commenced' (Monier Williams 2008).

place⁶ (14). What village is your father from? Tell me your name. What travails have your parents⁷ undergone to abandon you here? (15) The other responded, ‘My name is Janī. The Discus-Holder (*cakrapāṇī*)⁸ is my mother and father. I have no one except Him.’ (16) On hearing her words Nāma was filled with compassion. He held the child by the hand and led her to his own home⁹ (17). He told Goṇāī about the child lost amongst the pilgrims: ‘Without her parents she seems miserable; we must protect her’ (18). [Janī said] ‘During Kṛṣṇa’s descent (*avatāra*) there was a maid, Kubjā.¹⁰ ‘Without him there is no other parent for me. Similarly, I am Nāma’s only *dāsī*. There is nothing more for me’ (19).¹¹ Day after day her standing increased. Men and women asked her, ‘tell us who you really are’ (20). Janī answered them, ‘I am Nāma’s devoted servant who came on pilgrimage to Paṇḍharī and became absorbed in worshipping the Lord’ (21). While performing her household tasks she continuously recited the names of the Lord; at night she listened to *kīrtans* and would render obeisance [to god] (22).

A strange thing occurred one day while Nāmdev was asleep at home: five *ghaṭikās*¹² of the night had passed and clouds covered the sky (23). A great wind loosened his hut and carried it off. When Rukmiṇī’s husband heard [about the incident] he seized his *sudarśan* disk (24).¹³ He said to it, ‘Go to Nāmdev’s place and spin awhile, I will follow you soon’ (25). The Viṣṇu devotee and family¹⁴ were sleeping in the hut when Viṣṇu’s discus came and spun there rapidly (26). A colossal rainstorm raged on all sides but not a drop fell [on Nāma and his family], for when one of God’s servants participates in devotion calamity is averted (27). Thus, Rukmiṇī’s husband soon arrived and with his own hands he rebuilt the walls and then skilfully thatched the roof (28).¹⁵

⁶ The Marathi term *paradeśī* connotes ‘a foreigner’ (Molesworth 1857:488) or ‘refugee’ (Tulpule 1999:407), while *paradeśa* refers to ‘a foreign country’ (Berntsen 1982:84), ‘a foreign people or land’ (Tulpule 1999:462) and ‘a remote or foreign country’ (Molesworth 1857:488).

⁷ The term *vaḍila* connotes ‘senior; elder; eldest’ (Tulpule 1999:620) or ‘an ancestor; a senior or an elder; an elderly person; a superior (in age, wisdom, dignity); applied, by way of eminence, to one’s father’ (Molesworth 1857:723).

⁸ Janābāī *abhaṅgas* 42, 80, 86, 147, 155, 204 and 208 refer to Cakrapāṇī, see Appendix B.

⁹ The term *mandir* connotes ‘a house’ (Molesworth 1857:629) or ‘any waiting or abiding-place, habitation, dwelling, house, palace, or temple’ (Monier Williams 2008).

¹⁰ The term *kubjā* connotes ‘hump-backed’, ‘crooked’ (Monier Williams 2008) or ‘dwarfed’ (Tulpule 1999:187). The story of how Kṛṣṇa encountered the hunchback woman Trivakrā on the road to Mathura is told in the *Harivaṁśa* 71.22–35 (Masson 1980), *Brahma Purāna* 193.1–12, *Viṣṇu Purāna* 5.20.1–12, *Brahmavaivarta Purāna* 4.72.15–36, *Padma Purāna* 6.272.339–341, and the *Bhāgavata Purāna* 10.42.1–12, 10.48.1–11 (Bryant 2003:174–5, 203–3). For studies on Kubjā see Sheth (1983) and Pauwels (2008). Mahīpati also makes a connection between Kānhopātrā and *kubjā* (BVJ 39.15).

¹¹ The verse reads:

कृष्णावतारीकुब्जादासी॥त्याजवीणमायबापनसेमजसी॥मीनामयाचीअनन्यदासी॥नसेआणीकमजकाहीं॥१९॥ *kṛṣṇa avatārī kubja dāsī/ tyājavīna māyabāpa nase majasī/ mī nāmāyācī ananya dāsī/ nase āṇika maja kāhī/19/*

Abbott and Godbole translate this as: ‘At the time of Krishna’s *avatar-ship* he had a maid by the name of Kubja (the cripple). She had now appeared as an *avatar* in this *Kali Yuga*. So she has come on pilgrimage to Paṇḍharī, and is absorbed in the worship of Hari’ (1996:339). It is unclear why Mahīpati connects Kubjā and Janī but it is probably because they were both maidservants (see Pauwels 2008:332; Novetzke 2008:69) who had an intimate relationship with God. Moreover, they are both regarded as being liberated—Kubjā by Kṛṣṇa and Janī by Nāmdev (whom Mahīpati regards as an *avatāra* of Uddhava in BVJ 1.8)—and are both revered: Janī at the temple at Gopalpur (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996:69, *Ill* 11–17) and Kubjā in the Braj region (Pauwels 2008:317–18). Furthermore, both Kubjā and Janī are unattached and unprotected, and might therefore be considered sexually ‘available’—like Kānhopātrā—and so might seek God as a ‘Protector’. My thanks to Kasturi Dadhe for her help with this and later verses (Personal communication, 16th April 2013).

¹² A *ghaṭikā* is a measure of time equivalent to twenty-four minutes (Tulpule 1999:215).

¹³ The *sudarśan cakra* is the discus like weapon used by Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa and is considered the destroyer of all evil.

¹⁴ The term *kuṭumba* refers to a ‘family or household; the mistress of a family or of the house; a wife generally’ (Molesworth 1857:167).

¹⁵ Novetzke regards this story as indicating that ‘Nāmdev’s memory is intertwined with that of Janabai’ (2008:69ff).

Having heard the story astute listeners might say, ‘If the Holder of the *sāraṅga* [Kṛṣṇa]¹⁶ came and thatched the roof of Nāma’s house then why did he not make the hut more attractive?’ (29) But the Lord of fortune (*śrīpati*)¹⁷ does not allow his servants to become entangled in their domestic life (*saṃsāra*, *sansār*), for if he gave them great wealth it would hinder their indifference [to worldly life] (30).¹⁸ Duryodhana was¹⁹ the enemy of the Pāṇḍavas and he constantly harassed them. But when trouble befell them the Life of the world would run to their aid himself (31). He said, ‘I should keep them safe even if they will not remember me inwardly’. Yet the Lord will not let his servants drown in the ocean of worldly existence (32). ‘If I gave my devotees an excellent house then they would cease to worship me inwardly’. Therefore the Holder of the *sāraṅga* [only] gave Nāma a roof (33). In case cooked food harms her child a mother gives him a small mouthful, similarly the Dweller in the world (*jagannivāsa*) does not give his devotees unalloyed wealth (34). If plants are given too much water²⁰ they will turn yellow, thus the gardener gives a plant only as much water as necessary (35). The Dweller in the world gives his devotees sufficient food and clothes for their bodies; by various means he keeps their minds continually indifferent [to earthly things] (36).

Returning to the previous account: the Life of the world came, gathered straw and thatched Nāma’s roof himself (37). When His devotee awoke he looked outside and saw a yellow garment²¹ shining with the intensity of lightning (38). Then he immediately went outside and grasped His feet with love and said, ‘God, what are you doing coming here at night?’ (39) The Life of the world replied, ‘a terrible storm raged and your hut came loose and I have re-thatched it (40). You have abandoned your worldly life (*saṃsāra*) and occupation (*vṛttī*) and lovingly devoted yourself to worshipping me. Consequently, I—the Husband of Śrī—repaired the walls [of your hut] straightaway (41). If I had not come immediately, good people would have become sick due to the great calamity. Goṇāī would have become very angry and spoken to me severely (42). Thus, my esteemed devotee I came running to your aid during the night’. When Goṇāī heard His words she immediately fell at His feet (43). While Nāma told Him his secrets the Lord of the Universe remained there.²²

Janī came at once and began to massage God’s back (44) saying, ‘Ocean of mercy (*kṛpāsāgara*), Charmer (*manamohana*),²³ House of compassion (*karuṇālaya*), Life of the world (*jagajīvana*), You yourself have protected us in numerous ways’ (45). Then The Lord of the senses (*hr̥ṣīkeśa*)²⁴ said to Nāma, ‘You must be hungry. Quickly get up and let us take a meal together’ (46). Then Goṇāī quickly brought the savoury food served on a platter and they all sat down together to eat (47). Govind, Viṭṭhal,

¹⁶ The term *sāraṅga* refers to Kṛṣṇa’s bow, which is known for its strength (Bryant 2007:282 n.41).

¹⁷ The epithet *Śrīpati* connotes ‘lord of fortune; a king, a prince’ (Monier Williams 2008) and ‘the lord or husband of Śrī’ (Molesworth 1857:801), and refers to Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa.

¹⁸ *Mahīpati* highlights indifference (*udāsa*), as in verse 36, as what is important is worshipping God inwardly.

¹⁹ The Marathi verb *nirminē* means ‘to create; to cause, produce, effect, make’ (Molesworth 1857:470) and ‘to create, to build up’ (Tulpule 1999:386). The Sanskrit term *nirmā* connotes ‘to build, make out of, form, fabricate, produce, create’ while *nirmāna* connotes ‘forming, making, creating, creation, building, composition, work’ (Monier Williams 2008).

²⁰ The term used is *jīvana* that connotes ‘living, existing, subsisting; any means of life, immediate or remote, any provision or food, or any profession or business; water’ (Molesworth 1857:316), ‘life; water; nourishment’ (Tulpule 1999:261) or ‘vivifying; giving life; enlivening’ (Monier Williams 2008).

²¹ The term *pītāmbara* refers to the yellow (*pītā*) garment (*ambara*)—a *dhotar*—worn by Kṛṣṇa and Viṭṭhal/Viṭhobā.

²² For a version of the story in relation to Janābāī see Swamiji (2011:136–39).

²³ Janābāī *abhaṅga* 43.1 refers to *manamohana*, see Appendix B.

²⁴ Janābāī *abhaṅga* 130.1 refers to *hr̥ṣīkeśī* as helping Janī collect water, see Appendix B.

Nārāyaṇ and Mahādev were the names of Nāmdev’s four sons and the Life of the world (*jagajīvana*) sat with them to eat (48).²⁵ Goṇāī and Rājāī sat near Nāma, the devotee whom He placed beside Him when they sat down to eat: a marvel (49). Witnessing this Janī felt distressed in her heart and said, ‘Compassionate to the lowly (*dīnadayāla*), Discus-Holder (*cakrapāṇī*), why have you abandoned me (50)?²⁶ You accepted everyone when you all sat down to eat but I am inferior, an outsider,²⁷ so Lord of the senses you abandoned me (51).²⁸ As the cook discards the grit from the rice or the leather whip thrashes the sugarcane to remove the straw (52) so heartlessly you turn your back on me and fail to regard me with compassion’. The servant Janī became distressed because the First among men (*jagajethī*) was not compassionate towards her (53). Hearing her accusation the Life of the world said to Nāma, ‘this food gives me no pleasure now. What might be the cause?’ (54). The other one [Nāma] replied, ‘Discus-Holder, Janī is outside in distress; hearing her cries your mind is agitated (55).²⁹ Like when a calf cries loudly and the cow goes off her feed; or when a child wails in its cradle [and] the mother loses her appetite (56); or when a bird quietly gathering grain remembers her young; or when a doe cannot see her fawn for a moment and goes off her feed (57); or when wealth is beyond the grasp of a greedy person and he finds no pleasure in sweetmeats: thus, because Janī is discontent you are unable to relish your food’ (58). God withdrew his hand [from the food] so everyone else also stopped eating. Observing this Rājāī was heartened (59). The Discus-Holder washed his hands and sat calmly on a straw stool. Goṇāī called Janī and gave her the dish with [Viṭṭhal’s] leavings (60).³⁰ Brahma and all the other gods (*brahmādika*) never attained the favour (*prasāda*)³¹ they desired but Janī attained it unexpectedly due to her association with Nāma (61).³² Next [Janī] immediately covered the desired dish and waited in her hut calling, ‘First among men run to my aid now’ (62). Nāma and the Holder of the *sāraṅga* [Viṭṭhal] reclined on one bed; the clever one [Nāma] was comatose,³³ the World-saviour (*jagaduddhāra*)³⁴ arose (63). Quietly the Life

²⁵ Janābāī *abhaṅga* 471 mentions various family members, see Appendix B. This is an interesting verse as it describes commensality and promotes equality. Novetzke states that it associates *bhakti* with food sharing (2008:70; see Aklujkar 1992:104ff). Traditionally, the wife or daughter-in-law would have served the food to the men first and would have eaten [the husband’s leavings] afterwards. Mahīpati describes the family sitting around a ‘board’ and sharing the meal with God! No wonder he described it as *navalāī*; ‘a wonderful or uncommon thing, a marvel’ (Molesworth 1857:452). See Kosambi 1998 and Dabre 1998 for more on women in the home. Technically nobody can eat a meal until the family god(s) have been offered ceremonial food (*naivedya*) so Mahīpati may be expanding on this notion (see Elkunchwar 1998:192).

²⁶ Janābāī *abhaṅga* 48 refers to Janī feeling abandoned by God, see Appendix B.

²⁷ See note 6 (above).

²⁸ My translation of this verse differs slightly from Abbott and Godbole: ‘Thou hast placed all beside Thee and hast seated Thyself to eat. O *Hrishikeshi* (Lord of the heart), I am over very low birth, therefore Thou hast abandoned me as one without a protector’ (1996:342).

²⁹ Janābāī *abhaṅga* 67.2 refers to Janī standing outside the door, see Appendix B.

³⁰ The term *ucchiṣṭa* refers to the ‘leavings, fragments, remainder (especially of a sacrifice or of food)’ (Monier Williams 2008) and ‘leavings considered as *prasāda*’ (Tulpule 1999:297).

³¹ The term *prasāda* connotes ‘favor, graciousness, propitiousness; anything (a fruit, flower, rice) given by an idol, a Guru, a saint, as a blessing or mark of favour; Food etc. presented to an idol or a holy person to be distributed, thus honored, among worshipers; the sweetmeats and fruits distributed among the audience at the conclusion of a *kathā* or a Purāṇa reading; the rice etc. which are stuck upon an idol when it is consulted; Lit. cleanness, clearness, brightness [but] fig. mental sanctity or purity’ (Molesworth 1857:541).

³² Significantly, Mahīpati points out that Janī gains access to Viṭṭhal due to her association with Nāmdev according to Novetzke (2008:70).

³³ The term *nisteja* connotes ‘lacklustre’, ‘dull’ (Tulpule 1999:142; Molesworth 1857:474), ‘exhausted’ or ‘worn out’ (Tulpule 1999:380).

³⁴ The term *jagaduddhāra*—the text has the word *jagadotdhāra* but this appears to be an error—can also be translated as ‘salvation of the world’ (Molesworth 1857:301; Monier Williams 2008).

of the world went to Janī and in a humble voice said, ‘I am hungry therefore I have come to you (64). I was eating with Nāma but had not invited you there. Therefore, I immediately withdrew my hand and left the food’ (65). Janī replied, ‘Discus-Holder, Ocean of compassion (*krpāsāgara*), Rukmiṇī’s husband (*rukmiṇīvarā*) I have nothing to give in my house except pure loving faith (66).³⁵ Goṇā brought the leavings and gave them to me but I feel apprehensive about giving it to you Discus-Holder’ (67). Rukmiṇī’s husband (*rukmiṇīkānta*) replied to her, ‘Bring and give it to me quickly. One should not be reluctant to serve me that which is mine (68). Because I was eating I forgot to appreciate the food [enough]. So I’m still thinking about it. Immediately bring that food back to me’ (69).³⁶ Hearing the words spoken with love you listeners will doubt unnecessarily and will say, ‘why did the First among men go hungry only to later eat his leavings?’ (70) It was so that Janī could fulfil her objective as she had no food to give Him, thus the Life of the world asked to eat his leavings (71). Then Nāma’s maid seated the Lord of the senses and immediately brought the leavings and placed them before Him (72). With Janī sitting beside him the Discus-Holder began to eat. When Mother Rukmiṇī heard this she became perplexed mentally (73).³⁷ He, who manifests himself on the ocean of milk, whose flag is the eagle, who dwells in heaven; He is eating his leavings accompanied by his servant (74). He—of whom the Vedas and Śāstras continually sing, upon whom the Lord of Kailās [Śiva]³⁸ meditates—He sits alone and lovingly eats Nāma’s leavings (75). When sacrifices are offered He will not accept the oblation [thrown into the fire]. He, the Life of the world, then said to Janī, ‘I have eaten and am sated’ (76). He then immediately washed his hands and lay down to sleep. Then Goṇā came outside and said to Nāmdev (77), ‘While you were sleeping God arose, went to Janī’s dwelling and loving ate his own leavings’ (78). Viṣṇu’s servant replied, ‘O mother, the Discus-Holder is fond of devotees. [If anyone] has a pure heart He rushes there to their aid’ (79). He does not enquire about caste or family nor name adverse times and seasons.³⁹ Seeing [a person’s] faith, the Compassionate to the lowly (*dīnadayāla*) rushes to their aid immediately (80). The

³⁵ This appears to be a reference to Janābāi *abhaṅga* 116, see Appendix B.

³⁶ The text states जेवितारहिर्लेअन्नजाण॥ त्यांतगुंतलेमाझेंमन॥ आतांझडकरीतेचिअन्न॥ देआणोनिमजलागीं॥ *Jevitā rāhilē anna jāṇa / tyāta guntalē mājhē mana / ātā jhaḍakarī tēci anna / de āṇoni maja lāgī*// Abbott and Godbole’s translation reads: ‘A while ago I stopped eating, but I was hungry for it. Now bring Me that same food and give it to Me’ (1996:344). The verb *jevaṇe* means ‘to eat’ (Tulpule 1999:184), ‘to dine; to have a meal’ (Tulpule 1999:264) or ‘to eat a meal’ (Berntsen 1982:51). The term *anna* connotes ‘food’ (Berntsen 1982:4; Tulpule 1999:14; Monier Williams 2008), ‘victuals or provisions; a preparation of food, a dish’ (Molesworth 1857:31). The verb *anna rāhaṇē* means ‘to lose one’s appetite’ (Molesworth 1857:31) although the verb *rāhaṇē* means ‘to live, stay; remain’ (Berntsen 1982:127). The term *jāṇa* connotes ‘knowing, understanding’ (Molesworth 1857:313) or ‘knowledge’ (Tulpule 1999:255). The verb *guntāṇē* denotes ‘to become tangled, become snarled; to become involved’ (Berntsen 1982:37), ‘to be involved; to be obstructed’ (Tulpule 1999:204) or ‘to tangle, catch or hitch; to be embarrassed, to be involved in difficulties; to be occupied or engaged; to be under employment or in use—a person, animal, article, place’ (Molesworth 1857:238).

³⁷ Abbott and Godbole translate the phrase हेंऐकोनमातारुक्मिणी॥ विस्मीतमनींहोतसे॥ *hē aikona mātā rukmiṇī/ vismīta manī hotase*// as ‘When Mother Rukmiṇī heard of this she became perplexed in mind’ (1996:344). The term *vismīta* denotes ‘surprising; amazing’ (Tulpule 1999:665) or ‘astonished, surprised, wonderstruck’ (Molesworth 1857:767) while *vismīta* connotes ‘amazed, surprised, perplexed’ (Monier Williams 2008). Consequently, one could also interpret the phrase as ‘When Mother Rukmiṇī heard this she was surprised’.

³⁸ *Kailāsa*/Kailash is the name of a mountain in the Himalayas, which is regarded as Śiva’s paradise (Molesworth 1857:180; Monier Williams 2008).

³⁹ Abbott and Godbole (1996: 345) do not translate the phrase *namhaṇe kāhī kālaveḷa*, which I have translated as ‘nor name adverse times and seasons’. The term *kālaveḷa* connotes ‘a fixed or proper time’ (Tulpule 1999:157), ‘a loose term for adverse times or seasons; times, seasons, occasions, fit periods; an evil or inauspicious time’ (Molesworth 1857:163).

Bhīl woman plucked the fruit and first tasted it.⁴⁰ Recognising her love the First among men lovingly accepted it (81). Thus recognising Janī's devotion He ate his own leavings. Goṇāī what is there to be wondered at? Shall I explain it to you [further] (82)? Having heard this conversation the Life of the world came and lovingly lay down beside Nāma on the same mat (83). Only one watch⁴¹ of the night remained. The Holder of the *sāraṅga* came and sitting on Janī's bed told her to arise immediately (84).⁴² 'It is getting late Janābāī, arise at once and do your grinding, I have cleaned the hand-mill (*jātē*) and am waiting for you' (85). The Lord of the world put his hand under her neck and lifted her up. Rukmiṇī's husband then covered her head with the end of her *sari* (86).⁴³ He tied up her hair⁴⁴ and straightaway seated Janī facing [him]⁴⁵ and put the basket of grain nearby (87). Then Rukmiṇī's husband said, 'I will turn the hand-mill truly. You hold [the handle] in your hand, merely pretending [to grind], and lovingly sing songs' (88).⁴⁶ While the Lord of the senses spoke Janī the maid awoke. With love and much delight she began singing verses (*ovīs*) about the *sants* (89). 'Nivṛtti, Sopān and Jñāneśvar are my most supreme (*parātpara*) kin.⁴⁷ It is through their favour that the Bow-Holder shows me mercy (90). The servant of Viṣṇu [Nāma] is my father, Rajābāī [Rājāī] is my beloved mother, Gorā the potter is my friend (*sakhā*), Kabīr is my paternal uncle (*culatā*),⁴⁸ and Sāvātā my brother (91).⁴⁹ They performed improbable acts. Friends, words fail me!⁵⁰ They attached the Disc-Holder to them and became sated with the vivifying bliss of the Self (*svānanda*) (92).⁵¹ Jñāneśvar, harassed by the Brahmins of Paiṭhaṇ, did the impossible: he

⁴⁰ Śabarī/Shabari was a tribal woman who is said to have offered Rāma fruit she had pre-tasted for sweetness thus violating the fruit's purity but Rāma accepted the gift as it was offered with love. For a discussion of the story see Lutgendorf (2001) and Horstmann (2003:40–41, 82). Doniger (2010:569), Futehally (1994:135 n.29) and Martin (1999:29) all refer to a *pad* by Mīrābāī—translated by Hawley and Juergensmeyer (1988:137)—that relates the story and condemns the caste system. Mahīpati also refers to the Bhīl woman offering Rāma *bor* (jujube) fruit in the *Bhaktalīlāmṛta* 23.149 (Abbott 1927:221) and 30.132 (Abbott 1996:118).

⁴¹ The term *prahar* connotes 'a watch; a period of three hours' (Tulpule 1999:440).

⁴² Janābāī *abhaṅga* 129 refers to the first watch of the night and Viṭṭhal visiting Janī, see Appendix B.

⁴³ The term *padar* refers to the 'end of [a] sari or dhoti' (Berntsen 1982:83), 'the end of a garment' (Tulpule 1999:404), 'an end of a cloth; an ornamental border' (Molesworth 1857:488).

