

Sri Krishna Kathamrita



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pārijāta-vṛkṣopākhyānam

The Story of the Parijata Tree





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Highlights

• SATYABHAMA AND THE PARIJATA TREE

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• SATYABHAMA'S DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

• COMPARING THE LOVE OF DWARKA AND VRINDAVAN

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

• THE LEGEND OF THE PARIJATA TREE

A summary of the story from the Harivaiṣṇa Purāṇa



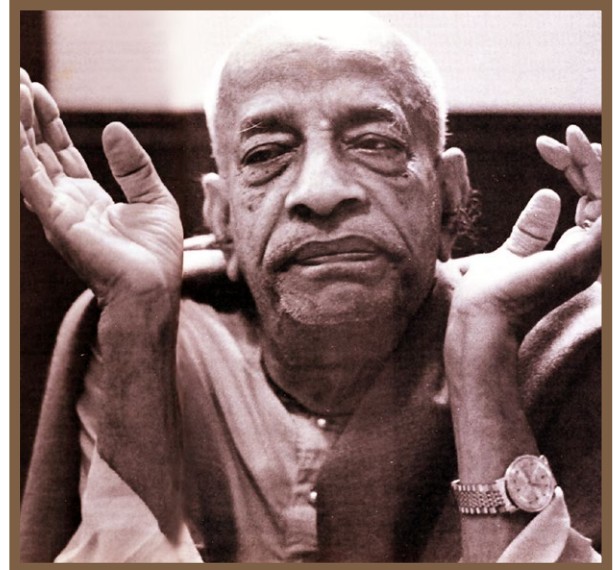
SATYABHAMA AND THE PARIJATA TREE



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Satyabhama: One of the principal queens of Lord Sri Krishna at Dwarka. After killing Narakasura, Lord Krishna visited the palace of Narakasura accompanied by Satyabhama. He went to Indraloka also with Satyabhama, and she was received by Sachidevi, who introduced her to the mother of the demigods, Aditi. Aditi was very pleased with Satyabhama, and she blessed her with the benediction of permanent youth as long as Lord Krishna remained on the earth. Aditi also took her to see the special prerogatives of the demigods in the heavenly planets. When Satyabhama saw the parijata flower, she desired to have it in her palace at Dwarka. After that, she came back to Dwarka along with her husband and expressed her willingness to have the parijata flower at her palace. Satyabhama's palace was especially bedecked with valuable jewels, and even in the hottest season of summer the inside of the palace remained cool, as if air-conditioned. She decorated her palace with various flags, heralding the news of her great husband's presence there. Once,



Unknown photographer.

along with her husband, she met Draupadi, and she was anxious to be instructed by Draupadi in the ways and means of pleasing her husband. Draupadi was expert in this affair because she kept five husbands, the Pandavas, and they were all very pleased with her. On receipt of Draupadi's instructions, she was very pleased and offered her good wishes and returned to Dwarka. She was the daughter of Satrajit. After the departure of Lord Krishna, when Arjuna visited Dwarka, all the queens, including Satyabhama and Rukmini, lamented for the Lord with great feeling. At the last stage of her life, she left for the forest to undergo severe penance.

Cover: Indra prays to Krishna who is holding the parijata tree while seated on Garuda with Satyabhama. Unknown artist. Himachal Pradesh. Circa 1794.



Unknown artist. Delhi region. 1525-1550.

Krishna uproots the parijata tree and steals it from Indra's abode

Satyabhama instigated her husband to get the parijata flower from the heavenly planets, and the Lord got it even by force from the demigods, as a common husband secures things to please his wife. As already explained, the Lord had very little to do with so many wives to carry out their orders like an ordinary man. But because the queens accepted the high quality of devotional service, namely administering the Lord with all comforts, the Lord played the part of a faithful and complete husband. No earthly creature can expect to have things from the heavenly kingdom, especially parijata flowers, which are simply to be used by the demigods. But due to their becoming the Lord's faithful wives, all of them enjoyed the special prerogatives of the great wives of the denizens of heaven. In other words, since the Lord is the proprietor of everything within his creation, it is not very astonishing for the queens of Dwarka to have any rare thing from any part of the universe. 🍃

— From the purport to *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 1.14.37. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Juhu, Bombay. 1987.

