

## Introduction

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### Delhi, 1788

The Mughal throne was a shadow of its former glory in 1788. Shah Alam, the emperor, was important only for the mantle of authority he represented. His predecessors, men like Akbar and Aurangzeb, the “great Moguls,” had been rightly regarded as the most powerful men on earth in their time. By the 1750s their power had migrated to regional principalities, or “successor states,” as they have come to be known. To make matters worse, the devolution of Mughal power meant that progressively less of the fabled wealth of India, which began in the rich soil of the countryside, made its way back to the center by way of taxation and annual tribute. The new men of consequence ruled from capitals like Hyderabad, Kabul, Jaipur, Mysore, Lucknow, Poona, and Calcutta. Some came from families that had served the Mughal throne for generations. Others were the heirs of rebel chieftains who had long chafed at Mughal dominance. Some, indeed, were a little of both: imperial politics, in India and in Europe, depended on the military subordination – and incorporation – of difference. And some were relative newcomers, men of trade from Europe who had brought not only an endless supply of New World silver but also new kinds of military organization and, eventually (but not just yet), new ways of understanding governance and the state.

Shah Alam possessed little power but he retained considerable authority. Over the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Mughal emperor and his Indo-Persianate nobility had crafted a culture of imperial politics that enabled an expanding circle of political-military elites from diverse ethno-racial, religious, and linguistic backgrounds to work together in the interests of the empire. By the eighteenth century, and particularly during its latter half when India was the most diverse place on earth, the Mughal throne symbolized the distant potential of that subcontinental empire, that language of power which is authority. In 1788 Shah Alam was still the sun around which competing interests orbited, maneuvering for advantage, each against the others.

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His decisions still conferred an air of legality, the impress of legitimacy, if little else.

Nevertheless, Shah Alam was approaching a crisis. Delhi's Shahjahanabad, the grand imperial city within a city that the Mughal emperor had built in the middle of the seventeenth century, was a viper's nest of warlords and intrigue. Circling above were vultures, the major powers, the English and the Marathas prominent among them, waiting for the emperor – the system – to falter and collapse so that they might feed on his carcass. They had plenty of cause to expect a ready feast. The weaker Shah Alam had become, the more he strove to retain his independence: and the more he attracted to his side men without clear allegiances, dangerous men, men with nothing to lose. Of particular concern to Shah Alam, and to all interested observers, in late July of 1788 was Ghulam Qadir Khan, an Afghan warlord who held the emperor prisoner in his own palace. Ghulam Qadir was unpredictable: his hatred for the emperor, fueled by the humiliation his family had suffered years earlier, was matched only by his thirst for treasure. But the emperor was not forthcoming on the location of the secret storerooms in the palace. Infuriated, the Afghan ordered Shah Alam's eyes pierced with needles. The next day, he personally carved one eyeball out of its socket and ordered a fellow Afghan to extract the other.

Not far from Delhi was another unpredictable warlord, the Maratha Mahadji Shinde. Shinde had remained aloof in the summer of 1788 while Ghulam Qadir had his way with the emperor and his family. Finally, late in the day, he decided to act. He soon took Delhi and captured Ghulam Qadir in the process. In 1789, at the repeated demands of Shah Alam, Shinde ordered the Afghan's eyes removed and sent in a casket to the restored imperial court in Delhi. But the damage had been done. The Afghan's atrocities, as Jadunath Sarkar justly remarked, "ruined the prestige of the empire beyond recovery."<sup>1</sup> They also cleared the way for open competition between the two major powers with subcontinental designs, the English and the Marathas.

If Delhi was the decaying inner city, the urban jungle of late eighteenth-century India, many of the "Vice Lords"<sup>2</sup> who prowled – or policed – its dark, narrow lanes in 1788 were *gosain* warriors commanded by the

<sup>1</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 4th edn (New Delhi 1991), vol. III, p. 263. Sarkar's narrative of Ghulam Qadir's rise and fall is on pp. 257–280. For an account of the atrocities committed by Ghulam Qadir, see Fakir Khairu-d Din Muhammad, *Ibrat-Nama*, trans. H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson in *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, vol. VIII (London 1873), pp. 249–254.