⁴⁴ Mahīpati uses the verb *sāvaraṇe/ sāvaraṇe*, which connotes 'to gather up or together closely, compactly, into narrow compass or the suitable order' (Molesworth 1857:847), 'to catch, take in hand' (Berntsen 1982:159), 'to control' (Tulpule 1999:743) while Janābāī *abhaṅga* 85 refers to God forming a braid/plait (*veṇī*). Abbott and Godbole's translation states, 'Then he plaited her hair...' (1996:345). Janābāī *abhaṅgas* 83 and 85 refer to God helping Janī with her hair, but *abhaṅga* 85 refers to plaiting hair, see Appendix B.

⁴⁵ The hand-mill might have been between Janī and Viṭṭhal as numerous depictions illustrate, for example the cover illustration and illustration 12 in Poitevin and Rairkar (1996).

⁴⁶ This could be a reference to Janābāī *abhaṅga* 225 which says 'My songs on the grindmill for grinding are really for Govind' or *abhaṅga* 227 which says 'The millstone of detachment rotates with pride, therefore hold onto God as much as the handle', see Appendix B.

⁴⁷ The term *soyarā* connotes 'a relative' (Tulpule 1999:777), a 'relative my marriage' (Berntsen 1982:162) or 'a connection, one related by marriage; a gallant or man kept by a dancing girl, slave-girl, or other prostitute; a kinsman or –woman' (Molesworth 1857:868).

⁴⁸ Abbott and Godbole's translation reads: 'Gora the potter is my dearest uncle, and Kabir and Savata are my brothers' (1996:346).

⁴⁹ Janābāī *abhaṅga* 172 mentions a number of these *sants*, see Appendix B.

⁵⁰ The first half of the verse states: याणींअघटीतकेलीकरणी॥ कायनवलवानूसजणी॥ *yāṇī aghaṭīta kelī karaṇī // kāya navala vāṇī sājanī*// Abbott and Godbole translate this as 'He did seemingly impossible things. Dear Friends, how can I describe them all?' (1996:346). The term *sājanī* connotes 'a mistress, a beloved woman; a woman's confidante or female companion' (Molesworth 1857:841), 'a woman friend' (Tulpule 1999:731), a female 'friend, lover' (Berntsen 1982:157).

⁵¹ Abbott and Godbole's translation reads: 'They made the Holder of the disk (Krishna) subject to them, and became satisfied with the water of supreme spiritual joy' (1996:346). The term *jīvana* connotes 'living, existing, subsisting; any means of life, immediate or remote, any provision or food, or any profession or business: also the pabulum or aliment of anything; water; life-giving' (Molesworth 1857:316), 'life; water; nourishment' (Tulpule 1999:261),

made a buffalo recite the limitless Vedas with its own mouth (93). Gorā the potter—Your devotee—absorbed in meditating upon the Husband of Rukmiṇī, trampled his child into the mud as he was oblivious [to what he was doing] (94). As he had broken his oath to Viṭhobā he cut off his hands. While hearing Nāmdev’s exposition (*kathā*) the Life of the world responded to his friend (95). [While the crowd were] clapping and shouting his hands burst forth,⁵² and suddenly a child came crawling [out of the crowd]. The event seems unlikely and one regards it with astonishment (96).⁵³ Vanamālī⁵⁴ went to meet his devotee Sāvātā, who immediately split open his stomach and hid Him in his lotus-heart (97). Hari, who contains infinite universes, concealed himself within him [Sāvātā]. Nāmdev came and quickly drew him outside (98).⁵⁵ Brother Kabīr, a foreigner, lives far away in Varanasi. The Lord of the senses sat beside his loom and did his weaving (99).⁵⁶ On the night of Śiva (*śivarātrī*) Nāma sat cross-legged and performed a religious discourse (*harikīrtan*) for Nāganāth.⁵⁷ Nine hundred thousand flags suddenly came down from heaven (100). Pleased with [his devotee] the inhabitant of Śiva’s paradise (*kailāsavāsī*) turned the temple to the west for him.⁵⁸ Such deeds are unintelligible to the Vedas and Śāstras’ (101). Thus, while pulling the hand-mill she sang verses pleasing to the heart. Listening to her the Lord of Paṇḍharī (*paṇḍharīnāth*) joyfully nodded his head (102).

When Goṇāī heard singing she hurried to the yard and asked Janī, ‘Whom else did you ask here to [help you] grind (103)? Did you bring a charwoman (*molakarīṇa*)⁵⁹ or a friend (*jāriṇa*)⁶⁰ to your place?’ The other [Janī] spoke not a word and stayed silent (104). Then Goṇāī, with anger in her heart, took a cane and entered Janī’s hut saying, ‘With whom have you been speaking (105)? Our domestic affairs (*saṃsāra*, *sansāra*) are in a poor state.⁶¹ What charwoman did you bring here? You give her grain for grinding, continually stealing it from us’ (106). She struck Janī with the cane but it struck God’s head [instead]. [He] said, ‘My name is Viṭhāī. I come to help [Janī] with the grinding’ (107).⁶² When Nāma heard this statement he understood its significance. He said to his mother, ‘You caused pain to the Life of

‘vivifying, giving life, enlivening; a living being; life; life-giving element, water; ’ (Monier Williams 2008) and *svānanda* denotes ‘joying in one’s own joy, rejoicing in self; a title of Brahma or the deity’ (Molesworth 1857:880), ‘the bliss of the Self’ (Tulpule 1999:737), ‘the bliss of the absolute Self’ (Tulpule 1999:785) or ‘delight in one’s self’ (Monier Williams 2008).

⁵² The text reads टळियावाजवितांफुटलेहात॥ *tāliyā vājavitā phuṭale hāta* // Abbott and Godbole translate this as ‘As hands were being clapped’ (1996:346)! The verb *phuṭaṇē* connotes ‘to burst, explode; to break out; to sprout’ (Berntsen 1982:98), ‘to burst forth’ (Tulpule 1999:476), ‘to burst through; to burst into eruption; to form and burst fully forth’ (Molesworth 1857:554).

⁵³ The Gorā story appears in BVJ 17.99–205 (Abbott and Godbole 1996:286–294).

⁵⁴ The term *vanamāla* means ‘wearing a garland of forest flowers’ and is an epithet for Kṛṣṇa (Monier Williams 2008).

⁵⁵ The Sāvātā story appears in BVJ 16.112ff (Abbott and Godbole 1996:269ff).

⁵⁶ Mahīpati tells the story of Kabīr and his wife in BVJ 11.15–98 (see Abbott and Godbole 1996:177–185).

⁵⁷ Nāganāth denotes the ‘serpent-chief’ [Śiva] and ‘a *liṅga* sacred to Śiva’ (Monier Williams 2008).

⁵⁸ For more on Nāmdev and the temple turning see BVJ 13.8ff (Abbott and Godbole 1996:204ff; Novetzke 2008: 63–66; Callewaert and Lath 1989:63 and Callewaert 2000:33).

⁵⁹ The term *mola* connotes ‘price or rate; wages of labour, hire, fare’ (Molesworth 1857:671) while *molakarīṇa* means ‘maidservant’ (Berntsen 1982:122) and *molārīṇa* connotes a ‘char-woman, job-woman, or corn-grinding woman; a labouring woman in general’ (Molesworth 1857:671).

⁶⁰ The term *jāra* connotes a male ‘paramour, gallant, leman, amoroso’ (Molesworth 1857:315), ‘illicit lover’ (Berntsen 1982:50) or ‘confidential friend’ (Monier Williams 2008). The term *jāriṇī* (*jārīṇa*) denotes ‘an adulteress’ (Molesworth 1857:316) or ‘a woman who has a paramour; having a paramour, enamoured’ (Monier Williams 2008). Abbott and Godbole (1996:347) translate the term as ‘neighbour’.

⁶¹ Abbott and Godbole (1996:347) add ‘and we have not enough flour in the house’ to this phrase.

⁶² Janābāī *abhaṅgas* 48.4, 71.1, 83.1, 199.4 refer to Viṭhābāī and *abhaṅgas* 42.4, 59, 118, 121, 204, 225, 226, 227 and 262 refer to grinding, see Appendix B.

the world' (108).⁶³ Hearing his statement Goṇāi felt ashamed and said, 'I struck the Lord of the senses'. Then she changed and attained refuge (109)⁶⁴ saying, 'Janī's good fortune is extraordinary, she subjugated Rukmiṇī's husband. In ignorance I went there and did wrong (110). He whom Brahma and all the other gods never see, I beat with a stick [as] I was enraged by my domestic cares'.⁶⁵ Thus she became distressed (111).⁶⁶ The delicate (*sakumāra*), dark-complexioned Supreme Reality whose sight cools my eyes;⁶⁷ He, Rukmiṇī's husband, the Dark-blue cloud, shows compassion to Janī (112). Here the handle of existence rotates the hand-mill of indifference. She fed the mill with the grist of accumulated deeds and ground it with love (113).⁶⁸ That which had appeared as name and form [individuality] she ground in the mill. Uniting the invisible and visible Janī sat there unconcerned (114).⁶⁹ Then the Discus-Holder immediately filled a basket with flour and put it aside. A little of the night remained so He reclined on a bed of bliss (115).⁷⁰ While the Life of the world was speaking to Janī with love He fell asleep. As dawn [Varuṇa] appeared in the east (116) Nāma's maid came to God [and said], 'Arise. The temple priests will come for sight [of you] and will not see you there (117).⁷¹ If the *kākaḍāārati*⁷² is not performed there will

⁶³ Abbott and Godbole add 'you did not know this' to this phrase (1996:347).

⁶⁴ The text reads मगपरतोनिआश्रमापातली॥ *maga paratoni āśrama pātālī* // Abbott and Godbole translate this as 'From there she then came back to her home' (1996:347). The verb *parataṇe* means 'to turn to the other side; to shift, to cause to change places; to change, alter, reverse; to return, give back, send back' (Molesworth 1857:488). The term *āśrama* connotes 'a hermitage; religious organization; stage of life' (Berntsen 1982:10) or 'the householder state' (Tulpule 1999:73). However, the term *āśraya* connotes 'an asylum, a refuge, a place of protection or security; shelter, protection, defence, cover; support or sustentation...' (Molesworth 1857:76) and the verb *āśrāyaṇe* connotes 'to take shelter in; to take refuge with; to resort to' (Tulpule 1999:73). The verb *pātāṇe* means 'to arrive; to reach; to obtain' (Tulpule 1999: 430) or 'to confide in or rely upon' (Molesworth 1857:556). Consequently, one could interpret the phrase to suggest that Goṇāi returned home and confessed her wrongdoing.

⁶⁵ The text reads: जळोतयासंसाराच्यागोष्टी॥ *jalotayā sansārāyā goṣṭī* // Abbott and Godbole translate this as 'accursed be my worldly thoughts' (1996:347). The verb *jalaṇe* means 'to burn; to be kindled, to be on fire; to be inflamed (with anger, lust)' (Molesworth 1857:311). The term *sansār* refers to 'practical life and its responsibilities, domestic affairs; temporal world, life in this world; household' (Berntsen 1982:155) and 'the married life' (Tulpule 1999:217). The term *goṣṭī* connotes 'story, tale, apologue; word, syllable, utterance, sound; matter, affair; case, condition, circumstances' (Molesworth 1857:248) and 'incident; conversation, dialogue' (Tulpule 1999:211).

⁶⁶ The text reads: हमणोनिकष्टहोतसे॥ *mhaṇoni kaṣṭa hotase* // Abbott and Godbole translate this as 'Thus speaking she became very repentant' (1996:347). The term *kaṣṭa* connotes 'trouble' (Tulpule 1999:38), 'agony' (Tulpule 1999:45), 'bodily exertion, labor, toil, pains, endeavors; the sensation of fatigue or weariness resulting; pain or inquietude' (Molesworth 1857:145). The verb *kaṣṭa hoṇe* connotes 'to be in distress' (Berntsen 1982:22) and *kaṣṭane* 'to suffer' (Tulpule 1999:139) or 'to be fatigued or harassed (by toilsome exertion): to be distressed or vexed (mentally): to suffer much pain or affliction or trouble' (Molesworth 1857:145).

⁶⁷ The text reads: पहातानिवतिमाझेदोळे॥ *pahātānivatimājhedoḷe* // Abbott and Godbole translate this phrase as 'whose sight cools the heart and eyes' (1996:347).

⁶⁸ The verse reads: इकडेअवखुंटीचेभोवते॥ फिरतहोतेवैराग्यजांतें॥ संचितमातृकाआवरणबहुतें॥ दळिलीत्यांतनिजप्रीती

॥११३॥ *ikaḍe bhava khunṭice bhonvatē// phirata hotē vairāgya jāṭē// sancita mātr kā āvaraṇa bahutē// ḍalilī tyāta*

nija prīti // Abbott and Godbole's translation states: 'Turning now to Jani, the handmill of indifference to earthly things was turning around the pivot of this earthly existence. She ground in love in the mill an immense amount of grain in the form of deeds done in former births' (1996:347). This follows Janī *abhaṅga* 118, 225, 227.

⁶⁹ The text reads: नामरूपदृष्टीसत॥ तेंतेदळतसेत्यांत॥ अव्यक्तांतमेळवोनिवयक्त॥ जनीनिश्चितबैसली॥११४॥ *nāmarūpa drṣṭīsa disata// tēṭe ḍalataṣe tayāta// avyaktāta meḷavoni vyakta// janī niścinta baisalī* // Mahīpati appears to be quoting from Janābāi *abhaṅga* 227 in verses 113 and 114 (see Appendix B).

⁷⁰ The term *sukhaśeja/sukhaseja* is 'a bed of bliss' (Tulpule 1999:758) or a 'bed of pleasure' (Molesworth 1857:852) which denotes 'a pleasant rest or sleep' (Monier Williams 2008). Abbott and Godbole translate the term as 'easy bed' (1996:348). Mahīpati appears to be referring to Janābāi *abhaṅga* 146 and 147, see Appendix B. This story is discussed by Pandharipande (2000:163ff) who refers to three *abhaṅgas* from the *Nāmdev Gāthā*. However, the story begins with Janābāi *abhaṅga* 147 (SSG 1:730), presented above.

⁷¹ This is probably a reference to Janābāi *abhaṅga* 147, see Appendix B.

⁷² The term *kākaḍāārati* refers to 'the waving around an idol, at daybreak, of kindled cloth wicks' (Molesworth 1857:148) or 'ārati to god performed with a burning torch before dawn' (Tulpule 1999:143).

be an outcry in the town'. Hearing this, the Lord of the world hastily went to the temple (118). In his haste the Life of the world was unaware of what he was doing. He forgot his woollen shawl (*sakalāda*) and threw on Janī's patched quilt (119). And the Lord of the world forgot the beautiful jewel-pendant threaded onto a single-stringed necklace (*ekāvalī*) as hurried to his temple (120).⁷³ The door opened [and] his devotees came to see and worship Him.⁷⁴ [They saw] the Life of the world standing on the brick draped with a patched quilt (121). All those who saw him were amazed. 'From where did God bring the patched quilt? [What] evildoer has laid a hand on [His] sapphire? We are completely in the dark (122).⁷⁵ One woman said,⁷⁶ 'He is a great trickster.⁷⁷ He feels great affection for His devotees. He forbids ritualistic action and shows the way to the final end (*siddhānta*)' (123). Another woman said, 'Life of the world, Ornament to your devotees, Rukmiṇī's Husband, Dweller on the sea of milk, Recliner on Śeṣa, this patched quilt does not become you' (124). Yet another woman said, 'One can infer that the maid Janī is very fickle: she must have beguiled the Discus-Holder and enticed Him' (125). Another woman declared, 'Just as Kubjā the maid is described in the holy *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* so are Janī's own deeds [here described]; let these deeds be known to you all' (126).⁷⁸ A different woman said, 'Go and tell Nāma to restrain his maid Janī [for] she has confused the Bow-Holder and made Him obedient to her' (127). Thus, in different ways all the people reasoned in their own minds. A priest quickly went near [the image], removed the patched quilt and examined [the image] (128). He saw that the pendant and necklace were not upon His lotus-heart and said, 'Perhaps generous Vanamālī has given them to someone?' They made humorous remarks saying that Janī had done a clever thing in offering God the patched quilt and taking the pendant and necklace (130). To illustrate: it is as if one offered god (*naivedya*) some buttermilk, begged for His favour and brought back some butter; or one gave God some water from an earthenware jar and brought back nectar (131); or one gave the jeweller hailstones (*gārā*)⁷⁹ and exchanged them for diamonds or as if one offered Rukmiṇī's husband black eyeliner (*añjana*)⁸⁰ and took home his silk

⁷³ The jewel (*ratna*)-pendant (*padaka*) to which Mahīpati refers is probably the *kaustubha* jewel.

⁷⁴ The phrase reads कवाडउघडितांनिजभक्तजन॥ दर्शनाआलेपूजाघुन॥ *kavāda ughaḍitā nija bhakta jana // darśanā āle pūjā gheuna //* Abbott and Godbole translate this as 'As the door was opened His *bhaktas* came to see and worship Him, bringing the materials for worship' (1996:348).

⁷⁵ The verse reads: देखूनिआश्चर्यकरितीसकळ॥ देवेंआणिलीकोटूनिवाकळ॥ चेटकीहातमालनीळ॥ नकळेपारआम्हासी
॥१२२॥ *dekhūni āścīrya [āścīrya] karitī sakāḷa/devē āṇilī koṭūni vākāḷa/ceṭakī hāta māla nīḷa/ nakaḷe pāra āmhāsī//* Abbott and Godbole translate this as 'All who saw Him thus were astonished. They said, "He Who is dark-blue-complexioned, like the leaves of the *tamal* tree, has done a very strange thing. Whose blanket could He have brought? We have no idea whatever"' (1996:348). The term *ceṭakī* refers to one 'that practises sorcery or witchcraft; a sorcerer, wizard, sorceress, witch; [one] that devises or plots mischief' (Molesworth 1857:290) and I have translated this as 'evildoer'.

⁷⁶ The use of एकहमणती *eka mhaṇatī* indicates that the speaker in this verse and in verses 124–127 are female, a distinction Abbott and Godbole fail to make (1996:348ff). The presence of a female speaker indicates that women are familiar with different aspects of religion and the stories relating to *bhakti* and are able to articulate them in public within a mixed gender group.

⁷⁷ The term *nāṭakī* connotes 'trickster; clever at acting' (Tulpule 1999:368) but Abbott and Godbole translate it as 'mimic' (1996:123).

⁷⁸ Mahīpati seems to regard his text, the *Bhaktavijaya*, as comparable to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Kubjā is acknowledged in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* so Mahīpati is acknowledging Janī in the *Bhaktavijaya* (Personal communication, Kasturi Dadhe, 10th May 2013).

⁷⁹ Abbott and Godbole translate *gārā* as 'crystals' (1996:349). Tulpule (1999:201), Berntsen (1982:36) and Molesworth (1857:233) denote *gārā* as 'hailstone' or 'flint' but Molesworth also suggests that it is 'a term for gems and jewels, in enumerating the things which run away with money' (1857:233).

⁸⁰ Abbott and Godbole's translation reads: 'black garment' (1996:349).

garment (*pāṭolā*) (132); or as if one offered the milkweed's [poisonous] (*arkī*) stalk to gratify Mārūtī,⁸¹ begged for the favour of nectar-like (*amṛta*) fruit and took the favour (133).⁸² Likewise, in offering her patched quilt she gave Vanamālī pleasure. [She] has removed the pendant on the necklace to which the nine gems are joined (134). The priests said, 'What shall we do? There's no one to blame. The locks being secured how did the Lord of Paṇḍharī leave? We do not understand' (135). A woman said, 'Let's go to Nāma's house straightaway, immediately call the maid Janī and question her' (136).⁸³ With this thought in their minds they rushed over [to Nāma's house] and said to Janī, 'Rukmiṇī's Lord is taken with you (137). We do not know how you have bewitched him. He dislikes our worship and homage. By some trick or other you have beguiled the Life of the world (138). The Dark-blue cloud is enamoured with you and our good deeds are all lost. Last night the Compassionate to the lowly came to you (139). You took His pendant and necklace and gave him your patched quilt. Bring and give it [to us] at once or we will punish you' (140). Hearing these words she instantly avowed, 'If I have taken the pendant then may my eyes burst' (141). As they rummaged around they found the necklace among the clothing and said, 'She must be impaled on an iron spike immediately (142)! Evidently she has stolen the ornament of Supreme Brahman, the Eagle-bannered (*gāruḍadhvajā*), today. Therefore she must be punished as a matter of course' all the Brahmins stated (143). Then Janī was promptly seized and led to the edge of the Candrabhāga river. There she brought the First among men to mind and begged for mercy (144). Saying, 'Purifier and restorer of the fallen (*patitapāvana*),⁸⁴ Bow-Holder, Friend of the friendless (*anāthanāthā*),⁸⁵ Rukmiṇī's Husband, Loving to his devotees (*bhaktavatsala*), Ocean of mercy, Saviour of the meek (*dīnodvāra*),⁸⁶ Pāṇḍuraṅga (145).⁸⁷ I am a refugee (*paradeśī*), in want of a protector (*anātha*),⁸⁸ and wretched (*dīna*). Who is there to rush to my aid apart from you?' Hearing Janī's affecting words the Life of the world came to her aid (146). The iron spike had been driven into the ground,⁸⁹ but suddenly it turned into water. Seeing such a miracle all the people were astonished (147). The priests were perplexed and said, 'Blessed is Janī's devotion, for when she recalled God, Rukmiṇī's husband came to her aid' (148). All the devotees gathered in a circle, cheering (*jayajayakāra*) and clapping, saying 'Vanamālī immediately rushes to the aid of his servants when they fall into trouble' (149).

A strange thing happened one day. The maid Janī was sitting in her hut, composing poetry in her mind to the Discus-Holder (150).⁹⁰ Then, what did Discus-Holder do? The Discus-Holder took pen and

⁸¹ Mārūtī 'Son of the Wind' is a Marathi epithet for the monkey deity Hanumān (Lutgendorf 2007:10, 24, 73).

⁸² The verse reads: अर्कीचेदांडेवाहोनिश्चिता॥ प्रसन्नकेलामारुती॥ अमृतफळेमागोनिप्रीती॥ तयापासोनिघेतली॥ *arkīce dāṇḍe vāhona niścītā/ prasanna kelā mārūtī/ amṛta phalē māgoni prīti/ tayā pāsoni ghetālī*// Abbott and Godbole's translation states: 'or as if one should offer fruit of the *rui* to Maruti to please him, and take from him nectar fruit' (1996:349).

⁸³ Abbott and Godbole do not distinguish the speaker as female (1996:349–50), see note 76 above.

⁸⁴ This epithet appears in Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 7.1, see Appendix B.

⁸⁵ This epithet appears in Goṇāī *abhaṅga* 1286.2, see Appendix B.

⁸⁶ This epithet appears in Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 4.1, see Appendix B.

⁸⁷ This epithet appears in Janābāī *abhaṅgas* 48.2, 77.2, 78.4, 82.3, 222.6 and Goṇāī *abhaṅga* 1267.3; see Appendix B.

⁸⁸ The term *anātha* also connotes 'destitute' (Berntsen 1982:3), 'orphaned' (Tulpule 1999:459), 'forlorn; friendless' (Molesworth 1857:27) and 'helpless, poor' (Monier Williams 2008).

⁸⁹ The iron (*loha*) stake (*suḷa*) was used to impale criminals (Tulpule 1999:766).

