

# Asian Religions in British Columbia

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*Asian* RELIGIONS  
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



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# Preface

Our book is about a place, written by a group of people of that place, for the people of the place. The contributors to this book share not only the common thread of scholarship but also the experience of living and working here. Scholars of the Asian religions of British Columbia, their varied backgrounds reflect the diversity of the province. The editors extend our deepest gratitude to this dedicated and professional group of men and women for their hard work and keen ideas.

Our companions have been the people of British Columbia who, before the beginning of the province to the present moment, have come together to celebrate, to discuss, to share the traditions (and innovations) of the religions discussed in the book. During our research, these British Columbians have often been our hosts, our informants, our fellow citizens, and our friends. Many have literally fed us, and all have given us intellectual and sometimes spiritual sustenance. Some individuals are credited in chapter notes, but many who do not appear in these chapters have added to our understanding. To all of them, individuals and families, leaders and folk, wise elders and bouncing kids, we extend our heartfelt gratitude.

Our book would not have been possible without initial funding from the Institute of Asian Research at the University of British Columbia. The Institute also matched some modest contributions from Simon Fraser University and Langara College. Throughout the writing process, we have benefited from the wise counsel of Emily Andrew, senior editor at UBC Press. The Universal Buddhist Temple (世界佛教會) in Vancouver provided funding as well to cover publication expenses, with the intent of making a contribution to the understanding of our multicultural society (not, of course, as an endorsement of the multitude of practices described in this book).

Regarding the representation of the many languages found in this book, where there is a choice of methods, we have been guided by practicality and

readability. We have often simplified words by omitting diacritics, but only when we believe that philologists will understand and that others won't mind. Where we have found it desirable to retain more complex styles of representation, we hope that the accuracy of the record offsets any inconvenience to the non-specialist. Citations of sources, diverse in kind, have likewise been made with simplicity and practicality in mind.

# Asian Religions in British Columbia



# Introduction

DON BAKER AND LARRY DEVRIES

The three co-editors of this volume have spent most of our professional careers studying Asian religions in Asia. When travelling around the southwest corner of the British Columbia mainland, however, we could not help but note that much of the religious activity that we have studied overseas has become increasingly visible right here in the province. Indeed, over the last three decades, the Vancouver metropolitan area has been transformed into a truly multicultural community.

This will be obvious to anyone who looks to the west while driving through the city of Richmond on Highway 99. Along No. 5 Road, running parallel to the highway and called by some the “highway to heaven,” are a number of religious schools and houses of worship that serve many of Vancouver’s ethnic groups with roots in Asia: a gurdwara for the Sikh community, the Ram Krishna Mandir Vedic Cultural Society for Hindus, the Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre for Shia Muslims (the Jami’a Mosque, for Sunni Muslims, is nearby, just off No. 5 Road), the Ling Yen Mountain Temple for Chinese Buddhists, and the Richmond Chinese Evangelical Free Church. The Fujian Evangelical Church, with a predominantly Filipino Chinese congregation, sits close to No. 5 Road, around the corner from the Vedic Cultural Society.

Evidence of the Asian impact on British Columbia is no less visible elsewhere in the Lower Mainland. Sikh and Buddhist temples, mosques, and Chinese, Japanese, and Korean churches are found all over the southwest corner of the province. Asian restaurants abound. Both the new Chinatown along No. 3 Road in Richmond and the old Chinatown in downtown Vancouver are famous for the quality and variety of their cuisine. When British Columbians want a taste of India, they head for Main Street in Vancouver. And North Road, running between Burnaby and Coquitlam, has grown during the last decade into a magnet for those who love spicy Korean food.

We mention food because it is one of the two features of immigrants' home culture that are most resistant to change. The other, of course, is religion. By the third generation, hyphenated Canadians are usually no longer fluent in the language of their forebears, and family dynamics tend to become Canadianized over time, but cuisine and religion survive. In fact, they often go together, since after Sunday services many houses of worship offer their congregations food in the style of their countries of origin. Such communal meals serve to affirm the ethnic solidarity of those who partake, or to commit the group to the beliefs, values, and practices of the ethno-religious community identified with a particular type of food.

The persistence of both cuisine and religion is not unique to communities with roots in Asia; for example, Italians, Greeks, and, more recently, Africans have contributed to the religious and culinary landscape of British Columbia. In this book, however, we focus on Asian Canadian communities, for several reasons. In the percentage of its population with roots in Asia, not only is the Greater Vancouver area one of the most Asian metropolitan areas in continental North America but British Columbia itself leads the nation (along with Ontario) in the multicultural character of its citizens. Moreover, the province has some of the oldest substantial Asian communities outside Asia. For example, Victoria has the oldest Chinatown in Canada, second in North America only to that of San Francisco.

According to the 2006 census, out of a total population of a little over 4 million in British Columbia, there were 432,435 Chinese (plus 10,565 who identify themselves as Taiwanese), 274,205 South Asians (including 7,975 Pakistanis, 4,150 Sri Lankans, and 570 Nepalis), 94,250 Filipinos, 51,860 Koreans, 41,585 Japanese, and 30,835 Vietnamese, plus Cambodians, Laotians, Indonesians, Malaysians, Mongolians, and Tibetans.<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of this Asian Canadian population lives in the Greater Vancouver metropolitan area. Vancouver is almost 30 percent Chinese, Richmond 43.6 percent (making Richmond the most Chinese mid-sized city in North America). Surrey is over 27 percent South Asian and around 5 percent Chinese; Burnaby, on the other hand, is 30 percent Chinese and 8 percent South Asian. Coquitlam, to round out the list of cities in the Vancouver metropolitan area with large Asian populations, is 17 percent Chinese, as well as 5 percent Korean and 3.6 percent South Asian. The many East Asians, South Asians, and Filipinos and other Southeast Asians living in Richmond make up 60 percent of the population, making it a majority Asian city. Burnaby was 49 percent Asian in the 2006 census, but immigration trends suggest that it has passed the 50 percent mark by now. Vancouver was not far behind at 46 percent Asian.<sup>2</sup>

Parallel to this, Asian religious groups have also burgeoned, with the greatest growth by far being seen in the Lower Mainland. A list maintained by Larry

DeVries shows about 250 Asian religious groups in British Columbia, of which nearly two-thirds are in Vancouver or vicinity. Most of the nearly 40 groups in the BC Interior are either Sikh, reflecting their early presence in the resource industries, or Buddhist, for diverse reasons such as the relocation of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War as well as the diffusion of especially Zen and Tibetan Buddhism among Euro-Canadians. Another 40 or so Asian religious groups are located on Vancouver Island as well as the smaller islands and the Sunshine Coast. Here also, Buddhist and Sikh groups are in the majority, but, unlike in the Interior, there are more of the former than the latter. There is hardly an area of the province without an Asian religious presence; even the British Properties in West Vancouver, established as an ethnic bastion, has recently become host to a Buddhist group, while the region of Kelowna, one of the province's least ethnically diverse cities, is home to a temple established by Buddhist nuns from Taiwan as well as to the Interior's only ethnic Hindu temple.

British Columbia and its Lower Mainland did not look like this forty or even thirty years ago. Canada began changing its immigration laws in the 1960s to eliminate the preference for Europeans that had been so strong previously. In addition, the adoption by the Trudeau government in 1971 of an official policy of multiculturalism made immigrants from Asia feel more welcome here. The result has been a surge of immigrants from all across Asia that has not only widened the range of culinary choices available to British Columbians but also greatly diversified the province's religious landscape.

The transformation of British Columbia by Asians and Asian religions occurred in three major stages. The first wave of Asians came from the United States in 1858, in the form of gold seekers from California who arrived in Victoria by steamer. The 450 men included, according to a journalistic chronicle, "only 60 ... British subjects," in a milieu where "Negroes, Kanakas, Chinese, Jews, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans, and other nationalities" were to congregate.<sup>3</sup> Their entry into an essentially British, colonial, class society virtually created by private enterprise (the Hudson's Bay Company) introduced two pertinent and persistent themes in the province's history, namely, extremely rapid growth through immigration and frictions based on class and place of origin.

The resource-extraction export economy boomed, with a peak in immigration in the last decade of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries.<sup>4</sup> It was during this period that the "elders" of BC Asian societies were formed – the Chinese, Japanese, and South Asians, largely Punjabis. As a reflection of this, we now find, respectively, the Tanggong Miao, established in Victoria in 1876;<sup>5</sup> the Vancouver Buddhist Church (Jōdo Shinshū), founded in 1905; and the Vancouver Sikh gurdwara, founded in 1908 (a surviving gurdwara from 1911 in Abbotsford was recently designated a national historic site).<sup>6</sup> Adding

to religious diversity in the Kootenay region were the Doukhobors, who arrived in 1908, and the Mennonites, who arrived in 1911, with later Mennonites coming from Russia to settle in the Fraser Valley in the 1920s. Ethnic segregation was the rule, perhaps best exemplified by separate camps for Japanese, Chinese, South Asians, and whites in the company towns of various resource industries.<sup>7</sup> In fact, anti-Asian race riots in Vancouver (as well as in Washington state, just over the border) were an important factor leading to Sikh migrations to California's Central Valley.

Despite these multicultural beginnings, British Columbia famously wended its way through the first half of the twentieth century as a "White Man's Province" (the title of one of three books on the topic by University of Victoria professor emerita Patricia Roy). The British majority decreased as the continental European percentage grew, but Asian exclusion resulted in the low point in immigration from Asia in 1961.<sup>8</sup> The mid-1950s to mid-1970s saw rapid development in free enterprise, megaprojects, and parallel unionization<sup>9</sup> with persistent class polarization. Two major universities opened in the mid-1960s, the Swami Radha group was founded in British Columbia in 1957, and the first class in Buddhism was offered at the University of British Columbia in 1964.<sup>10</sup> Although the province removed the ethnic voting barrier in 1947-52, it has generally lagged behind other provinces in social reforms such as women's suffrage and, until 2007, elimination of age discrimination. Racist practices continued in such areas as the British Properties until 1954, while racist labour laws persisted until 1968, long after they had been abolished elsewhere in Canada.<sup>11</sup>

But change was imminent, at least in policy. Although immigration had reflected a preference for Britons and Europeans (especially Northern Europeans), practice changed in 1962 and was replaced with a policy based on skill sets (the point system) in 1967, following a similar US liberalization in 1965. Alan B. Simmons describes the transition as one from "official colonial racism" to "widespread informal racism in civil society."<sup>12</sup> (In Chapter 4, Rastin Mehri shows how this attitude led to a negative reaction in 1985 to a proposed Zoroastrian temple in West Vancouver, just down the street from the British Properties.) A further complexity was added to the social makeup of the province in the 1960s and 1970s by the arrival of an extraordinary number of Vietnam War resisters from the United States, many of whom became Canadian academics, artists, and professionals. This second time period seems to be a time of transition, with rapid change on the ground offset by social conservatism. Here we find the establishment of such diverse groups as the Konkō Church of Vancouver, the Shree Sanatan Dharam Ramayana Mandali of Fiji, and the British Columbia Muslim Association, all in 1966; the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of British Columbia, begun informally in 1967 with connections to Seattle; and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON) centre in

British Columbia, formed “in 1969 [when] two of Srila Prabhupada’s disciples came up from San Francisco.”<sup>13</sup> Both the Zen Centre of Vancouver, established in 1970, and the Dharmasara Satsang Society, established in 1974, also have strong connections to California. The West Coast and Asia thus continued to have an impact on BC society.

The third stage in the arrival of Asian worldviews in British Columbia can aptly be titled after a speech by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, “Multiculturalism Means Business.”<sup>14</sup> A slightly earlier Business Immigration program was reworked in 1984 and extended in 1986 to actively attract immigrant capital in the “business” and “investor” classes. In the period 1978–2001, international immigration to British Columbia rose from a low of 6,836 to a peak of 47,965 in 1996/97. Taking the year 2001 as normative, over three-quarters of these immigrants were most recently established residents (a census category) of Asia. Immigration to the province from overseas in the investor class peaked in the years 1993 and 1994, with 6,867 and 6,292, respectively. The “entrepreneur” class reached levels of 4,072 in 1993, 4,172 in 1994, and 4,231 in 1996.<sup>15</sup> Thus, investment in the province by immigrant Asians rose substantially, especially in the mid-decade before 2000. Since well over 90 percent made their homes in the Vancouver area on arriving in British Columbia, it is not difficult to connect this with the building of the province’s largest Buddhist temples in Vancouver suburbs: the Japanese Jōdoshū Tozenji in 1989 in Coquitlam, the Taiwanese/Hong Kong Pure Land Ling Yen Mountain Temple in 1999 in Richmond, and the Korean Chogye Buddhist Seogwangsa in 2001 in Langley.