<sup>2</sup> R. Lincoln Keiser, *The Vice Lords: Warriors of the Streets* (New York 1969). The Vice Lords are a powerful North American gang founded in the 1950s in the Lawndale section of Chicago.

shadowy figure of one “Himmat Bahadur.” Indeed, Himmat Bahadur was as responsible as anyone (although Shinde comes a close second) for the depths to which Delhi had sunk in 1788. He had been secretly colluding with Ghulam Qadir since early August of 1787.<sup>3</sup> When the emperor’s palace guard had withdrawn later in that year, Himmat Bahadur was left with the responsibility of patrolling the walls of the city. He withdrew his forces in mid-July, just as Ghulam Qadir was entering Delhi, thereby abandoning the Mughal emperor to his fate. It turns out that he was motivated not by hatred for the emperor, but by a desire for revenge – against Mahadji Shinde. Four years earlier Himmat Bahadur had engineered every aspect of Shinde’s foray into and ascendancy over Delhi,<sup>4</sup> but he was rewarded with treachery. Shinde had brushed him and his men aside and had tried to take away their massive revenue estates near Delhi and pension them off to a paltry assignment in rugged Bundelkhand.<sup>5</sup> Himmat Bahadur would have none of it: Ghulam Qadir, it would appear, was his way of trying to lure Shinde into a close-quarter battle the Maratha could not win. It almost worked, but in the end Shinde would not take the bait. So Himmat Bahadur withdrew his forces so as to avoid blame for the ugly consequences that were sure to follow.

Shinde sought to imprison Himmat Bahadur in the summer of 1789, ostensibly for his role in the degradation of the emperor but mostly because the Maratha despised the *gosain*. Among other allegations, Shinde blamed him for his own failure to gain a permanent ascendancy over the Mughal throne in 1785 – even though the real cause of Shinde’s frustrations was Shinde himself, particularly his rash decision to engage in a military contest with the kingdom of Jaipur to the west soon after gaining Delhi. But there was another fuel that stoked Shinde’s wrath that summer: He suffered from a painful case of the boils which, he claimed, was caused by Himmat Bahadur’s “magical arts.”<sup>6</sup> Shinde’s

<sup>3</sup> Kirkpatrick to Governor General Cornwallis, letter received 17 Sept. 1787 (dated 5 Aug.), Bengal Secret and Political Consultation (BSPC), Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC), British Library, London.

<sup>4</sup> See Major James Browne, “Memorandum for Mr. Hastings, respecting the State of Affairs in Hindostan, January 1, 1785” (Add. MS 29,209, Hastings Papers, Manuscripts Reading Room [henceforward MRR], British Library, London), esp. fols. 161b–177a.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, letters from Anderson, the Resident with Shinde at Dig, to Cornwallis, letter received 8 February 1786 (dated 18? Jan. and 9 Mar.), BSPC; and “Copy of an arzie from Rajah Omrou Gir Behadre, written to the Nawaub Vizier,” enclosed in a letter from Harper, the Resident at Lucknow, to Governor General Cornwallis, letter received 17 Sept. 1787 (dated 14 Aug.), BSPC. Omrou Gir Behadre was Himmat Bahadur’s brother, better known to us as Umraogiri.

<sup>6</sup> Ives to Cornwallis, letter received 12 Aug. 1789 (dated 30 Jul.), BSPC. The full episode is narrated in Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 4th edn (New Delhi 1991), vol. IV, pp. 6–10.

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men even produced a woman who gave evidence to this effect, and who appeared able to ease his symptoms. Himmat Bahadur escaped from Shinde's guard, however, and took refuge with another Maratha warlord, Ali Bahadur, the "illegitimate" grandson of the *peshwa* who had recently arrived in the neighborhood seeking to make his fortune out of the chaos of Delhi politics. Eventually, through the intercession of Ali Bahadur – who stood to gain much from the armed men and political information that Himmat Bahadur could provide – Shinde was forced by the *peshwa* to make peace with the *gosain*. An unusual scene followed, in which Shinde presented himself at Ali Bahadur's camp and invested Himmat Bahadur with a *khilat*, a robe of honor. Normally, the Mughal ritual of *khilat* signified the subordination of the recipient, in this case Himmat Bahadur. But normally such gifting takes place in the *darbar* of the person giving the robes. However, Himmat Bahadur had refused to go to Shinde's *darbar* as a suppliant, begging for pardon. So, instead, Shinde was forced to go to him – in effect, to do the begging himself. This constituted a public humiliation of massive proportions for the Maratha warlord. But he had no choice: the only other option was a robe of honor for Himmat Bahadur from the *peshwa* himself. It was a blow from which Mahadji Shinde would not recover.