⁹⁰ The text refers to आठवीतसे *āṭhavitase*: *āṭha* connotes 'eight' and *vīta* or *vitasti* means 'span' (Tulpule 1999:667; Molesworth 1857:788) or 'measure of length: defined either as a long span between the extended thumb and little finger or as the distance between the wrist and the tip of the fingers and said to be 12 *aṅgūlas* (breadth of a finger) or

ink, and as Janī's poetry fell upon His ears He wrote it down with His own hands (151). You will say, 'How could words from Nāma's house reach his ears while the Discus-Holder was seated in the temple? This seems doubtful in our minds' (152). But the Pervader of the universe (*viśvavyāpaka*), the Life of the world, Witness to the intents of the heart (*antarasākṣī*), Cloud of intelligence, who knows his devotees' minds, He is omniscient (153). Draupadī was harassed by Duṣśāsan. In Hastanāpur she thought about Kṛṣṇa. How could He hear her in Dvārka? Yet he rushed to her aid (154). When Gajendṛā pleaded movingly then he was heard in heaven (*vaikuṅṭha*). Similarly the First among men, through his inner eye (*jñānadṛṣṭi*), heard Janī's words immediately (155). Only the Lord of Paṇḍharī understands his devotees' pleas, so listeners never should be doubtful (156). Then, Rukmiṇī's Lord said to Himself, 'I find Janī's verses pleasing'. Therefore, He took up a pen and sat writing in person (157). Once Jñāneśvar came to pay his respects (*namaskāra*). Seeing him the Bow-Holder remembered what He was doing (158). So, Govind hid away His ink, pen and paper. Brahman (*saccidānanda*), the Root of joy (*ānandakanda*) created a marvellous diversion (159). Jñānadev came to Him and put his head on His lotus-feet, saying 'All alone Vanamālī, what are You writing (160)?' Hearing this Pāṇḍuraṅga replied, 'I am writing down Janī's verses (*abhaṅgas*)'. As Śrīraṅga [Viṭṭhal] spoke, Jñānadev laughed. He said, 'Victory! Victory to Rukmiṇī's Husband (*ramaṇa*) and Lotus-Lord (*kamaḷāpatī*), Janī has complained about You [but] You are writing about this in a book with your own hands, which is surprising (162)! Fords (*tīrthas*), vows, donations, austerities, speaking the truth (*satya*), even though you write about this with your own hands and speak about it with you own mouth it is not right for anyone with a little wisdom (163).⁹¹

Moreover, Vanamālī you must have committed numerous deeds all over the world yet one must never write them down (164). Your deeds (*caritra*) Lord of Rukmiṇī are written by Sarasvatī.⁹² The Vedas and Śāstras extol your attributes, the Purāṇas sing the praises of your heroic deeds (*pavāḍā*);⁹³ Vyāsa, Vālmika and the other great poets extolled You before attaining their position⁹⁴ and if you write down Janī's verses (*pada*) then the poets will laugh at you' (166). Hearing him say this, the Cloud Dark-Blue body (*ghananīlakāya*) replied, 'Janī's words are filled with love and I find her compositions lively (167).⁹⁵ Truly, as they fell upon my ears I sat down to write them but seeing you suddenly I felt apprehensive (168). So hurriedly I hid the paper, ink and pen but I do not understand at all what gave me away?' (169) Jñānadev said, 'Life of the world, Ornament of your devotees, there is none other apart

about 9 inches' (Monier Williams 2008; Tulpule 1999:4). The phrase 'for eight spans' may refer to the length of the verse(s) that Janī composed or the amount of time that Janī spent composing.

⁹¹ Mahīpati seems to be suggesting that Janī has composed about *tīrtha* and so on and that she is also critical of Viṭṭhal. Janī may be saying that Viṭṭhal should acknowledge everything she has done to attain Him. Jñānadev seems to be criticising both Janī and Viṭṭhal: Janī because she should not write and/or talk about what she has done or composed about (*tīrtha* and so on) as it is rather egotistical; Viṭṭhal as He should not write or talk about what she has done either because it acknowledges her 'ego' and He should know better because he is wise (Personal communication, Kasturi Dadhe, 10th May 2013).

⁹² See Novetzke for more on Sarasvatī as 'the goddess of orality and the recitation of sacred text' (2008:103–104).

⁹³ The term *pavāḍā* connotes 'A panegyric or encomiastic piece in a kind of alliterative poetry recounting the achievements of a warrior, the talents and attainments of a scholar, or the powers, virtues, and excellencies of a person gen.' (Molesworth 1857:496).

⁹⁴ The term *padavī* connotes 'title' (Berntsen 1982:83), 'a status, a position' (Tulpule 1999:404), 'a rank, station, post, office' (Molesworth 1857:488). Abbott and Godbole translate it as 'final bliss' (1996:352).

⁹⁵ The text reads ऐसेऐकोनीतयेवेळे॥ घननीळकायबोकिले॥ जनीचेशब्दप्रेमळभले॥ वाटतीरसाळमजलागीं॥१६७॥ *aisē aikonī taye veḷe/ ghana nīḷa kāya bolile/ janīce śabda premaḷa bhale/ vāṭatī rasāḷa maja laḡī/167*// My translation differs from Abbott and Godbole's translation which states: 'Hearing him say this, the cloud-dark Krishna replied, "The verses of Jani are full of love. I feel them today exceedingly interesting"' (1996:352).

from us [devotees] who knows Your inner thoughts (170). Just like a husband's inner thoughts are only understood by a chaste and dutiful wife; or a mother's love is only understood by a child (171); or as the poet's delightful words are identified by an expert, so the ones with wisdom and experience are those who attained the knowledge that comes knowledge about the Self (*adhyātma*) and scripture (*vidyā*) (172); Dark-Blue Cloud, it is as if the *cakor* [bird] fully understands the Lord of Rohiṇī [the Moon];⁹⁶ or Govind's mind understands the objects of the sense organs (173). So we always understand your soul's secrets easily', thus spoke Jñānadev and Adhokṣaja [Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa] laughed (174). Then Jñānadev said, 'Life of the world, let's go and meet Nāma, and I will tell him about your great love for Janī' (175). 'Certainly' replied Rukmiṇī's husband, quickly getting up and setting out. So taking one another by the hand they both proceeded (176).⁹⁷ Jñānadev and the Discus-Holder came to the house of Viṣṇudāsā.⁹⁸ They gave each other a hug and sat on a comfortable seat (177).⁹⁹ When Vanamāli arrived at the house a crowd of *sants* had already gathered there: like a king sitting in his assembly hall once his army has gathered (178); or hearing that Indra¹⁰⁰ is seated a host of gods encircle him; or as when ascetics sit around Śiva¹⁰¹ with love (179); or as wherever Indra sits all the perfected ones (*siddhas*) enfold him there; or when loving devotees with a fondness for religious discourse (*kīrtan*) come running to the arena (180); or wherever priceless gems are found, all the appraisers gather there; or when large black bees hover around the lotus plant's flower (181); or how beggars gather around when they see the lotus-like eyes of a generous donor; or as when small red ants rush towards wherever there is sugar (182). So, seeing the Lord of world seated in Nāma's house all the *sants*, united in joy, gathered there (183). Having embraced every one, the Life of the world said to Nāma 'Call Janī and bring her here so that she may be presented (*darśan*) to the *sants*' (184).¹⁰² Then Goṇāi said to Rājāi, 'Janī is outside making dung cakes.'¹⁰³ Go and tell her that Rukmiṇī's Husband is calling her' (185).¹⁰⁴ Then Janī quickly washed her hands and came to the courtyard; beholding the Lord of Paṇḍharī she prostrated herself (186).¹⁰⁵ Then Jñānadev remarked to Nāma, 'Today, I have seen a marvellous thing: the Lord of Heaven writing down Janī's verses with his own hands' (187). The Ornament of His devotees said to them, 'writing down Janī's verses has not diminished me at all (188). I take an oath, witnessed upon your feet, that Janī's Prakrit [Marathi] speech

⁹⁶ The *cakor* is a Greek Partridge, which is fabled to subsist on moonbeams (Molesworth 1857:267; Monier Williams 2008). The term *rohiṇī* is the 'name of the ninth *nakṣatra* or lunar asterism and of the lunar day belonging to it...it is personified as a daughter of Dakṣa, and as the favourite wife of the Moon, called "the Red one" from the colour of the star Aldebaran...' (Monier Williams 2008).

⁹⁷ The text reads: अवश्यहमणोनिरुक्मिणीकांत॥ उठोनिनिघालेत्वरित॥ एकमेकाचाधरोनिहात॥ दोघेजणचालिले॥१७६॥ *avaśya mhaṇoni rukmiṇī kāntā/ uṭhoni nighāle tvarita/ ekamekācā dharoni hāta/ do ghe jaṇa cāile*// Abbott and Godbole translate this as: 'The Husband of Rukmini replied, "I agree. That was already in my mind." Then taking on another by the hand they hastened along' (1996:353).

⁹⁸ The text states विष्णुदासाच्याआलेसदनी॥ *viṣṇudāsācyā āle sadanī*. Abbott and Godbole interpret this as 'came to the house of the *Vishnudasa* Nama' (1996:353) while Novetzke states that 'Mahipati refers to Namdev as "Vishnudasa"' (2008: 259n.80). For more on the issue of multiple Nāmas and Nāmdev's identity see Novetzke (2008:138ff).

⁹⁹ Abbott and Godbole translate *sukhāsana* as 'easy mat' (1996:353).

¹⁰⁰ The term *śacīramaṇa* means 'Husband or Lover of Śacī' and is an epithet for Indra (Monier Williams 2008).

¹⁰¹ The term *śaṅkara* means 'maker or conferrer of prosperity' and is an epithet for Śiva (Molesworth 1857:779).

¹⁰² Abbott and Godbole translate *darśan* here as 'introduced' (1996:354).

¹⁰³ Janābāi *abhaṅga* 125.1 (SSG 1, p.727–728) refers to Janī collecting cow-dung (*śeṇa*), see Appendix B.

¹⁰⁴ This phrase illustrates the female hierarchy in the home: 1) Goṇāi, the mother and mother-in-law; 2) Rājāi, the daughter-in-law; and lowest of all 3) Janī, the servant.

¹⁰⁵ Abbott and Godbole have an additional verse for 186: 'Hearing this request, she hastily went and told her, 'The Holder of the disk (Krishna) has come to our house and call for you' (1996:354).

must be known as charming (*svāda*) and delightful (*rasa*)’ (189).¹⁰⁶ I, Govind, take the paper of pure being and write of my own delights: inner happiness and the realisation of knowledge (190). ‘Whoever reads Janī’s words,¹⁰⁷ I will await them in the courtyard’, he so mouthed. From Nāma’s house the Discus-Holder said (191).¹⁰⁸ ‘He who continually sings Janī’s verses will have no difficulties in their domestic life (*sansāra*). At the end I will certainly lead him to absorption in the Divine (*sāyujyā*)’ (192). Vanamālī having spoken thus, Jñānadev laughed. With crashing cymbals (*tāla*)¹⁰⁹ everyone proclaimed ‘Victory!’ Who were all the *sants* gathered there (193)?¹¹⁰ Kabīr, who had come from Varanasi and Cokhāmeḷā the great devotee; thirdly, Rohidās the shoemaker, the eminent Vaiṣṇavas were all seated there (194). Sajjan the Pathān [Muslim], His devotee;¹¹¹ Bayā the butcher, who was extremely indifferent [to worldly attachments]; the leatherworker and Bhil tribeswoman,¹¹² were great *sants* always filled with love (195);¹¹³ and Mukundarāj, the door-opener (*dārekarī*) who always remained at the great door [of the temple];¹¹⁴ Goṇā and beautiful Rājā who continually proclaim ‘Victory! Victory! (196) and Nāma, His devotee; in the middle sat Rukmiṇī’s husband like the King amidst his army radiating lordly grandeur (*nātha aiśvaryē*) (197).¹¹⁵ Then Jñāneśvar asked Janī, ‘Nāmdev has assumed four incarnations (*avatāras*): Pralhād, Angad, and the venerable Uddhava,¹¹⁶ and has subjected the Bow-Holder to him (198). How many births have you had through worshipping God? Tell us all about it. Do not be inhibited (199).

¹⁰⁶ Abbott and Godbole appear to translate *svāda* and *rasa* as ‘happy thoughts’ (1996:354).

¹⁰⁷ The term *bolanī*—a noun derived from the verb *bolanē* ‘to speak’—connotes ‘talk’ (Tulpule 1999:83, 500), ‘an expression’ (Tulpule 1999:467), ‘talking’ (Tulpule 1999:500), and ‘a language; speech; verbal expression; a speech’ (Tulpule 1999:500). Abbott and Godbole seem to translate *bolanī* as ‘verses’ (1996:354).

¹⁰⁸ The text reads: जनीचीं बोलणीं वाचीलकोणीं॥ मीतिष्ठेनतयाचे आंगणीं॥ ऐसें स्वमुखें चक्रपाणीं॥ बोलेसदनीं नामयाचे॥
janīcī bolanī vācīla koṇī/ mī tiṣṭhena tayāche āṅgaṇī/ aisē sva mukhē cakrapāṇī/ bole sadanī nāmayācī// Abbott and Godbole translate this as ‘If anyone reads her verses I shall stand waiting upon him in his yard.’ Such were the words that Krishna used in the house of Nāma...’ (1996:354).

¹⁰⁹ Abbott and Godbole state that Jñāneśvar ‘clapped his hands’ (1996:354).

¹¹⁰ Janī is accepted into the group of devotees due to the endorsement of Viṭṭhal and, possibly, Jñāneśvar (see Novetzke 2008:70).

¹¹¹ For more on Sajjan see McLeod (1980:122ff).

¹¹² The Bhil woman was probably Śabarī/Shabari (see note 40 above).

¹¹³ Abbott and Godbole do not mention the *cāmbhār* (leatherworker) or *bhillaṭī* (Bhil tribeswoman) but refer instead to ‘Kamal the gardener’ (1996:355), which may be a reference to Janābāi *abhaṅga* 172 (see Appendix B) or *abhaṅga* 9.1–3 in *Santa janābāice aprakāśita abhaṅga saṁhitā* ‘The collection of *sant* Janābāi’s unpublished *abhaṅgas*’ (SSG 2:1397, 9.1–13): वैष्णव कबीर चोखा मेळा महार । निज तो चांभार रोहिदास ।१। सजन पठाणबच्चा तो कसाब । वैष्णव ते शुद्ध एकनिष्ट ।२। कमाल फुल्लारी मुकुंद झारेकारी । जिहीं देवद्वारीं वस्ती केली ।३। *vaiṣṇava kabīr cokhāmeḷā mahār/ nija to cāmbhār rohidāsa /1/ sajan paṭhāṇabaccā to kasāba/ vaiṣṇava te siddha ekaniṣṭa /2/ kamāl phullārī mukunda jhārekārī / jihī devadvārī vastī kelī /3/* Kabīr the Vaiṣṇava, Cokhāmeḷā the *mahār*; His own shoemaker Rohidās (1). Sajjan the young Pathān and butcher: they were pure and whole-hearted Vaiṣṇavas (2). Kamāl the florist, Mukund the sifter of goldsmith’s ashes who remained at the great door [of the temple] (3).

¹¹⁴ The term *dārekarī* connotes ‘The person employed to open and close the *dārē* of a plantation or garden during the time of irrigation’ (Molesworth 1857:408), the *dāre* is ‘a gate in a dam’ (Tulpule 1999:327). Abbott and Godbole refer to Mukundarāj as ‘the sifter of goldsmith’s ashes’ (1996:355). It seems that this Mukundarāj is not the one who composed the *Vivekasindu* and *Paramāmṛta* (see Tulpule 1979:316–6, 325–7, 347; Ranade 2003:25–7; and Bahirat 1968/1998).

¹¹⁵ The text reads: आणिनामानिजभक्त॥ मध्यें बैसलारुकिमणीकांत॥ जेविसेनेमार्जीनृपनाथ॥ ऐश्वर्येशोभेआगळा॥ *āṇi nāmā nija bhakta/ madhyē baisalā rukmiṇīkānta/ jevī sene mājī nṛpa nātha/ aiśvarya śobhe āgaḷā*// Abbott and Godbole translate this as: ‘Then there was Nama, the very dear *bhakta* of God. The Husband of Rukmiṇī sat in the midst of them, just as a kind in the midst of his army outshines all in glory’ (1996:355).

¹¹⁶ For more on Pralhād see Callewaert 1989 (pp.10, 399ff), for the story of Angad see Callewaert 2000 (pp.7–8ff) and for Nāmdev as an *avatāra* of Uddhava see Callewaert 1989 (pp.15ff).

Hearing this Nāma's maid prepared to speak,¹¹⁷ she said, 'When the Lord of the senses became Hayagrīva,¹¹⁸ then I obtained a place at his feet (200). Then the champion of Ambarṣī assumed ten forms (*avatāras*): as the fish, the tortoise and the great boar he came to kill powerful demons (201); after becoming Nārasimha, Vāmana, and Paraśarāma.¹¹⁹ He then became Dāśaratha's Rāma. Now Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the resting place of all, has become the seated Buddha (202). When God assumed these various forms (*avatāra*) I was with Him'. Having heard these words Jñānadev was amazed (203).¹²⁰ He said, 'Blessed is this servant Janī. By her endless accumulation of meritorious deeds she has made the Lord of the senses gracious [towards her], which Brahma and all the other gods find difficult to obtain' (204).¹²¹ Then the Discus-Holder said to the *sants*, 'Now, divide the scribes amongst yourselves and the words which come from your mouths write them down (205). Saccidānand the Brahmin will write down Jñāneśvar's jewelled words; Sopān, the perfect incarnation of Viriñci [Brahmā], will write down Nivṛtti's [words] (206). Jñānadev will write down Muktabāi's *abhaṅgas* completely. [Visobā] Khecar will write down Jogā Paramānand's secrets (207). Sāvātā the gardener and Vaiṣṇava devotee—let his scribe be Kaśibā Gurav; The God of gods made Sudev the scribe of Kūrmadās (208). Ananta Bhaṭ the Brahmin: he should do Cokhāmeḷā's writing, and Rukmiṇī's Husband will write down the words of Nāma's Janī (209).¹²² Thus, having allocated the scribes the Discus-Holder said to Jñānadev, 'Now, you should have no inhibition in listening to Janī's *abhaṅgas*' (210). Hearing this, the noble Vaiṣṇavas said, 'We have made ourselves capable of keeping promises. There is none like us in this world however hard you search' (211). If the sun takes a blind man by the hand, then what will he not be able to see? If Sarasvatī is kindly disposed towards a dumb man then he will be able to recite the Vedas (212). Likewise, if You are favourable towards Janī then who will call her a slave?'¹²³ Hearing this, the Life of the world smiled (213). Then, Nāma fetched water and reverently washed everyone's feet with fragrance (*gandha*), flowers and all the offerings (*upahāra*) and completed the worship with all the particulars of worship (214).¹²⁴ He gave betel

¹¹⁷ Mahīpati may be suggesting that Janī gave a discourse or *kīrtan*. See Novetzke 2008 (pp.74ff) for more on *kīrtan* and oral performance.

¹¹⁸ Hayagrīva means 'horse-necked' and is the 'name of a form of Viṣṇu' (Monier Williams 2008).

¹¹⁹ Nārasimha is the 'man-lion', Vāmana is the 'dwarf', and Paraśarāma is 'Rama with an axe' *avatāra* of Viṣṇu (Monier Williams 2008).

¹²⁰ The text reads: आश्चर्यकरीअंतरी॥२०३॥ *āścarya karī antarī*// Abbott and Godbole translate this as 'his mind was full of astonishment' (1996:355), which follows the Marathi more accurately than my translation. One may wonder if the inclusion of Jñānadev legitimises Janī as a poet and/or *sant*. Mahīpati may be referring to the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Janī that regard Jñānadev as a *guru* and praise him: see Janābāi *abhaṅgas* 59, 121, 143 (which refers to Jñānadev writing near Janī), 168, 266, 268, 269, and +43 in Appendix B.

¹²¹ The text states: म्हणेंधन्यहेजनीदासी॥ इच्याअपारपुण्यरासी॥ प्रसन्नकेलाहृषीकेशी॥ ब्रह्मादिकांसिदुर्लभजो॥२०४॥ *Mhaṇe dhanya he janī dāsī/ icyā apār puṇyārāsī/ prasanna kelā hr̥ṣīkeśī*// Abbott and Godbole translation reads: 'Said he, Blessed is this servant girl Janī. By her limitless good deeds she has made *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) favourable to her. His sight is unobtainable even to Brahmadev and other gods' (1996:355).

¹²² Mahīpati seems to be quoting from Janābāi *abhaṅga* 271 (see Appendix B). See Novetzke (2008 70, 259 n.8; 78, 260 n.9) for a translation and discussion of this verse.

¹²³ This statement seems to validate Janī as a poet and *sant*.

¹²⁴ The term *sampūrṇa* connotes 'All, every one, the whole; whole, entire, complete, perfect; completed, perfected, finished, prepared or executed wholly; the entertainment of Brahmans, or other particular ceremony, completing and closing a religious observance' (Molesworth 1857:820). The term *mīlita* denotes 'mixed, mingled; met; met together; blended' (Molesworth 1857:653). The term *upacāra* connotes 'service' (Tulpule 1999:3), 'an article of substance used in worship' (Tulpule 1999:95), 'sandalwood paste and rice particles; a ritual of welcoming' (Tulpule 1999:195), 'the performance of a ritual' (Tulpule 1999:655), 'approach, service, attendance; reverence, attendance; ornament, decoration' (Monier Williams 2008) and 'A common term for the particulars and points of idol worship; of which sixteen are enumerated' (Molesworth 1857:98).

rolls (*viḍā; pān*) to everyone and lovingly prostrated himself. Then the Husband of Śrī (*śrīpatī*) took His leave of Goṇāi and immediately set off (215). Taking a group of devotees along with Him, Vanamāḷī entered the temple. Then He told Rukmiṇī all that had happened (216). He who is the Brother of the destitute (*anāthabandhū*), the Source of compassion (*karuṇākara*), Loving to his devotees, the Ocean of mercy, the Ocean of compassion (*karuṇāsindhu*), the Bow-Holder, He is the one concerned about our well-being (217). He is the one narrating His devotee's life-stories, with loving-eyes, Mahipatī is merely a puppet. The wise ones know this already (218). Peace! This book is the sacred victory of devotees (*śrībhaktavijaya*). Listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen with love O faithful devotees. This is the twenty-first delightful chapter (219): an offering to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

2. *Bhaktavijaya 39: Kānhopātrā*

Reverence to Śrī Gaṇeśa. O Hearers, listen carefully. Paṇḍharī is in the southern country and seven *kos* from there is the village of Mangalvedha (1).¹ In that place was a prostitute (*veśyā*) and dancing girl (*kalāvantiṇa*) and her name was Śāmā. Kānhopātrā was born of her, a beautiful gem (2). In looking at her beauty the heavenly attendants were ashamed [of their own beauty]. The creator had created none her equal in the three worlds (3). In her youth she learnt the art of singing and dancing. In looking at her Rambhā, Tilottamā and Menakā were all ashamed (4).² The mother said to her daughter ‘Let’s go to the royal palace so that you will be given ornaments when your beauty is seen’ (5). She replied, ‘O mother know that no man worthy of my beauty will appear however one searches (6). If there is a man endowed with ten million times my beauty I shall marry him’, thus Kānhopātrā resolved (7).³ ‘Men of the mortal world seem to me as flies before a sun: to them I shall appear radiant’ (8).