The highly visible “Asian mall” phenomenon, studied by David Lai, also developed at this time. Such development had begun in the 1980s in the Vancouver suburb of Richmond, leading to forty-nine “Asia-themed” malls in 2000 and spreading also to Burnaby, Surrey, and Port Coquitlam, as well as augmenting Vancouver’s Chinatown.<sup>16</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, a much smaller area of South Vancouver was developed as the “Punjabi Market” (with Punjabi and English street signs),<sup>17</sup> along with a similar area on the border of Surrey and North Delta designated as the “Punjabi Bazaar.” Don Baker reports that most Korean stores used to be located along the highly multicultural Kingsway, running from Vancouver’s Main Street through Burnaby to New Westminster. Starting with one Korean supermarket in 2000, however, an area along North Road (the border between Burnaby and Coquitlam) has developed until there are strip malls filled with various types of Korean shops, including medical and dental clinics, Korean lawyers’ offices, pubs, travel agencies, bakeries, restaurants, coffee shops, video shops, insurance offices, and so on, spread along three blocks, with many Korean shops adjacent to the main area. Korean shopping areas are also found in Vancouver and Port Coquitlam.

Given this growing contribution of communities with roots in Asia to the economic, social, and cultural life of British Columbia, we felt that it is important to learn more about these communities and how they are helping to make the province, in the words of Tourism BC, “the best place on earth.” One way to do so is by exploring the role that Asian religious organizations play in British Columbia today. This is the path we have chosen.<sup>18</sup>

By Asian religious organizations we mean both those whose members are predominantly ethnically Asian and those that have mostly “convert” members but have their roots in Asia and maintain strong ties to Asia. Including both types of organizations in our study enables us to discuss both the role of religious organizations in fortifying ethnic solidarity and the ways in which they add new elements to an already diverse religious culture in Canada’s Pacific Rim province.

Most of the BC communities surveyed in this volume consist primarily of people with Asian roots who are affiliated with a religious tradition that is a significant part of their ancestral culture. Because the rise in Asian immigration to British Columbia began only relatively recently, many in such communities are first-generation immigrants. For example, most of the Chinese Buddhists introduced by Paul Crowe in Chapter 8, the Sikhs discussed by Kamala Nayar in Chapter 2, and the Muslims introduced by Derryl MacLean in Chapter 3 represent recent Asian contributions to the globalization of BC culture. Such contributions, however, are not the only Asian religious influence on cultural diversification in the province.

In our research, we also found non-Asian converts to Asian religions, such as practitioners of Hinduism who are of European ancestry (discussed by Larry DeVries in Chapter 1) and non-Tibetan members of Tibetan Buddhist organizations (discussed by Marc des Jardins in Chapter 9). There are Asian congregations in traditional Western religious groups too. Don Baker and Li Yu (in Chapters 8 and 11, respectively) found sizable vibrant Christian communities that were predominantly Chinese, Korean, or Filipino, which, in most cases, were as culturally Asian as their Buddhist, Hindu, Zoroastrian, or Sikh counterparts. They, too, are manifestations of religious globalization in our multicultural environment.

Before proceeding further with our discussion of the Asian component of religious and ethnic diversity in British Columbia, we should define the terms “ethnicity” and “religion.” Both are often used but almost never defined, mainly because it is difficult to come up with definitions for either term that are specific enough to be meaningful while being general enough to encompass all the phenomena that each is intended to refer to.

We should begin with the term “religion,” since the focus of this book is Asian religious communities. Most of the congregations discussed here focus

on interaction with God or with gods through prayer and rituals, whereas others focus on stilling the mind through meditation, with little or no reference to a deity. Some of the groups we studied are led by trained, certified clergy, whereas others have no formal clergy at all. How can we justify calling both types of groups “religious”?

DeVries states in Chapter 1 that religion is “a kind of language ... an instrument of expression, communication, and contemplation.” Seen as such, religion refers less to beliefs about the supernatural, to ethical codes, or even to rituals *per se* than it does to the affirmation of shared beliefs and values through regular group activities such as rituals and through declarations of such beliefs and values. In this book, we consider such affirmations to be religious, and those who meet regularly to make such affirmations to be religious communities.

Obviously, not all group expression of shared beliefs is religious. We would not normally consider a group’s declaration of its belief that the Vancouver Canucks will win the Stanley Cup to be religious. Nor are all regular group activities religious. Playing golf with the same group of friends every Saturday morning would not normally be considered a religious activity. What sets religious communities apart from other groups is their assumption that they are engaged in activities that rise above everyday, mundane concerns, whether they are interacting with supernatural beings or trying to quiet the normal noise of the mind. Whether they are praying or meditating, they feel that what they are doing is qualitatively different from shopping for groceries, working at a desk, or skiing down the slopes of Whistler Mountain. Moreover, coming together regularly with like-minded individuals in order to engage in communal rituals creates a strong sense of being part of an in-group, almost like an extended family, albeit one united not by blood but by its distinctive beliefs, practices, and values. Many such communities affirm their conviction that their particular group is distinctive and special by applying to it the label “religious.” In this book, we accept this self-designation, and we also consider as religious a few communities that, although they may not explicitly refer to themselves as such, nevertheless behave in ways so similar to consciously religious communities that they arguably fall into the same category.

Most, though not all, of the religious communities examined in this book are what might be called “ethno-religious communities.” They are communities of people who not only share the same religious beliefs, values, and practices but are also mostly members of a single ethnic group. One of the themes running through most of the chapters is this interplay of religiosity and ethnicity. Thus, we need to explain what we mean by “ethnicity.”

We prefer the term “ethnic group” to “race.” As physical anthropologists point out, there is so much overlap in biological characteristics within the various communities that share a major region of the world that there is no physical

basis for dividing the peoples within East Asia, South Asia, or Southeast Asia into different races. What criteria do we use, therefore, to distinguish one ethnic group from another?

We could base ethnic labels on political identity, on the political entity that people migrated from or where their ancestral home is, and this would enable us to distinguish, for example, Japanese from Chinese, Vietnamese from Thais, and Indians from Pakistanis. It is not always possible to identify an ethnic community with a national community, however. For example, Sri Lankan Buddhists tend to see themselves as ethnically distinct from Sri Lankan Tamils. The Sikh organizations in British Columbia attract Punjabis but few members with roots in the rest of India. Moreover, not all Punjabis in British Columbia are Sikhs. Relying on a narrow political criterion would also make it difficult to differentiate Parsees, discussed in Chapter 4, from other peoples from India.

What about language, then? One feature of most ethno-religious communities is that the preferred language of their religious services is the language of the home country rather than English. In the case of Chinese, however, we find more than one Chinese dialect being used by Chinese ethno-religious communities. Moreover, although Cantonese and Mandarin are usually called dialects, they actually function as different languages in that they are mutually unintelligible. Yet, Chinese, whether they speak Mandarin or Cantonese, consider themselves to be members of the same Chinese community.

Language as a defining criterion also falls short when we discuss ethno-religious communities of the children or grandchildren of immigrants from Asia. Although those in the second generation usually speak and understand some of the language that their parents use, they are often not fluent enough to feel comfortable at a religious service conducted only in that language. Those in the third generation are even less likely to speak the language of their ancestors. Thus, if we use language as a defining criterion of ethnicity, we would have to deny the label “Chinese” to most third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation Chinese Canadians; nor could we call “Japanese” the Pure Land Buddhist temples that are frequented by Japanese Canadians who don’t speak Japanese (discussed by Michael Newton in Chapter 10). Relying on language as a criterion for ethno-religious identity would also cause problems when we talk about Filipinos. They are the third largest Asian ethnic community in Canada, after Chinese and South Asian, but English shares national-language status with Filipino in the Philippines and many Filipinos, including the immigrants themselves, feel at home with English. In fact, only one of the many Roman Catholic Masses celebrated for Filipino congregations in the Lower Mainland every month is regularly conducted in Tagalog. The rest are in English.

Despite the difficulty of finding one objective definition of ethnicity that applies to all the ethnic groups discussed in this book, we still use that term simply because many of the religious groups with Asian roots that we studied use ethnic labels to refer to themselves and their organizations. As with the term “religion,” we rely heavily on self-identification rather than on any narrow linguistic, political, or physical criteria.

Even with such a flexible understanding of ethnicity, we found that not all the religious communities we studied could be defined in ethnic terms. Thus, we have to distinguish ethnic communities such as those who congregate in Korean and Chinese churches and Vietnamese Buddhist temples from non-ethnic communities such as Tibetan Buddhist groups. They play different roles in society.

Ethnically defined religious organizations have several secular functions besides satisfying the religious needs of their members. First, they provide opportunities for new Canadians to meet regularly with those who speak the same language that they speak, eat the same food that they eat, and have basically the same beliefs and values that they have. Second, they provide a venue for immigrants to reaffirm their ethnic identity in the midst of the cultural and ethnic mosaic that is Canada. In fact, they may even strengthen an ethnic identity that was simply assumed in the mother country but that is highlighted in contrast with other ethnicities in Canada. Third, they give members of immigrant communities an opportunity to attain high-status positions, such as elder in a Korean church, that might be difficult for them to achieve in Canadian society at large. Finally, they provide an avenue for promoting ethnic consciousness in the children and grandchildren of immigrants, through the nature of the religious community, the language used in its services, and the types of events that are celebrated by the community (which often include secular as well as religious holidays from the old country). Ethno-religious communities can be powerful tools for reminding the second and third generations where their ancestral roots lay.

In addition to the mono-ethnic religious communities that comprise most of the groups discussed in this book, there are what can be called multi-ethnic religious communities in British Columbia. For example, the Islamic community, discussed in Chapter 3, is divided more along sectarian than ethnic lines. Those who frequent the Sunni mosques come from a wide range of countries and linguistic communities. There is no specifically Pakistani mosque, for example, and Pakistanis and Arabs may worship side by side with Indonesians or Malaysians. Similarly, Shia mosques attract Muslims from a variety of national and linguistic backgrounds. Islam in British Columbia is mainly Asian, since most active Muslims are of Asian, primarily South Asian, ancestry, but

it encompasses many different ethnic Asian groups, speaking different languages at home and considering different nations as their ancestral homelands. It cannot, therefore, be considered a mono-ethnic community.

Nevertheless, the various mosques and Islamic associations in British Columbia have one thing in common with many mono-ethnic organizations. They all reinforce a distinctive identity for their members within mainstream Canadian society. They provide a supportive community for those who want to maintain their specific Asian religious identity. They help Muslims remain Muslims, for example, despite pressures toward conformity in what is still predominantly a Christian society, at least culturally. (Thirty-five percent of British Columbians say they have no religious affiliation; most of the rest say that they are Catholic, Anglican, or Protestant.)<sup>19</sup>

The link between ethnicity and religious affiliation may be tenuous in the case of Muslims, but it is almost totally absent from a few other communities in British Columbia that are centred on religions with roots in Asia. Tibetan Buddhism is one example. There are only about 100 Tibetans living in British Columbia but, according to Marc des Jardins, a third of all Buddhist centres in the province are associated with Tibetan Buddhism. Obviously, most “Tibetan” Buddhists in British Columbia are not Tibetan. Some are Chinese, but many others are of European background. Vietnamese Buddhism has, along with its many temples for Vietnamese practitioners, a Mindfulness Practice Centre that looks to a Vietnamese monk living in France for guidance but that has a predominantly non-Vietnamese membership. The Japanese new Buddhist organization Sōka Gakkai has more non-Japanese than Japanese adherents in British Columbia. Even Hinduism has a non-ethnically South Asian component. DeVries points out in Chapter 1 that the first “Hindu” community in the province was founded by a German Swami! Also, both the Daoist group Fung Loy Kok and the new Chinese religion Falun Gong have attracted many non-Chinese practitioners.