The remarkable sequence of events in 1788–1789 was a typical turning of the tables orchestrated by Himmat Bahadur. Indeed, the more one examines the succession of events that marked Mughal (and Maratha) decline in the late eighteenth century, and the concomitant rise of British power, the more one sees the outline of Himmat Bahadur in the background. On several occasions he emerges into the light. He fought on the side of the Mughal emperor and the Afghans against the Marathas at Panipat in 1761; he was present with the Awadhi and Mughal forces against British forces at Buxar in 1764, and helped Shuja ud-Daula escape after his defeat; he was instrumental in the downfall of Bharatpur and the rise of Najaf Khan, the Persian adventurer, at Delhi in the 1770s; he engineered Mahadji Shinde's foray into Delhi politics in the 1780s; he was the force behind Ali Bahadur's conquest of Bundelkhand in the name of the *peshwa* in the 1790s. His last act, at the end of his life in 1803, was to enable the Maratha defeat at the hands of the British in Bundelkhand and the Doab and, thereby, the British capture of Delhi, an event that catapulted the Hon'ble Company into the role of paramount power in southern Asia – and ultimately the world.

Himmat Bahadur was ubiquitous because he was the kind of person that everyone needed. He was reviled because he was the kind of person that everyone hated needing. He was the inside operator people turned to when they wanted troops, an ear to the ground, a deft negotiator,

or a dirty job done quietly. His genius lay in his ability to parlay his indispensability into power. He was aided in his work by the fact that he was not high-born, and he did not suffer the illusions of the high-born: he knew how and when to fight – and when to run. He knew how to convince his opponents and allies alike that he had nothing to lose. And though he commanded thousands of men, he never suffered from the Achilles' heel that plagued warlords like Shinde: the constant clamor of troops demanding their arrears in pay. Himmat Bahadur was, arguably, the most successful military entrepreneur of the late eighteenth century. He certainly had better staying power than any other late eighteenth-century actor, save the corporate body of John Company. And, perhaps, that is why he joined it in the end.

This book was written, in part, out of a desire to understand Himmat Bahadur. But in order to understand him we must peel away a succession of veils. The first veil to be removed is the name “Himmat Bahadur.” This was a “Persianate” nickname of sorts meaning “great courage,” awarded to him for an act of bravery in the service of the Nawab of Awadh in the 1750s.<sup>7</sup> It is the name that tends to show up in Company and Persian correspondence from the eighteenth century. The name he went by both before and after his *nom de guerre* gained currency in official correspondence, and the name I tend to use in this book, is Anupgiri Gosain – or simply Anupgiri. This earlier name brings us closer to who he was: like the men he commanded, Anupgiri was a *gosain*. This fact means that in addition to being India's most successful military entrepreneur in the eighteenth century, Anupgiri was also a “Saiva ascetic” – or, for those who find these two words obscure, a Hindu renouncer who worshipped Siva. As I make clear in the chapters that follow, the words Hindu, renouncer, worship – even Siva – are not as straightforward or simple as they appear.

But the name Anupgiri Gosain, too, is a kind of veil. It conceals the fact that we do not – and cannot – know his first name, the name his mother and father gave him at birth. This is because his father's death left his mother destitute: she sold her two children in their infancy to the man who became, in Saiva sectarian memory and in fact, their guru and commander.

If these sentences convey an impression of Indian religion and asceticism that is at odds with the model the reader was raised with, it is because that model was based on wishful thinking. One object of

<sup>7</sup> This according to Bhagvandin, the editor of Padmakar's *Himmatbahadur Virdevali* (Banaras n.d.), xxi. Bhagvandin gives no source, but it is likely that his account of Himmat Bahadur's life was based largely on legend and the stories told by the warlord's descendants. He adds that Himmat Bahadur was wounded in the thigh while protecting Shuja during the Battle of Buxar in 1764.

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this book, and this introduction, is to reflect on the possibility of a better model.