One day there was a pilgrimage going to Paṇḍharī. The Vaiṣṇavas proclaimed with cymbal, drum, flag and kettledrum (9). When Kānhopātrā saw the *sants* she prostrated herself and asked ‘Where are you Vaiṣṇavas going? Please tell me’ (10). They said, ‘We are going on pilgrimage to Paṇḍharī where the Dweller in Vaikuṇṭh waits on account of Puṇḍalīk (11). Kānhopātrā asked the *sants*, ‘Who is the Dweller in Vaikuṇṭh?’ They said, ‘Even Brahma extols His greatness (12).⁴ He is ten million times more generous, patient, handsome and perfect than Lakṣmī; the moon and sun orbit the earth due to his radiance’ (13). Kānhopātrā said to the *sants*, ‘If I go to the Lord of the senses (*hr̥ṣīkeśa*) for protection will He accept me (14)?⁵ They told her, ‘Kubjā was Kaṃsa’s deformed and lowly maidservant in Mathura and Kṛṣṇa transformed her body for his own honour (15).⁶ Ajāmeḷa and Cokhāmeḷa he cherished, for he is Cloud-Blue, Purifier and restorer of the fallen (*patitapāvana*), Compassionate to the wretched (*dīnadayāla*), Saviour of the world (*jagaduddhāra*) and Protector of the lowly (*dīnabandhū*)’ (16). On hearing the *sants* recitation [Kānhopātrā] hurried home, paid homage to her mother and said ‘I am going to Paṇḍharī’ (17). Taking the *vīṇā*, the beautiful woman left singing with love. Then Kānhopātrā went [to Paṇḍharī] extolling Hari’s qualities (18). Kānhopātrā proceeded to the great door [of the temple] by performing a [rolling] prostration (*loṭāṅgaṇa*), with impassioned devotion and in supplication. She said, ‘Hearing of your fame I have come as a supplicant to you Viṭṭhal’ (19). ‘You are generous, patient,

¹ The distance from Maṅgalvedha to Paṇḍharpūr is fourteen miles.

² These three women were *apsarās*, a class of female divinity or ‘celestial nymph’ who inhabit the sky but often visit the earth and are fond of water; they are the wives of the *gandharvas* (demigods; celestial musicians) and can change their shape at will. Rambhā is sometimes regarded as a form of Lakṣmī and as the most beautiful woman of Indra’s paradise (Monier Williams 2008).

³ Ranade suggests that Kānhopātrā found Viṭhobā to be her equal in beauty and so ‘married’ him (2003:190–191, 10).

⁴ The phrase *brahmādikāśi* denotes the ‘region’ or ‘sphere’ of Brahma, which suggests Mahīpati is referring to *brahmāloka* (the world of Brahmā) and to the celestial beings who reside there.

⁵ This verse could be interpreted as Kānhopātrā seeking the protection of the deity or of a man so as to be kept woman. Kānhopātrā, like Kubjā and Janī, is unattached and unprotected, and might therefore be preyed upon by men who considered her sexually ‘available’. Consequently, Kānhopātrā might have God as a ‘Protector’.

⁶ The story suggests that Kubjā satisfied Kṛṣṇa’s senses by providing him with sandalwood paste but that once she had been transformed into a beautiful woman she wanted to satisfy her senses (lust) with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa had no desire to gratify himself but went to Kubjā’s house to transform her into a pure devotee. The Vārkarīs appear to be suggesting that Kānhopātrā, like Kubjā, can be transformed into a pure devotee (Prabhupada 1970). For the story see BhP 10.42.3–12; 10.48.1–11 (Bryant 2003:174–75, 202–03). Mahīpati also suggests that Janī is an *avatāra* of Kubjā in BVJ (21.19).

handsome, perfect and possess the six attributes of divinity,⁷ [so I have come to] stay at your place as a supplicant to you O Viṭṭhal’ (20). ‘Ajāmeḷa and Gaṇikā⁸ came and you accepted them in a moment.’⁹ The *sants* have told of this in writing, so I come to you as a supplicant (21). My customary occupation was bodily sexual pleasure and my place was known. I have abandoned all on your account and supplicate myself to you O Generous One (22). Now accept me as your supplicant O Lord’. Thus, Kānhopātrā placed her head on his feet (23). Considering Hari’s form in her mind, Kānhopātrā remained in Paṇḍharī at the great door [of the temple] extolling the good qualities of the Lord (24).

However, there was a wicked man who went to the king of Bedar¹⁰ and reported to him (25): ‘In Paṇḍharī, at the great door [of the temple], is a beautiful courtesan (*gaṇikā*) and in the three mortal worlds there is no other woman her equal’ (26). A fisherman kills fish even though they have committed no wrong, so bad men maintain their enmity towards the good and virtuous (27). The hunter shoots wild beasts even though they are faultless, so the wicked maintain their enmity towards the good and virtuous (28). When a tiger sees a man it looks at him with anger seeking to devour him, so the wicked always bear hatred in their hearts for the good and virtuous (29). Bed-bugs bite men while they sleep although they are without fault, so the wicked always bear hatred in their hearts for the good and virtuous (30). Knowing [Kānhopātrā] had committed no crime the wicked man went to the king and reported to him. Having heard the news the king sent his messenger to Paṇḍharī (31). Kānhopātrā was at the entrance [of the temple] faithfully performing a *kīrtan*. Immediately the king’s men appeared and spoke (32) saying, ‘Come to Bedar at once or you will be taken by force’. She replied, ‘I will pay my respects (*namaskāra*)

⁷ The six attributes (*ṣaḍgūṇa*) are *samagra aiśvarya* (all-sovereignty or lordship), *samagra dharma* (all-goodness or excellence), *samagra yaśa* (all-glory, majesty, or victory), *samagra śrī* (all-opulence or fullness), *samagra jñāna* (all-knowledge or understanding), and *samagra vairāgya* (absolute exemption from desire, dispassion) (see Molesworth 1857:801; Tulpule 1999).

⁸ The term *gaṇikā* suggests one ‘enjoyed by one person or many persons living in a group’ (Sithannan 2007:11) or ‘belonging to *gana*, the people’ (Eraly 2011:453). A *gaṇikā* was an ‘elite courtesan’ who, in contrast to the ordinary prostitute (*veśyā*), resided in a large, well-furnished house and whose ‘household establishment was headed by her mother and included maidservants, female messengers, musicians, other professionals and children’. The *gaṇikā* was ‘a connoisseur of refined pleasure and culture’ (Singh 2008:506) and according to the *Kāmasūtra* (1.3.15) was expected to be familiar with the arts of ‘singing, dancing, playing musical instruments, painting and decoration; preparing wines and other drinks; doing conjuring tricks, practising sleight of hand, telling jokes and riddles; completing words, reading aloud, improvising poetry, staging plays, knowledge of metre and literary work; gambling; and etiquette’ (Kaul 2006:63). Furthermore, a *gaṇikā* ‘was a desirable woman, desired for her beauty as well as her refinement and intellect’. However, a *gaṇikā* had no choice in ‘the object of their love’ (Singh 2008:506). The *Kāmasūtra* and Sanskrit *kāvya* literature refer to *gaṇikās* but with ambivalence. The *gaṇikā* ‘is admired and celebrated for her beauty, wit, and other accomplishments’ but ‘the fact that her sexual favours could be bought by anyone for money meant that she could never hope to attain social respectability (Singh 2008:507). The idea that a *gaṇikā* lacked social respect is challenged by both Sithannan (2007) and Eraly (2011:453) who refer to the *Kāmasūtra* (1.3.18) saying that ‘the king always honours her, and virtuous people praise her’ (Doniger 2009:16). A *gaṇikā* symbolised ‘well-being, luck and prosperity, wherever present’ and was considered *nitya sumangali* ‘eternally married and reaching widowhood being out of bounds for her’ (Sithannan 2007:13). A *gaṇikā* was often the property of the state and could only be freed, if at all, for an exorbitant sum. The daughter of a *gaṇikā* with the required qualifications was expected to become a *gaṇikā* too. The Tamil epics *Maṇimēkalai* (6th century) and *Cīvaka Cintāmaṇi* tell how Maṇimēkalai becomes a Buddhist nun just as her mother, the courtesan Mādavī, had done so earlier (Feldman 2006:171; Sithannan 2007:14). The Gaṇikā mentioned by Mahīpati was probably Piṅgalā (see BhP 11.8.22–44; Kiehnle 1997a:124; Leslie 2003:165) rather than the *apsarā* whom Indra sent to Yama and who turned into a river (*Brahmā Purāṇa* 86.30–39; Söhen 1989). There are distinctions between the different types of prostitute as indicated by the different terms: *veśyā* or *rūpajīva* was a prostitute ranked lower than the *gaṇikā* due to her lack of artistic skills. The lowest form of prostitute was the *dāsī* (slave) such as the *kumbhadāsī* ‘‘pots-and-pans’’ prostitute’ (Feldman 2006:162).

⁹ Mahīpati seems to be drawing from *abhaṅga* 12 in referring to Ajāmeḷa and the *gaṇikā* but the rest of the statement attributed to Kānhopātrā (v.21–23) does not correspond with the poetry attributed to Kānhopātrā, see Appendix B.

¹⁰ Bedar (Bīdar) is a city and district in north-eastern Karnataka.

to god and return immediately’ (33). The messengers stood in the assembly hall while Kānho went into the temple. Hands joined she prayed, ‘God-King, Husband of Sītā (34), called “Puṇḍalik’s blessing”, Pāṇḍuraṅga. I call myself yours Śrīraṅgā. Now, if you give me up Destroyer of existence, who will be at fault? (35) Fearful, I to say to you, if the king takes me to Bedar, Dweller in Paṇḍharī, Śrī Hari, whose fault will it be? (36) When you heard Gajendrā’s lament you immediately came to his aid, Life of the world.¹¹ If you give me up, Cloud of mercy, who will be at fault? (37) When a pigeon falls into distress you easily apprehend its anguish. Now if you should abandon me, who will be at fault? (38) When the tiger caught the doe,¹² she called upon you and you came to her aid Lord of the Senses, so if you abandon me Lord of Paṇḍharī who will be at fault? (39) When Durvās tormented Ambarṣī you endured the pain of birth,¹³ now if I am taken to Bedar who will be at fault? (40) Ajāmeḷa and Cokhā the *mahār* were accepted by you, now if you ignore me who will be at fault? (41) When a young frog was being boiled to death it called upon you and you instantly came to its aid, so if you abandon me now who will be at fault? (42) My heart has been united with your form (*svarūpa*), and if the wicked [men] touch me then the *sants* and good people will mock you, O Viṭṭhal’ (43). On hearing this piteous speech Nārāyaṇa dissolved with compassion. Immediately he withdrew her spirit and united it with his own essential form (44). The *sants* and priests nearby witnessed [what happened] there: the Compassionate One took Kānhopātrā within (45).¹⁴ Kānho was absorbed through his lap and the evidence [of this] continues to the present day. Those who go to Paṇḍharī in veneration see this for themselves (46). Her corpse was taken at that time and interred by the southern door.¹⁵ Immediately a *taraṭī* tree sprang up there (47).¹⁶

Meanwhile the messengers from Bedar came from the assembly pavilion and questioned the priests about what had become of Kānhopātrā (48).¹⁷ They said, ‘her spirit has been absorbed into the Lord’s form’. The messengers said, ‘bring her corpse to show us’ (49). The priests told the messengers, ‘her corpse has become a tree’. Then they [the messengers] said, ‘your desire has caused this (50). You [must have] dug an underground passage in front of the door from where she was able to flee, and now you say she has become a tree! You are telling untruths’ (51). Without further consideration the priests were seized and taken to Bedar to report to the king (52). They presented him with a gracious gift (*prasād*) but as he was an arrogant man a hair appeared [in it]. The Muslim became angry and questioned the priests (53). The Muslim king lacked discrimination so the priests were terrified and quickly placed the coconut and fragrant black powder (*bukā*) before the king (54).¹⁸ Greatly afraid they wondered what to say and decided to tell the king that it was god’s hair (55). They said, ‘the hair is surely that of

¹¹ Gajendrā was the chief of the elephants whom Viṣṇu saved from a crocodile and who gained liberation. The story is told in BhP 8.2; see Nelson 2006:187–188 or ‘The Elephant Gajendra’s Crisis’, available at <<http://vedabase.net/sb/8/2/en>> [Accessed 27th November 2012].

¹² Mahīpati seems to be referring to the final *abhaṅga* attributed to Kānhopātrā—*nako devarāyā anta pāhū ātā*—see Appendix B.

¹³ Mahīpati seems to be referring to Kānhopātrā *abhaṅga* 11, see Appendix B.

¹⁴ The text suggests that the deity took Kānhopātrā within his knee (*jānū*) but as this sounds odd in English it has been omitted in this translation. However, it is possible that the text means that Kānhopātrā was on her knees when she was absorbed into the deity.

¹⁵ It is interesting that Kānhopātrā was interred as usually only *sannyāsīs* are buried.

¹⁶ The *taraṭī* (*taraṇṭī*) tree is *Capparis Erythrocarpus*.

¹⁷ This is probably the Viṭṭhal *sabhā maṇḍap*, a quadrangle with wooden pillars that dates to about 1621 (Deleury 1994:60a).

¹⁸ The king is described as *avinda* (*avindhā*), a term meaning ‘unbored or unpierced’ and which refers a Muslim ‘because his ears are unbored’ according to Molesworth (1857:50).

Kānhopātrā's supporter,¹⁹ the Dweller in Vaikuṅṭh who stands on the bank of the Bhima (56). Come to Paṇḍharī and if the hair is not god's [hair] then punish us': this they gave in writing (57). The king asked the Brahmans how Kānho had united with god. The priests replied, 'she [united with god] like sea-salt unites with the sea' (58). So as to attain evidence [of this for himself] the king went rushing off [to Paṇḍharpūr]. The Brahmans wondered, 'now what do we do?' (59). 'If the Muslim does not find hair on god then he will kill us. The Dweller in the three-worlds will either keep us from shame or neglect us' (60). When the Brahmans came near Paṇḍharī they then appealed [to God] saying, 'Merciful Mādhav, You are our protector (61). When the house made of lac was on fire you delivered the Pāṇḍavas, O Eternal One; now you are our only protection in this difficult situation (62). While serving vile company²⁰ you made Draupadī into the four-armed one: O Husband of Rukmiṇī you are our protection in this difficult situation (63). When a forest fire blazed you consumed the fire to protect the cows and cowherders. How difficult can it be for you to save us at this time? (64) When clouds unleashed terrible rain you easily held up [mount] Govardhan.²¹ How difficult can it be for you to save our lives? (65) Knowing your power we testified in writing that the curly hair graced the Four-armed one, the Dark-coloured one' (66). Then the king arrived at the great door [of the temple] and instantly saw the Brahmans spread out in prostration before god, near the eagle [shrine] (67). They said, 'Puṇḍalik's boon-granter, Eternal one, you are our protector from difficulty. Except for you, Lord of the Universe, we see no one to come [to our aid] at the moment' (68). The king went into god's bed-chamber and looked at him. Suddenly he saw his radiant crown confining his beautiful curly hair (69); his enormous lotus-eyes, his heavenly crocodile-shaped earrings and around his throat Viṣṇu's necklace with the *kaustubha* jewel (70). On his breast was a very beautiful pendant and both his hands lay on his hips. His loins were wrapped by a yellow silk *dhotar* and his neck adorned with the necklace of Viṣṇu (71). He whom *yogis* petition in meditation, whom all gods worship, he was seen by the king (72). The king became repentant and said to the Brahmans, 'I have seen the deity as you told me he would look' (73). With sincerity the king prostrated himself before god, embraced god and promptly said to the priests (74). 'Kānhopātrā's fortune is great as she was absorbed into the Lord's own form. We are unfortunate and lack understanding so have I harassed her' (75). Then he said to the priests, 'How did Kānhopātrā become a tree?' They took him to the southern door [of the temple] and showed him the *taraṭī* tree (76). The Brahmans told the king that the sacred city of Paṇḍharī was ancient and that all the gods became trees and remained there (77). Today the *taraṭī* tree is still visible at the southern door and faithful devotees come to Paṇḍharī to see it (78). The next chapter tells the amazing story of the Vaiṣṇava devotee Dāmājīpant.²² Mahīpati, who comes to him as a supplicant, extols his good qualities (79). Peace-Happiness-Prosperity (*svasti*)! This book is the *Śrī*

¹⁹ The term *kaiṃvāra* means 'espousing a part; taking and maintaining a side or cause' and *kaivārī* denotes one 'that espouses a cause; that avenges, rescues, protects, maintains' according to Molesworth (1857:180).

²⁰ The term *pañkti* refers to 'a row of people sitting down at a meal: hence society, companionship, fellowship, brotherhood; or a body, a company, a sodality, an association' according to Molesworth (1857:478).

²¹ The term *nakhī* refers to 'the touch of a fingernail; a light touch' according to Tulpule (1999:361). Kṛṣṇa was said to have lifted Govardhan hill with one hand and/or on his little finger to protect the *gopas* and *gopīs* from the torrential rain sent by Indra (BhP 10.24–25; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 5.10–11) see Bryant (2003:111–118; 2007a: 128ff, 502), Vaudeville (1992), Pintchman (2005:65–66) and Hawley (1981:156–160ff).

²² The name Dāmājīpant is a name derived from *dāma* 'money': 'money considered as a personage, *Squire Cash*' according to Molesworth (1857:408).

Bhaktavijaya. In listening to it the Lord of the Universe will be pleased; so listen god-loving, faithful devotees. This is the tasteful thirty-ninth chapter (80). This is an offering to Kṛṣṇa; Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

APPENDIX D:

LIST OF EPITHETS EMPLOYED IN THE COMPOSITIONS ATTRIBUTED TO THE
SANTAKAVĪYITRĪS¹

EPITHET	SANT
Acyuta ('Steadfast') = Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa	Bahiṇābāi (134) ²
Adināth ('First Lord') = Śiva	Bahiṇābāi (1)
Āji ('Grandmother'/respectful particle)	Bahiṇābāi (235)
Akaḷākaḷa ('Inscrutable Unblemished')	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Akhaṇḍa eka svarūpa ('Undivided One')	Bahiṇābāi (234)
Amareśvarā (Omkareśvarā) = Śiva	Janābāi (45, 51)
Ambābāi ('Mother')	Janābāi (Unpublished 11)
Ānanda (Joy, Happiness) = Śiva	Rājāi (1333); Janābāi (260); Soyarābāi (18)
Ānandakanda ('The root of joy')	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Ānandavadana ('Face of joy')	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Anantā/ Ananta (Eternal One)	Muktābāi (8); Goṇāi 1286; Janābāi 204, 347; Goṇāi 1286; Nirmaḷā (9); Bahiṇābāi (67, 178)
Anāthanāthā (Friend of the friendless)	Goṇāi 1286; Kānhopātrā (3); Līmbāi; Bhāgū Mahārīṇ 4; Nirmaḷā (8, 18)
Anāthācī deva (God of the friendless)	Soyarābāi (7)
Arikuḷahanana ('Killer of the enemy tribe')	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Ātmārām (the Supreme Reality)	Muktābāi (31); Janābāi 3; Bahiṇābāi (107, 614, 637)
Ātmārūpa (Form of the soul)	Bahiṇābāi (109)
Aviṭa (Unfailing One)	Muktābāi 41

¹ The numbers beside the *sant*'s name denote the *abhaṅga* number from the SSG or Kolhārkar edition for Bahiṇābāi in which the epithet appears. The numbers in parentheses are *abhaṅgas* I have not translated.

² The numbering of the Bahiṇābāi *abhaṅgas* is from Kolhārkar (1926) as this is the edition used by Abbott (1929/1985) for his translations. The numbering of the other *abhaṅgas* is from the SSG (Gosāvi 2005). The epithets sometimes appear more than once in the *abhaṅga* listed.

Bā (Father/Dad)	Nirmaḷā (4), 19; Soyarābāī (2, 24, 28); Bahiṇābāī (413)
Bābā (Father)	Rājāī 1326; Janābāī (15, 33, 271)
Bālamukund (‘young Mukund’) = Kṛṣṇa	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Baḷavant (Mighty) = Hanumān	Janābāī (23, 57, 114, 323, 328)
Bāpā (Father)	Goṇāī 1305; Janābāī 268; Kānhopātrā (14); Bahiṇābāī 139, 141, 196, 254, 578)
Bhagavān (God, Supreme God)	Viṭhābāī
Bhaktajanūjjīvana (‘Enlivener of his devotees’ souls’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Bhaktijvāḷa (‘The source of devotion’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Brahma (Creator of the universe; the Absolute)	Muktābāī (1, 5, 6); Goṇāī 1268; Janābāī 181; Kānhopātrā 2; Bahiṇābāī (7, 37, 95, 103, 109, 117, 127–28, 131, 151, 159, 162, 164, 168–9, 170–72, 196, 203, 216–17, 240, 251, 254, 270, 273, 288, 296–97, 300, 311, 313, 327–28, 331–32, 340, 376, 383, 421–22, 427, 429, 431, 451, 452, 457, 459, 461, 467, 526, 587, 611, 613, 617, 619, 626, 637, 654, 680)
Bhavamocana (‘Releasing from worldly existence’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Brahma vandī jyāce pāya (whose feet are revered by Brahma)	Janābāī 262
Brahmāṇḍanāyakā (Lord of the Universe)	Goṇāī 1286
Brahmarūpa (‘A form of Brahma’) = Viṣṇu	Bahiṇābāī (226)
Caitanyadhana (‘Destroyer of consciousness’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Cakrapāḷa (Discus-holder)	Goṇāī 1268
Cakrapāṇī (Discus Bearer)	Goṇāī (1302); Janābāī (22, 36), 43, 80, (81), 86, 147, 155, 204, 208 (253, 283, 291, 320, 321, 337, 339; U 19, 29); Kānhopātrā 9; Soyarābāī (7); Bahiṇābāī 172, 294, 466, 588, 701, 717–18)
Candramaulī (‘Bearing the moon upon his head; Moon-crested’) = Śiva	Bahiṇābāī (83)
Cidambar (‘Heart as big as the sky’)	Viṭhābāī
Dāvānalaprāśana (‘Feeding on forest fire’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Dayecyā sāgarā (Ocean of mercy)	Kānhopātrā 9
Deva (God; deity)	Muktābāī (13, 22, 24); Goṇāī (1264), 1266, 1267, 1268, 1275, (1277, 1278, 1280, 1283,

	1291, 1292,1293), 1300, (1301), 1305; Rājāi 1326; Janābāi (1, 13, 14, 20, 22, 25, 29, 61, 62, 63, 64, 72, 73, 76), 83, 85, 86, 91, (93, 95), 97, (99, 101, 109, 119), 121, 122, (127, 136, 139, 142), 147, (148, 150, 151, 156, 157, 158, 165), 191, (193, 205), 227, (235), 243, (248, 255, 252, 255), 262, (263, 265), 271, 278, (283, 284, 287, 293), 294, (287, 293, 294), 318, (322, 323, 330, 332, 337, 341, 342; U 3, 21, 22, 24, 27, 30) U 43; Rājāi 1326, (1329, 1333); Kānhopātrā (5, 12) x; Līmbāi; Lāḍāi; Bhāgū Maharin 1, 4; Nirmaḷā; Soyarābai (1, 7), 19, (27, 49, 58); Nirmaḷā (1), 6; Gaṅgabāi A; Sakhūbāi; Bahiṇābāi (12, 24, 31, 34, 35, 40, 41, 48, 51, 54, 61, 64–66, 69, 73, 97–99, 230, 232, 354, 265–7, 276, 286, 297, 315–18, 320–21, 330, 361, 365–66, 398, 400, 403, 405–06, 409, 432, 442, 456, 460, 462–63, 466–67, 472, 490, 503, 526, 530, 552, 561, 566, 576, 586, 588–89, 591, 606, 611, 620–21, 630, 637, 698, 701, 704, 707–08, 710, 720–21, 730, 732, 738, 740
Devācā viśrāma (‘Rest of the gods’) = Viṭṭhal	Janābāi (25)
Devādhideva/devāciyādeva (God of gods; God over gods)	Janābāi (62); Bhāgū Mahārīṇ; Gaṅgabāi A; Bahiṇābāi (466, 697)
Deveakīnandana (‘Devakī’s son’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Devakīsuta (‘Devakī’s son’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Devarāṇā (God-king)	Bahiṇābāi (208, 667)
Devarājā (God-king)	Janābāi (20)
Devarāyā (God-King)	Rājāi (1333); Janābāi 42 (U 27, 28); Kānhopātrā ‘33’; Nirmaḷā (3, 4, 15); Bahiṇābāi (67, 523, 634, 642)
Dharmarākṣaṇa (‘Protector of righteousness’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Dīnabandhu (‘Brother of the distressed’)	Bahiṇābāi (67, 454, 717)
Dīnānāth (Protector and reliever of the wretched)	Rājāi (1333); Janābāi (208); Bahiṇābāi (454, 717)
Dvārakecyārāya (King of Dvārka)	Janābāi (163)
Girajecā kānta (Girija’s husband) = Śiva	Janābāi 347
Gokuḷicyā devā (God of Gokul) ³	Janābāi (263)

³ The Vārkarī *sants* portray Viṭṭhal as ‘playing with the cowherd boys and girls’ when they regard him as the resident of Gokul according to Dhere (2011:31).