Despite these examples of religious organizations originating in Asia that have attracted many non-Asian members in British Columbia, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural affinity usually overrides shared religious beliefs and values and splits religious communities into ethnic enclaves. Because many Asian religious organizations also serve as cultural organizations, as ways to affirm and promote a specific ethnic identity, they are often composed primarily of members of one ethnic group. We see this even within religions that claim to be world religions rather than national religions. For example, Chapters 8 and 11 show that Asian Christian communities divide along ethnic lines, with Chinese Christians attending churches frequented by other Chinese, Koreans attending churches with mostly Korean congregations, and Filipinos flocking on Sundays to churches where other Filipino Christians gather. We find the same phenomenon

with Buddhism, as evidenced by the separate chapters on Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai and Laotian, and Sri Lankan and Myanmar Buddhism. There is little indication of a shared Buddhist affiliation drawing together those communities separated by differences in ethnicity. Besides the role of religious communities in affirming a separate and distinct ethnic identity, cultural differences in the roles of religious leaders, in the rituals that they and lay practitioners perform, and in the language used in those rituals keep communities apart even if they share the same general religious affiliation.

Asian religious groups continue to diversify. The year 2000 saw the establishment of three unique Hindu groups in southwestern British Columbia: the Fraser Valley Hindu Society in Abbotsford (a city that is also home to the province's newest university program in South Asian Studies, at the University of the Fraser Valley); Shri Durga Bhameshwari Mandir in Surrey, one of British Columbia's other burgeoning cities and winner of the 2008 Cultural Capital of Canada Award; and Arul Migu Thurkadevi Hindu Society (BC), with its distinctive connections to Hawaii and Sri Lanka. The past decade has also seen the development of multi-ethnic Buddhist groups such as the Shinzanji Heart Mountain Temple in 1999 in Victoria, with unique British Columbia – Japan connections; the Mountain Rain Zen Community on Vancouver's ethnically diverse south Fraser Street in 2002, in association with US groups; and the Sherab Chamma Ling Tibetan Bon Buddhist Centre in 2003 at Courtenay on Vancouver Island, with Canada's first Bön priest.

So, in what sort of place do these Asian religious groups find themselves? When Larry DeVries studied Buddhist groups in 2004, he observed gloomily that in Vancouver they were virtually an exclusively "east side" phenomenon. This fits very neatly with John Porter's demonstration in *The Vertical Mosaic* (1965) that Canada is a class-based society in which non-establishment groups such as immigrants are systematically absorbed and remain at lower levels of social and economic mobility. Even with the addition of the business and investor immigration categories, one can argue that class distinctions persist. We would like to take a different tack, however, and end with a brief reflection on the direction of Asian religious groups in British Columbia.

In Chapter 3, Derryl MacLean detects a growing congruence between realization of the *ummah*, a Muslim term for an ideal society, and the multicultural society developing in the province. In other words, the policies and the social fact of multiculturalism have made possible initiatives to create conditions inherent in the ideals of the religious groups. In Chapter 6, Bandu Madanayake finds that the religious ideals held by the Buddhist groups he studied are quite consistent with generally held Canadian values. In Chapter 8, Don Baker points out the value of ethnic religious groups as a positive social resource in a multicultural society, while cautioning that mere passive tolerance can be fragmenting

unless augmented by an active effort to understand and resolve cultural differences and create a “healthy diversity.” A few recent examples will suffice to show this kind of healthy diversity in action.

- The Fraser Valley Buddhist Temple (Jōdo Shinshū) officially reopened on 3 October 2004, after the original temple was destroyed by fire in 2002.<sup>20</sup> In the interim, the temple’s Japanese-language school was housed first in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Blueridge Drive (also neighbour to Abbotsford’s newest Sikh gurdwara), then was invited in by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which saw the opportunity to make “some wonderful new friends.”<sup>21</sup>
- The Radha Yoga and Eatery, at the heart of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside is a reincarnation of the original Radha House located in upscale Marine Drive in Burnaby. Since December 2004, the Radha group has brought not only the Shivananda tradition but also organic cuisine and local musicians and artists to a part of town known for its poverty and social problems. In short, Radha Yoga is a good neighbour.
- The Avatamsaka Monastery Meditation Centre (Hoa Nghiêm Temple) was established in the Fraser Valley community of Mission by Venerable Master Thích Nguyễn Thảo. Founded in 2000 with many years’ worth of donations from its congregation, the temple was put up for sale in early 2005 and the proceeds were donated to the Canadian Red Cross to help the victims of the 26 December 2004 tsunami in Asia.<sup>22</sup>

As noted earlier, ethnic relations in Canada have been guided since 1971 by an official policy of multiculturalism. The policy attempts to create a national community that is inclusive while recognizing linguistic and ethnic differences within Canadian society. This book addresses the question of how well this policy has worked. African Americans have long pointed out that, in the United States, the most segregated hour of the week is 10:00 a.m. on Sunday morning, when most churches have services. Is the same true of Canada? Do Asian religious organizations help people of Asian ethnicity, especially recent immigrants, feel a part of the Canadian national community, as the foregoing examples suggest? Or do they reinforce a division of Canadian society into separate and distinct ethnic communities? If the latter is true, is it a problem that we should worry about, or is it a positive phenomenon that contributes to the multicultural mosaic that we Canadians like to brag about?

The chapters that follow will help answer these questions. They discuss in their own ways the historical backgrounds, social contexts, and manifestations of the religious traditions represented by various communities in British Columbia, and the relationship of these religious communities to Canadian society

and multiculturalism. Our goal is not just to describe the diversity of religious life in the province but also to draw attention to what we have in common. Where relevant, the authors discuss significant similarities and differences between the communities surveyed in their chapters and other groups described in this book. The result is a portrait of the mosaic that is British Columbia, in which many diverse cultural and religious elements have come together to form the multicultural society that makes Canada's Pacific province such a comfortable and interesting place in which to live.

#### NOTES

- 1 <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/censuso6/data/highlights/ethnic/pages/>. Statistics Canada information is used with the permission of Statistics Canada. Users are forbidden to copy the data and disseminate them, in an original or modified form, for commercial purposes, without permission from Statistics Canada. Information on the availability of the wide range of data from Statistics Canada can be obtained from Statistics Canada's Regional Offices, its World Wide Web site at <http://www.statcan.ca>, and its toll-free access number, 1-800-263-1136.
- 2 <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/censuso6/data/profiles/community>.
- 3 Harry Gregson, *A History of Victoria, 1842-1970* (Victoria, BC: Victoria Observer, 1970), 12-13.
- 4 Immigrant Voices, <http://www.canadianhistory.ca/iv/>.
- 5 David Chuenyan Lai, *The Forbidden City within Victoria* (Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers, 1991), 60-68. See also Chapter 12.
- 6 Immigrant Voices, <http://www.canadianhistory.ca/iv/>. See Chapter 2.
- 7 Patricia Roy and John Herd Thompson, *British Columbia: Land of Promises* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005), 109. Many well-known incidents of discrimination of this period, such as the "head tax," Asian exclusion in both immigration and labour, the *Komagata Maru* incident, and Japanese internment, are treated in this keenly analytical source.
- 8 Veronica Strong-Boag, "Society in the Twentieth Century," in *The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia*, ed. Hugh J.M. Johnston (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996), 277.
- 9 Jean Barman, *The West beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 284.
- 10 Daniel L. Overmyer, "Glowing Coals: The First Twenty-five Years of the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia, 1960-1985," *BC Asian Review, UBC 75th Anniversary Issue 3/4* (1990): 8.
- 11 Aprodicio A. Laquian, Eleanor R. Laquian, and T.G. McGee, eds., *The Silent Debate: Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada* (Vancouver: Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia, 1998), 8.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 13 Temple brochure.
- 14 Katharyne Mitchell, *Crossing the Neoliberal Line: Pacific Rim Migration and the Metropolis* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 204.
- 15 BC STATS and Statistics Canada websites as cited above for years 1978-2001.
- 16 David Chuenyan Lai, "Chinese: The Changing Geography of the Largest Visible Minority," in *British Columbia, the Pacific Province: Geographical Essays*, ed. Colin J.B. Wood (Victoria, BC: Western Geographical Press, 2001), 147-74.

- 17 "Harry Lali's Motion Asking for 'Punjabi Market-Langara Station' (RAV) Carries Unanimously," *VoiceOnline.Com*, 6 May 2006, <http://www.voiceonline.com/voice/060506>.
- 18 For a complementary approach, see Paul A. Bramadat, and David Seljak, eds., *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada* (Toronto: Pearson Longman, 2005), the plan for which appears to rest on Harold B. Barclay, Harold G. Coward, and Leslie S. Kawamura, eds., *Religion and Ethnicity: Essays* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978). Both books highlight certain themes, such as gender and generational relations, and complement our focus on the more or less public presence of religious organizations. The Canadian studies, including this book, can be read in the context of what has become an established field of Asian American studies, in which some sociologists of religion have queried ethnicity, transnational movements, immigration, and settlement, and aimed to redress an often-stated lack of religion in such studies. See most recently Richard D. Alba, Albert J. Raboteau, and Josh DeWind, eds. *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative and Historical Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 2009). Synthesis of these and emerging, more global studies remains a desideratum.
- 19 2001 Census Profile: British Columbia, <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/profiles>.
- 20 *The Light of the Buddha*, newsletter of the Steveston Buddhist Temple, Richmond, BC, September 2004, <http://www.sbt.shawbiz.ca>.
- 21 Bill Gerber, "FVAA New Home to Fraser Valley Japanese Language School," British Columbia Adventist Conference, 11 June 2003, <http://www.bcalive.ca/artman/publish>.
- 22 This article was widely distributed over the Internet. One source is "Canadian Temple Offers Proceeds to Red Cross," *Peace, Earth and Justice News*, 6 January 2005, <http://www.pej.org>.

PART I

# Traditions from South Asia





# Hindu and Other South Asian Religious Groups

LARRY DeVRIES

*draṣṭum icchāmi te rūpam aiśvaram puruṣottama*

“I wish to see your Divine Form, O Supreme Person.”

– (*Bhagavadgītā* 11.3)

A group of Indian immigrants, mostly Punjabi and Hindi speakers in the area of Abbotsford, a fast-growing city East of Vancouver in the Fraser Valley, the agricultural breadbasket of Southwestern BC, colloquially referred to as the “bible belt,” had been attending the Vishva Hindu Parishad in Burnaby since its founding in 1974. This meant a drive of about an hour each way, often in the evening, to attend services such as Tuesday devotions to Hanuman. As the Abbotsford community grew, so did the desire to have a local Hindu temple. Darshan Sharma relates how things got started one Sunday evening in July 1998, when the core group met at his furniture store. “I said, ‘Do you really want to start a temple here?’ Then I just took a calendar, like the one over there.” Gesturing toward a religious poster on the wall of the temple dining area, he continued: “I washed my hands. I took some *agarbhati* [incense] and prayed. Then I wrote a cheque for \$5,000 and said, ‘OK, who will do the same?’” Seven cheques were written, and before the evening was over, phone calls had brought in enough funds for a down payment on a temple property. Thus was born the Fraser Valley Hindu Society. In 1999, the group purchased a property adjacent to the Abbotsford airport, which, significantly, became an international airport around this time. Currently the temple serves about 200 families in the Fraser Valley and plans are underway for a new 3,000-square-foot structure.<sup>1</sup>

In these roots can be seen the community nature of the temple. All the work of the temple, other than the religious duties performed by a full-time priest, is done by the members, including bringing in a city water line, refurbishing the former auto body shop on the property to serve as the *mandir* (temple proper), and advertising for a priest. The current priest, Pandit Vasisht, lives with his family in the original house on the property, conducts Monday and Tuesday evening services for Shiva and Hanuman, respectively, as well as Sunday general services, and opens the temple for certain periods every morning and

afternoon for devotees. He was trained in Delhi but served most recently in Yuba City, California, and in Edmonton.

The gathering I attended began at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday with *bhajans* (devotional songs) in Hindi, led mostly by a dozen women who accompanied the singing on percussion instruments (two drums, hand cymbals, and so on). About eight or nine men sat separately at first, as was the case at many temples I visited in BC, and two small children circulated between the gender groups. Members arrived continually, sometimes ringing the small bell in the middle of the hall, paying their respects by prostration, with some touching their heads to the floor, others their full bodies, rising with hands in *anjali* (folded prayer gesture), and praying before taking a place on the green-carpeted floor. By 11:30 a.m., there were twenty-one women, ten men, and about ten children.