SATYABHAMA'S DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

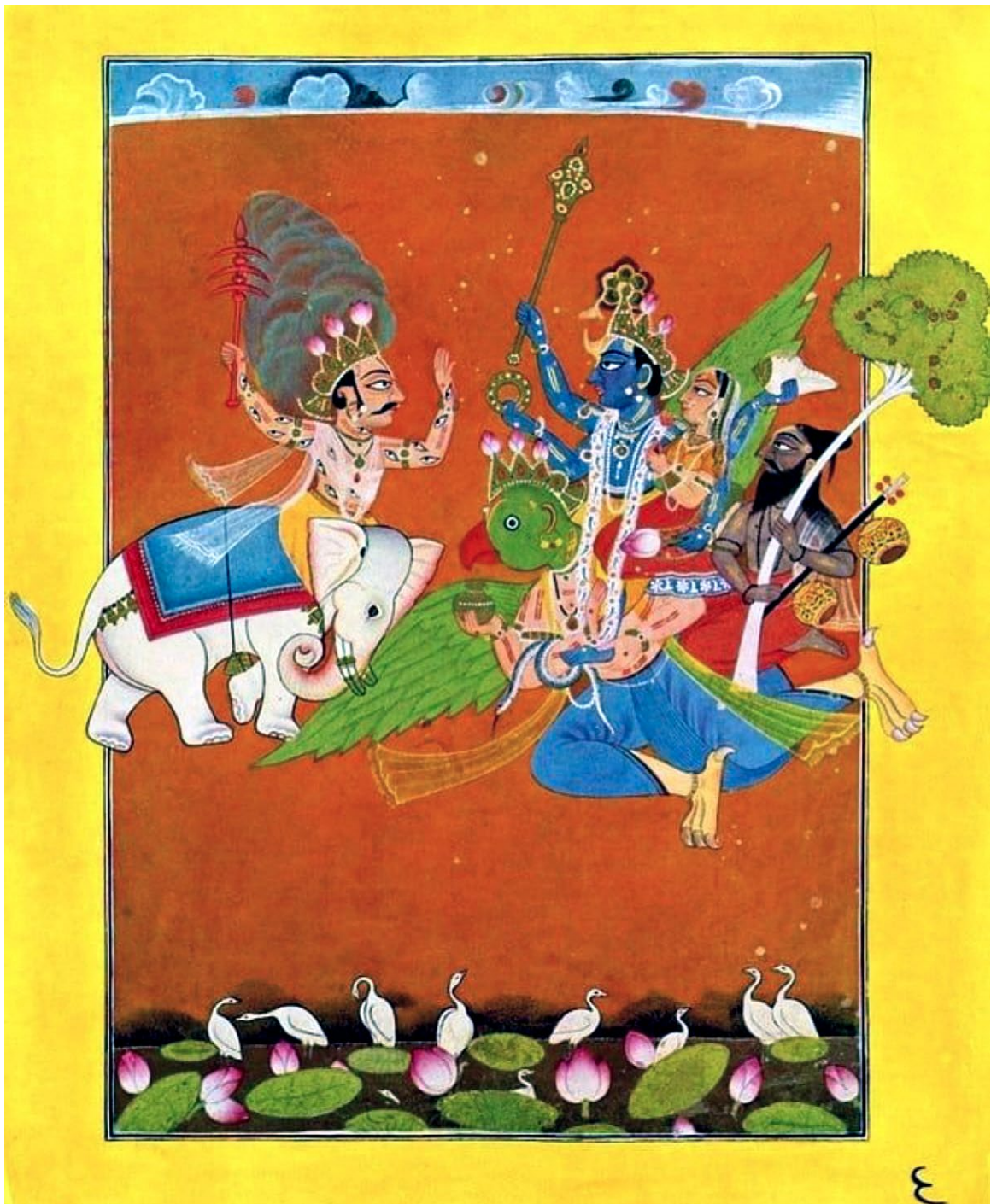


Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur's
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata madhya-khaṇḍa 9.213
With the Gauḍīya-bhāṣya commentary of
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

bhakti-yoge tomāre vecila satyabhāmā
bhakti-vaśe tumi kāndhe kaile gopa-rāmā

[Kholavecha Sridhar offers prayers to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu during the *mahā-prakāśa līlā* at the home of Srivas Thakur:] "It was through devotional service that Satyabhama sold you. Being controlled by devotional service, you carried a cowherd damsel of Vraja on your shoulders."

Satyabhama's devotional service is explained as follows: During Krishna's Dwarka pastimes, the great sage Narada one day came before Krishna with a parijata flower in his hand that Indra had given him. At that time, Krishna was residing in the house of



Unknown artist. Basohli school. Circa 1730s

Krishna takes the Parijata tree from Indra

Rukmini. When Narada gifted that parijata flower to Sri Krishna, Lord Vāsudeva gave it to Rukmini. On seeing this, Narada praised the good fortune of Rukmini and concluded that she was the most intimate and chaste wife of Krishna. Thereafter, the maidservants of Satyabhama who were present at the time informed Satyabhama about the incident. As a result, when Satyabhama became filled with conceit, Krishna went to her residence and promised to please her by bringing