### Killing ascetics

Anupgiri Gosain, alias Himmat Bahadur, was a Saiva ascetic warrior and warlord. The chapters that follow are also an attempt to understand, often through him, what it meant to be a Saiva ascetic warrior and warlord in a late medieval world that was being catapulted by global transformations into the modern. More generally, this book is a history of Hindu ascetics who kill – and of the slow rise and demise of those killing ascetics between 1500 and the present. Armed Hindu ascetics have been known across the centuries by various names. I first came across them as *nagas*, a term that is said to refer to their nakedness in battle, from the Sanskrit “*nagna*.” However, the first use of the term *naga* for such men that I am aware of is from the eighteenth century. Sixteenth and seventeenth-century authors tended to speak of *yogis* (or *jogi*, *ioghee*) when describing these kinds of men, sometimes in a disparaging manner. The eighteenth century saw the increased use of the terms *sanyasi* (*sannyasi*, *sunmasee*) and *fakir* (*faquir*, *fukeer*), particularly by British officials in Bengal. To the west, toward Allahabad, Lucknow, and Delhi, the term *gosain* (*gossye*, *gusain*, *gusaiyan*) prevailed. Further west still, toward Jaipur in particular, the term *bairagi* (*byragee*, *vairagi*) gained prominence. This terminological variety is due partly to sectarian distinctions: *bairagi*, for example, tends to refer to ascetics oriented toward Vishnu or one of his avatars, Rama or Krishna. But much of it reflects the fact that observers did not, and still do not, know what to make of these armed men on the margins of religion and society.

This is not the first time warrior ascetics in India – or Anupgiri and his men, for that matter – have appeared on the radar screens of modern historians. The first scholarly attempt to explain warrior ascetics in Indian history was the work of the Scottish missionary–scholar, J. N. Farquhar, in particular in an article he authored in 1925 entitled “The Fighting Ascetics of India.”<sup>8</sup> The timing of this article (and Farquhar’s interest in warrior ascetics generally) is significant, coming as it did in the wake of Mohandas Gandhi’s revolutionary rise to power in Indian nationalist politics after 1919. The rising profile of Gandhi’s own ascetic repudiation of violence, particularly in the West, meant that warrior ascetics were

<sup>8</sup> J. N. Farquhar, “The Fighting Ascetics of India,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 9 (1925): 431–452. See also his “The Organization of the Sannyasis of the Vedanta,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (July 1925): 479–486.

increasingly seen as a “problem” that Western scholars needed to resolve – particularly if they were to be able to properly understand the social and religious depth of Gandhi’s civilizational claims. For Farquhar the particular challenge was explaining how the peaceful ascetic order created by the ninth-century sage Shankaracharya evolved a numerically dominant military wing, a wing that would have been on prominent display during his visit to the Allahabad *kumbha mela* in 1918.<sup>9</sup> His explanation pointed to the rise of Islam in South Asia – and more particularly to the persecution (according to sectarian legend) of non-violent Hindu *sanyasis* by fanatical Sufi warriors, *ghazis* intent on stamping out pagan religious practices. The historiographical significance of Farquhar’s assertions is that it inaugurated in the Western academy a communalist explanation of Hindu warrior asceticism that has not, to date, received a serious challenge. It is not difficult to see why: officials and historians, Indian as well as British, had long cited Hindu–Muslim difference – and its corollary, violence – as a defining feature of Indian history and society; the explosion of Hindu-versus-Muslim antagonism and communal violence after 1920, and the institutionalization of that antagonism and violence in Partition and the divided nation-states of India and Pakistan after 1947, only served to further embed the communalist understanding of the Indian past.<sup>10</sup> Even David Lorenzen, whose important 1978 essay did much to dispel the simplistic notion that the initial arming of Hindu ascetics was a response to Muslim atrocities, himself suggested that the coming of Muslim rule in India – and with it broad legal, political, and cultural sanctions in Islam for the persecution of non-Muslims – probably acted as the catalyst that resulted in the formal militarization of Hindu ascetic orders.<sup>11</sup>

For my part, it is not my intention to argue against Farquhar (or Lorenzen for that matter), that Muslim persecution, legal or otherwise,

<sup>9</sup> In his essay, “The Historical Position of Ramananda (part 1),” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (April 1920): 185, Farquhar reports that he attended the 1918 Allahabad festival. The *kumbha mela* is a massive pilgrimage festival that alternates every three years between Allahabad, Ujjain, Hardwar, and Nasik. It attracts millions of lay pilgrims and tens of thousands of ascetics from throughout India and is the occasion for the initiation of thousands of young men into the major armed orders. The central spectacle of the *kumbha* is the procession of the *naga akharas* to sacred water (at Allahabad, the *sangam*) during astrologically pre-ordained moments; these processions are known as “*shahi snan*”, or “the imperial immersion” – a term that reflects, as I argue in chapter 1, the involvement of the Mughal imperial court in the affairs of the armed ascetic orders.