Throughout the service, members continually arrived or departed, attending to business, especially collecting donations, distributing receipts, keeping a list of the day's donors, and preparing for the communal meal to follow. At 11:30 a.m., the priest offered a prayer to Krishna and a long invocation highlighting the ideas of calming the passions, religious devotion (*bhakti*), and gaining insight (*jnana*). The altar was curtained while offerings were made, then the curtains were withdrawn so that all could view the freshly revered images and sing the beautiful hymns accompanying *arati* (devotional offering of lamps). The congregation approached the altar one by one to wave the tray of oil lamps in graceful circles to the images, with the temple bell being rung all the while to heighten the religious awe of the moment. The priest recited verses from the Vedas and Upanishads, along with a recitation of divine names. He then blessed the congregation with a sprinkling of water, and the lamp trays were taken to each devotee to return the light to the individuals, who, after offering a coin, received it with cupped hands and applied it to head, eyes, and body. The canopy of the altar itself proclaimed in Sanskrit the sacred and once-secret Gayatri Mantra of the Rigveda: "Let us think deeply on the radiance to be desired of God Savitr; may he stimulate our minds!" The liquid and fruit offerings were taken by the devotees as *prasada*, literally the "grace" of the deities. This basic pattern of *bhajan*, *puja* (offerings), *arati*, and *prasada*, no doubt familiar to many readers, has remained a stable element of virtually all groups in this study, even when not performed in an established temple.<sup>2</sup>

The Abbotsford temple, a community temple, is a sign of the continued growth of the Hindu population in British Columbia and reflects where recent South Asian immigrants are choosing to live. Over the past two decades, immigrants from India have generally been the immediate relatives of earlier immigrants and have avoided the inflated land values of Vancouver in favour of the adjacent suburbs, especially Surrey (about one-third of new arrivals) and Abbotsford (about 10 percent).<sup>3</sup> Among these, there is a wide range of people

from various parts of India and groups forming a secondary diaspora from “intermediate” locales, especially Guyana and Fiji, as well as Tamils from Sri Lanka, Fiji, and Malaysia – what Derryl MacLean refers to as the “double diaspora” (Chapter 3). In addition, there are organizations such as the Vedanta Society, where an extremely well educated and successful group of older immigrants from India are in the majority. The society’s founder first set foot on North American soil in Vancouver in 1893 on his way to the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago, but its closest ties have been to societies formed in California and Seattle as well as in India. There are also groups such as the followers of the Swami Shivananda Radha and Paramahansa Yogananda, which draw from the general multi-ethnic British Columbia population.

Since the groups discussed in this chapter mainly follow religious traditions that originate in the Indian subcontinent,<sup>4</sup> share (although unequally) a certain set of practices and ideas, and acknowledge (again unequally) a central body of literature, they may be roughly called “Hindu.” This study acknowledges, but does not attempt to resolve, the many historical, social, and ideological issues raised by this term. To depict the diversity in these groups, I have chosen for the epigraph a line from the *Bhagavad Gita*, a text central to most of the traditions and often depicted in temple booklets: “I wish to see your Divine Form, O Supreme Person.” It is a request for revelation (*darsana*), a prayer for insight, and a major strand in the self-representation of Hindu religious groups in British Columbia and elsewhere.

Like the Daoist and Buddhist traditions discussed in this book, Hindu traditions have arrived in British Columbia in two ways: by diffusion of ideas and practices through an existing population and by immigration. In studying this process with regard to Buddhism, the scholar Martin Baumann reconsidered the implications of a widespread typology of “convert” versus “ethnic,” and suggested a shift away from dichotomies of origin (sometimes tinged with race consciousness) toward a focus on religious practice.<sup>5</sup> In an earlier study of Buddhists in British Columbia, I found that practitioners can be quite flexible in crossing boundaries asserted by scholars! A prime example of this is reported by a Vancouver neighbourhood paper in an article about “ethnic” Sikhs attending the Guru Ram Dass Ashram of Vancouver, whose members are sometimes referred to as “White Sikhs.” The Punjabi devotees felt the Ram Dass Ashram to be “much more committed to prayer, more committed to the Sikh way, more committed to finding peace in oneself.”<sup>6</sup> Here religious practice takes precedence over ethnicity.

Throughout my research, I have found groups, such as those described by Don Baker and others, that have served as sites where new immigrants could establish and ground themselves. I have also noted, however, the phenomenon – described by Kamala Nayar in Chapter 2, by Paul Bramadat elsewhere,<sup>7</sup> and

by others – followers of an immigrant tradition, once established, seeking the deeper intellectual and spiritual roots of the tradition. Indeed, Bramadat has found that both religious and ethnic self-identification are “increasingly elastic.” In view of all these considerations, I have included a range of groups in this discussion, based simply on the felicitous statement of Vasudha Narayanan that they “speak the Hindu idiom”<sup>8</sup> to express meanings that are always ethnic and cultural or political and national, but also deeply personal.

### **The Place of “Hinduism” in British Columbia**

British Columbia is a province of contrasts, both geographical and social. Remarkably wealthy in natural resources (its economic base), it is also home to Canada’s poorest neighbourhood, Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. The stark contrast of mountains and sea is mirrored in social and class dichotomies. The Downtown Eastside is simply the most visible part of a city with a clear “East Side” versus “West Side” split that is evidenced by property values, voting patterns, and so forth. This is not idle observation, for Hindu practice in Vancouver is almost exclusively an “East Side” phenomenon, most precisely following the pattern discovered in a 2004 study of Buddhist groups in British Columbia<sup>9</sup> (a trend recently challenged, however, by the patrons of some Tibetan Buddhist groups, as discussed in Chapter 9). The Vancouver suburbs are also home to most “Hindu” groups, sometimes prominently located, especially if the area is home to a variety of newer religious buildings. Just as often, or perhaps more often, one finds these pockets of beauty in neglected areas betwixt and between – between urban developments, in the Downtown Eastside, or in a decidedly secular industrial park.

The earliest days of Hindu practice in British Columbia are essentially undocumented. An earlier study points to the existence of a South Asian population in the 1880s in Golden.<sup>10</sup> Although the religious focus of this population was a Sikh gurdwara that functioned until 1925, it is unlikely that there were no Hindu practitioners among the mostly Punjabi population. One study indicates that about one-fifth of the Indian immigrant population in Canada at the start of the twentieth century – about 1,000 people – were Hindus.<sup>11</sup> Despite these early dates, the history of Hindu practices in the subsequent half-century remains obscure, or may be summarized in the words of one interviewee in another study who stated that “Hindu, Sikh and Muslim families from India all attended the Gurdwara.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Speaking the Dialect of Universalism**

The oldest BC group “speaking the Hindu idiom” provides a counterpoint to the Fraser Valley Hindu Society described above. The Radha House organization was founded in 1957 by the German swami Sylvia Hellman, known as

Swami Shivananda Radha or simply Swami Radha,<sup>13</sup> in a private home in South Burnaby that served as headquarters for Swami Radha and several young male disciples, who typically held outside jobs to support themselves and the group. In 1963, the group moved its headquarters to Yashodhara Ashram in the small community of Kootenay Bay in the BC Interior. Radha House as a cooperative home in Burnaby came to an end several years ago, and its place was taken in 2004 by the experimental Radha Yoga and Eatery in the Downtown Eastside.

Although the Radha group has six centres in British Columbia and others elsewhere in Canada, the United States, and England, the heart of the movement is the Kootenay Bay ashram established at the opposite end of the province from Vancouver. At this “Yoga Retreat and Study Centre,” members of the small, permanently resident spiritual community of twelve to fifteen, some initiated in the Radha lineage, offer a variety of courses to guests throughout the year. On the day I visited, a bland vegetarian meal was eaten in silence by seventy to eighty persons, aged perhaps nineteen to senior, at least 80 percent of whom were women. The extensive grounds are traversed by well-kept paths and stairs winding among native pines and fir, grassy openings, apple trees nurtured from the original farm, flower and rock gardens, a stream, and images of religious personages such as the Hindu god Shiva, Guanyin, and the Virgin Mary.

Of course, the refreshing mountain air and sparkling lake are exhilarating, but one is reminded to bring this experience within. This message is intentionally conveyed by the Temple of Divine Light, a large pure white hemispherical structure about sixty feet in diameter (Figure 1.1). Save for a modest wooden altar with a few pictures of the founder, it is completely empty inside, in this respect not unlike the Baha’i temple in Wilmette, Illinois – an enclosed space surrounded by gardens. Here was the architectural realization of the teachings of the Divine Light Society and its “divine light invocation Mantra.” The building is often photographed from the outside because of its beauty, but the space inside best conveys the meaning: quiet, still, and empty – a container of light.

Swami Gopalananda (formerly David Forsee) spoke with me afterwards and gave me a copy of his book *Can You Listen to a Woman* (Timeless Books, 1999). Studying, travelling, searching, David’s narrative seems emblematic of a significant segment of North American youth in the 1960s and ’70s. He describes Swami Radha’s method of aesthetic activities (painting, music, dance, writing) as paths toward “the divine,” serving as a foil to the rational and ego-centred orientations of school, jobs, or social roles. In the context of the present book, perhaps this is a “youth culture” counterpart to what Don Baker considers for immigrants as “cultural oases.”

The Swami Radha group, with its combining of sacred figures and texts from a variety of religious streams, clearly falls in with a tradition beginning in India in the nineteenth century that speaks a universalizing dialect of the “Hindu



FIGURE 1.1 The Temple of Divine Light in Kootenay Bay is a veritable *container* of light. *Photo by Larry DeVries*

idiom.” This current in Indian religion grows out of India’s encounter with Western influences. Here, universalism may be seen as a form of discourse addressing the “universal element existing in all particular religions.”<sup>14</sup>

Other “universalizing” groups (in the Hindu idiom) include the Self-Realization Fellowship and the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of British Columbia. The former was founded in 1935 by a Bengali émigré to the United States, and began in British Columbia in the 1950s as a small meditation group meeting in private homes.<sup>15</sup> There are now roughly half a dozen BC branches. Religious services are conducted every Sunday and also several evenings a week in a rented facility in a mixed commercial-residential area of Vancouver. I attended a Sunday Readings Service with about thirty people in a spacious and quiet room. On the altar were six pictures of the figures central to the tradition, Krishna and Jesus in the centre, flanked by the founder, Yogananda, and his three predecessors in the Kriya Yoga lineage. The service opened with a prayer addressing the altar figures as well as “the saints of all religions,” and included readings from the Gospel of Mark, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and Yogananda’s *Autobiography of Yogi*. Although the society has a base in (Ranchi) India, the most immediate connection of the BC groups is to a monastic group in Los Angeles

and an ashram in Nevada City, California, “Ananda Village.”<sup>16</sup> A distinctly West Coast theme emerges in quite a few of the groups studied.

The Vivekananda Vedanta Society of British Columbia also has a West Coast connection in its close relationship to the society in Seattle and in its leader since 1978, Swami Bhaskarananda, who is also president of the Interfaith Council of Seattle.<sup>17</sup> As mentioned earlier, the founder of the Vedanta Society, Swami Vivekananda, passed through Vancouver in 1893 on his way to Chicago. The BC society began in 1967 when early members began driving to Seattle to attend meetings with the Seattle group, which had been established in 1938. A core group of four people met weekly in private homes in Vancouver for meditation and study of texts such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and the writings of Ramakrishna. The Vancouver group now has about eighty members and has contributed at least two monks to the movement. The meeting I attended at an East Vancouver community centre was open to the public on the occasion of Swami Bhaskarananda’s visit and had been preceded the day before by a private session. Among the twenty or so members present, there was a remarkable representation of retired professors. Proceedings were conducted before a table set up with portraits of Jesus, Ramakrishna, and the Buddha between two candles, two vases with fresh flowers, and incense burning at the centre.

### **The Language of the Particular**

The Vancouver area is home to a number of small temples patronized by members of specific ethnic communities (largely self-defined in terms of geography and language) or subdivisions of these communities, namely, Punjabi, Fijian, South Indian Fijian, and Sri Lankan. Steven Vertovec has noted similar cases, in which “caste, sectarian and linguistic/regional traditions and communities ... remain more or less intact.”<sup>18</sup> In Vancouver, region and language often appear to be the deciding factors.