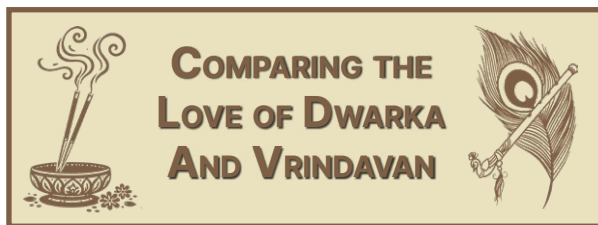
an entire parijata tree to her house. Thereafter, when Narada went there and specifically glorified the *punyaka-vrata*, Satyabhama expressed a desire to observe that vow. Then Krishna brought the parijata tree from Amaravati, the abode of Indra, and according to the prescriptions of that *vrata*, Satyabhama bound Krishna to that parijata tree and gave him in charity to Narada. (*Hari-vaṁśa*, *Viṣṇu-parva*, chapter seventy-six.) 🌸

— *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* with commentary of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thākura. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited and published by Pundarik Vidyānidhi Das. Vrjaraj Press. Vrindavan. 2001.

Painting by an unknown artist, Nepal. Circa 1775.



Pastimes in Dwarka



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Rukmini, Satyabhama, and the other wedded wives of Krishna in Dwarka have conjugal love, but it is mixed with *jñāna* and *aiśvarya* — knowledge and opulence — and thereby their love is shrunken. They become afraid. Lakshmi is also a wife of the Lord, and she has conjugal love that is mixed with *aiśvarya*, opulence. But in Vrajabhumi it is pure love with no mixture of *jñāna* and *aiśvarya*. Lakshmi once underwent thousands of years of *tapasya* in Bilvavan to enter into Vrajabhumi to take part in the *rāsa* dance. Krishna said to her, “Why are you undergoing such *tapasya*? What do you want?”

“Please grant me this. I want to develop such *vraja-prema*, *gopī-prema*, that I can enter into Vrajabhumi and take part in the *rāsa* dance.”

Krishna said, “No. It cannot be granted.”

What you deserve you will get. It is not that you will jump and Krishna will grant you. No. What is your

rasa, that is there for you. If you deserve it then he will grant. Krishna said, “No. It cannot be granted. Beg for some alternative thing.”

Then, “Alright, I will remain as a golden line on your chest.”

Krishna said, “*Tatāsthu* — that is granted.” 🍌

— From a lecture in Bhubaneswar on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, date unknown.



Adapted from Harivaṁśa Purāṇa

The Harivaṁśa Purāṇa is generally considered to be an appendix to the Mahābhārata. It has three parvas or divisions. The Viṣṇu-parva is entirely devoted to kṛṣṇa-līlā. It begins with Krishna’s appearance in Mathura, then describes — following in almost exactly the same pattern of pastimes as found in the tenth canto of the Bhāgavatam — the vraja-līlā, mathurā-līlā, and dvārakā-līlā. The following highlights and essence from chapters 65 to 75



Painting by Miskin and Kesu Kalan. 15th century illustration for Harivamsa

Krishna in Dwarka



Krishna acquires the parijata tree for Satyabhama

of the Viṣṇu-parva reveal intriguing insights on the wondrous nature of the parijata tree, and the quarrel between Krishna and Indra.

Arriving in Dwarka from Indra's paradise, after being respectfully greeted with due decorum by Krishna, Narada presents a single flower from the parijata tree to Krishna which he had brought as a gift. Krishna then gives the flower to Rukmini, who was seated next to him. Accepting the flower, Rukmini gracefully entwines it in her hair. At that time, she in whom the entire beauty of the world had been enshrined, and of whose charm the mind of Narayan had been captivated, looked doubly beautiful by the grace of that celestial flower. Narada then addressed her as follows, "O beautiful one! This flower is meant for you alone, and shall remain fragrant and fresh without ever wilting or fading for an entire year. O goddess, according to your desire, this flower can keep you warm or cool throughout every season of the year. Furthermore, whatever other flowers you may wish for will be present before you. O goddess, due to its benign

influence, immense treasures and a worthy son will be bestowed upon those who wear it, and no evil or malefic forces can ever afflict the mind. Only good fortune will prevail. The flower will also appear in any color that you may like, and will also expand or contract its dimensions according to your fancy. Not only that, but its weight can also increase or decrease according to your wish, and it will become soft and pliable or hard and defined, as per your desire. O lotus-eyed one, continued Narada, the flower removes any unpleasant aroma and can serve as a lamp at night. If you so desire, it will even bring you garlands of Santanaka flowers (considered one of the finest flowers in paradise) as well as ever-lasting attire, plus *māndapas* constructed wholly from flowers. While wearing or carrying this flower on your person, you will never be subjected to hunger, thirst, remorse, or have to suffer from any sort of decrepitude which typically accompanies age. In fact, all things shall be precisely according to your wishes. Not only that, but, prompted by your mere thinking alone,



Photo by J. Johnstson. 1874.

