## Contents

| Preface  | Xi   |
|--|------|
| Acknowledgments  | xv   |
| Note on Transliteration  | xvii |
| Introduction—Kṣetropadhāna   | 1    |
| What Is a Purāṇa? 2 The Bhāgavatapurāṇa 3 Editions, Translations, and Scholarship 6 The Archetypal Saptāha 7 The Contemporary Saptāha 11 Writings on Saptāhas 12 Other Oral Performance Traditions 15  | 18   |
| 2. The Saptāha—Yajña  Mridul Krishna's Saptāha, Vrindavan 28 Saptāha at Naluna, Garhwal 35  The Senj Devtā 37  The Saptāha Commences 39  The Middle Days 42  The Final Day 45  Sri Vishnu Shiva Mandir, Canberra 48  The First Session: Māhātmya 50  Mornings 51  Afternoons and Evenings 55 | 27   |

viii Contents

| Two Events 56 Three Saptāhas Compared 58       |     |
|--|-----|
| •  | 60  |
| 3. The Sponsor—Yajamāna                        | 00  |
| Typology 61<br>Motivations 64                  |     |
| •  |     |
| The Role of Sponsors 67 Personal Narratives 70 |     |
|  |     |
| Naluna Sponsor 70                              |     |
| Brisbane Organizers 74                         |     |
| 4. The Exponent—Hotr                           | 77  |
| The Goswamis of Vrindavan 79                   |     |
| Shrivatsa Goswami 79                           |     |
| Abhishek Goswami 83                            |     |
| Chandan Goswami 88                             |     |
| The Guru-Kula Path 92                          |     |
| Radhikadas Maharaj 92                          |     |
| Siddhanti Maharaj 95                           |     |
| Vedic Yatra Pathashala 97                      |     |
| The Crowded Marketplace 101                    |     |
| 5. The Text—Veda                               | 106 |
| Preliminaries: The Māhātmya 108                |     |
| Day One: Skandha 1 109                         |     |
| Day Two: Skandhas 2–4 111                      |     |
| Day Three: Skandhas 4–6 113                    |     |
| Day Four: Skandhas 7–8 115                     |     |
| Day Five: Skandhas 9–10 118                    |     |
| Day Six: Skandha 10 Continues 120              |     |
| Day Seven: Skandhas 11–12 124                  |     |
| 6. The Verses—Mantra                           | 127 |
| The Avatāras of Kṛṣṇa 130                      |     |
| The Bhāgavata as an Avatāra 131                |     |
| The Naimișa Forest 132                         |     |
| Vaikuṇṭha: The State of Bliss 137              |     |
| Nārada and Bhakti: Two Narrative Verses        | 139 |
| Audience Reception 142                         |     |

Contents ix

| Ways of Understanding the Verses 144            |     |
|---|-----|
| Scripture, Evidence, Faith, and Truth 146       |     |
| 7. The Audience—Viś                             | 147 |
| The Brisbane Bhakti Yoga Centre 150             |     |
| What Attracts Audiences? 151                    |     |
| Vows and Restrictions 155                       |     |
| The Audience Experience 157                     |     |
| Saptāhas as Transformation 163                  |     |
| Sources of Transformation 166                   |     |
| Are These Experiences Typical? 167              |     |
| The Audience "Makes" the Event 170              |     |
| 8. Results—Phala                                | 172 |
| The Results of a Saptāha 172                    | •   |
| Internal Sources of Authenticity 178            |     |
| Potency of Oral Transmission 178                |     |
| Exponents' Qualities 180                        |     |
| The Role of Sanskrit 181                        |     |
| Sabda-Brahman: The Power of the Divine Word 184 |     |
| Satsang and Darshan 187                         |     |
| The Experience of Communitas 188                |     |
| Audiences as Agents 191                         |     |
| External Drivers of Growth 191                  |     |
| National and Global Contexts 195                |     |
| 9. Conclusion—Pūrņāhuti                         | 200 |
| Why This Text? 200                              |     |
| The Future of Saptāha 202                       |     |
| Mandala of Basic Questions 205                  |     |
| A Personal Note 207                             |     |
| Notes   | 209 |
| Glossary  | -   |
| •   | 213 |
| Bibliography                                    | 215 |
| Index   | 221 |