The oldest in this group is the Shree Sanatan Dharam Ramayan Mandali of Fiji.<sup>19</sup> According to members, the group began in 1966 through a desire to recite the Tulsi Ramayana (a devotional text) from a copy held by one of the members.<sup>20</sup> Meeting in homes at first, members attended the Vishva Hindu Parishad (see below) when it was established in 1974. They soon decided, however, to form a separate worship group where they would “feel more at home,” presumably in a more familiar diasporic form of practice.<sup>21</sup> They purchased a church building in 1977 and converted it to serve as a temple in the Commercial Drive neighbourhood, well known and frequented by Vancouverites for its ethnic diversity. They plan to build a new temple on a property on East 41st Avenue.

Services and other activities are all conducted on a volunteer basis, including priestly duties. The altar reflects a pan-Hindu diversity of images, including Krishna, Radha, and Hanuman, with Shiva and Parvati at the centre. I counted

more than twenty-five images on the altar. Altar inscriptions are more specific: *Om namaḥ śivāya namaḥ satyaṃ śivaṃ sundaram om hara hara mahādeva* “Om. Obeisance to Shiva. (The Godhead) is Truth, Mild (*śiva*), Beautiful.” Worship consists of Monday evening recitations from the Shiva Purana and Tuesday evening recitations of the Ramayana. The Tuesday service I attended began with *puja* (offerings), followed by singing of the Ramayana with harmonium, drum, and other percussion accompaniment, interspersed with homilies both read from a book and delivered extemporaneously in Hindi, and concluding with *arati* and distribution of fruit and sweets on plates as *prasada*. Partway through the singing, six devotees separated to the side for a brief *havan*, the fire offering.

The Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam Educational and Cultural Society, formerly the Sangam Educational and Cultural Society of BC (Fijian), is even more specific in its regional origin, consisting of a group of Fijian Hindus of South Indian origin. Its founder, Sevaratnakam Sadhu Kuppuswami, established the society in 1926 in Fiji specifically for the social and educational upliftment of South Indian Fijians, who had arrived a bit later than the North Indians and felt some discrimination from them. A large framed picture of the founder adorns the side of the altar, with an account of his activities celebrating him as a founder of many schools for children in Fiji. The group began with devotions in private homes in 1982 and purchased a former warehouse in north Richmond in 1992. The property overlooks the abandoned tracks of the former inter-urban streetcar line. Interestingly, just down this street on the margins of industry and neighborhood is the location of a group following one of British Columbia’s major Tibetan Buddhist leaders (see Chapter 9) – both groups quite literally beneath the notice of the “mainstream” travelling over the Highway 99 bridge overhead, on the main route to the United States.

Religious services, led by three volunteer pandits (priests), are held on Fridays and on Sundays, when there are also Hindi and Bharatanatyam (classical dance) classes for children. The community consists of around 600 families. Most are from Surrey, Richmond, Vancouver, and Burnaby, but some also cross the border from Washington state. The *thaipusam* (a major South Indian annual festival) ceremony I attended took place on a Friday evening. Many families took part, with around twice as many women as men. Prayers were in a mixture of Tamil, Hindi, and Sanskrit from a booklet printed in Roman script. The altar contained *murtis* (images) of virtually all major Hindu deities, plus the South Indian Balaji and Shirdi Sai Baba. Members informed me that images had simply been gathered over time from the homes of devotees. The ceremony concluded with the procession of a portable shrine to Murugan, the focus of the celebration, flanked by his two consorts. As we circled, stopping to break

open coconut offerings at the cardinal directions, the drumming, the dancing of some men, the singing of all, and the swaying of the multi-coloured shrine with its deities peering out from layers of raiment and garlands made the air come alive with a sacred vibration. The ceremony concluded with announcements and food.

We continue our journey deeper into the realm of the particular with a visit to Shri Durga Bhameshwari Mandir, also known as Shri Durga Mandir Surrey, founded in 2000 and thus among the newest temples in British Columbia. The location is a small commercial-industrial “park” in Surrey. The temple honours a “living goddess” as she appeared in the Punjabi village of Bham in 1955.<sup>22</sup> Devotees come from all over British Columbia as well as from Seattle. There are Tuesday devotions to Hanuman and *puṛnima* (full moon) observances, but the main focus is *puja* on Sundays, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., to Durga as the living goddess Bhamesvari. A large framed photo installed in 2003 is the centrepiece of the temple altar and is accompanied by more generic Durga images. The Sunday service I attended began with a meditative playing of the harmonium by Pandit Rajpal Sharma, followed by *bhajans* sung mainly by the women with especially inspired *dholak* (drum) playing. After *puja*, the altar curtain opened on a tableau lit with a strobe light, and there was recitation of the verses of the *Śrīdurgāsaptasatī*, in which is mentioned the goddess as “*bhāma*,” that is, “light” itself, but also understood by worshippers as “the goddess in Bham.” The temple is self-supporting and attended by families; it is a community enterprise.

The fourth group I wish to consider in this section is the Arul Migu Thurkadevi Hindu Society (BC), consisting mainly of Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu practitioners. The society, which meets in a “storefront temple” just over the Vancouver border in South Burnaby, was registered on 1 January 2000 at virtually the same time as the Bhameshwari Mandir in Surrey. The temple occupies a modest location on a commercial thoroughfare. Like the other sites in this group, it generates vibrant religious activity inside, which, in this case, often spills out into the streets in the form of circumambulation of the temple or processions through the neighbourhood. The temple started in 1999 with the installation (*pranasamsthapana*, or “establishing the living presence” in the image) of its principal deity, Durga Devi. There are images of Hanuman and Murugan on either side of the Devi altar. As with temples in India and Sri Lanka, there are also separate shrines to other deities: Nataraja (Shiva in dancing posture) and Parvati, Ayyapan (a Keralan deity), and Bhairava, a “fierce” form of Shiva represented by his trident (*trisula*) alone. As at the above temples, *puja* and *arati* are performed for these deities, but individually rather than at a collective altar. A variety of deities is in worship, but the group identifies closely

with the Saiva Siddhanta tradition that originated in Tamil Nadu in the ninth century, so its worship centres on Shiva.

Although this small and lovely temple would appear to be the epitome of the particular, with its regional (Sri Lanka), linguistic (Tamil), and sectarian specificity, it steps beyond itself in a universalizing direction in two ways. First, the roots of the Saiva Siddhanta tradition are universalizing, as are virtually all *bhakti* (devotional) traditions in India. The founders are well known to cut across social boundaries and to critique “orthodox” ritual and thought. In so doing, however, they paradoxically become a sect of those who espouse universal Oneness *in that idiom*.<sup>23</sup> Although the temple is a social paradox, the universalizing language of the “Hindu idiom” is evident in terms of religion.

The temple also transcends its boundaries as a representative of a globalized “Hinduism.” In a quiet corner near the main shrine, there is a series of seven small portraits of major figures of the Saiva Siddhanta tradition. These begin with several Nayanars, the founding poet-saints, and culminate with Tamil siddha (non-sectarian “adept”) Yogar Swami (d. 1964)<sup>24</sup> and his disciple, the late American swami Shivaya Subramuniaswami. Subramuniaswami was born Robert Walter Hansen in Alameda County, California, in 1927.<sup>25</sup> Initiated in Sri Lanka in 1949, he founded the Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order and Saiva Siddhanta Church in Sri Lanka, and afterwards on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. Among the many international activities of this energetic swami was the establishment in 1979 of the well-known magazine *Hinduism Today*, an issue of which a member of the Durga temple placed in my hands to help explain the religion of the community. When Subramuniaswami established (in his book *How to Become a Hindu*, published in 2000) the requirement to renounce one’s connection to one’s present or any other religion, the Saiva Siddhanta Church embarked on a path of sectarianism quite at odds with the kind of universalism that sees itself as an augmentation of any sincere religious belief and practice. Still, the church continues to enrich the religious practice of independently established temples worldwide, including others in British Columbia such as the Sri Ganesh Temple Society of BC, founded in 1999 and established in a home on south Main Street in Vancouver in 2004, and the Sri Murugan Temple on River Road in Richmond. These temples represent a kind of global Hindu ecumenism but retain an underlying sectarian and ethnic (Tamil) specificity.

### **The Large Temples**

Burnaby is best known among local Hindus as home to the oldest and largest Hindu temple in the province, the Vishva Hindu Parishad of British Columbia (renamed the Hindu Cultural Society and Community Centre of BC in 2000).<sup>26</sup>

This and several other larger temples serve the community by combining diverse traditions in the “Hindu idiom” quite consciously under one roof, often in an explicitly pan-Hindu and inclusive way. The Parishad is an international organization based in India, founded by Swami Chinmayananda in 1964. Its work has multiple aspects, but, in general, it has been studied for its conservative Hinduism domestically and its service to “non-resident Indians” internationally. Vertovec gives the network its own category among his three types as “ultimately unitary” and “nationalistic.”<sup>27</sup> Since I am not addressing politics in this chapter, being without systematic empirical evidence, I shall concentrate on its pan-Hindu inclusivism.

The uniting feature is evident, for the larger BC temples serving an immigrant community predominantly from India were very intentionally inclusive. Here were: the “Hindu idiom” spoken most deliberately and consciously, the use in teaching of the widely understood language Hindi, reference to major texts such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Tulsi Ramayana*, liturgy drawing on the Vedas and Upanishads, and Indian cultural traditions of music and dance. All these traditions play a role in the lives and spirit of practitioners, sustaining and nurturing them with what they feel to be their own and in which they could take pride of both heart and intellect. It is not historical studies or esoteric etymologies that constitute a religion, nor even the philosophical rigour of its doctrines, attractive though this may be. Rather, it is the religion’s ability to come to life in its devotees as a support for everyday life, a solace in sorrow, and a home for expressions of joy.

A Victoria temple is representative of this group of religious societies. The Victoria began in September 1974, meeting in the basement of its now immediate past president, Gurudutt Jhagra. After a year or so, meetings began rotating among members’ homes on Sundays. From 1977 to 1993, having outgrown house meetings, the group rented church halls on Saturday evenings because these were occupied on Sundays. Mr. Jhagra described the years of careful packing, unpacking, and repacking of religious pictures (only posters, no *murtis*) and communal items to and from car trunks. On several occasions, the group was asked to leave when church members became aware that a Hindu group was meeting on church property. With manifest happiness and relief, it purchased the old wooden church building of St. Mary’s Anglican (now located in a new building a block away) on 17 July 1995. The first *murtis* (sacred images) of Lakshmi and Narayana (Vishnu) were purchased by a donor and arrived from Hyderabad in 1996. Services were conducted by members themselves as before, until the first full-time priest arrived in April 2001. The pandit now travels frequently to serve virtually the entire Vancouver Island area, with temple attendees coming from the Island, the Lower Mainland, and occasionally Seattle,



FIGURE 1.2 The steeple of the former St. Mary's Anglican Church, now Victoria Hindu Parishad, proclaims the sacred sound *Om*. *Photo by Larry DeVries*

Calgary, or even Toronto. Members speak Hindi, Telugu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengali, and Tamil, but services are conducted in Hindi. I met at the temple a very aged member whose father had come to Victoria in 1906.

On the day I attended, a continuous, round-the-clock recital of the *Tulsi Ramayana* was just finishing. Having already visited the Shree Mahalakshmi Temple in Vancouver, which was also (barely) recognizable as a former church (as, apparently, is the much larger Hindu Cultural Society and Community Centre in Burnaby), I was surprised to see the steeple intact in Victoria but surmounted with a beautifully calligraphed red *Om* on a white background (Figure 1.2). Since its founding, a variety of *murtis* in both North and South Indian styles have been added to the altar area. Seven or eight people were present when I arrived, but by the time of *bhajans* there were more than fifty. The service began with a long chant by Mr. Jhagra and proceeded in much the same way as I have already described elsewhere. Realizing his central role in so many years of religious activities, I asked Mr. Jhagra how he had prepared. His immediate and very reverent response was “my *guruji*,” Swami Satyamitranand Maharaj, who had visited in 1976 and is now extremely well known as the founder of the Bharat Mata (Mother India) temple in the sacred pilgrimage

city of Hardwar.<sup>28</sup> The swami's *satsang* (devotional gathering) and "video presentation" are given one evening a month at the Burnaby temple, illustrating the broad connections within the province.<sup>29</sup>

This temple represents a diverse and broad-minded community, indeed. Announcements included a reference to an upcoming Ahmadiyya World Religion Conference,<sup>30</sup> and members here, as at numerous other temples, shared many recommendations for contacts with diverse religious groups connected with India. An active educational program for children offered Hindi classes, music, and scriptural stories, and dance will be added in the near future. The Victoria Hindu Parishad has come into its own. The group is active, open, and confident. This characterization applies also to other, larger temples such as Lakshmi Narayan Temple, founded in 1990 and established in 1992 in a spacious building in Surrey, and Shree Mahalakshmi Temple, founded in 1990 in Vancouver. I met a Muslim man at one of the larger temples I visited. When I asked about his temple attendance, he simply replied that "many streams lead to one ocean." This widely quoted Hindu tenet appears to express the confidence of a community in control of its own social and spiritual destiny.