Statue of Indra from the Sabha Jain caves in Ellora. Built between the 9th and 10th centuries CE

it will create the most delightful and pleasing music. O goddess, at the end of a year this flower will, of its own nature, vanish and re-unite with

the parijata tree from whence it came. O illustrious lady! May good fortune attend you. It was Brahma, the creator of this world, who invested the parijata



SATYABHAMA'S REACTION



Srila Rupa Goswami's Ujjvala-nīlamanī 15.86

ahaha gahanā keyam vārtā śrutau patitādyā me
viditam anṛtam hāsyād brūṣe vimuñca kadarthanām
sahacari kuto jīvaty asmin jane 'pi janārdano
dyutaru-kusumaṁ tasyai hā dhik kṛtī vitarīṣyati



Alas! What ominous news has fallen on my ears! You are speaking lies as a joke. Give up torturing me! O friend! While I am alive, Krishna, who knows place, time and worthy recipient, gives the flower of the heavenly parijata tree to Rukmini. What misfortune!

From Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur's Ānanda-candrikā commentary: This gives an example of māna in a queen. Satyabhama speaks to a friend who tells her about Rukmini getting a parijata flower. *Keyam adbhūta* means “never heard before.” This means it breaks the ears. Considering for a moment, she says, “I know. For a joke you are lying in order to torture me.” While someone with my qualities is alive (*asmin jane*), he who knows place, time and worthy recipient (*kṛtī*), gives the flower to her, Rukmini.

— English translation by Bhanu Swami. Sri Vaikuntha Enterprises. Chennai. 2014.



Indra riding on his elephant carrier Airavata chases Krishna who is seated on Garuda carrying the Parijata tree

tree with these extraordinary potencies. Uma, the beloved of Shiva and fair daughter of the Himalaya, decorates herself with these flowers, as well as Aditi (the mother of Indra, Vaman, and all the devas), Sachi (Indra's spouse), Savitri (Brahma's wife), and Lakshmi. All the consorts of the devas adorn themselves with these flowers. Yet, for them also, the flowers only last for a year once picked."

Noticing the presence of Satyabhama's servant girls, Narada, in order to start a quarrel, began to exaggerate Rukmini's fortune, praising her beyond measure in the presence of Krishna, saying, "I have now come to realize that among the sixteen thousand queens, you are undoubtedly the foremost. O most beloved of Krishna, today you have humiliated all your co-wives, and today, I have truly understood the magnitude of your great fortune, because none other than the slayer of Madhu himself has given you this flower. What to speak of Jambavati and the other queens of Krishna, even Satyabhama, who always considers herself most fortunate and favored, will today surely have to acknowledge her own misfortune as well. O damsel with charming limbs! I must

confess", continued Narada, that you appear to me to be the *dvitiya-ātmā* — second-soul, of Lord Krishna! O beloved of Lord Hari! Know that this parijata flower is the quintessence of all the gems in the three worlds, and that you have achieved something which is to be considered more precious than even life itself."

The servant girls, who had been sent by Satyabhama, simply stood there and heard all that was said by Narada to Rukmini. The servant girls of the other queens were there also, and they all returned to their respective mistresses, and told them everything that had been said. All the queens blossomed with joy upon hearing of Rukmini's special favor, with the sole exception of Satyabhama, who was unable to endure the exalted fortunes of her co-wife.

Chapter sixty-five closes with Satyabhama, a goddess of radiant youth and charming appearance, now entirely consumed by a jealous and disconsolate indignation, preparing to enter the *krodha-grha*, chamber of anger. She breathes heavily, and with her fingernails rips to shreds the play-lotus that she customarily twirls in her



Painting by Debanjan. Circa 1967.

Krishna and Satyabhama on Garuda

Unknown artist. Rajasthan. Circa 1700.



Krishna and Balaram in Dwarka

hand. She carelessly throws aside her exquisite saree of crimson hue, discards all her ornaments and fine jewelry, and smears her forehead with red sandalwood pulp. Clad in two pieces of white cloth

which were bright like snow, she bound a white cloth around her head which now looked effulgent like the moon. Shorn of her happy countenance, and dressed all in white, she appeared like a raging fire inflamed with the fuel of her jealous anger. Her servant girls attempt to physically drag her out of the sulking-chamber while telling her, “You are confining yourself most unreasonably!” But try as they might, they could not persuade their mistress to abandon the lonely apartment of anger. (*To be continued in the next issue.*) 🍌

— Summary by Jagannath Mishra Das.

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