



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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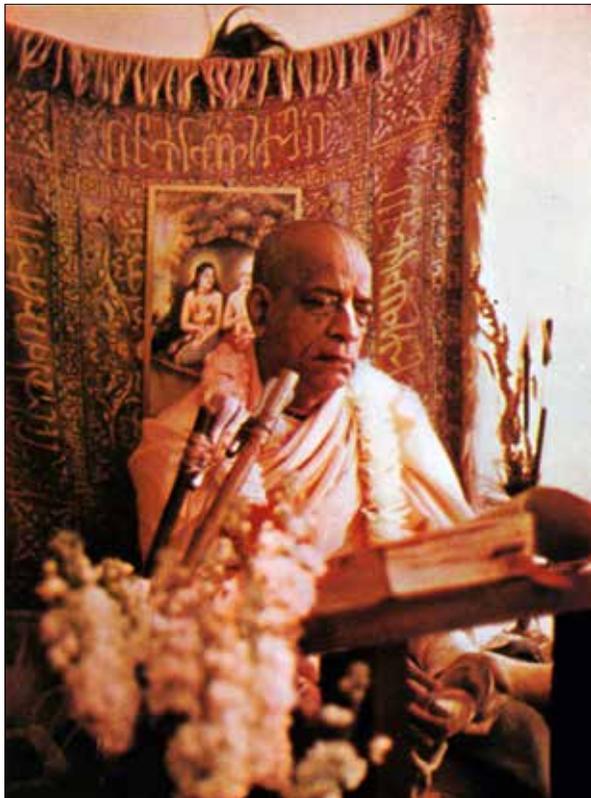
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Radhamadhava Das



OUR ONLY REAL ENEMY

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Devotee: Prabhupada, what is the devotee's greatest enemy?

Prabhupada: He himself. Because he's a rascal, he's his greatest enemy. So just get out of this rascaldom, and you become your friend. Nobody is enemy. You are yourself your enemy. Nobody is enemy. 🙏

— From a morning walk in Paris. 12 June 1974.

PURI - THE INNER CHAMBER OF SRI CHAITANYA'S HOME PART 2

By Radhamadhav Das

As with most Odias, the *kula-devatā* of the Mishra family was Lord Jagannath. One night, Jagannath appeared in the dream of the Mishras and ordered them to move to Bengal. This was before Shobha Devi was born. The Mishras had so much devotion to Lord Jagannath that they at once packed and moved to Bengal! After they thus migrated to Dhaka Dakshina Gram in Sylhet, Jagannath again appeared in their dream. He told them that he was so much pleased with their unwavering devotion that now he will himself take birth in their family in his most essential form (*svarūpa*). The Mishras got very excited. This confidential secret was then passed down many generations in their family until it reached Shobha Devi.

Shobha Devi, the *ṭhākura-mā*, paternal grandmother, of Mahaprabhu, was a great devotee and was extremely eager to witness how Lord Jagannath would appear in her family. As the years were passing, no child seemed to match the prediction and Shobha Devi became more and more anxious. She was getting old and her only last wish was to have darshan of the divine child. She continuously prayed to Lord Jagannath to grant her desire. Being very pleased with her devotion, the Lord appeared to her in a dream. She then saw how Jagannath gradually turned into a beautiful *sannyāsī* with shaven head and wearing a simple loin cloth. He had a dazzling golden effulgence and was always chanting Krishna's

names. Only his eyes remained dilated like the eyes of Jagannath — otherwise the form of Jagannath was completely transformed into that of a very attractive young renunciate. This *sannyāsī* then told her:

“My beloved Thakur-ma! Behold — I am your grandson! I shall soon take birth in your family! You will only see me for a short time. But don’t worry, I shall give you a very special deity of myself — the only deity of mine with *cakā-dolā* eyes!” [Note: One of the names of Jagannath is Chaka Dola, meaning, “He who possesses round eyes.”]

When Shobha Devi awoke from her dream, she was in great ecstasy. However, now that she had this heart-melting darshan of the new *sannyāsī* Jagannath, her feelings of separation from him started burning like a forest fire. She then shared her vision with her husband, Upendra Mishra, who was extremely happy to hear it. They decided to keep the darshan secret.

Shobha Devi’s son, the father-to-be of Mahaprabhu, Jagannath Mishra, moved from Sylhet to Nabadwip to study under Pandit Nilambara Chakravarti, a renowned astrologer and scholar of Nabadwip, who originally hailed from Magdoba in the district of Faridpur, situated between Nabadwip and Srihatta. After some years, the time came when Jagannath Mishra’s marriage was to be arranged. His parents, Upendra Mishra and Shobha Devi, found a suitable bride in Sachi Devi, the pious daughter of Nilambara Chakravarti, and thus visited Nabadwip. Nilambara Chakravarti knew from his astrological calculations that Sachi Devi will become the mother of the Supreme Lord. When he shyly indicated this to Jagannath Mishra’s parents, they broke out into tears and shared their most well-kept secret with him that Lord Jagannath had promised to take birth in their family.