Other large metropolitan temples show similar growth. The Ram Krishna Mandir at the Vedic Cultural Society of British Columbia<sup>31</sup> is situated on No. 5 Road in Richmond, just north of a small Sri Lankan Hindu temple, Subramaniya Swamy Temple, in an area where a succession of Buddhist, Sikh, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish houses of worship has inspired the local appellation "Highway to Heaven." Sri Sri Radha Madana-Mohan Temple<sup>32</sup> is located on the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON) property on Southeast Marine Drive in Burnaby. According to the temple brochure, ISKON was established in British Columbia in 1969 by two disciples from San Francisco. Although it has a distinctly Euro-Canadian clergy, the Krishna temple is extremely popular locally, with an estimated 1,000 mostly Indo-Canadian visitors celebrating *Krishna janmastami* (birthday) in the summer of 2007. The Vishva Hindu Parishad has recently broken ground for a new temple on the immediately adjacent property,<sup>33</sup> showing the continued blending of a tradition that arrived via the United States (the "Hare Krishnas") with the Vishva Hindu Parishad, which came directly from India.<sup>34</sup> It is interesting that these two are located only a few blocks from the original Radha House in Burnaby.

There is one final temple that best fits with the "large temples" in this section because of its pan-Indian ecumenism, even though it is much smaller due to its location. The South Okanagan Hindu Temple in Summerland<sup>35</sup> is the only ethnic Hindu temple in the BC Interior, located about halfway between the temples in the Lower Mainland and Victoria described above and the Radha temple in Kootenay Bay. According to temple vice president Arvin-der Mohan, Hindu families began arriving in the Okanagan Valley in 1965

and met with local Sikhs for devotions for quite some time. The small Hindu community, now about fifteen families in Summerland and ten families in adjacent Penticton, founded its own temple with the purchase of a Spanish mission-style church building and the formal installation of the divine images on 25 July 1993. All religious services are conducted by the devotees themselves, for there is no resident pandit. According to Arvinder, this has the advantage of affording them a degree of freedom from the formalism of ritual actions and timing.

The service I attended was indeed relaxed and happy. There were about thirty people, with slightly more women than men, as at other temples, and a number of children and youth, the latter participating fully. Women, men, and young people all took part in *bhajans*, sung from books. Arvinder then led the group from a photocopied sheet in more formal *bhajans*, the *arati* hymn (although there was no formal offering of flame), and the invocation of peace. He identified these recitations as having been compiled from Arya Samaj sources (discussed below). The simplicity of the service sheet made it easy for the youth to memorize, and they participated fully in the singing. The group was remarkably diverse for its size, with Punjabi and Gujarati families of three generations, a local Sikh family, and visitors from England, from Assam and Karnataka, India, and from Surrey, British Columbia. A Euro-Canadian woman from neighbouring Kelowna occasionally comes to teach the children.

The main hall contains *murtis* of Radha and Krishna, Shiva, Parvati, Brahma, Ganesha, and Shiva's bull, Nandi (Figure 1.3). In addition to these images, there was much evidence of the work of the devotees themselves, not only in the canopy, lights, and hand-stitched "*om*" (upper left corner of Figure 1.3) but also in the selection of pictures. One object initially escaped my attention as I was preoccupied with recording the expected images – a reindeer, visible on the left of Figure 1.3, which I saw only after the photos were developed. This revelation (confirmed by a temple devotee) drove home the point that this was a Canadian altar, made by Canadians, in Canada. In one of British Columbia's least ethnically diverse areas,<sup>36</sup> the South Okanagan Hindu Temple is at home in a church building strongly reminiscent of the significant Portuguese presence in the Okanagan Valley. The temple is securely established and is an active participant in its community in such ways as student aid in the form of the "Okanagan Hindu Temple and Culture Society Bursary."<sup>37</sup> The "Hindu idiom" is spoken here with a distinctly Canadian accent.

### **Re-formations New and Old**

The large temples account for by far the greatest portion of collective Hindu practice in British Columbia. They are rooted in the religious insights and organizations of recent centuries in India and are closely connected to both the



FIGURE 1.3 The reindeer *murti* (left) joins Krishna, Radha, Brahma, Parvati, and Shiva at the South Okanagan Hindu Temple in Summerland. *Photo by Larry DeVries*

development of that country as a modern nation and its cultural contribution to global society. This presence does not just reproduce classical Hinduism but grows out of a virtual habit of self-examination and reform in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and ultimately from practically the earliest ages. Stages in the development of reform and reformulation in Indian religious tradition, really present in all, are salient in several BC groups, such as the Brahma Kumaris, a group headquartered in Rajasthan, India, and the Sant Nirankari Mission, with headquarters today in Delhi. Both were founded around 1930 and are worldwide missions.<sup>38</sup>

Hindu education and practice in British Columbia have been greatly supported by the presence of the Chinmaya Mission Advaita Vedanta Centre since 1972. Swami Chinmayananda, well known as the founder of the Vishva Hindu Parishad in India in 1964 (see above), also established a remarkable pan-India network of centres for religious education that quickly grew into a worldwide organization. Swami Chinmayananda's work, indeed his conversion, was inspired by a visit in 1947 to the Shivananda Ashram in Rishikesh, India, later the site of Swami Radha's initiation (see above). Swami Chinmayananda's visit to Vancouver in 1972 was one of his many tours known as *jnana-yajna* (offerings

of insight), at first in India and then throughout the world, which essentially democratized a previously elitist course of study and practice. He delivered three lectures at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, but more importantly, became the personal guru of his host couple, Mr. and Mrs. Raj Kapahi, who formed the centre of the new group.<sup>39</sup> As with the Vivekananda Vedanta Society, close connections were established with a Seattle group, with teachers travelling to Vancouver on a regular basis. The Vancouver group, the only active one in British Columbia, is small, with a little over a half-dozen students, but clearly presents a rigorous course of textual study. Connections are maintained with groups at four centres in California.

An earlier reform movement stems from 1875, when the Arya Samaj was founded in the Punjab by Swami Dayananda Sarasvati. This reform arose from a radical rejection of image worship and temples, moving toward the religion of the earlier Vedas and Upanishads and the *Bhagavad Gita*. With this came a reinterpretation of the caste system along lines arguably consistent with the earliest texts, as expressive of social function rather than status based on ritual purity. Interpretation of the canon is always allowed in the “Hindu idiom.”

The Arya Samaj remains influential in India as well as in the diaspora, as seen earlier. The BC group draws mainly on Fijian Hindus and some diasporic Guyanese.<sup>40</sup> It meets weekly in the small stucco one-storey Fiji Canada Association building in Burnaby, just over the boundary with Vancouver, like the Vishva Hindu Parishad to the north and the Devi temple to the south. The service, which is attended by a dozen or so families of elders, parents, and children, consists entirely of a fire ritual (*havan*) accompanied by mantras (verses and formulas) of the Vedas. Shobha Rae, a priestess of the group, and the other priest wore the garb of North Indian pandits, and all officiants donned a yellow sash on which was printed in Sanskrit the beautiful Gayatri Mantra of the Rigveda: “Let us think deeply on the radiance to be desired of God Savitr; may he stimulate our minds!” The mantra is symbolic of spiritual illumination, but also in this case social liberation, for Swami Dayananda insisted that it be available to all, contrary to its traditional restriction based on caste and gender. The central rite is the *havan* (literally “offering”), in which the fire itself is the divine element, there being no image required. The service concluded with *bhajans* in Hindi and a reading from a biography of Swami Dayananda in Hindi. A communal meal followed. Shobha, who works as a freedom of information officer for the city of Vancouver, became the first woman priest of the group in British Columbia through an intense course of self-study together with the guidance of Dr. Satish Prakash, director of a *gurukul* (Arya Samaj school) in Queens, New York, and continues her study with annual visits to Queens for mentoring by Dr. Prakash.

Whereas Swami Dayananda was active in the late nineteenth century, the remarkable poet-saint Kabir dates from perhaps the fifteenth century, in Northern India, and is the spiritual focus of the Kabir Cultural Centre (Guru Kabir Association of Canada). The poetry of Kabir, at once mystical and plainspoken, is claimed by both Muslims and Hindus and is also found in the Sikh holy book (*Adi Granth*).<sup>41</sup> They are thus consistent with the first Sikh Guru's teaching that there is "neither Muslim nor Hindu," only a God beyond description (or "without qualities," Sanskrit *nirguna*), beyond portrayal as image, but nevertheless accessible to human intuition. Kabir was a mystic who spoke as a devotee.

In British Columbia, the work of Kabir has been brought to life in the Kabir Cultural Centre, especially by its president, Dr. Jagessar Das. The group has met since 1976, in members' homes at first, and acquired its present location in Surrey in 1996.<sup>42</sup> It has remained stable since its beginnings at about fifteen to twenty members, most of whom are of Guyanese heritage, with a few from Fiji or other communities. The location is a modest two-storey suite in an industrial-commercial park, not unlike that of the Bhameshwari Mandir. The worship area is above (with eating and visiting areas below) and is furnished with a large framed portrait of Kabir, below which is an altar with pictures of the two most recent leaders of the group in India, together with flowers, the *Bijak* (a book of Kabir), including Dr. Das's English translations, a lamp, and offerings. The group has services every Sunday, yoga and meditation classes on Monday evenings, *puṛnima* (full moon) services, and a special service for Kabir (*Kabir chalisa*) on the first Wednesday of each month. It celebrates an annual festival of Kabir's birth as well as the traditional Indian holidays of Holi and Diwali.

Dr. Das was born of parents belonging to the Kabir *panth* (sect) who indentured to Guyana in 1910. As a young man, he attended the University of British Columbia Medical School and read Rabindranath Tagore's translations of Kabir's poetry. "It was the first thing I read in English on Kabir," he says. He typed out a copy of the whole book. In the early 1960s, Dr. Das attended lectures by Swami Shivananda's successor (see above), Swami Chidananda, at the YWCA on Burrard Street in Vancouver. After beginning his medical practice, Dr. Das met weekly with Pandit Gian Chandje Shastri of the Burnaby Vishva Hindu Parishad to read and translate the Hindi verses of Kabir. The assistance of the pandit was necessary since Dr. Das's first language is English, not Hindi. It is also a tribute to the successful outreach of the Vishva Hindu Parishad. In the mid-1980s, Jagdish Shastri, a monk of the Kabir sect from India, stayed in Dr. Das's home for three years, and the two of them pored over Dr. Das's translations, correcting and polishing. Two of three volumes have now been published as *The Bijak of Guru Kabir* (Surrey: Guru Kabir Association of Canada).

A fourth kind of reformulation is rooted in the compendium of yoga compiled by Patanjali in the early centuries of the Common Era. In British Columbia, these teachings are practised by the Dhyana Yoga Meditation Society of Vancouver, headed by Dr. Avinash Anand.<sup>43</sup> The group is not formally active as such, but remains a network of practitioners that spans the globe in a unique way. The society traces its beginnings to a visit in 1981 by Dr. Usharbudh Arya (now internationally known as Swami Veda Bharati),<sup>44</sup> when he delivered lectures in a member's home, and a second visit in April the following year, during which five to six people were initiated. Members practise meditation on Monday nights and *hatha yoga*, the discipline of yogic postures, on Saturdays. Dr. Anand emphasized that the connection between disciple and guru transcends distance and time. Once one is connected to the lineage, which is ultimately traced back to the deity Shiva, "they help you." When I asked Dr. Anand about other religious practices, he related how he had once been a regular temple attendee, maintaining a regular schedule of offerings, but that his yoga practice had gradually taken more time and seemed more in harmony with his personal development. The Dhyana Yoga Meditation Society clearly shares features with such groups as Yashodhara Ashram; both seek a deepening of religious experience on a personal level, beyond the ritual and social, and presumably beyond language or sect.