Gokuḷamaṇḍhaṇa (‘Adornment of Gokuḷ’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Gokuḷarakṣana (‘Protector of Gokuḷ’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Gopāḷa (Cowherder; Earth-protector)	Goṇāi 1286; Janābāi 30, (61, 264, 265, 270, 334, 335; U36); Soyarābāi (1); Bahiṇābāi (291–92, 466, 527–28, 565, 588, 631)
Gopīmanaraṅjana (‘Delight of the milkmaids’ hearts’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Gopirājā (‘King of the milkmaids)	Bahiṇābāi (346)
Gopīpriyakāṇha (‘Playful beloved of the milkmaids’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Govardhanagokuḷrakṣana (‘Protector of Govardhan and Gokuḷ’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Govinda (Protector of cows)	Muktābāi 37; Goṇāi (1277); Rājāi 1325, (1330); Janābāi 104, (142, 148, 152, 156, 212), 225, (335; U 24, 41, 42); Kāṇhopātrā 6; Soyarābāi (42); Bahiṇābāi (70, 103, 293, 300, 346, 564–65, 568, 570–71, 575, 585, 588); Sakhūbāi
Guṇanidhāna (‘Treasury of excellencies’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Guṇavihīna (‘Devoid of attributes’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Guru	Muktābāi ‘Hindi’; Janābāi 225, 269, ‘43’; Gangābāi B
Gururāja (Venerable king; Preceptor-King)	Gangābāi B
Gururupa (Handsome Form)	Gangābāi B
Guruvīṇa (Preceptor)	Gangābāi B
Hari (the Tawny One; the Destroyer of pain) = Lord	Muktābāi (1, 4, 5, 6) 7, (8, 9), 10, (11,12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20), 21, 26, (27, 28, 36), 37 (39); Goṇāi (1277, 1289, 1294); Rājāi (1333); Janābāi (15, 79, 94, 103, 131,150, 152), 155, 204, (261, 331, 332, 337), x (U26, 36); Kāṇhopātrā x; Nirmaḷā (11); Soyarābāi (9, 43, 45, 52, 60); Bahiṇābāi (14, 21, 26, 32, 36, 60, 62, 65, 67–9, 94, 105, 136, 154–56, 160, 292–93, 295, 333, 428, 453–54, 462, 466, 486, 499, 524, 528, 532–37, 585, 589, 563, 565, 570, 582, 585, 587, 596, 611–12, 625, 635, 702) ‘Hindi’; Sakhūbāi
Harinijadhāma (‘The abode of Hari’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Hariguṇabharita (‘Abounding in the Lord’s qualities’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Harirāmakṣṇa	Muktābāi 7

Hṛṣīkeśa (Lord of the Senses; Bristling Haired One)	Muktābāi (29) 40; Janābāi (47, 60, 79, 120), 130 (286, 289, 292; U 17); Kānhopātrā 11; Bahiṇābāi (527, 529, 705, 719)
Indra (The god of rain who presides over heaven and the gods) = the Supreme Being	Bahiṇābāi (78, 160, 257–58, 279, 336–37)
Iṭhobā = Viṭhobā (popular, illiterate use)	Sakhūbāi
Īśvar (God)	Muktābāi (Unpublished SSG 2 p. 1400)
Jagajethī (‘Conqueror of the world’)	Goṇāi (1294); Janābāi 347; Kānhopātrā 11; Bahiṇābāi (720)
Jagajjīvana (‘Life of the world’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Jagannātha (‘World lord’) = Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa	Bahiṇābāi (187)
Jñānābāi (‘Lady knowledge’)	Janābāi 59
Kamalāpatī (Lotus-Lord)	Janābāi (47); Soyarābāi 31
Kānhāi (Playful Kṛṣṇa)	Janābāi 136
Keśava (Killer of the horse-demon Keśī; ‘Long-Haired’)	Muktābāi (40); Goṇāi (1284); Rājāi (1333); Līmbāi; Janābāi (9, 25, 156, 160, 188), 224; Soyarābāi 3, (26, 33), 55; Nirmaḷā (1); Bahiṇābāi (69, 72, 92, 136, 489, 697, 709)
Keśavarāva (Lord ‘Kṛṣṇa’)	Goṇāi (1294);
Keśīnāthā (The Lord’s hair)	Rājāi (1333);
Keśīrāja (Long-Haired Lord; Killer of the horse-demon Keśī)	Muktābāi 32; Goṇāi (1277, 1283, 1285); Nirmaḷā; Bahiṇābāi (178)
Khaṇḍerāyā (Sword King) = Śiva	Janābāi (340)
Kṛpāghana (‘Cloud of compassion’)	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Kṛpāvan (Compassionate One)	Janābāi 44
Kṛpāvanta deva (Compassionate god)	Nirmaḷā (18);
Kṛpecyā sāgarā (Ocean of compassion)	Nirmaḷā (5);
Kṛṣṇa (Dark-blue, Black)	Muktābāi (6); Lāḍāi; Janābāi (179, 247, 293, 319; U16); Kānhopātrā 4; Bahiṇābāi (209, 291, 295, 297, 415, 526, 532, 565–66, 568, 571, 583, 585, 586, 617, 627, 635, 694); Sakhūbāi <i>pad</i>
Kṛṣṇa kānhāi (Playful/Sportive Kṛṣṇa)	Kānhopātrā 4; Bahiṇābāi (515; 585)
Kṛṣṇābāi (Goddess Kṛṣṇa)	Janābāi (115)

Kṛṣṇanāthā (Lord Kṛṣṇa)	Janābāī (28); Bahiṇābāī (527)
Kṛṣṇarāma (‘Kṛṣṇa and Rāma’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Kṛṣṇarāṇa (King Kṛṣṇa)	Bahiṇābāī (582)
Lāl gusāījī (Dear Darling/Red Lord)	Muktābāī ‘Hindī’?
Madanamohana (‘The infatuater of the god of love’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Mādhava (Sweet; Springtime; ‘Descendant of Madhu’)	Muktābāī 26; Kānhopātrā 14; Bahiṇābāī (52)
Madhusūdana (‘Killer of Madhu’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Mahārāja (Great King)	Muktābāī ‘Hindī’; Janābāī (228)
Māhaśvar (‘relating to the great lord’) = Śiva	Janābāī (266)
Mahāviṣṇu (Great Viṣṇu)	Janābāī (272)
Maheśādīdeva (‘God the origin of the gods’) = Śiva	Janābāī (127)
Manmohana (‘Attractive’, ‘Captivating’, ‘Engaging’)	Janābāī 43; Bahiṇābāī (585)
Māūlī (Mother)	Soyarābāī 31, (56)
Māya (Mother)	Janābāī 48, 74, 85, 168? 269, 331? Bhāgū 3? Kānhopātrā 8?; Soyarābāī
Māyabāpa (Mother-Father; Parent)	Goṇāī 1266, 1268; Rājāī (1333); Janābāī 78, 168, 204, (331; U 36); Līmbāī; Bhāgū Maharin 3; Soyarābāī (1, 26), 31, (32, 33, 56); Nirmalā (1, 22); Kānhopātrā 8; Bahiṇābāī (529)
Mayuradhvarāja (King with peacock banner)	Goṇāī (1294);
Medhaśyāmā (the Dark One)	Janābāī 43, (286); Bahiṇābāī (68, 585)
Mohan (Delightful; Charming; ⁴)	Muktābāī 21
Mohanmātā (‘Mother Mohan’)	Muktābāī (13)
Mokṣapadadāyaka (‘Bestower of the state of liberation’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Mukund (Supreme God)	Muktābāī 26; Lāḍāī;
Munimānasmohana (‘Captivator of the sage’s mind’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Murārī (Enemy/slayer of the demon Murā)	Janābāī 204 (U 24); Bahiṇābāī (565)
Nāganāth (Serpent-chief; a <i>liṅga</i>) = Śiva	Rājāī 1324

⁴ Hawley defines Mohan as ‘the Beguiler’ (2005:106).

Narasimha ('Lion-headed man') = Viṣṇu	Bahiṇābāi (9)
Nārāyaṇa ('Related to man'; the cosmic creator)	Muktābāi (12, 14), 23, 32; Goṇāi (1284); Janābāi (64, 100, 137, 154, 156, 322, 332; U3, 26, 31, 35, 38, 41), x; Kānhopātrā 6, 7; Soyarābāi (1), 4, (8, 42, 54); Nirmaḷā 6; Bahiṇābāi (43, 52, 62, 171, 247, 252, 262, 321, 317, 322, 400, 466, 527, 539, 582, 616, 700, 718–19, 736–37)
Nirguṇa ('Without qualities/attributes')	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Nirvikāra ('Unchanged')	Bahiṇābāi (167)
Nityānanda ('Everylasting joy')	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Pāṇḍavapratipālaka ('Supporter of the Pāṇḍavas')	Bahiṇābāi (585)
Pāṇḍava sāhākārī ('Assistant to the Pāṇḍavas')	Muktābāi (6)
Paṇḍharīcācora (Thief of Paṇḍharpūr)	Janābāi 180
Paṇḍharīcādeva (God of Paṇḍharpūr)	Goṇāi 1275; Bahiṇābāi (459)
Paṇḍharīce āi (Mother from Paṇḍharpūr)	Janābāi 71
Paṇḍharīci/a rāṇā (King of Paṇḍharī)	Lāḍāi; Kānhopātrā (18); Nirmaḷā (2, 15);
Paṇḍharīcā rāva (King of Paṇḍharī)	Bahiṇābāi (453)
Paṇḍharīnāthā (Lord of Paṇḍharpūr)	Goṇāi 1266, 1304; Rājāi 1326; Līmbāi; Janābāi 53, (57, 68, 70, 73, 76), 87, (119, 120, 142, 159; U 33); Kānhopātrā (17); Bahiṇābāi (501, 504, 719)
Paṇḍharīrājā (King of Paṇḍharpūr)	Janābāi 78
Paṇḍharīrāvā (King of Paṇḍharpur)	Muktābāi (14); Rājāi (1329); Janābāi (4, 178, 228, 285)
Paṇḍharīrāyā (King/Master of Paṇḍharpūr)	Goṇāi (1278, 1280, 1288), 1286; Rājāi (1321); Janābāi (46), 53, (56, 65, 94, 170; U 8); Kānhopātrā (21); Soyarābāi (5, 26, 30, 53, 56); Nirmaḷā (4), 19; Bahiṇābāi (595, 737)
Paṇḍharīvāsā (Resident of Paṇḍharpūr)	Soyarābāi 35
Pāṇḍuraṅga (the White One) = Śiva/Viṭṭhal	Goṇāi (1264), 1267, (1285), 1295; Rājāi 1325, (1332, 1333); Līmbāi; Janābāi (20, 21, 36), 48, (72, 76), 77, 78, 82, (137, 139, 154, 188, 190, 196, 217), 222, (241, 265), 271, (287, 331, 334; U 7, 18, 21, 27, 31, 32, 38); Kānhopātrā 1; Līmbāi; Bhāgū Maharin 4; Soyarābāi 6, 31; Nirmaḷā (3, 15); Bahiṇābāi (9, 21, 26, 29, 36, 39, 42, 51, 53, 68, 72, 73, 85, 98, 129, 186, 337, 393, 458, 463, 464, 479, 488, 494, 495,

	525, 592, 667, 687, 717); Viṭhābāi
Pāpachedana (‘Remover of sin’)	Bahinbai (585)
Parātmā (‘the Supreme Spirit’)	Bahinagai (612)
Parabrahma (‘the Ultimate Reality’)	Bahinābāi (37, 232, 292, 424, 434, 456, 535, 688, 739)
Paramānand (Supreme Bliss)	Janābāi 27, (49), (271); Bahinābāi (585)
Paramātmā (‘the Supreme Soul’)	Muktābāi (34)
Paranārīvedhaka (‘Piercer of a strange woman’)	Bahinābāi (585)
Parapuruṣa (‘The Supreme Spirit’)	Bahinābāi (471)
Patitapatāvanā (Purifier and restorer of the fallen)	Kānhopātrā 7, 22; Soyarābāi (7); Nirmaḷā (8, 18)
Puṇḍalīka varadā (Puṇḍalīk’s boon-granter)	Kānhopātrā 6
Puṇyavantarāyā (‘Virtuous King’)	Goṇāi (1294)
Purṇakāma (‘One whose desires have been fulfilled’)	Bahinābāi (585)
Puruṣī (‘Man’, ‘The Supreme Being’)	Bahinābāi (585)
Puruṣottam (‘Supreme Spirit’) = Viṣṇu	Bahinābāi (585, 716)
Putanāśoṣaṇa (‘Destroyer of the demoness Putana’)	Bahinābāi (585)
Rāghava (‘Fish’) = Rāma	Bahinābāi (65)
Rāghobā (‘Lover’)	Bahinābāi (60)
Raghuvīra (Raghu-hero) = Rāma	Janābāi 195
Rājā (King)	Janabai (57)
Rakhumācā patī (Rakhumābāi’s husband) = Viṭṭhal	Janābāi (72), 347
Rakhumācyā kāntā (Rakhumāi’s husband) = Viṭṭhal ⁵	Līmbāi; Kānhopātrā 6;
Rāma (‘Dark’, ‘Black’, ‘Lovely’, ‘Beautiful’)	Muktābāi (11); Janābāi (12, 62, 217, 248, 277; U 39); Soyarābāi 22; Bahinābāi (75, 107, 170, 297, 390, 537, 549, 604, 697)
Rāma Kṛṣṇa	Muktābāi (8, 9, 15), 37; Janābāi (212); Soyarābāi (9, 42, 44); Bahinābāi (249)
Rāmarājā (King Rāma)	Bahinābāi (621)
Rāṇā paṇḍharīcā (King of Paṇḍharī)	Lāḍāi

⁵ The Vārkaī *sants* refer to Viṭṭhal as the ‘husband of Rukmiṇī’ when they consider him as the Lord of Dvārakā according to Dhare (2011:31).

Rāvo brahmāṇḍīcā (‘King of the Universe’)	Bahiṇābāī (167)
Rukmiṇīnāyakā (Rukmiṇī’s husband/lover)	Janābāī (41)
Rukmiṇīcā kāntā (Rukmiṇī’s husband)	Janābāī (20)
Rukmiṇīcyā kunkā (Rukmiṇī’s husband)	Janābāī (51, 61)
Rukmiṇīvara (‘Rukmiṇī’s husband)	Soyarābāī 14
Saccidānanda (‘Being-consciousness-bliss’ or ‘Brahman-Māyā-Īśvara’) = Supreme Reality	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Sadāśiva (Always Auspicious) = Śiva	Janābāī (272)
Sadguru (True Guru; Good Teacher)	Janābāī (273); Bahiṇābāī (117, 118, 147, 162, 179, 180, 186, 250, 324) ⁶
Sadgururāyā (Lord True Guru)	Janābāī (187); Bahiṇābāī (633–34)
Sadgururājā (Lord True Guru)	Bahiṇābāī (643)
Sāhabjī (Master)	Muktābāī (Hindi)
Sakhya (Friend)	Bahiṇābāī (70)
Śaṅkar = Śiva	Bahiṇābāī (10, 143)
Śāraṅgadhar (Bow-Holder)	Janābāī 91 (U 2, 18); Bahiṇābāī (720)
Siddhanāth (‘Divine Lord’) = Śiva	Bahiṇābāī (7)
Siddheśvar = Śiva	Bahiṇābāī (8)
Śiva (The Auspicious One)	Janābāī (120), 186, (187), 226, (248); Kānhopātrā 2; Bahiṇābāī (1, 3, 127, 128, 213, 276, 288, 312, 435, 685)
Śrīharī (Splendid Sun)	Muktābāī; Janābāī (U 3); Soyarābāī (17, 32); Bahiṇābāī (539, 543, 573, 582, 735)
Śrīkṛṣṇa (Holy Kṛṣṇa)	Bahiṇābāī (627)
Śrīkṛṣṇa rāyā (Holy King Kṛṣṇa)	Muktābāī (6)
Śrīmukha (‘Illustrious Countenance’)	Janābāī (69)
Śrīmūrti (the personification of the Supreme being)	Janābāī (192)
Śrīpati (‘Lord’) = Viṣṇu	Janābāī (324); Kānhopātrā (3); Nirmaḷā (8); Bahiṇābāī (466, 549, 630, 732)
Śrīrāma (Holy Rāma)	Janābāī (U16); Bahiṇābāī ((621, 629, 650)

⁶ The term *sadguru* may refer to the *guru* of a particular disciple and some the *abhaṅgas* attributed to Bahiṇābāī are ambivalent as to whether they are referring to Tukārām or the deity.

Śrīraṅga ('Radiant Colour') = Viṣṇu or Śiva	Janābāī (20); Soyarābāī (5); Bahiṇābāī (172, 568)
Sṛṣṭīvarī (Excellent Universe)	Janābāī 211
Sukhāce sāgar (Ocean of happiness)	Nirmaḷā (7)
Svāmī ('Master')	Bahiṇābāī (186)
Svāmī brahmapūrṇā (Lord of complete mystery)	Viṭhābāī
Svāmī of Kudagoḷ (Lord of Kundagoḷ)	Viṭhābāī
Trailokyācyā rāyā (Lord of the three worlds)	Janābāī (65)
Trikūṭicā deva (Triumvirate god)	Muktābāī (U)
Tribhuvanī samartha (Lord of the three worlds)	Goṇāī 1276
Tripuṭībhedaṇa ('The divider of the three moras [<i>a-u-m</i>])	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Udārācyā rāyā (Generous One)	Janābāī 155
Vaikunṭhīcā harī (Lord of Vaikuṅṭh)	Janābāī (261)
Vaikunṭha nāyaka ('Lord of Heaven')	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Vaikunṭhapati ('Lord of Heaven')	Bahiṇābāī (466)
Vaikunṭhīcā rāṇā (King of Heaven)	Sakhūbāī
Vaikunṭhā rāyā (King of Heaven) ⁷	Kānhopātrā 6
Vanamālā/Vanamālī (a garland of forest flowers) = Kṛṣṇa	Sakhūbāī; Bahiṇābāī (66)
Vaiṣṇavācyā mātā (Mother of Vaiṣṇavas)	Janābāī (185; U 9)
Vaiṣṇavāncā rāva ('King of the Vaiṣṇavas')	Goṇāī (1294)
Vasudev	Bahiṇābāī (565596)
Vasudevanandanā (Vāsudeva's son; Kṛṣṇa)	Kānhopātrā 6;
Viṣṇu (All Pervader)	Muktābāī (U); Janābāī (171, 197); Kānhopātrā 6; Bahiṇābāī (127, 143, 214, 259, 313, 457, 549, 627); Sakhūbāī
Viśvapāla ('All-protector; Protector of the universe')	Bahiṇābāī (67)
Viṭhābāī = Viṭhobā as friend/mother	Janābāī (35, 41), 48, (51, 52), 71, 83, (136, 160), 191, (U 5); Kānhopātrā 10 (16), x; Viṭhābāī

⁷ The Vārkarī *sants* call Viṭthal 'the husband of Lakṣmī' when regard Viṭthal as the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha according to Dhere (2011:31).