Hearing this, Nilambara Chakravarti also started to shed tears of joy and, without saying a word, brought them to their family temple. There, amongst other deities, they were amazed to have the darshan of their Krishnacandra deity, a unique Krishna deity who sports *cakā-dolā* eyes like Lord Jagannath. Upendra and Shobha Devi at once remembered the golden Brahmin with exactly the same *cakā-dolā* eyes who appeared to Shobha Devi and told her that he will soon appear in her family. They almost fainted with joy. Their hearts were raging as Shobha Devi also shared this secret with Nilambara Chakravarti and his wife.

However, they never told to anyone that their grandson will become a *sannyāsī* and leave them in his

young age, because they couldn’t bear even the thought of it. Unable to control their feelings, the two fathers and the two mothers hugged each other. Then they spontaneously started an ecstatic *kīrtana*. Nilambara Chakravarti could not contain himself in his bliss and loudly announced to Jagannath Mishra’s parents that along with his daughter, he will also donate the Krishnacandra deity to them! The marriage of Jagannath and Sachi was thus sealed with their parents’ tears of joy.

Nilambara Chakravarti calculated an auspicious day for the marriage. According to various sources, their marriage took place in Nabadwip. However, the Mishras say it was held in Sylhet, and at that time the Krishnacandra deity came to the Mishras in Sylhet together with the bride. The bride is commonly given to the care of her husband’s family according to the tradition of *kanyā-dāna*. Upendra Mishra and Shobha Devi decided to stay back in Sylhet, where they started serving the Krishnacandra deity in great bliss, anticipating their grandson’s birth. Shobha Devi made her son Jagannath promise that he will send his son to see her in Sylhet as soon as he will be old enough to make the journey.

In great excitement about the promise of Lord Jagannath to appear in their family, Sachi and Jagannath performed the sacred ritual of *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra*, begetting spiritually potent offspring. However, as providence had it, just like Mother Devaki, Sachi Devi had one miscarriage after another. Meanwhile, Shobha Devi was getting very old and her eyesight weakened. Her anxiety knew no bounds, and she fervently begged Lord Jagannath to be merciful on her.

After eight miscarriages, Sachi Devi finally gave birth to a beautiful baby boy whom they named “Vishwarup”. In 1486, their second son also took birth in Mayapur. They named him “Vishwambhar”. Vishwambhar Mishra fulfilled all the auspicious signs of the prophecy of Lord Jagannath. Already before his birth, his maternal grandfather Nilambara Chakravarti had made his horoscope and determined that he will be non-different from Lord Vishnu. After his birth, he confirmed this by identifying all the auspicious signs on his divine body.

Receiving this news, Shobha Devi was in ecstasy. Unable to make the journey to Nabadwip in her old age, she took shelter of *saṅkīrtana* and the service of her Krishnacandra deity. When Vishwambhar was sixteen, his father told him of his promise to his grandmother, and so Vishwambhar travelled to Sylhet. For the first time in his life, he greeted her heartily:



Photo by Radhamadhava Das

Deities currently worshiped by the Mishra family descendents in Srikona in Assam. Left: Mahaprabhu as a sannyāsi. Right: Deity of Krishna

“My dear Thakur-ma. I am Vishwambhar Mishra, your grandson!”

Shobha Devi could not recognize Him, and replied, “You surely look as splendid as everyone says. You are having lovely curly locks and a fancy dress. But you have first appeared to me in your *sannyāsi* form with simple loin cloth, and in my heart I have already accepted that beautiful young *sannyāsi* as my grandson. He has come to me as the *svarūpa* of Jagannath. If you really are that grandson of mine, then prove it by showing me your most beautiful *sannyāsi* form!”

This pastime is an example of how the love of a devotee for a particular form of the Lord has the power to supersede the Lord’s own powers, just like Mother Yashoda didn’t believe Krishna to be the Supreme Lord even after seeing all the universes in his mouth. For Mother Yasoda, Krishna’s form as her little Gopal is sweeter than his majestic form. Similarly, for Shobha Devi, Mahaprabhu’s humble *sannyāsi* form is sweeter than his form as a clever *paṇḍita*, and thus Yogamāyā didn’t allow her to be swayed by Nimai Pandit, although he was standing right in front of her in all his splendour.

Vishwambhar agreed under one condition: “I shall certainly fulfill your desire, but you have to lock me in your altar room and wait for seven days without opening the door.”

Thus, on a Sunday during *cātur-māsya*, Nimai entered the altar room and his grandmother locked him inside. Soon, ecstatic *kīrtana* started from inside. It was heard all over the village, but very few were able to tell from where it came. In her absorption, Shobha Devi didn’t take food or water. She just stood in front of the door and clapped her hands to the *kīrtana*. Some villagers asked her questions but she would not respond.