### **Jains, Indian Buddhists, and Ravidasis**

British Columbia is also home to South Asian immigrant practitioners of Jainism and Buddhism, religions that, although not "orthodox Hindu," share much of its idiom.<sup>45</sup> Jainism dates itself far back in time in India, with a succession of twenty-four enlightened teachers, the latest of whom was Mahavira, an elder contemporary of the Buddha in the sixth century BCE. By contrast, Indian Buddhism was virtually lost around 1200 CE and was revitalized by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a lawyer and constitutionalist in the Indian Independence movement who saw Buddhism as a movement for the upliftment of untouchables.<sup>46</sup> Shortly before his death in 1956, Ambedkar led many of low status in the newly independent country in converting to Buddhism.

The local Jain community consists of thirty-five to forty families who meet in homes, particularly on the annual occasions of the birth of Mahavira in spring; Dashalakshana, a ten-day observance of ten principal virtues in summer; and Jain Diwali, celebrating the nirvana of Mahavira in the fall. Unlike Ontario, which has a much larger Jain population (and also more Hindus), British Columbia has no temple or resident monastic. The community belongs mostly to the Svetambara sect, but the earliest members, Ananda K. Jain and Gyan Chand Singhai, who arrived in 1966, are Digambara Jains. An excellent book explaining Jain belief and practice and extending it to the contemporary world

has been published by Vastupal Parikh, a former professor at the former Notre Dame University in Nelson, British Columbia.<sup>47</sup>

The Buddhist group known as the Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Association began in 1981, led by Mohan Bangai. Mohan came to Canada as a student and was associated with a practising group of fifteen to twenty families meeting in homes in Victoria, Vancouver and elsewhere in the Lower Mainland, and Quesnel. From this group, the Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha (see below) split off; it still houses a collection of Ambedkar's works and remains dedicated to ameliorating caste-based injustice.<sup>48</sup> After reading an article on Ambedkar's work for the Scheduled Castes (untouchables) in India, Mohan was inspired to further study Ambedkar and his eventual religion of choice, Buddhism. The essential message, he felt, was first one of spiritual development, and this entailed development of an egalitarian society through education. Studies in Buddhism led to an encounter with the Goenka movement and continuing study with local *vipassana* (meditation) groups. S.N. Goenka lectured to a group of 800 at the Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha during his visit to British Columbia in 2002. Both Mohan and his wife, Pam, are practitioners and teachers of *vipassana* because "without meditation Buddhism is not Buddhism." Mohan sees the Buddhism of Ambedkar as contributing to a general social uplift, not only for "oppressed people, but for all people," since it, simply put, "increases good values and decreases bad values." Ambedkar's Buddhism thus fits hand-in-glove with Canadian multiculturalism, defined by Mohan as "extracting universal ideas out of various contributions for the benefit of all." Mohan has also been active with the Indian Buddhist Society of Canada (discussed by Bandu Madanayake in Chapter 6, particularly with respect to the Surrey Buddhist Vihara, with which the Indian Buddhist Society of Canada cooperates).

The Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, located in Burnaby, is quite closely related to the Indian Buddhists in British Columbia and elsewhere.<sup>49</sup> Established in 1982 for the "primary purpose of propagating the teachings of Shri Guru Ravidass Ji," it acts as both a gurdwara following a Sikh code of conduct (*rehat-maryada*) and a community centre. Annual events celebrate "Shri Guru Ravidassji, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Shri Guru Arjan Devji, Shri Guru Nanak Devji, and anniversary of Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha."<sup>50</sup> The worship service follows the Sikh *rehat-maryada*, but the hall contains a large portrait of Guru Ravidas, just to the side of the Guru *Adi Granth*. I was informed that some members removed the portrait but that it was reinstalled after a while. This indicates the dynamic state of the Ravidasi religion, a "creative tension," as one member put it.<sup>51</sup>

The portrait issue as well as the very name of the Sabha designating Ravidas as "guru" point to the dialogue between Sikh identity and Ravidasi identity. The Ravidasi faith, like the Kabir *panth* discussed earlier or the Sikhs, whose

sacred text also contains the poems of both, is universalist in its religious message, worshipping the “one true God,”<sup>52</sup> but it is uniquely particularist in at least one area of social practice: caste. The Ravidasi faith centres on Ravidas precisely because he was of the same “untouchable” or *dalit* (oppressed) caste status as the worshippers, the Chamar subcaste. Some scholars explain this adoption by saying that Ravidas “values his own lowly position as a vantage point,”<sup>53</sup> while a worshipper at the Burnaby temple simply says that with a separate temple (from the mainstream Sikh gurdwaras), they “feel more comfortable, not being reminded of low status.” Indeed, the temple recently restricted *membership* to those of the caste of Guru Ravidas (although all are invited to *worship*), a decision that was challenged at and upheld by the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal.<sup>54</sup> The group acts as a focal point for caste uplift and social conscience in general, with activities related to minority issues and non-violence. The temple is a refuge from which to speak most authentically against social inequity in the context of both theological universalism and liberal democracy, an invaluable thread woven into the fabric of Canadian multiculturalism.

### **Conclusion**

South Asian religious groups in British Columbia are, like the province itself, diverse and divided, but also seek in many ways to transcend these divisions.<sup>55</sup> They vary widely from universalizing to highly particularist with regard to practice, focus of worship or spiritual practice, language, or even caste. Their ideas and practices have arrived both with immigration from South Asia or intermediate points and by diffusion through an existing receptive population. The diversity within groups may be ideologically crafted as a unifying factor or it may appear as the spontaneous colloquy of many voices that T.N. Madan calls “folk pluralism.”<sup>56</sup>

The gatherings and dispersals represented by group members are reflected in their practices. The multiplicity of trajectories of those gatherings is often noted. Some have remarked on the “twice migrant” path; I have noted above the ripple of ideas that occurs in a variety of ways. Not yet fully studied is the rural-to-urban migration that has been experienced both in the home country and in Canada. Once or several times, migrant folk may congregate in a home, a rented space, or a “temple” that may call itself a community centre, where people can feel at home. Like many of the groups studied in the other chapters, Hindus worship at home as well as in temples. But these new “temples” are in this sense new homes. Having frequently begun in private homes, they are refuges, as Don Baker notes in Chapter 8, shelters in which not only the linguistic but also the religious idiom and much else (including dress and food)

are shared. Once secure and collectively engaged, the community may reach out, for example, from Hindu to Sikh, as I found in several groups, or in a “universalist” mode sought by some groups studied in this chapter and in Chapter 12 – in any case, knitting together the fabric of Canadian multicultural society.

These groups of people are interconnected within and outside the province, and are connected with Canadian society as a whole. Most of them are community-based, supported by and serving those in a particular locale. Some groups appear to have a particular affinity with other groups along the West Coast, such as ISKON, the Yogananda group, and the Chinmaya Mission, all with groups in California; and the Vedanta Society and others with groups in Washington state. There are connections to the east as well, with the Sri Murugan Temple drawing priests from Montreal and practitioners of the Arya Samaj making annual journeys to New York. Among social connections, perhaps the most striking is the maintenance of caste affiliation by the Guru Ravidass Sabha. While Vertovec reasonably predicts the effacement of caste essentially on the grounds that as an entire system it does not travel well piecemeal,<sup>57</sup> in the case of the Guru Ravidass Sabha, *dalit* status is foregrounded as a means of raising consciousness and seeking social justice across multiple (not only caste) boundaries. Canadian multiculturalism, while stemming from a liberal egalitarianism, also recognizes distinctiveness and provides the milieu for this work.

Throughout this chapter, I have tried to maintain the focus on religion, although I have sometimes needed to use a synonym. Not only is “religion” a somewhat ignored topic compared with others in the academic realm but the religions discussed in this book are some of the least studied, although they are neighbours and constituents of the very fabric of modern democracies like Canada.<sup>58</sup> Speaking of religion as a kind of language (“the Hindu idiom”), as an instrument of expression, communication, and contemplation, has enabled us to see an immense variety of groups as speakers of “dialects” of the “Hindu idiom” – different dialects, but mutually intelligible. Since these groups are constituents of BC society, they expand the expressive range of and the potential for communication between all residents of the province. New residents find a ready-made home in established groups, and established groups avail themselves of new ideas and practices to enrich their spiritual lives. Charles Taylor identified the lifeblood of a liberal multicultural society as recognition of the dignity of the individual, which “forges identity” and allows one to live in such a society as a whole human being.<sup>59</sup> To take one example, the richness of the religious and social fabric in this province enabled Dr. Das to study Hindi at the Vishva Hindu Parishad and parlay this into a contribution to the development in British Columbia of a religious group that he first knew growing up

in Guyana. In another example, newcomers directly from India both find recognition in, and themselves recognize, the religious foundations in the Vedanta Society or ISKON, and flourish within these groups simply because of the power and authenticity of the “Hindu idiom.”

Taylor observed that a multiculturalism of respect and recognition can be rather passive and fragmenting. He proposed in addition a “multiculturalism of value.” This kind of multiculturalism actively reaches beyond mere “recognition” or a passive “tolerance,” actively seeking the value and worth of complex, long-standing, and widely practised human institutions such as religions. The necessity in modern pluralistic democracies of active engagement with others is widely recognized in the contemporary study of religious pluralism.<sup>60</sup> Certainly, South Asian immigrants to British Columbia have valued the religious footholds established not only by other immigrants but also by converts attracted to “the Hindu idiom” because of its relevance to their lives in a modern society – all being elements of the “Divine Form” mentioned in the inscription at the beginning of this chapter.

#### NOTES

- 1 Information in this section comes from field visits of 29 January and 21 February 2006, and from interviews with Mr. Darshan (Dave) Sharma, president of the temple.
- 2 Religious activities in many of the traditions studied in this book also take place in homes, places of business, or informal gatherings. Additional information on the practices of ethnic Hindus in Canada can be found in Harold Coward and Sikata Banerjee, “Hindus in Canada: Negotiating Identity in a ‘Different’ Homeland,” in *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*, ed. Paul A. Bramadat and David Seljak (Toronto: Pearson Longman, 2005), 35, 37. Coward’s brief characterization of Hindu congregational religious practice as “Protestant-style” ignores a long-standing practice in South Asian devotional traditions that is described in many sources. Fenggang Yang and Helen Rose Ebaugh, in “Transformations in New Immigrant Religions and Their Global Implications,” *American Sociological Review* 66, 2 (2001): 269-88, consider “congregational structure” more systematically under a number of factors. Both studies would benefit from the vivid description and analysis of group worship in India by Milton B. Singer, “The Radha-Krishna Bhajanas of Madras City,” in *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes*, ed. Milton Singer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 90-172. The urban situation studied by Singer parallels the urban groups in this book.
- 3 BC STATS, <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca>.
- 4 Sikh traditions are considered in a separate chapter because of their unique history in British Columbia. BC and Ontario are the two provinces with the highest percentages of new South Asian immigrants (<http://www.statscan.ca>). In BC, Sikhs make up 3.5 percent of the total population and Hindus around 1 percent, whereas in Ontario there are relatively more Hindus than Sikhs. For immigrant Hindu religious groups in Ontario with some very useful Indo-Canadian history, see Milton Israel, *In the Further Soil: A Social History of Indo-Canadians in Ontario* (Richmond Hill, ON: Organization for the Promotion of Indian Culture, 1994).
- 5 Martin Baumann, “Protective Amulets and Awareness Techniques, or How to Make Sense