<sup>10</sup> See Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi 1990); Peter Gottschalk, *Beyond Hindu and Muslim: Multiple Identity in Narratives from Rural India* (New York 2000); and Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley 1994).

<sup>11</sup> David Lorenzen, “Warrior Ascetics in Indian History,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98 (1978): 68.



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had nothing to do with the original arming of non-Muslim Indian ascetics. This is because we do not, I believe, possess sufficient evidence to argue the case one way or the other. What we do possess is evidence that calls into question the hard boundaries posited between Hindu and Muslim in the late medieval, early modern period – particularly in reference to armed ascetics. To some degree, this renders the original, communal question moot. Nevertheless, I feel the communalist oral tradition upon which Farquhar relied does transmit an important kernel of meaning, and I draw upon it in chapter 1 to argue that what we later come to know as Hindu warrior asceticism *was* in some – perhaps unexpected – ways a product (though not an anachronistic or antagonistic one) of Mughal rule. Hence the title of the chapter, “Mughal *yogis*.” Similarly, I argue in chapter 2 that Saiva ascetic guru-commanders were well placed tactically, socially, and culturally – and even religiously – to respond to the need for increasingly well-trained, mobile, and inexpensive bodies of men in the changing military economy of the eighteenth century. Moreover, some of these Saiva commanders were particularly well positioned to respond to and take advantage of Company expansion out of Bengal and up the Gangetic Plain toward Delhi. Hence the title of chapter 3, “Company *gosains*.” Similarly the title of chapter 6, “Indian *sadhus*,” is intended to characterize the ways in which armed ascetics refashioned themselves in (and were refashioned by) the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in response to the religious forces of imperialism and nationalism, particularly devotionism.

The goal in all of this is not to suggest that armed ascetics were simply a product of their times – indeed, far from it. Such an impulse is an unfortunate by-product of the reasonable desire of scholars in the academy to combat “primordialism” and “essentialism” in the wider world. Rather, the goal is to counter the pervasive popular and occasionally scholarly tendency to accept uncritically a distinctly modern oral narrative of armed asceticism that begins with the organizational genius of Shankaracharya in the ninth century, and begins again with the violent arrival of Muslims in the eleventh century.<sup>12</sup> While I agree – indeed, I argue – that we cannot understand what we now know as Hindu warrior asceticism without recourse to religion, that religion may not be recognizable as distinctly or exclusively Hindu, or even necessarily anti-Muslim, especially given the complex history that swirls around it between 1500 and 2000. There is something else, beneath and beyond Hindu and Muslim, that we need to

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Jadunath Sarkar (and Nirod Bhusan Roy) *History of the Dasnami Naga Sanyasis* (Allahabad n.d. but probably mid 1950s); G. S. Ghurye, *Indian Sadhus* (2nd edn, Bombay 1964); and Sadananda Giri, *Society and Samyasin (A History of the Dasnami Samyasin)* (Rishikesh 1976). I will have more to say about Jadunath Sarkar’s work in chapter 3.



put our finger on – to take the pulse of, as it were. I return to this point momentarily, and to religion more generally.

Though the scope for the application of their craft is today much constrained, warrior ascetics continue to exercise considerable influence in modern India, particularly in the nationalist imagination. This stems in large part from the literary genius of the Bengali nationalist writer, Bankim Chandra Chatterji. Beginning in the 1870s, Bankim depicted armed Hindu ascetics as proto-modern Indian patriots, sprung from the soil to defend Hinduism against Muslim and British invasions.<sup>13</sup> For the *naga sadhus* of the present, and those middle-class nationalists who idealize them in their imaginations, the emotional appeal of this chivalric role as defenders of a beleaguered religion (and religious nation) is that it papers over their (the *akharas*' [confraternities]<sup>14</sup>) much more complicated investment in the Mughal and Company past. More pragmatically, by accommodating themselves to the image of the patriotic Hindu ascetic, opportunistic *naga* chiefs (or *mahants*) have gained access to a newly emergent north Indian power base, namely, urban middle-class Hindu nationalism and the political plums that have recently accrued to it. This was a two-way street: if *naga mahants* eyed middle-class Hindu nationalism with a desire to expand their influence among Vaishnavas, Hindu nationalists also eyed the *naga mahants* with their own, wider political agendas. The recruitment of the *akharas* by Hindu nationalists began in the early twentieth century, but the real political payoff only came in the late 1980s when several *naga mahants* allowed themselves and their organizations to be swept up in the movement to reclaim the remembered birthplace of Rama at Ayodhya. Untangling the knotted threads of the "*Ramajanambhumi*" movement is not a goal of this work – indeed, the more I examined that knot, the more it metamorphosed into a red, or rather saffron, herring, not really that revealing in the longer history of warrior asceticism.<sup>15</sup> And in any case, it seems clear that despite the continued persistence of "godmen" in Indian politics, the Hindu right