Viṭhāī (feminine of Viṭhobā)	Janābāī (265, 285; U11); Kānhopātrā (16); Bhāgū Maharin 1, 2
Viṭhāī māulī (Mother Viṭhāī)	Bahiṇābāī (735)
Viṭho	Janābāī (28), 30, (107), 116, (137, 149, 165, 219; U7, 25) ; Bhāgū Maharin 5/Bhāgūbāī; Nirmaḷā 14;
Viṭhobā	Goṇāī 1266, 1268, 1270 (1278, 1293, 1299); Rājāī 1322, (1323), 1324, 1326, (1332, 1333); Janābāī (1), 8, (9), 11, (31, 33), 78, 89, (135, 149, 165, 176, 182, 187, 192), 195, (215), 222, (252, 280, 282, 292, 331, 338, 344; U 1, 15, 18, 25, 36, 40); Kānhopātrā; Nirmaḷā; Soyarābāī 41, (43, 46), 57, (60), 62; Nirmaḷā 14, (17); Bhāgūbāī; Bahiṇābāī (52, 74–5, 98, 129, 459, 460, 463, 511, 561, 673)
Viṭhobārāyā (King Viṭhobā)	Rājāī (1333); Janābāī (73);
Viṭhū	Janābāī (16); Kānhopātrā (12); Soyarābāī (59); Nirmaḷā 14; Bahiṇābāī (546)
Viṭhyā (feminine of Viṭhobā)	Janābāī 19
Viṭṭhal (‘Receiver of the ignorant and destitute’; ‘He who stands on a brick’)	Muktābāī (1, 2, 3), 41; Goṇāī (1264), 1269, 1275, 1276, (1280), 1286, (1301, 1306); Rājāī 1326, (1323, 1333); Aubāī; Lāḍāī; Janābāī 3, (4, 6, 10, 25, 26, 28, 32, 39, 40, 42, 70), 78, (89, 92, 94), 118, 124, (128, 131, 133, 138), 139, (142, 149, 178), 180, (192, 197, 215, 218, 221, 237, 238, 246, 250, 277, 293, 338, 344; U 5, 9, 16, 21, 23, 36, 39); Kānhopātrā 9, 20; Bhāgū Maharin 2; Soyarābāī (7, 9, 13), 14, (16, 17, 18, 21, 26), 47, (58, 61); Nirmaḷā 6, 14, (15); Bhāgūbāī; Bahiṇābāī 25–7, 38, 52, 129, 300, 311, 346, 347, 460, 466, 490, 561, 562, 626, 638–39, 695–96, 728; Viṭhābāī; Sakhūbāī
Viṭṭhal māulī (Mother Viṭṭhal)	Janābāī (138)
Viṭṭhal māye (Mother Viṭṭhal)	Janābāī (89, 92)
Viṭṭhal sakhayā (Companion Viṭṭhal)	Kānhopātrā 6
Viṭṭhalrājā (King Viṭṭhal)	Muktābāī (3)
Vyāpakvyoma (‘Pervader of the sky’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Yādava kuḷabhūṣaṇa (‘Ornament of the race of Yādavas’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)
Yamunājalakhaṇḍaṇa (‘Separator of the waters of Yamuna’)	Bahiṇābāī (585)

Yogeśvar (Yoga Master; the Ultimate Reality)	Muktābāī 41
Yogījanapālana ('Guardian of the ascetics')	Bahīnābāī (585)
Yogījanaviśrāma ('Rest of the ascetic')	Bahīnābāī (585)

APPENDIX E:

HINDI COMPOSITIONS ATTRIBUTED TO MUKTĀBĀĪ AND BAHINĀBĀĪ

1. Introduction

There are compositions in Hindi attributed to both Muktābāī (c. 1279–1297 C.E.) and Bahinābāī (c. 1628–1700 C.E.). I first read these compositions in Shrotriya (1992) and my translations and discussion is based on this work. It is probable that this is the first time that any of these ‘Hindi’ compositions have been translated and discussed in English. The Hindi scholar V.M. Sharma (1957) mentions Muktābāī as having composed in Hindi and how she describes herself as ‘Mahārāja Muktābāī’ in her Hindi compositions. It seems that the Marathi poets Cakradhar (1194–1276) and Jñāneśvar composed poems in Hindi (Sharma 1957) and that this may have been influenced by the Nāths (Pandey 1965:60n.23; McGregor 1984:21–23). The type of Hindi used by the Nāths was a mixture of old Khārībolī and Brajbhāṣā (McGregor 1984:23). Nāmdev is said to have composed songs in a form of ‘mixed’ Hindi (including Khārībolī, Rajasthani and Panjabi) known as *sādhukkaṛī* ‘holy men’s jargon’ (McGregor 1984:40). It is therefore not inconceivable that Muktābāī composed in a form of Hindi influenced by the Nāths. However, it is possible that attribution could be based on Muktābāī’s connection with Jñāneśvar as three different Muktā’s connected with the Nāths have been identified by Kiehnle (1997b:506). This may also be the case with Bahinābāī, who is regarded as Tukārām’s disciple, because Tukārām is thought to have composed in Hindi as well as Marathi (Lal 2006:4403; Desai 1973:183).

It is interesting to note that the compositions in Hindi have been ascribed to women who might both be regarded as Brahmins but otherwise have few biographical similarities. Muktābāī is regarded as a *mahayogini* who decided to accomplish *shītāprajñāta* or ‘complete tranquillity or balance of mind’ by Bhagwat (2005:171; 1990:227), she never married and died young. Bahinābāī is regarded as a *pativrātā* and a *yogabhraṣṭa* ‘an individual perched in this life on the edge of *mokṣa*’ (McGee 1999:137; 1999:161), who had two children and died in old age.

2. Muktābāī’s ‘Hindi’ composition

One Hindi verse attributed to Muktābāī is a fascinating composition as it appears to differ from the Marathi *abhaṅgas* attributed to Muktābāī. This is largely due to the amorous devotional theme, in which the author appears to be celebrating their love for Kṛṣṇa.

वाह वाह साहबजी सदगुरु लाल जुसाईजी।
लाल बाच मो उडला काला ओंठ पीठसो काला।
पीत उनयनी भ्रमर गुफा रस झूलनवाल ।
सदगुरु चेले दोनो बराबर एक दस्तयो भाई ।
एकसे एक दर्शन पाये महाराज मुकाबाई ॥

*Vāha vāha sāhabajī sadaguru lāla gusāījī/
Lāl bīc mo uḍalā kālā oṅṭha pīṭhaso kālā/
Pīta unyanī bhramara guṇphā rasa jhūlanavālā/
Sadaguru cele dono barābara eka dastayo bhāī/
Ekase eka darśana pāye mahārāja muktābāī//*

Hurrah! Hurrah! Master, True Guru, Dear Darling.
Darling Kṛṣṇa poured black on me; my lips are darker than my back.
The yellow one swings high with their love in a garlanded harbour.
The True guru and the disciple are equal, one...brother.

Mahārāj Muktabāī keeps having darśan, each one better than the other.
(Muktābāī, Hindi verse, quoted in Shrotriya 1992:26).

The term *lāl gusāījī*, which appears in the first line, can be translated literally as ‘Red Lord’. However, *lāl* means ‘dear’ or ‘darling’ and is a specific epithet for Kṛṣṇa. Consequently, I have taken *lāl*, in the first two lines of this verse, as referring to Kṛṣṇa. The phrase ‘Darling Kṛṣṇa poured black on me’, at the start of the second line, does not make sense in Hindi. The term *uḍalā* may be *urelā*, from *urelṇā* ‘to pour out’, which would give the phrase ‘the darling Kṛṣṇa poured black on me’. The ‘black’ probably refers to Kṛṣṇa’s colour, after all he is Śyāma ‘the dark Lord’. The meaning of the phrase ‘my lips are darker than my back’ is difficult to ascertain. It suggests some play with colours, red and black, by the author. It is probable that the author is relying on the audience understanding a double meaning for *lāl*, ‘red’ and ‘darling’. The phrase may suggest that the author’s lips—Muktābāī’s lips—had contact with Kṛṣṇa, and that his kisses made her lips black. There are similar sentiments expressed in Jayadev’s *Gītāgovinda*: ‘Dark from kissing her kohl-blackened eyes, At dawn your lips match your body’s color, Krishna’ (GG 8.2, Stoler Miller 1997:106) and ‘My black form responds with red passion’ (GG 10.5, Stoler Miller 1997: 112). The third line of this verse is particularly difficult to translate. It is unclear whether the subject of the line is Muktābāī, Kṛṣṇa or someone else? Consequently, I am discussing the terms and all their possible meanings and interpretations so as to show how I have arrived at my translation. What becomes clear as one explores each term is the number of possible meanings. The author may have phrased things so as to allow for a broad interpretation but one can only speculate.

The first word, *pīta*, could mean ‘drink’, which makes sense in the *rasa* context. Pintchman describes *rasas* as ‘subjectively felt aesthetic emotions’, which a viewer or listener experiences (2005b:357). In the worship of Kṛṣṇa *rasas* and *bhāvas* are reconfigured as devotional categories with *bhāva* referring to the devotee’s attitude and *rasa* the joyful experience of the love relationship with Kṛṣṇa (Pintchman 2005b: 357–58). However, *pīta* could also mean ‘yellow’ as Kṛṣṇa is often depicted clad in yellow. This might connect with *bhramara* (bee), as a bee is dark and draped in yellow like Kṛṣṇa and the two are equated by the *gopīs* (Goswami and Case 2006:54; Hawley 1981b:4). Kṛṣṇa’s body may have turned yellow—afire—due to the pain of love he felt for the woman next to him (Pauwels 1996:34). However, in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10.47.1) Uddhava/Ūdho, Kṛṣṇa’s messenger, is described as wearing yellow (Olivelle 2003:195). Moreover, Rādhā’s complexion is said to be carried in the yellow flowers of the *kadamba* tree (Ray 2003:155–6),¹ a tree which is associated with Kṛṣṇa and that is thought to reunite separated lovers. Consequently, I have translated *pīta* as ‘the yellow one’ as it remains unclear who the subject of the line is, although it seems clear that the ‘yellow one’ is connected to Kṛṣṇa in some way.

The term *unyanī* may have a connection with *nayan*. In Sanskrit *unnayana* connotes ‘having upraised eyes’ (Monier Williams 2008) or ‘with eyes raised upwards’ (Apte 1890:436). Kṛṣṇa invites the *gopīs* to look into his eyes and so establish a bond with him. One of the reasons Kṛṣṇa is said to be dark is because he lives in the eyes of the *gopīs*, whose eyes are lined with kohl and this leaves a mark on him (Kumar 2007: 6–7). Kṛṣṇa is also described as *kamala-patra-akṣa* ‘lotus-eyed one’ (BhG 11.2; Prabhupādā 1986:529). There are a number of references to eyes in relation to Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. A passage from Kṣemendra’s *Daśāvatāracarita* relates: ‘Could anyone’s eyes help drowning in him when he is addicted to passion, A trembling wave of love, delighting delightful young women?’ (Daśāvatāracarita 173; Miller 1975:665). If one takes these different interpretations into account, the eyes referred to in the verse are probably those of either Kṛṣṇa or his inamorata: Rādhā/the author/Muktābāī. However, *unnayana* as ‘raising’ or ‘lifting up’ (Chaturvedi 197:91; Molesworth 1857: 97) could be connected with *jhūlana* (swing), as I will discuss below.

A *bhramara* is a ‘large black bee’. The bee is regarded as acting like a lover in producing and drinking honey (Stoler Miller 1997:19). The bee was considered fickle, flirting with one flower then another (Goswami and Case 2006:54; Snell 1991:101), which is why Rādhā and the *gopīs* regarded Kṛṣṇa as a *bhramara*. The epithet was transferred to Uddhav, saying that like Kṛṣṇa he was dark and draped in yellow (*Sūrsāgar* 36.2, Snell 1991:101; Goswami and Case 2006:54). There is a verse that connects

¹ The *kadamba* tree is *Nauclea cadamba* (Dhere 2011:298n2).

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa through the metaphor of a bee: ‘Rādhā became his most beloved for his joy—like jasmine for a bee’ (*Daśāvātāracarita* 8.83, *Durgāprasāda* 1891:82.; Stoler Miller 1975:664). There are also references to bees in Jayadeva’s *Gītagovinda* (1.27; 1.28; 1.36, 11.4; Stoler Miller 1997:19) and one particular phrase connects both bees and eyes: ‘Lover, draw kohl glossier than a swarm of black bees on my eyes (12.12, Miller 1997: 124). The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10.33.15) also mentions bees as part of the backdrop for Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* to perform the *rāsa līlā*:

The *gopīs*, with glowing faces, cheeks adorned with locks of hair, and lotus flowers behind their ears, were beautiful. They danced with the Lord in the circle of *rāsa* to the musical accompaniment of the bees complemented by the sound of their anklets and bangles. Wreaths of flowers fell from their hair.

(BhP 10.33.15; Olivelle 2003:141)

In this context bees form part of the setting in the glades and bowers of Vṛndāvan (Kinsley 1972:179). Consequently, the location for the interaction between Kṛṣṇa and his devotee/lover is most likely the forests of Vṛndāvan.

The term *gumphā* refers to a cave, cavern or place of retreat. In Marathi *gumphā* refer to a cave or thatched hut (Tulpule 1999:205)—presumably as a place of retreat—but it may also refer to ‘a sylvan abode of a yogi or devotee, a recess formed by intertwining boughs and creepers; an arbour, a bower’ according to Molesworth (1857:240). The verb *gumphāṇē* means ‘to string together’, while *gumphāṇē* means ‘to wreathe, string together’ or ‘to get involved’ (Tulpule 1999:205). In Sanskrit *gumphā* connotes ‘tying or stringing’ as a garland, combining with each other while *gumphā* refers to a wreath or bunch of flowers, which may suggest a particular *rāsa*. If one takes the setting to be Vṛndāvan it is likely that the verse is referring to an arbour or bower in the forest, which may be strung with flowers. This is probable when one considers the term *jhūlanā*, as I mentioned above.

The term *jhūlanā*, *jhūlānā* or *jhūlanā* in Marathi means ‘swing’ (Molesworth 1857:332, 334) and the verb *jhūlānā* in Hindi means ‘to swing; to rock; to keep in suspense/uncertainty’ (Caturvedi 1970:256).² The *jhūlān yātrā* ‘swing festival’ occurs in Śrāvaṇ, which is during the rainy season, and celebrates Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s love (Tripathy 2003; Māhāpātra 1989:118). The festival can last anywhere from one to thirteen days. In Vṛndāvan the festival starts on the third day of the bright fortnight of Śrāvaṇ and continues until the full-moon night. In the temple the deities are placed on a decorated swing for five days. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are offered flowers and prayers, and they are pushed on their swing. At the Jagannāth temple in Puri, the *dolayātra* (swing festival) begins on *śukla daśamī* (the tenth lunar day of moon-bright fortnight) and continues for seven days until *pratipadā* (the first phase of the dark fortnight). Lord Jagannāth’s representative Madanmohan—the *utsava mūrti* (festival image)—the goddess Lakṣmī and Viswadhatri are placed on a decorated wooden swings and worshippers gather to witness the deities being swung and passages from Jayadev’s *Gītagovinda* being recited (Khuntia 2004:4; Sri Sri Radha Govinda’s *Julan Yatra*; ‘Jhulan Purnima’). The pushing of the swing constitutes a service to the deities, a means of entering into their pastime and a celebration of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s passionate union.

The rainy season, when the festival occurs, is considered a time of ‘lush sensuality’ (Stoler Miller 1994:57). After the heat of summer the forests are in bloom and full of buzzing bees. During the monsoon the air is humid so finding, or creating, a breeze is important and swinging is one the best ways to do this. The season of swinging is one of ‘wild freedom and delight’ states Hawley (1981:24). A swing ride suggests ‘rhythm and balance as the swing passes back and forth over the ground’ (Hawley 1981:27) and can be seen as an action that sets the powers of fertility in motion (Solomon 1970:44). Furthermore, swinging is a metaphor for sexual union or ‘erotic engagement’ (Lyons 1992:36; Hawley 1981:27; Khuntia 2004:49). Rādhā’s friends make and decorate a swing with garlands and creepers for her and Kṛṣṇa on a *kadamba* tree. The *kadamba* tree—a symbol for the love between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā (Ray 2003:155–6)—is said to carry Rādhā’s complexion in its yellow flowers. The *kadamba* is considered strong and beautiful, signifying that Rādhā can control Kṛṣṇa with her love. While the couple are swinging they are sprayed with rose-water, which may have a connection to the *rāsa* mentioned in the verse. However, there could also be a connection between the *kadamba* and *rāsa* as Purāṇic legend states

² Muktabāi, Jñānadev and Eknāth are all attributed with composing *jhokyāvarīl ovyā* or ‘ovīs [sung] on the swing’ by Pāṅgārkar (see Kiehnle 1997a:42, n.179, 180).

that the distillation of liquor is connected with the *kadamba* tree (Wilson 1840:571): Kṛṣṇa is said to have seen drops of liquor coming from a *kadamba* tree and to have drunk the liquor with his herdsmen and *gopīs* (Gupta 1971:25).

The story goes that Kṛṣṇa swung higher and higher—he is considered the king of pranksters—and faster and faster while the couple were swinging. This frightened Rādhā so much that she clung to him. The subsequent union of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is said to resemble the flash of lightning in the middle of a rain cloud. Having accomplished his objective Kṛṣṇa allows the *sakhīs* to bring the swing to a stop. He then rides with Lalitā, Viśākhā and the other *gopīs*, expanding himself to swing on swings with each of them (Kumar 2007). It is interesting to note that Muktabāī is said to have disappeared in a flash of lightning while performing a *kīrtan* (Ranade 2003:44), an idea which may be based on a Jñāneśvar *abhaṅga* (Ranade 2003:44–5). The author of this Hindi verse may be intimating that, like Rādhā, s/he were suddenly unified with the Lord.

The swing season is considered one of homecoming and reunion, and is the time when a woman visits her paternal home. There is a story that after a long wait Rādhā was collected from her in-laws by her brother Śrīdārmā and taken to Varsana (Barsana) where she was reunited with her family and friends. While she was at home Rādhā rocked to and fro with her brother on a swing. Kṛṣṇa—as a newlywed husband—was jealous of her departure so he disguised himself as a girl in order to join Rādhā and swing with her (Hawley 1981:27; Khuntia 2004:50). The suffering in separation (*viyoga*) that Kṛṣṇa felt for Rādhā—and Rādhā and the *gopīs* felt for Kṛṣṇa—is therefore overcome by reunion (Hawley 1984:93–118). The illustrated manuscript of the *Devī Māhātmya* has an image of the goddess ‘seated in lalitāsana (a pose connoting ease or relaxation), on a swing suspended from a leafy branch, high above the peaks of her mountain abode’ (Lyons 1992:36). There are depictions of women swinging which date to back the first century C.E:

...women swinging from the branches of trees (that is, grasping a branch with one hand in order to swing the body, rather than sitting on a plank attached by ropes to the trees) are known as far back as Sāñcī...such a female figure, a kind of vṛkṣadevatā [tree goddess], was associated with the flowering or fruiting of the tree.

(Lyons 1992:36)

There may therefore be a connection with fertility, a theme that is part of the swinging season, and swinging in trees. In the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, the goddess Tripurā-sundarī is called *kumārī* (virgin). Lyons asserts that *kumārī* signifies that the goddess was ‘unwed’ and ‘free from a husband’s control’ as she had ‘created the world, and continues to act in it according to her own, supremely free desire’ (1992:36). Lyons believes that the depiction of the goddess in the *Devī Māhātmya* is of the ‘young, playful, independent aspect of the goddess’ (1992:36). One can therefore make a connection between this conception of the goddess and Rādhā/Muktabāī/devotee utilising her love for Kṛṣṇa in order to gain union with him.

The fourth line of the verse is difficult to complete as the meaning of *dastayo* is uncertain. In Hindi the term *dast* may connote ‘from hand-to-hand’ or ‘hand-in-hand’ (Caturvedi 1970:308), while *dastā* refers to a [police or army] division as well as a bouquet of flowers (Caturvedi 1970:309). In Marathi *dasta*, a term with Persian derivations, refers to ‘a hand at cards’ as well as ‘power, authority, right’. The term *dastāyavaja* (*dastaivaja*), connotes ‘a note of hand, a titledeed, a bond, a signature. It is used loosely of anything...by which one may be bound in law (Molesworth 1857:405). The term *dastayo* clearly has a connection to ‘hand’, which suggests a bond or intimate connection between Kṛṣṇa and the disciple/devotee/lover who is termed *bhāī* (brother). I have left the translation unfinished as I could find no suitable term or expression in English.

The final line of the verse—*ekase eka darśana pāye mahārāja Muktabāī*—has been translated as ‘Mahārāj Muktabāī keeps having *darśan*, each one better than the other’ but it could equally read ‘Muktabāī has *darśan* of the *mahārāj*, one better than the other’ or ‘the *mahārāj* and Muktabāī have *darśans* of each other’. The key element is that *darśan*, the look and look returned, is occurring. The selection was made on the basis that the verse uses the signature ‘mahārāja Muktabāī’, which is taken as identifying the Hindi compositions attributed to Muktabāī (Shrotriya 1993:26).

Muktābāī, remembered as the sister of Jñāneśvar, probably did not compose this verse according to Shrotriya (1993:26). Moreover, three different Muktā's have been identified by Kiehnle: a Muktā who was a pupil of Gorakhnāth according to Cāngadev's *Tattvasār* and Visobā Khecar's *Ṣaṣṭhal*; a Muktā who called herself the disciple of Nivṛtti, composed songs and instructed the *yogī* Cāngadev, and a Muktā who was a *tapasvinī* known to Cakradhar (d.1272 or 1274) the founder of the Mahānubhāvas (1997b:5). The possibility of different Muktā's highlights the issue of attribution, as does the difference between the signatures in the Marathi and Hindi compositions. The Marathi compositions attributed to Muktābāī use the signature or *mudrā* 'Muktāī' while this verse refer to Muktābāī. Furthermore, the Marathi *abhaṅgas* explore the themes of *advaita vedānta* and *nivṛtti dharma* in the *tāñice abhaṅgas* (door verses), as well as the importance of the Name and attaining union with the Supreme. This Hindi verse falls into the category of *mādhurya* or *madhurā bhakti*, which is a form of *bhakti* not found in the Marathi compositions attributed to Muktābāī.

Mādhurya bhakti relates to the *mādhuryabhāva* with which it is performed. In this state the devotee approaches the Lord as if they were close relations and thus an inner relationship of love is fostered, which culminates in union with the Lord (Tipnis 1985: 235–238). *Madhurā bhakti* is formed of three main *bhāvas*: *kāntābhāva*, where the devotee looks upon the Lord as husband/beloved; *gopībhāva*, where the devotee considers themselves the Lord's *gopī* and engages in play with him, and *sakhībhāva*, where the devotee considers themselves the Lord's female friend, companion or confidante. It may be possible to connect this form of *bhakti* and *advaita* (Brockington 2005:41) as some advaitin teachers regard the bath as an external form of meditation in which the individual becomes immersed in god (King 2005:173). In the same way one could imagine the author/subject—Muktābāī—so engrossed in Kṛṣṇa that the bond between them resulted in the realisation of non-difference. While this is conceivable it does not resolve the issue of authorship. Significantly, the first records of *mādhurya bhakti* in Marāṭhī are found in the works of Vamana Pandit (1618–95 C.E.). This tradition was carried forward by *lāvaṇī* poets of the eighteenth century onwards (Novetzke 2005a:131, n.3). It is worth noting that the Vārkarī *sampradāya* is regarded as 'disassociated' from *mādhurya bhakti* (Novetzke 2006:128), which might account for why compositions with that sentiment do not form part of its mainstream rhetoric or compendia.

However, Muktābāī is credited with being the first Marathi *sant* to compose songs in Hindi (Paradkar 1970) but limited information on this topic is available. The Nāth *siddhas* used songs to spread their teachings and Matsyendranāth has had songs in Old Hindi attributed to him (Kiehnle 1997a:15–16). Consequently, there could be a linguistic link between Muktābāī and the Nāths via her brother Nivṛttināth (Sharma 1957). Hawley notes that Uddhav/Ūdho is presented as a Nāth *yogi* in the NPS *Sūr Sāgar* (NPS 4156.2-4, 4219.8-13, 4252.5-6, 4308.3, 4311.12, 4312.3-5 and 4430) but that Uddhav/Ūdho probably just 'represents yoga in general' (1981b:5, n.6). However, it is Nāmdev's Hindi songs which are considered the first authentic Hindi compositions by a Marathi *sant* (Paradkar 1970). Whomever the author of this composition it connects both Hindi and *mādhurya bhakti* to the Vārkarī *sampradāya* to some extent.

3. *Bahiṇābāī's 'Hindi' composition*

Bahiṇābāī is credited with composing *pads* (verses) and *gauḷaṅs* in Hindi (Kolhārkar 1929:115–121; Paradkar 1970:272). A *gauḷaṅ*, *gauḷaṇī* or *gavlan* is a milkmaid or cowherd woman (Tulpule 1999:212) and therefore refers to a 'dialogue between Krishna and the milkmaids' (Rege 2002:1044). One can therefore see a connection with the *madhurā bhakti* genre of the Hindi composition attributed to Muktābāī. However, Bahiṇābāī is credited with composing twenty-two compositions in Hindi (although they often mix Marathi and Hindi) thirteen of which tell the story of Kṛṣṇa based on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (Shrotriya 1992:36; Jāvāḍekar 1979). These compositions, like the ones attributed to Bahiṇābāī in Marathi use the signature *bahinī kahe* 'Bahinī says'. However, the Hindi word *bahin* (*bahenī*), like the Marathi word *bahīṇa*, means 'sister'. The composition of the verse might therefore have been by someone connecting themselves to Bahiṇābāī as a 'sister' or just using the term 'sister' as a generic term for a woman.