- of Buddhism in the West,” in *Westward Dharma: Buddhism beyond Asia*, ed. Charles S. Prebish and Martin Baumann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 59.
- 6 “Sikhing freedom,” *Vancouver Courier*, 26 January 2005 (article is now located at <http://archive.vancourier.com>). Of course, in many cases ethnicity may just as well prevail, as especially noted by Verne A. Dusenbery, “On the Moral Sensitivities of Sikhs,” in *Divine Passions: The Social Construction of Emotion in India*, ed. Owen M. Lynch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 239-61.
  - 7 Paul A. Bramadat and David Seljak, eds., *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada* (Toronto: Pearson Longman, 2005), 230, 225.
  - 8 In *The Graceful Guru: Hindu Female Gurus in India and the United States*, ed. Karen Pechilis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 168.
  - 9 Bruce Matthews, ed., *Buddhism in Canada* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).
  - 10 Charles Anderson, Tirthankar Bose, and Joseph I. Richardson, eds., *Circle of Voices: A History of the Religious Communities in British Columbia* (Lantzville, BC: Oolichan Books, 1983), 262. This is a basic work on religion in British Columbia.
  - 11 K. Laxmi Narayan, *Indian Diaspora: A Demographic Perspective*, Occasional Paper no. 3 (Hyderabad: Centre for Study of Indian Diaspora, University of Hyderabad, n.d.). See <http://www.uohyd.ernet.in/sss/cinddiaspora/occ3.html>.
  - 12 In the *Indo-Canadian Oral History Collection*, “made up of two separate projects to interview early Indo-Canadian settlers in Canada, almost all of them British Columbians,” by Dr. Hari Sharma, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Simon Fraser University. See <http://content.lib.sfu.ca/icohc/index.php>.
  - 13 Field visits of 17 and 20 July 2005 and interviews of 19 July with Swami Lalitananda, and 20 July with Swami Gopalananda. Additional sources are pamphlets and books published by the organization, and the websites <http://www.radha.org>, <http://www.yasodhara.org>, and <http://www.radhavancover.org>.
  - 14 Arvind Sharma, *The Concept of Universal Religion in Modern Hindu Thought* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK, and New York: Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, 1998), 2. The scholar of Bengali mysticism June McDaniel notes its distinct origin in classical Hindu texts and exegesis in “The Hindu Roots of Universalism, and Its Relevance to Modern Religious Studies,” *World Association for Vedic Studies Conference*, July 2002; see Infinity Foundation, <http://www.infinityfoundation.com>.
  - 15 Field visit of 15 January 2006 and a telephone interview with Charles Scott, the current leader of the group. See Polly Trout's 2000 study of Yogananda in the United States. See also <http://www.yogananda-srf.org>.
  - 16 See <http://www.expandinglight.org/who/about/ananda-village.htm>.
  - 17 Field visit of 10 February 2006 and conversations with a variety of members. Carl T. Jackson gives a complete account of the society, including history and analysis. Arvind Sharma, *Concept of Universal Religion*, 42-72, discusses the “universalist” views of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. A fascinating personal account of the order in India is found in *The Ochre Robe* by the singular Austrian Swami Agehananda Bharati (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961).
  - 18 Steven Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 162.
  - 19 Field visit of 14 February 2006 and conversations with the temple president, Mr. Indar Narayan Singh; field visit of 4 February 2006 to Then India Sanmarga Iky Sangam Educational and Cultural Society in Richmond and interview with James G. Reddy, past president; field visits of 25, 26, and 30 July 2006 to Shri Durga Bhameshwari Mandir in Surrey and interview with Yashpal Indarjit Parmar, president of the society, and pandit Rajpal

- Sharma; field visit of 27 July 2005 to Arul Migu Thirkadevi Hindu Society (BC) in Burnaby, interview of member, and temple website at <http://www.geocities.com/aruldurgavol>.
- 20 Here is an exact parallel to Manmohan Wirk's account of the establishment in 1908 of the first BC gurdwara to house a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib held by a devotee: Manmohan Singh Wirk, *A History of the Sikhs of Victoria, BC* (Victoria: M.S. Wirk, 2005). See also Chapter 2.
- 21 Such a perception was tentatively noted by Jim Wilson, "Fijian Hinduism," in *Rama's Banishment: A Centenary Tribute to the Fiji Indians, 1879-1979*, ed. Vijay Mishra (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979), 86-111. For this reference, I am indebted to Dr. Kam Prasad, most recently of Tokushima Bunri University. Milton Israel, *In the Further Soil*, 10, 38, 43, records similar sentiments.
- 22 The Bham temple may be seen online at Info Punjab, <http://www.infopunjab.com/punjab/travel/bham.htm>.
- 23 A.K. Ramanujan, following Victor Turner, explained the initial breaking of barriers as "anti-structure," leading ultimately to "counter-structure," in *Speaking of Siva* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 34-37.
- 24 K. Kailasapathy, "The Writings of the Tamil Siddhas," in *The Sants: Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India*, ed. K. Schomer and W.H. McLeod (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), 385.
- 25 Birth records were confirmed by Verne Deubler of the California Genealogical Society.
- 26 Field visits to four temples: (1) Hindu Cultural Society and Community Centre of BC in Burnaby on 12 February 2006; (2) Lakshmi Narayan Temple (Vedic Hindu Society) in Surrey on 2 July 2005, and talks with temple president Parshottam (Paul) Goel and secretary Brahma Swarup Varma; (3) Shree Mahalakshmi Temple in Vancouver on 17 July 2005, and interview with Mrs. Chaitanya, wife of temple priest Pandit Prameya Chaitanya; and (4) Victoria Hindu Parishad in Saanichton, Vancouver Island, on 14 August 2005, and interviews with Pandit Parmod Kumar Gaur, temple president Dr. Prasad Chintalapati, and founding member and past president Mr. Gurudutt Jhagra. The Burnaby and Victoria temple websites are at <http://www.webpuddy.com/vhp> and <http://www.victoriahindutemple.com>, respectively.
- 27 Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora*, 162-63.
- 28 A sometimes carping account of this temple and its place in the development of national consciousness is found in Lise McKean, *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and the Hindu Nationalist Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- 29 See <http://www.webpuddy.com/vhp>.
- 30 See Chapter 3, on Asian Muslims in British Columbia.
- 31 The temple website is found at <http://www.geocities.com/ramkrishnamandir>. The temple was visited on 5 August 2006.
- 32 Milton Israel, *In the Further Soil*, 62, notes that at an Ontario ISKON temple, "the congregation is virtually all Indian."
- 33 See "New Temple Building Plans under Construction 2007-2009 5420 Marine Drive, Burnaby" at <http://www.hindutempleburnaby.com>.
- 34 A rural group of ISKON followers is found in the BC Interior, "Saranagati Village" (or "Saranagati Farm") near Ashcroft. See <http://www.saranagati.ca> for information on the site as a cooperative (thus joining a long history of rural cooperatives in the province), as well as "Venables Valley School." Since the "Hare Krishnas" are well known, with an extensive Internet presence, and are much-studied, I mention only a study of newer developments in the movement: E. Burke Rochford, *Hare Krishna Transformed* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).
- 35 Information in this section comes from a temple visit on 8 August 2008.
- 36 "Kelowna remains one of the least diverse metropolitan areas in the nation, with a visible

- minority population of just five per cent”: *Vancouver Sun*, 2 April 2008, reporting on census release. See <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/british-columbia/story/2008/04/02/bc-most-diverse-province.html>. The temple is the only non-Christian religious group in a local listing (<http://www.boomtrek.com/canada/summerland/services/churches.html>).
- 37 See [http://www.bclocalnews.com/okanagan\\_similkameen/summerlandreview/lifestyles/22835729.html](http://www.bclocalnews.com/okanagan_similkameen/summerlandreview/lifestyles/22835729.html).
- 38 See [http://www.bkwsu.org/index\\_html](http://www.bkwsu.org/index_html) and <http://www.nirankari.com/vancouver/index.html>.
- 39 This material is derived from a visit to the Chinmaya Mission in Vancouver on 13 January 2006, and from an unpublished manuscript by Jaya Muzumdar, who now teaches there. I also am indebted to Brahmacarini Robyn Thompson, the main teacher in British Columbia since 1986.
- 40 Field visit of 23 October 2005 and conversations with members. To illustrate the influence of the Arya Samaj in the Hindu diaspora, according to Hugh Johnston, “The Development of the Punjabi Community in Vancouver since 1961,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 20, 2 (1988): 11-12, the first priest of British Columbia’s largest temple, the Vishva Hindu Parishad, was an Arya-samaji.
- 41 Kabir’s poems were translated into English by Rabindranath Tagore in 1915 and Charlotte Vaudeville in 1957. Much work on the Kabir sect in India has been done by David N. Lorenzen.
- 42 Information in this section is derived from field visits of 2 and 22 October 2005; interviews with Dr. Das, especially on 8 August 2006; *The Kabir Voice*; and the group website, Kabir Association of Canada, <http://www.members.shaw.ca/kabirweb>.
- 43 Field visit of 1 December 2005 and interview with Dr. Avinash Anand.
- 44 See <http://www.themeditationcenter.org> and <http://www.swamiveda.org>.
- 45 Interviews with Gyan Chand Singhai on 1 September 2006 and Mohan Bangai on 30 July 2006.
- 46 The bibliography on Ambedkar and the Ambedkar movement is very extensive. For an introduction, see Surendra Jondhale and Johannes Beltz, eds., *Reconstructing the World: B.R. Ambedkar and Buddhism in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), particularly chapters by Eleanor Zelliot, G. Aloysius, and Maren Bellwinkel-Schempp; see also Sukomal Chaudhuri, *Contemporary Buddhism in Bangladesh* (Calcutta: Atisha Memorial Publishing Society, 1982), and quite a few articles by Heinz Bechert.
- 47 Vastupal Parikh, *Jainism and the New Spirituality* (Toronto: Peace Publications, 2002).
- 48 See <http://www.gururavidassabha.org>.
- 49 The Ravidas groups, composed of self-designated Chamars, an “untouchable” (or *dalit*, “oppressed”) caste, is included here for its strong reformist strain and also because recent surveys of South Asian religious groups in the United States and Canada have, somewhat ironically, not touched on them, despite many Ravidas associations in these countries. (Mark Juergensmeyer devotes two chapters to the Ravidasis in India and in the United Kingdom in *Religion as Social Vision: The Movement against Untouchability in 20th Century Punjab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), and the theme is important throughout his book.) A similar lack of notice of *dalits* in studies of South Asian Christians was cited by Rachel Fell McDermott, “From Hinduism to Christianity, from India to New York: Bondage and Exodus Experiences in the Lives of Indian Dalit Christians in the Diaspora,” in *South Asian Christian Diaspora: Invisible Diaspora in Europe and North America*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen and Selva J. Raj (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Press, 2008), 223-48.
- 50 See <http://www.gururavidassabha.org>.
- 51 I owe this and many other points, such as the reference to the British Columbia Human

Rights Tribunal below, to numerous conversations with Jai Birdi, member of the Sabha and president of Chetna Association of Canada.

- 52 Joseph Schaller, "Sanskritization, Caste Uplift, and Social Dissidence in the Sant Ravidas Panth," in *Bhakti Religion in North India: Community, Identity and Political Action*, ed. David N. Lorenzen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 113. Schaller also notes variation in self-ascribed religious affiliation, including "Hindu," "non-Hindu," and "Ravidasi."
- 53 John Stratton Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 17.
- 54 *Sabota and Shergill v. Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Temple*, 2008 BCHRT 269 (<http://www.bchrt.bc.ca/decisions/2008/july-aug-sept.htm>).
- 55 Themes for further study are mentioned by Dan Overmyer in the Concluding Comments below. Background can be found in Anderson et al., *Circle of Voices*, and Coward and Banerjee, "Hindus in Canada." Coward's portion of the chapter repeats his earlier work.
- 56 T.N. Madan, ed., *India's Religions: Perspectives from Sociology and History* (New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 31-32.
- 57 Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora*, 52.
- 58 Bramadat and Seljak, *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*, 232-33, note this for Canada. Diana L. Eck, whose whole *Pluralism Project* was motivated by this in the United States, makes specific note in *A New Religious America* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), 18.
- 59 Charles Taylor, Amy Gutmann, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Jurgen Habermas, Stephen C. Rockefeller, Michael Walzer, and Susan Wolf, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 63-73. See the final report in 2008 of the Quebec Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences (Bouchard-Taylor Commission), available at <http://www.accommodements.qc.ca/index-en.html>.
- 60 Robert J. Schreiter, "Summation: Call to Action," in *A Dome of Many Colors: Studies in Religious Pluralism, Identity, and Unity*, ed. Arvind Sharma and Kathleen M. Dugan (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 190.