<sup>13</sup> *Anandamatha* (Calcutta 1882), trans. as *The Abbey of Bliss* by Nares Chandra Sen (Calcutta 1906). For a more detailed discussion of this and the other issues raised in this paragraph, see William Pinch, "Soldier Monks and Militant Sadhus," in David Ludden (ed.), *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India* (Philadelphia 1996), pp. 140–162; and chapter 6, in this volume.

<sup>14</sup> See chapter 1, fn. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Save to note that beneath the remembered Hindu–Muslim fractures in Ayodhya today lies a deep, and oblique, Saiva–Vaishnava fault line. This is certainly a question worth more research, and any inquiry should begin with three facts: first, the presence of numerous *gosain* followers of Anupgiri and Umraogiri in Awadh in the eighteenth century; second, the increasing involvement of Jaisingh II of Jaipur and his successors (and of ascetics headquartered in Galta) in the religious affairs in the Vaishnava pilgrimage centers of north India, including most notably, Ayodhya, also in the eighteenth century; and third, the gradual accommodation of Saiva ascetics to Vaishnava institutionalization through the course of the nineteenth century.

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no longer possesses, in the twenty-first century, the monopoly on Indian *sadhus* that it did in the twentieth. Many *akharas*, and many *mahants*, have learned that political success means not putting all your eggs in one basket – and that the religious understandings of middle-class Hindu nationalism do not necessarily accord with their own.

The contentious politics that swirled around armed ascetics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were what first attracted me to them as a subject for study. Despite the popular assumptions concerning the organic patriotism of armed Hindu ascetics,<sup>16</sup> the details of their past, as I show in the first three chapters, are much more complicated and contradictory. Far from thinking of themselves as the last line of defense against foreign invaders, armed ascetics in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries served any and all paymasters, including the Mughals and the British. Nor did they understand themselves as fundamentally or exclusively Hindu in the modern sense of the term, but rather drew on multiple martial and political idioms, including idioms we normally associate with the British and the Mughals. Despite the claims of twentieth-century oral tradition (the examination of which forms the introduction to chapter 1), the origins of the *naga akharas* are not to be found in the imputed civilizational conflict between Muslim and Hindu. It seems much more likely, as I suggest in chapters 2 and 5, that weapons (and the art of violence) were part of a *shaktiyoga* repertoire that centered on harnessing supernormal forces both within and beyond the human body. This might be read as an overly idealist account, given Lorenzen's emphasis on material factors – especially the need to protect religious endowments from treasure-hungry monarchs – in the early manifestations of warrior asceticism in the latter part of the first millennium CE.<sup>17</sup> As I see it, Lorenzen's quite convincing materialist account nevertheless begs the question of where the wealth came from in the first place, especially if we acknowledge that the dominant religious culture was not necessarily a devotionalist, dualist one. In any case, the distinction between idealist and materialist causality tends to dissolve in the face of monistic sensibilities.

<sup>16</sup> And in case there are any doubts about the persistence of those assumptions, one need only tour the new Museum of Indian Independence in Delhi's Red Fort. A caption describing early resistance to English East India Company rule reads as follows: "In eastern India, displaced peasants and Bengal soldiers joined hands with religious monks and uprooted zamindars rose up [sic] in the Sanyasi revolution (1763–1800). 'Bande Mataram' the patriotic song composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his novel Anand Math, inspired greatly the Sanyasi Movement." I am grateful to Peter Gottschalk for this information.

<sup>17</sup> Lorenzen, "Warrior Ascetics in Indian History," 64–65.