The Hindi compositions attributed to Bahiṇābāī (Jāvaḍekar 1979:161–64;180–89, *pade* 390–404)³ begin with a description of Vasudev and Devakī’s astonishment at seeing Kṛṣṇa’s true form after he had been born (BhP 2.9–46, Bryant 2003:19–23) and explains that through the Lord’s blessing one may have peace (Jāvaḍekar 1979:161; Shrotriya 1992:37):

फूल बिना फल । जल बिना अंकुर । बिनपुरुष नही छाया ॥
जलबिन कमलिनी रविबिन तेज आगे नहां सब आया ॥
तरु ताहां बीज । बीज नहां तरु है । दीपके पास प्रकाश ॥
नर नाँही नारी..पुण्य ताहा आविनाश ॥
बहेणि कहे जिसकु हरी आवे वोहि है पुण्यकी रास ॥
शांती क्षमा उसके घर सोवे । सबही संपति दास ॥⁴

*Phūl binā phal/ jal binā ankur/ binapuruṣ nahī chāyā//
Jalabin kamalinī ravibin tej āge nahā sab āyā//
Taru tāhā bīj/ bīj nahā taru hai/ dīpake pās prakāś//
Nar nāhī nārī...puṇya tāhā āvināś//
Baheṇī kahe jisaku harīāve vohi hai puṇyakī rās//
Śātī kṣmā usake ghar sove/ sabahī sampati dās//*

Fruit without flower, buds without water; without man there can be no shelter.
Lotus without water, light without sun, one cannot exist without the other.
Where there is a tree there is seed and where there is a lamp there is light.
Where there is a man there is a woman, where there is a blessing there is permanence.
Bahiṇī says, ‘wherever Hari is that’s the zodiac of blessing, at his home peace and forgiveness sleep while wealth is the servant’.

Bahiṇābāī then describes how Vasudev removes Kṛṣṇa from the palace, leaves him in Gokul and takes Yasoda’s daughter Maya back with him to Mathura. She concludes: ‘Bahini says, “Whoever is blessed by Kṛṣṇa, nothing can touch him”’ (Jāvaḍekar 1979:181, v.390).

In the next verse Bahiṇābāī says that she has become a *bhāṭī*, a bard or minstrel, through singing about Kṛṣṇa’s victories (Jāvaḍekar 1979:162, v.639). She congratulates Nanda and Yaśoda for gaining a son saying, ‘O Nanda do not make him downcast, Govind is Brahman himself’ (Jāvaḍekar 1979: 162, see v.399 p.176). She reminds Kṛṣṇa’s foster-parents and the hearer that although Kṛṣṇa is called Govind: ‘He is the Brahma in *samsāra* and his name is *nirguṇa*’ (Jāvaḍekar 1979:162). Despite the fact that Kṛṣṇa is *nirguṇ nirākār paramātmīyā* ‘the qualityless, formless Supreme Soul’, the Bahiṇābāī Hindi compositions relate how Viṣṇu took various forms (*rūpa*)—or descent forms (*avatāra*)—as Kūrma, the ‘Tortoise’; Narasiṃh, the ‘Man-lion’; Paraśurāma, the ‘axed-wielding Rāma’; Vāman, the ‘Dwarf’; Matsya, the ‘Fish’, and Varāha, the ‘Boar’ (Jāvaḍekar 1979:162, see v.640, p.300). Bahiṇābāī declares that Kṛṣṇa came to protect dharma and frighten away sin (Jāvaḍekar 1979:132, v.399 p.176).

The Bahiṇābāī ‘Hindi’ compositions can be appreciated for telling the story of Kṛṣṇa—an important practice in *bhakti*—and for the socio-religious critique they offer asserts Shrotriya (1992:39–40). Bahiṇābāī is not the only Marathi *santakaviyatrī* attributed with composing songs in relation to Kṛṣṇa—there are Janābāī songs about Kṛṣṇa’s youth—but the attribution of these compositions raise some interesting questions.

4. Conclusion

Why might Bahiṇābāī and/or Muktabāī be the only *santakaviyatrīs* credited with producing (so-called) Hindi poems? Muktabāī may have produced various forms of composition, including those in Hindi, due to Nāth influence. However, this does not explain the *mādhurya bhakti* theme, as that has little connection to the yogic concerns of the Nāths. Could their composing in Hindi be related to their caste or the

³ There are *pads* attributed to Bahiṇābāī, which use of the ‘signature’ *bahiṇī kahe*, in Kolhārkar (1929:115–121).

⁴ Jāvaḍekar 1979:161.

relationship with a male figure or *guru*? Muktabāi's *guru* may have been Gorakhanāth or her brother Nivr̥ttināth (Kiehnle 1997b:5) while Bahiṇābāi is considered to have been a disciple of Tukārām, so might it be that Muktabāi and/or Bahiṇābāi composed in Hindi to honour their *gurus*. Might author(s) composing in the name of these women have sought a connection with these male figures? If so, then why are there no Hindi compositions attributed to women connected with Nāmdev, to whom a whole corpus of poems in Hindi is ascribed (see Callewaert 1989)? Moreover, what might the aim of composing songs in Hindi have been? It is possible that the songs in Hindi were a means of situating Hindi within Maharashtra, to honour the *guru*, to include *mādhurya bhakti* in the Vārkarī context, and/or promulgate the Vārkarī *sampradāya* beyond the confines of Marathi linguistic and socio-cultural borders. Why might an author have wanted to attribute their compositions in Hindi to these women specifically? Would it just have been a means of authorising their composition(s)? If that is the case it does not appear to have succeeded as the 'Hindi' compositions do not tend to appear in 'authorised' Vārkarī works like the *Sakala Santa Gāthā*. Did the author(s) wish to be connected to a life perceived to have been lived by a woman, a *sant* and exemplar, with whom s/he related? Was it a means of being in communion (*satsaṅg*) with these *santakaviyatrīs* and/or 'the community of *sants*', which is considered important in *bhakti*? These questions and probably others in relation to these Hindi compositions are as yet unanswered.

APPENDIX F

THE HINDU CALENDER IN MAHARASHTRA

Caitra	March–April
Vaiśākha	April–May
Jyeṣṭha	May–June
Āṣāḍha	June–July
Śrāvaṇa	July–August
Bhādrapada	August–September
Āśvina	September–October
Kārttik	October–November
Mārgaśīrṣa	November–December
Pauṣa	December–January
Māgha	January–February
Phālguna	February–March

APPENDIX G:

CASTES, CLASSES AND TRIBES IN MAHARASHTRA

Andh:	a tribe from the Nanded district
Beldār:	stone-diggers and earth-workers, also called Waḍār
Bhaṇḍārī:	a <i>śūdra</i> caste who make an alcoholic spirit from coconut trees
Bhangis:	hereditary sweepers and scavengers, ex-‘untouchables’
Bhaṭ:	Brahman priests
Bhil:	a tribe found in the Dhule and Jalgaon districts
Brāhmaṇ:	there are four Brahman castes in Mahārāṣṭra: Chitpāvan, Deśastha, Karhḍā and Sāraswat
Cāmbhār:	a leather worker or cobbler [<i>Cāmār</i> in Hindi]
Carmakār:	a leather worker
Chāndrasenīya:	a caste of writers (well-educated but below Brāhmans)
Chitpāvan:	a Brahman caste who directed politics 1700–1920; also known as Koṅkaṇasthas (as they originate from the Koṅkaṇ)
Deśastha:	a Brahman caste belonging to the <i>deś</i>
Dhanagar:	shepherds
Gamit [Gramit]:	tribals from the Koṅkaṇ
Gavī:	herders
Goṇḍ:	a tribal group found in Bhandara, Chandrapur and Nanded districts
Gopāl:	cowherders; a caste of ‘acrobats’, who break stones with their bare hands, lift great weights and perform feats of strength
Gurākhī:	cow-keeper/herder
Gurav:	a <i>śūdra</i> Śaivite caste; employed in temples, also musicians
Hāṭkar:	a sub-caste of the Dhanagars
Jain:	an adherent of the Jain tradition; Gujarati merchants or agriculturalists from southern Maharashtra, treated as a caste
Kaikadi:	makers of twig baskets
Katkari:	a forest tribe


Karhāḍā:	a small Brahman caste originally from the Koṅkaṇ
Kāsār:	braziers or workers in white/bell metal; makers or stringers of glass bangles
Kolhāti:	‘untouchables’; women are singers, dancers and prostitutes. Their current status is that of a nomadic tribe: Dulkar Kolhāti, Kham/Bhantu Kolhāti
Koḷī:	fishermen, watermen found in Thane, Raigad, Nasik, Pune and Ahmednagar districts; priests with rights to offerings, particularly in Pandharpur temples
Kokana:	a tribe
Koṅkaṇastha:	a name for Chitpāvan Brahmins
Korku:	a tribe from the Amaravati district
Koṣṭī:	weavers
Kulkarni:	Brahmins, traditionally village accountants
Kumbhār:	potters
Kuṇbī:	farmers, agriculturalists, or cultivators
Lingāyat:	a member of the Vīraśaiva ‘sect’ that originates from Karnataka, treated as a caste in Maharashtra
Lohār:	ironsmiths
Mahār:	the largest ‘untouchable’ caste in Maharashtra; protagonists in the struggle for equality and in mass conversions to Buddhism
Mahadeo-Koḷī:	agricultural tribe
Māḷī:	gardeners
Māṅg/Māṅg:	‘untouchable’, caste of rope-makers, formerly executioners
Marāṭhā:	the dominant agricultural caste of Maharashtra; a resident of Maharashtra
Mārwāḍī:	businessmen, moneylenders originally from Marwar (the Jodhpur region of Rajasthan)
Nandīwālā:	“One who works with bulls”, a nomadic tribe possibly originating from Andhra Pradesh
Nhāvī:	barber
Paṛī:	washermen
Rāmoṣṭī:	watchmen, formerly tribals
Sālī:	weavers
Sāraswat:	Brahmins with religious centres in the South
Saudāgar	trader

Śimpī:	tailors
Śūdra:	the fourth order of the <i>varṇas</i> ; some Brahmans believe that all Maharashtrians except Brahmans and ‘untouchables’ are <i>śūdras</i> (Zelliot 1988:343–44)
Sonār:	goldsmiths
Telī:	oil pressers, oilmen
Ṭhākūr:	a woodland tribe particularly associated with north Koṅkaṇ; a chief in certain castes
‘Untouchable’	there are three main ‘untouchable’ castes: Cāmbhārs, Mahārs and Māngs who are now generally referred to as <i>dalits</i>
Waḍār/Beldār:	stonebreakers, earth-workers
Vanjārī/Banjārī:	carriers of grain and salt
Wāraḷī:	a jungle tribe found particularly in north Koṅkaṇ
Wārik:	barbers
Veśya:	dancing girl, woman who dances in public, courtesan (harlot)
Vikar:	weavers


APPENDIX H:

ARTICLES, CUTTINGS AND PROGRAMMES

॥ श्री ज्ञानेश्वर महाराज प्रसन्न ॥



संतश्रेष्ठ श्री ज्ञानेश्वर महाराजांचा
आषाढी वारी पालखी सोहळा
 शके १९२८ सन २००६ श्रीच्या पालखी सोहळ्याचा तक्ता
श्रीक्षेत्र आळंदी ते श्रीक्षेत्र पंढरपूर



ज्येष्ठ वद्य ॥ ८/९ ॥ सोमवार दिनांक १९ जून, २००६ ते आषाढ शुक्ल ॥ १५ ॥ व आ. वद्य ॥ १ ॥ मंगळवार दिनांक ११ जुलै, २००६

तिथी	वार	दिनांक	सकाळी निघण्याचे ठिकाण	सकाळचा विसावा	दुपारचा निवेद्य (भोजन), निघण्याचे ठिकाण व वेळ	दुपारचा विसावा	रात्रीचा मुकाम
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ॥ ८/९ ॥	सोमवार	१९/०६/२००६	.....	.....	.....	जम्हान दुपारी ४.०० वाजता	गांधीधरदा - आळंदी
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ॥ ९/१० ॥	मंगळवार	२०/०६/२००६	आळंदी	१) शोल्या पादुका (आरती) २) भोसरी फाटा	फुले नगर	बाळकंडवाडी	पालखी विठोबा मंदीर, भवानी पेठ, पुणे.
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ॥ ११/११ ॥	बुधवार	२१/०६/२००६	.....	.....	.....	.....	पुणे
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ॥ १२/१२ ॥	गुरुवार	२२/०६/२००६	पुणे	शिन्दे छत्री (आरती) १) हडपसर	तळकी देवाची	२) चडकी नाला ३) झेंडेवाडी	सातवड
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ॥ १३/१३ ॥	शुक्रवार	२३/०६/२००६	सातवड	बोरानके मळा	वगई - शिवरी	साकुई	कैजुर्हा
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ॥ १४/१४ ॥	शनिवार	२४/०६/२००६	जेजुरी	१) दौंडज शिव २) दौंडज	चालहे	.....	बाल्हे
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ॥ १५/१५ ॥	रविवार	२५/०६/२००६	चालहे	फिरो खुर्द विहीर	निरा, श्रीचे तिरा स्नान	.....	सांगड
आषाढ शु. ॥ १६/१६ ॥	सोमवार	२६/०६/२००६	.....	.....	.....	.....	सांगड
आषाढ शु. ॥ १७/१७ ॥	मंगळवार	२७/०६/२००६	सांगड	.....	पोणे	पारिविचय विंध (उभे सिंग नं - १)	वठगाव
आषाढ शु. ॥ १८/१८ ॥	बुधवार	२८/०६/२००६	ताडगाव	१) हनु मंदीर काळज २) सुखडी	शिंभोरी ओढा	चडजल	फलटण (विमानवळ)
आषाढ शु. ॥ १९/१९ ॥	गुरुवार	२९/०६/२००६	.....	.....	.....	.....	फलटण (विमानवळ)
आषाढ शु. ॥ २०/२० ॥	शुक्रवार	३०/०६/२००६	फलटण	विष्णुची	सिंभर	निवळक फाटा	वराड
आषाढ शु. ॥ २१/२१ ॥	शनिवार	१/०७/२००६	वराड	साधुनुवाचा ओढा	गार्गुली पाटबंधारी पोला फौजल जवळ	शिंपगापुर फाटा (पातसकरवाडी)	नातेपुते
आषाढ शु. ॥ २२/२२ ॥	रविवार	२/०७/२००६	नातेपुते	.....	गांडची ओढा	सदाशिवनगर, गोल सिंग नं. १ पुंदावडे	प्राळशिरस
आषाढ शु. ॥ २३/२३ ॥	सोमवार	३/०७/२००६	प्राळशिरस	भुडगाफाटा (गोल सिंग नं-१)	शिंभोरी, जामेडलगर	धावा - जाची घाट	जेळपूर
आषाढ शु. ॥ २४/२४ ॥	मंगळवार	४/०७/२००६	जेळपूर	ठाकुरदुवाची समाधी (गोल सिंग नं-३)	तोंडले - भोंडले	टया	भंडी शोगांव
आषाढ शु. ॥ २५/२५ ॥	बुधवार	५/०७/२००६	भंडी शोगांव	.....	भंडी शोगांव	बाजीरावजी विहीर उर्ध्वसिंग नं २ व गोलसिंग	वाखरी
आषाढ शु. ॥ २६/२६ ॥	गुरुवार	६/०७/२००६	वाखरी	.....	वाखरी	पादुकेजवळ उभे सिंग नं ३ व आरती	पंढरपूर
आषाढ शु. ॥ २७/२७ ॥	शुक्रवार	७/०७/२००६	पंढरपूर	सकाळी नगर प्रदक्षिणा	श्रीचे चंद्रमाला स्नान	.....	पंढरपूर
आषाढ शु. ॥ २८/२८ ॥	शनिवार	८/०७/२००६	पंढरपूर	.....	.....	.....	पंढरपूर
आषाढ शु. ॥ २९/२९ ॥	रविवार	९/०७/२००६	पंढरपूर	.....	.....	.....	पंढरपूर
आषाढ शु. ॥ ३०/३० ॥	सोमवार	१०/०७/२००६	पंढरपूर	.....	.....	.....	पंढरपूर
आषाढ शु. ॥ ३१/३१ ॥	मंगळवार	११/०७/२००६	पंढरपूर	श्रीचे चंद्रमाला स्नान, श्री विठ्ठल श्रीविष्णुची पोटा व गोलाकार फाटा	पंढरपूर	पादुकेजवळ विसावा, घातीचा प्रवाह सुठ	वखरी

Plate 22: Jñānēśvar pālkhī timetable 1 (2006)

श्रीक्षेत्र पंढरपूर ते श्रीक्षेत्र आळंदी

आषाढ शु. १५ व आषाढ कृ. सकाळवार दिनांक ११ जुलै २००६ ते आषाढ कृ. १० गुरुवार दिनांक २० जुलै, २००६

तिथी	वार	दिनांक	सकाळी निघण्याचे ठिकाण	सकाळचा विसावा	दुपारचा नेवेद्य (भोजन), निघण्याचे ठिकाण व वेळ	दुपारचा विसावा	रात्रीचा मुक्काम
आषाढ शु. १५	शुक्रवार	११/०७/२००६	पंढरपूर	श्रीचे वंशायाम स्वाम, श्री विठ्ठल-रुक्मिणी देव व गोवा मंदिर काठा	पंढरपूर	पातुकेजवळ तिसावा, परतोचा अक्सर मुठ	वाखरी
आषाढ कृ. १६	गुरुवार	१२/०७/२००६	वाखरी	१) शंभू देवाचे २) रथ्या	तोंडले-बोडले	-----	रोळापूर
आषाढ कृ. १७	गुरुवार	१३/०७/२००६	रोळापूर	१) मुतविका २) जुहुसगावा	मालविरस	१) पांदावडे २) सनशिवनगर ३) पांडवी	वातेपुते
आषाढ कृ. १८	शुक्रवार	१४/०७/२००६	वातेपुते	१) संपुर्ण २) भासुतुआचा ओवा	वाड	१) पिंढाद २) सिडपरी	फलट्या
आषाढ कृ. १९	शनिवार	१५/०७/२००६	फलट्या	१) निंभोरे लोका २) सुभवाडी ३) दारमोदेर काळज	तरडगांव	योगेंद्र पुल काठा	पाडेगांव
आषाढ कृ. २०	रविवार	१६/०७/२००६	पाडेगांव	श्रीचिं १) शंभू	विरा	विंगे खुद निहीर	सलहे
आषाढ कृ. २१	सोमवार	१७/०७/२००६	सलहे	१) शंभू २) जेजुरी देवा	जेजुरी	१) साकुर्डे २) यमाई विठोरे ३) क-कपुर	सासवड
आषाढ कृ. २२	मंगळवार	१८/०७/२००६	सासवड	-----	सासवड	१) काठेवाडी २) गडकीवासा ३) राजकी देवता	हडपसर
आषाढ कृ. २३	बुधवार	१९/०७/२००६	हडपसर	प्रायश्चात (संवात)	पुणे	पुणे	गालखी विठोबा मंदिर, पुणे
आषाढ कृ. २४	गुरुवार	२०/०७/२००६	पुणे	पुणे	पुणे	१) येसवडा २) काळज ३) विंधी ४) श्रीकृष्ण पातुकरा ५) आळंदीचा पातुकरा	आळंदी
आषाढ कृ. २५	शुक्रवार	२१/०७/२००६	आळंदी	आळंदी	आळंदी नगरप्रदक्षिणा	हजेरीगावतो भोदेर नारळप्रसाद	

Plate 23: Jñāneśvar *pālkhī* timetable 2 (2006)¹

¹ The columns, left to right, read: *tīrtha*, holy place; *vār*, day of the week; *dinānk*, date; *sakālī nighanyāce thikāṇ*, place of morning start; *sakāḷacā visāvā*, mornings' rest [place]; *dupāracā naivedhya (bhojana)*, *nighanyāce thikāṇ va veḷa*, noon food offering to the deity (meal), place of start and time; *dupāracā visāvā*, noon's rest; *rātrīcā mukkām*, overnight place of halt.

॥ श्री संत ज्ञानेश्वर महाराज प्रसन्न ॥



संतश्रेष्ठ श्री ज्ञानेश्वर महाराज पालखी सोहळा सन २००६

ह.भ.प. मुक्ताबाई महाराज बेलगांवकर
दिंडी क्र. ५९, रथामागे (रजि. नं. : ई/४४७४/२००५/पुणे.)

चालक : ह.भ.प. कृष्णा शंकर चांदेरे,
सुस, ता. मुळशी, जि. पुणे.

दुपारच्या व रात्रीच्या मुक्काम स्थळांचे माहितीपत्रक व अन्नदाते

तिथी	वार	दिनांक	दुपारचा नैवेद्य व भोजन व पंगत देणारे भाविक व स्थळ	रात्रीच्या मुक्कामाचा नैवेद्य व भोजन पंगत देणारे भाविक व स्थळ
जेष्ठ वद्य ८/९	सोमवार	१९/६/२००६	आळंदी (प्रस्थान) श्री. विश्वनाथ तापकीर प्रमोटर अॅन्ड बिल्डर	आळंदी (प्रस्थान) संस्था श्री. मंगीलाल चौधरी धनश्री सुपर मार्केट, सुस रोड पाषाण पुणे.
जेष्ठ वद्य १०	मंगळवार	२०/६/२००६	कळसगांव श्री. बाळासाहेब धापटे व श्री. दिसले (मांडववाले)	पुणे मुक्काम श्री. पारेख बंधु पुणे.
जेष्ठ वद्य ११	बुधवार	२१/६/२००६	पुणे मुक्काम श्री. दत्तोबा भागुजी वेडे (पाटील)	पुणे मुक्काम श्री. शंकरराव सोनवणे व सुभाष तोंडे
जेष्ठ वद्य १२	गुरूवार	२२/०६/२००६	हडपसर माजी नगरसेवक श्री. दत्ता बनकर सावतामाळी नगर	सासवड श्री. दिलीप वेडे पाटील (मा. सरपंच) श्री. लक्ष्मणराव वेडे (पोलीस पाटील)
जेष्ठ वद्य १३	शुक्रवार	२३/०६/२००६	यमाई, शिवरी श्री. विश्वनाथ सोपानराव वेडे (पाटील)	जेजुरी श्री. संपतराव शिंदे व श्री. बाळासाहेब किसन चिंचवडे, चिंचवड
जेष्ठ वद्य १४	शनिवार	२४/०६/२००६	वालहे श्री. राजाभाऊ जाधव सरपंच, नेरे गाव	वालहे श्री. मानसिंगराव जाधव (मागे पहा...)