On the fourth day she could not bear the separation any longer. She made a very beautiful flower garland for her beloved Lord, and then she pushed open the door of the altar room. This, of course, reminds us of the pastime of Jagannath in which Indradyumna Maharaja could not wait until the deity carving was complete, and thus it adds even more depth to the intimate relationship between Jagannath and Mahaprabhu. In the altar room, Shobha Devi beheld a most astonishing scene. Nimai Pandit had transformed into a splendid *sannyāsi* with dilated eyes like Jagannath and was blissfully singing and dancing in the *kīrtana* with his associates, who were also dancing and playing various instruments. When Chaitanya Mahaprabhu noticed her, all of his associates suddenly vanished. The beautiful *sannyāsi* affectionately glanced at his grandmother with his *cakā-dolā* eyes, and said:

“My beloved Thakur-ma! You could not wait any longer, but that is all right. Behold, just for you, I have manifested this most confidential form as a beggar *sannyāsī*, begging for the love of the *vraja-vāsīs*. I have kept my *cakā-dolā* eyes so you can understand that I am that very Jagannath who promised to take birth in your family. My dear Thakur-ma, I have fulfilled your desire. Will you now embrace your grandson?”

Shobha Devi slowly stepped forward. She gracefully garlanded her grandson and finally embraced him in great bliss. Various symptoms of devotional ecstasies conquered her body, and she fainted in a swoon. When she came back to consciousness, she was still embracing Mahaprabhu. But he had transformed into a beautiful Mahaprabhu deity. The deity was still wearing her garland around his neck. And he was still glancing at her lovingly through his *cakā-dolā* eyes. Till today, on the five consecutive Sundays of the month of *Caitra*, (March-April) there is great *kīrtana-mahotsava* in Naba Dhaka Dakshin in Srikona celebrating this pastime.

There are many old *kīrtanas* that were composed for this Mahaprabhu deity. In one such *kīrtana*, Mahaprabhu’s *sannyāsī* cloth is teasingly described as old and full of holes. During my first phone conversation with the Mishras, I had asked them if they wanted me to bring hair for Mahaprabhu from Vrindavan.

They refused, saying that he is a *sannyāsī*, but requested me to kindly bring woolen chaddars. It is very rare to see devotees in Bengal worshipping Mahaprabhu’s deity in the form of a *sannyāsī*, because his taking *sannyāsa* lead to him leaving Bengal. Perhaps it was out of a concern not to hurt the feelings of the residents of Nadia that inspired the general rule that the *Gauḍīyas* don’t worship Mahaprabhu’s *sannyāsa* form as a deity. How surprising it is that the first manifest deity of Mahaprabhu in Bengal is worshiped in his *sannyāsī* form! In another sense, it is not surprising, considering that the Mishras hailed from Puri Dham, where Mahaprabhu performed his *sannyāsa* pastime.

The Odia devotees have every reason to rejoice in worshipping the *sannyāsī* form of Mahaprabhu, because his taking *sannyāsa* lead to him coming to them in Puri, and in one sense also, to return home. Thus we can find several such deities across Nilachal. Also, many devotees worship his *sannyāsī* form on the altar of their hearts, because it is in his *sannyāsa-līlā* in Puri that his innermost three desires were fulfilled (*dvādaśa vatsara śeṣa rahilā nilācale ... āsvādiyā pūrṇa kaila āpana vāñchita — Caitanya-caritāmṛta 1.13.39-43*). “Home is where the heart is,” the saying goes. Since his heart’s desires were fulfilled particularly in Puri, it also applies in the most esoteric way that Puri is the inner chamber of Mahaprabhu’s home. According to Nityananda Das’ *Prema-vilāsa* (8.19-20), Mahaprabhu had expressed this to Nityananda Prabhu:

*prabhu kahen śrīpad tumi kara avadhāna
ye stāne basile sukha sei janmashāna
ye nimitta chāḍiyā āinu nilācala*

Mahaprabhu said to Nityananda, “O Sripad, please listen carefully. That place where you get happiness is your real *janmashāna*, place of birth or home. That is why I left [Nabadwip as well as my initial plan to go to Vrindavan] and came to Nilachal.”

This striking revelation could also be read as an indication that his ancestral home is Nilachal. However, more important than the soil of his seminal descendance is his chosen home of esoteric happiness. In Mahaprabhu’s case, both seem to match with Nilachal, Puri Dham. Puri Dham is his home from the ancestral point of view, and furthermore from the esoteric point of view, Puri is the inner chamber of Mahaprabhu’s home — where his heart is fully satisfied. 🙏

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Email: katha@gopaljiu.org
Website: www.gopaljiu.org
Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

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