Plate 24: Timetable of the Muktabāi Mahārāj Belagānvakar Diṇḍī, Jñāneśvar Pālkhī (2006)

पू. मुक्ताबाई: १८३३२९५८८० / २३२७१०

जेष्ठ वद्य ३०	रविवार	२५/६/२००६	निरा श्री. शंकरराव मर्दाने पुणे.	लोणंद श्री. हरिभाऊ भगवान पाटोळे, पुणे.
आषाढ शुद्ध १	सोमवार	२६/६/२००६	लोणंद श्री. रामचंद्र वाघ, पुणे	लोणंद श्री. नितीन सोपान ढमाले, पुणे.
आषाढ शुद्ध २	मंगळवार	२७/६/२००६	लोणंद श्री. आबासाहेब शेळके पाटील	तरडगांव श्री. राजाराम गायकवाड, माजी सरपंच
आषाढ शुद्ध ३	बुधवार	२८/६/२००६	निंबोरे ओढा श्री. राजाभाऊ जोरी प्रमोटर अॅण्ड बिल्डर्स	फलटण यशवंतराव चव्हाण शाळेमागे, शेलार बंधू
आषाढ शुद्ध ४	गुरूवार	२९/६/२००६	फलटण डॉ. मानेसाहेब	फलटण अगरवाल बंधु
आषाढ शुद्ध ५	शुक्रवार	३०/६/२००६	पिपरद श्री. राजेंद्र दादामहाराज ठोंबरे, श्री. गुलाबनाना दगडे	बरड श्री. दिलीप उत्तमराव दगडे, मा. उपसरपंच
आषाढ शुद्ध ६	शनिवार	१/७/२००६	धर्मपुरी श्री. विजयराव पाटील	नातेपुते दादासाहेब मारकड व बळकुंडे - सरकारी दवाखाना
आषाढ शुद्ध ७	रविवार	२/७/२००६	मांडवी ओढा नवनाथ तोडकर	माळशिरस : अॅड. नितीन कोकाटे श्री. नंदु दा. कोकाटे, श्री. पंढरीनाथ कोकाटे श्री. अंबादास नारायण कोकाटे श्री. नारायण कोकाटे, कोकाटे मंडळी
आषाढ शुद्ध ७	सोमवार	३/७/२००६	खुडुस आनंद काळुराम बोडके, नादेवराव बळवंत साखरे	वेळापूर श्री. भवरलाल दुर्गारामजी चौधरी धनश्री फुटस अॅण्ड व्हेजिटेबल, सूस रोड
आषाढ शुद्ध ८	मंगळवार	४/७/२००६	तोंडले-बोंडले जाधव बंधु	भंडी-शेगांव धनाराम नेताजी सोळंक (हनुमान सुपर मार्केट, औंध)
आषाढ शुद्ध ९	बुधवार	५/७/२००६	भंडी-शेगांव श्री. किसनराव वामनराव ढमाल	वाखरी श्री. जगताप, औरंगाबाद
आषाढ शुद्ध १०	गुरूवार	६/७/२००६	वाखरी श्री. भगवानराव बोबडे, औरंगाबाद	वाखरी : श्री. मगनराव जाधव, संपतराव जाधव, दामोदर पायगुडे, नैकर मंडळी
आषाढ शुद्ध ११	शुक्रवार	७/७/२००६	पंढरपूर संतोष सावंत मुंबई ह.भ.प. मुक्ताबाई महाराज बेलगांवकर सांगोला रोड.	पंढरपूर सुरेंद्र जोशी, सांताक्रूझ, मुंबई
आषाढ शुद्ध १२	शनिवार	८/७/२००६	पंढरपुर : श्री. संतोषराव ढवळे, रामनगर, औरंगाबाद. श्री. संतोष क्षीरसागर, मुंबई, श्री. नामदेवराव चांदेरे, मा. सरपंच, सूस	

दिंडी सोहळ्यास सर्वांर्धाने मदत करणाऱ्या दानशुरांचे शतःश धन्यवाद व आभार
संपर्क : सचिव श्री. मारुती ज्ञानेश्वर कोकाटे मो. नं. ९८२२९८८९६७

Plate 25: Timetable of the Muktabāi Mahārāj Belagānvakar Diṇḍī, Jñāneśvar Pālkhī (2006)¹

¹ The columns, left to right, read: *tīrtha*, holy place; *vār*, day; *dinānk*, date; *dupāracā naivedhya va bhojana va pangat deṅāre bhāvik va sthaḷ*, noon food offering to the deity and meal given to the devoted in rows, and place;

॥ श्री ॥

॥ श्री संत ज्ञानेश्वर प्रसन्न ॥ ॥ श्री विठ्ठल-रुक्मिणी प्रसन्न ॥ ॥ श्री संत तुकाराम प्रसन्न ॥





ह.भ.प. मुक्ताबाई महाराज बेलगांवकर दिंडी क्र. ५९ व सर्व
वारकऱ्यांच्या वतीने उर्वरित वैधानिक विकास महामंडळाचे अध्यक्ष

माननीय श्री. उल्हासदादा पवार

यांची विधान परिषदेवर निवड झाल्याबद्दल बुधवार, दि. २१/६/२००६ रोजी
सकाळी ९.०० वाजता पुणे जिल्हाचे ज्येष्ठ नेते संत तुकाराम
सहकारी साखर कारखान्याचे संस्थापक/चेअरमन

मा. श्री. नानासाहेब नवले

यांचे शुभहस्ते गौरवचिन्ह, शाल, श्रीफळ देऊन गौरविण्यात येणार आहे.

कार्यक्रमाचे अध्यक्ष

ह.भ.प. मुक्ताबाई महाराज बेलगांवकर

प्रमुख पाहुणे

श्री. महावीर जोधळे (संपादक : दै. प्रभात)
नगरसेवक : श्री. विकास मठकरी (पुणे महानगरपालिका)

संयोजक

ह.भ.प. कृष्णा शंकर चांदेरे श्री. दिलीपराव उत्तमराव दगडे श्री. नामदेवराव गेनुजी चांदेरे

ह.भ.प. मुक्ताबाई महाराज बेलगांवकर संस्थेचे
सर्व विश्वस्त व दिंडी क्र. ५९ मधील सर्व सहकारी

**स्थळ : गोगटे विद्यालय, 'दै. प्रभात'जवळ,
मोदी गणपती मागे, नारायण पेठ, पुणे ४११ ०३०.**

Plate 26: Invitation to honour Ulhāsādā Pavār, Wednesday (21st June 2006)

Muktābāi Mahārāj Belagānvakar and all the Vārkarīs of *diṇḍī* 59...

Honour Śrī Ulhāsādā Pavār

Wednesday 21st June 2006 at 9 am, Puṇe district...

Nānāsāheb Navale,

Programme Organiser: Muktābāi Mahārāj Belagānvakar;

Chief Guests: Śrī Mahāvīr Jondhale (Editor of the 'Daily Prabhāt'); 'City-servant' Śrī Vikās Maṭhkarī
(Pune Municipal Corporation Corporator)

Organisers: Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śankar Candere, Śrī Dilīprāv Uttamarāv Dagaḍe, Śrī Nāmdevrāv Genujī Candere,
Muktābāi Mahārāj Belagānvakar's institution, All Trustees and supporters of Diṇḍī 59.

At Gogaṭe School, behind Modī Gaṇapatī, Nārāyaṇ Peṭh, Puṇe, 499030.

rātrīcā mukkāmācā naivedya va bhojan pangat deṅāre bhāvīk va sthal, overnight halt with food offering to the deity
and meal given to the devoted in rows, and place.

Matter of faith and more...

The annual 'palkhi' draws unusual participants

By Snehal Sonawane & Gitesh Shelke/TNN

Pune: A foreigner who is fascinated by the saint poets of India. A group of youngsters who think a pilgrimage will teach how to live in peace and harmony. An elderly couple who have tirelessly been drawing *rangoli* for the Sant Dyaneshwar *palkhi* (palanquin) for half a century.

They are those who have been mesmerised by the power of the faith that draws lakhs of pilgrims every year on the annual pilgrimage on foot from Dehu and Alandi to Pandharpur via Pune. They are among the young, old and the unusual participants in the 700-year-old tradition of the *warkari* community.

For *rangoli*-maker Vasant Thite (70), who has for 50 years been part of the annual pilgrimage from Alandi to Pandharpur on scooter along with his wife Suhasini (68), drawing *rangoli* for the *palkhi* is like service to God.

"We also teach the art of *rangoli* to students in various villages on our way to Pandharpur," Thite said. He is always in the forefront in social service, including assistance for the earthquake victims in Gujarat and soldiers engaged

Pics: Nilesh Kulkarni



'Rangoli'-maker Vasant Thite and his wife Suhasini astride their two-wheeler and (left) a foreign pilgrim takes rest during the *palkhi* procession

in the Kargil war.

The life of saint poets in India, including Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram, has always fascinated Jacqueline Daukes, a Briton who will be travelling on foot with the *warkaris* from Vilapur to Pandharpur. In India on her second visit for research, Jacqueline is studying the Bhakti literature for her post-graduation.

"It's amazing how the *warkaris* travel all the way on foot with only faith in God in their hearts. They are willing to put them-

selves to hardship only because of their devotion."

She pointed to the devotion of Muktabai Belgaonkar, one among a few women to lead a *dindi* in the Dnyaneshwar *palkhi* procession. Belgaonkar, who hails from Beed district, has been undertaking the pilgrimage since the age of eight. "As a *warkari*, I have accompanied the *palkhi* for 25 years, and as a *dindi pramukh* I have completed another 25 years," she said.

Leaving behind luxuries of life for the 21-day pilgrim-

age on foot is a group of youngsters who have been inspired by devotion. On his eighth pilgrimage from Alandi to Pandharpur is Bhushan Narkhede (20) from Jalgaon, for whom the journey teaches many lessons of life. "It teaches us to live with peace and harmony with each other in spite of adverse situations. It increases our tolerance and we learn to face hardships in life," he said. Narkhede has inspired his cousins and friends too, many of whom have joined the pilgrimage.

Plate 27: Pune Times article (22nd June 2006)

कोणी
ऐकेल का?

कात्रज घाटात
आपत्कालीन
यंत्रणा हवी

कात्रज घाटात वाहतूक गेल्या ५/६
महिण्यापासून विस्कळित होत आहे. शनिवारी,
रविवारी कात्रज घाटातील वर्दळ वाढते. हे
लक्षात घेऊन पोलिस नियंत्रण, केनची मदत.

आर.एन.आय. १५५७/५७, रजिस्टर्ड क्र. एएन-२/आर.एन.पी./पी.एन.डब्ल्यू./डी./२८/२००६-२००८

आपत्कालीन यंत्रणा हे सर्व प्रभावी हवेच शिवाय
कात्रज घाटाला पर्यायी रस्त्याचे कामही लवकर
पूर्ण होणेही गरजेचे आहे.

सौ. राजश्री महाजनी, पुणे



संत तुकाराम महाराज
आषाढी वारी पालखी सोहळा

देहू ते पंढरपूर

मिती	वार	तारीख	दुपारचा विसावा	पालखीचा मुक्काम
ज्येष्ठ व. ६	शनिवार	१७ जून २००६	---	इनामदार साहेबवाडा देहूगाव
ज्येष्ठ व. ७	रविवार	१८ जून २००६	निगडी	आकुडी- विठ्ठल मंदिर
ज्येष्ठ व. ८	सोमवार	१९ जून २००६	---	निवडुगा विठ्ठल मंदिर, नाना पेठ, पुणे
ज्येष्ठ व. १०	मंगळवार	२० जून २००६	---	निवडुगा विठ्ठल मंदिर, नाना पेठ, पुणे
ज्येष्ठ व. ११	बुधवार	२१ जून २००६	हडपसर	लोणी काळभोर- विठ्ठल मंदिर
ज्येष्ठ व. १२	गुरुवार	२२ जून २००६	उरळी कोचन	यवत- भैरवनाथ मंदिर
ज्येष्ठ व. १३	शुक्रवार	२३ जून २००६	भांडगाव	वर्दळ- विठ्ठल मंदिर
ज्येष्ठ व. १४	शनिवार	२४ जून २००६	पाटम	उंडवडी गवळ्याची
ज्येष्ठ व. ३०	रविवार	२५ जून २००६	बऱ्हाणपूर	धारामती- सांस्कृतिक भवन
आषाढ शु. १	सोमवार	२६ जून २००६	काटेवाडी	सगसर
आषाढ शु. २	मंगळवार	२७ जून २००६	बेलवाडी	लासुर्ये
मंगळवार, २७ जून २००६ : सकाळी बेलवाडी येथे पहिले गोल रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. ३	बुधवार	२८ जून २००६	गोतडी	निमागव केतकी
आषाढ शु. ४	गुरुवार	२९ जून २००६	इंदापूर	इंदापूर
गुरुवार, २९ जून २००६ : दुपारी इंदापूर येथे दुसरे गोल रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. ५	शुक्रवार	३० जून २००६	---	इंदापूर
आषाढ शु. ६	शनिवार	१ जुलै २००६	वावडा	सरटो
आषाढ शु. ६	रविवार	२ जुलै २००६	अकलूज	अकलूज
रविवार, २ जुलै २००६ : सकाळी अकलूज (माने विद्यालय) येथे तिसरे गोल रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. ७	सोमवार	३ जुलै २००६	माळीनगर	बोरगाव
सोमवार, ३ जुलै २००६ : सकाळी माळीनगर येथे पहिले उभे रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. ८	मंगळवार	४ जुलै २००६	माळखावी	पिराची कुरोली (गारगान)
आषाढ शु. ९	बुधवार	५ जुलै २००६	पिराची कुरोली	वाखरी
बुधवार, ५ जुलै २००६ : बाजोराव विहीर दुसरे उभे रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. १०	गुरुवार	६ जुलै २००६	वाखरी	श्री क्षेत्र पंढरपूर



संत ज्ञानेश्वर महाराज
आषाढी वारी पालखी सोहळा

आळंदी ते पंढरपूर

तिथी	वार	तारीख	दुपारचा विसावा	रात्रीचा मुक्काम
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ८/९	सोमवार	१९ जून २००६	---	गाधीवाडा - आळंदी
ज्येष्ठ वद्य १०	मंगळवार	२० जून २००६	फुलेनगर	जलखी विठ्ठल मंदिर, भवानी पेठ, पुणे
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ११	बुधवार	२१ जून २००६	---	पुणे
ज्येष्ठ वद्य १२	गुरुवार	२२ जून २००६	उरळी देवाची	सासवड
ज्येष्ठ वद्य १३	शुक्रवार	२३ जून २००६	यमाई-शिवरी	जेजुरी
ज्येष्ठ वद्य १४	शनिवार	२४ जून २००६	वाल्हे	वाल्हे
ज्येष्ठ वद्य ३०	रविवार	२५ जून २००६	नीरा, श्रीं नारा लान	लोगंद
आषाढ शु. १	सोमवार	२६ जून २००६	---	लोगंद
आषाढ शु. २	मंगळवार	२७ जून २००६	लोगंद	तरडगाव
मंगळवार, २७ जून २००६ : दुपारी चांदोबाचा लिंब येथे पहिले उभे रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. ३	बुधवार	२८ जून २००६	निभोर ओढा	फलटण (विमानतळ)
आषाढ शु. ४	गुरुवार	२९ जून २००६	---	फलटण (विमानतळ)
आषाढ शु. ५	शुक्रवार	३० जून २००६	पिंपरद	बरड
आषाढ शु. ६	शनिवार	१ जुलै २००६	धर्मगुी पाटबंधारे बंगला	नातेपुते
आषाढ शु. ६	रविवार	२ जुलै २००६	मांडवी ओढा	माळशिरस
रविवार, २ जुलै २००६ : दुपारी सदाशिवनगर येथे पहिले गोल रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. ७	सोमवार	३ जुलै २००६	विशोरी, ज्ञानेश्वरनगर	वेळापूर
सोमवार, ३ जुलै २००६ : सकाळी खुडूसफाटा येथे दुसरे गोल रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. ८	मंगळवार	४ जुलै २००६	तोडले-बोडले	भंडी शेगाव
मंगळवार, ४ जुलै २००६ : सकाळी टाकूरखुवा समाधी तिसरे गोल रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. ९	बुधवार	५ जुलै २००६	भंडी शेगाव	वाखरी
बुधवार, ५ जुलै २००६ : दुपारी बाजोराव विहीर (वाखरी) दुसरे उभे रिंगण व चौथे गोल रिंगण				
आषाढ शु. १०	गुरुवार	६ जुलै २००६	वाखरी	पंढरपूर
गुरुवार, ६ जुलै २००६ : पादशुद्धी करून पहिले उभे रिंगण (वाखरी)				

Plate 28: Tukārām and Jñānēśvar Pālkhī timetables (2006)

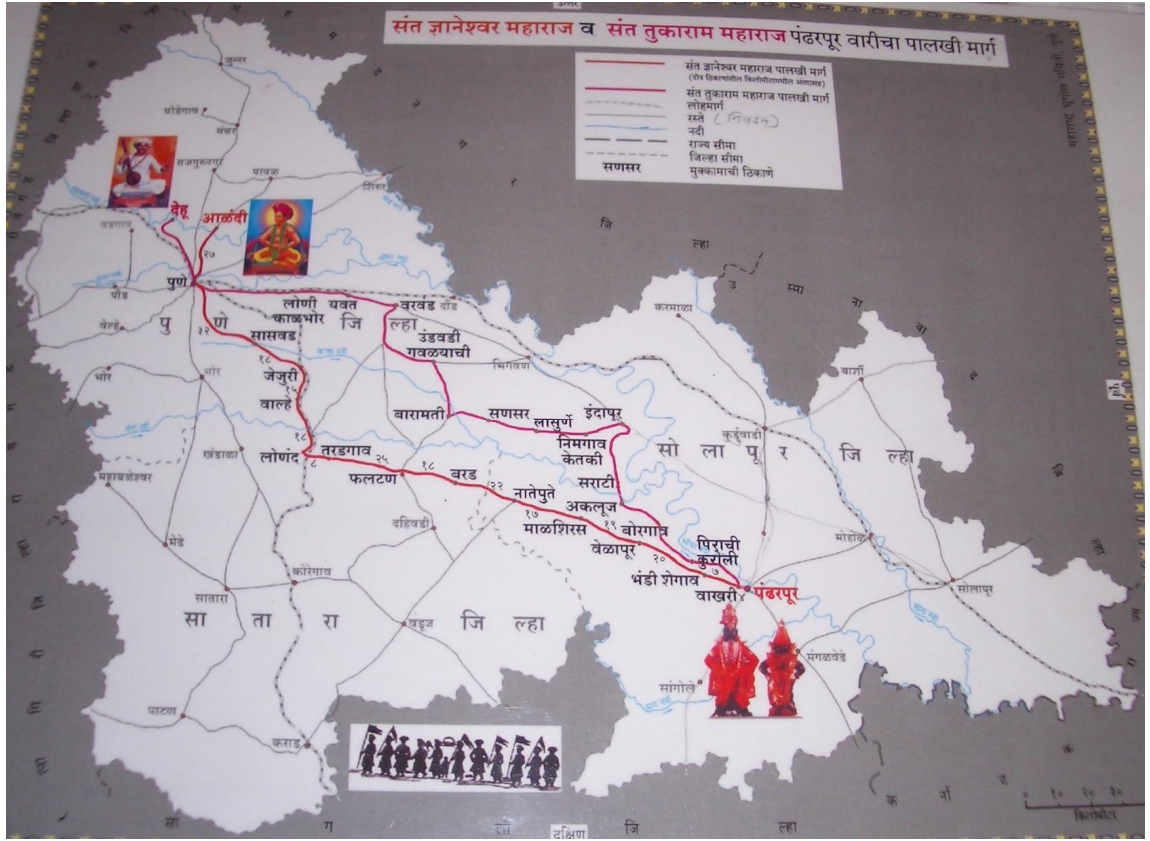


Plate 29: Map detailing the route of the Jñāneśvar and Tukārām pālkhās to Paṇḍharpūr²

² Thanks to Dr. Mukta Garsole for having this and the subsequent map made for me.

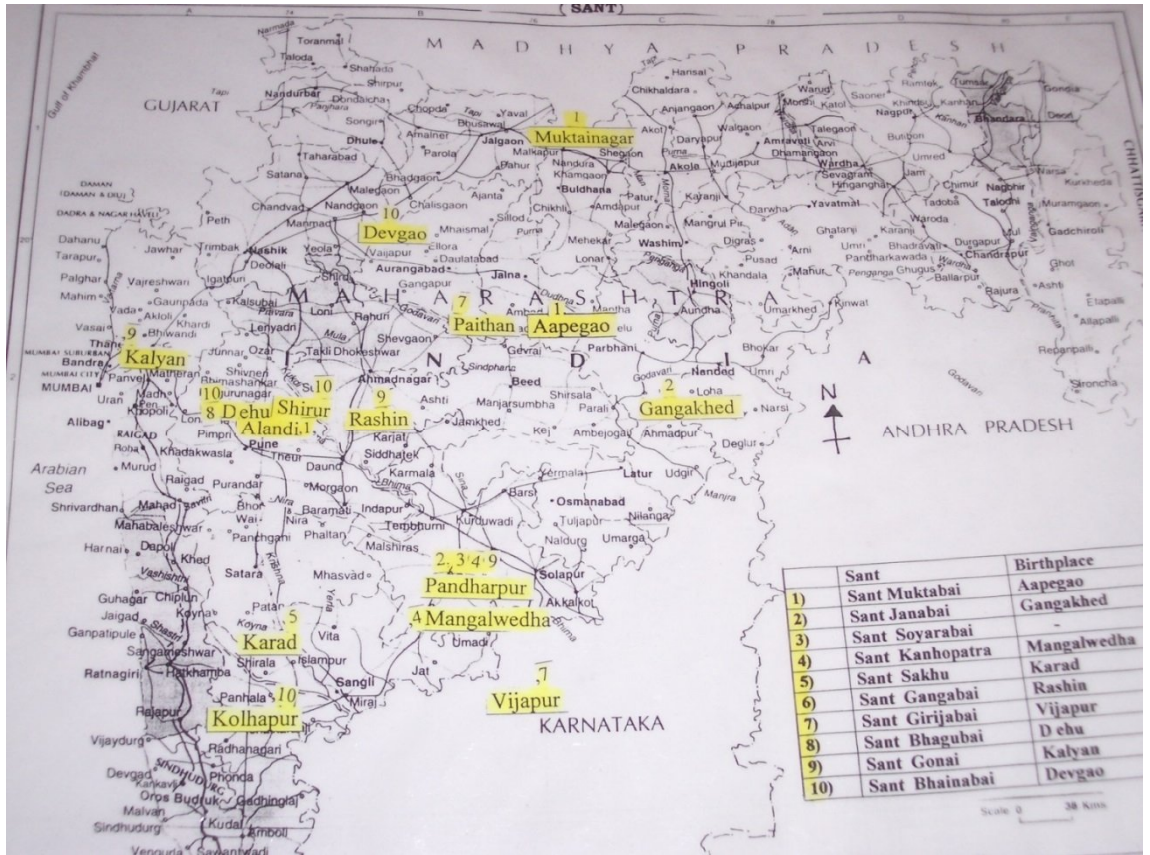


Plate 30: Birth and work/*samādhi* place of Vārkarī female sants

	SANT	BIRTHPLACE	WORKPLACE/ <i>SAMĀDHI</i>
1	Muktābāī	Apegaon (or Alandi)	Alandi/Muktainagar
2	Janābāī	Gangakhed	Pandharpur
3	Soyarābāī	-	Pandharpur
4	Kānhopātrā	Mangalvedha	Pandharpur
5	Sakhūbāī	Karad	Karad
6	Gāngabāī	Rashin	-
7	Girijābāī (Eknāth's wife)	Vijapur (or Bijapur)	Paithan
8	Bhāgūbāī (Tukārām's daughter)	Dehu	Dehu
9	Goṇāī	Kalyan	Pandharpur
10	Bahiṇābāī	Devgaon	Dehu, Shirur