



तव कथामृतं तसजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 36

3 September 2002

Śrī Annadā Ekādaśī, 11 Hṛṣīkeśa, 516 Gaurābda

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INITIATION IS THE BEGINNING

*His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada*



Regarding your question of an initiated person falling prey to the *māyā*, the answer is that so long we are in this material world there is always chance of being spoiled by *māyā*, so we must stick with vow to the lotus feet of Krishna. An initiated devotee is given the chance for becoming free from the entanglement of karma wheel. Initiated means beginning, not perfection. The spiritual master's business is to guide him to the perfectional point. But if one does not strictly follow the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master his initiation does not bear any meaning. The initiation performance is an agreement by the disciples to abide by the order of the spiritual master. Therefore, if the spiritual master is bona fide and the disciple is serious to abide by his order, then the success is sure. If a disciple follows strictly the devotional way of life, he is no longer a karmi and all his activities, which may appear to be like ordinary work, or it may be activity according to scriptural injunction, are counted as devotional service. And devotional service in all circumstances is free from the actions and reactions of karma. I hope this will clear the matter. ❀

— Letter to: Jaya Gopala — Los Angeles 11 January, 1970.

SANKHACHUDA AND SRIDAMA

Garga-saṁhitā canto 2, chapter 26

In the last two issues of Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu we printed two versions of the story of the demon Shankhachuda, as given in Srila Rupa Goswami's Lalita-mādhava and as in Garga-saṁhitā. In this issue we present an account from Garga-saṁhitā relating the events in the spiritual world, before Krishna's appearance in this world, leading up to Krishna's pastime of killing Shankhachuda. King Bahulasva is inquiring from Narada Muni.

Sri Bahulasva said, "The spiritual sparks that emerged from Aghasura and the other demons entered Lord Krishna. Why did the spark of light from Sankhachuda enter Sridama? O intelligent one, O best of those who know everything, please describe to me this very wonderful pastime of Lord Krishnachandra."

Sri Narada said, "O noble-hearted king, please hear this story, which describes pastimes that happened in Goloka, and which I heard from the mouth of Narayan Rishi:

"Radha, Sri, Viraja, and Bhu are the four consorts of Lord Krishna in Goloka. Of them, Radha is the most dear to Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One day in a secluded forest grove the Lord enjoyed pastimes with Viraja, who was as splendid as ten million moons and very much like Radha. When Radha heard from a friend's mouth that Krishna had enjoyed pastimes with Her rival, She became filled with jealous anger.

“Ascending a chariot made of wonderful jewels, gold, and pearls, and decorated with ten million flags and golden domes, clutching a stick, and accompanied by a billion *gopī* friends, the Lord’s beloved, Sri Radha, rushed to see Lord Krishna. Seeing powerful Sridama guarding the entrance by Krishna’s order, Radha and Her friends rebuked him with many words. Eager to enter, Radha and Her friends began to hit Sridama with sticks. Hearing the great commotion the *gopīs* were making, Lord Krishna disappeared.

“Out of fear of Radha, Viraja transformed herself into a river that flowed for eighty-million miles around Gokula. She encircled Goloka as an ocean encircles a continent. She was glorious as if she were decorated with flowers and jewels and decorated with a crown. Looking at the forest there and the river [that Viraja had become], and thinking that Lord Krishna had gone, Sri Radha went to Her own forest grove. Then Lord Krishna transformed Viraja from a river back to her form of a girl dressed in glittering garments. Lord Krishna again enjoyed a *rāsa* dance with Viraja in the forest by the Viraja river.

“Some time passed and then, aware that Radha was suffering in His separation, Lord Krishna went with Sridama to Her forest. Radha said, ‘O Krishna, go where Your love is! Viraja has become a river. You become a river also! Why would You want to stay with Me in this forest?’

“Hearing these words, Lord Krishna went to Viraja’s forest. Then Krishna’s friend Sridama spoke angrily to Radha, ‘Sri Krishna is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the master of countless universes. He is the master of Goloka. He has many millions of transcendental potencies and can do whatever He likes. He is greater than the greatest. O Radha, please don’t criticize Him.’

“Radha replied, ‘You praise your father and criticize Me, your mother. Fool, leave Goloka and become a demon!’

“Sridama said, ‘O beautiful one, even though Lord Krishna was kind to You, still You were angry and jealous. Therefore You will go to the earth and for a hundred years be separated from Sri Krishna, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. Of this there is no doubt.’

“Having thus cursed each other, they became anxious and frightened. At that moment the Lord appeared there. The Supreme Personality of Godhead said, ‘O Radha, I have the power

to negate My own words and throw them far away, but I do not have the power to negate and throw away the words of My devotees. O beautiful one, don’t lament! Please hear the blessing I give to You: After many months, when the period of Our separation is over, You will see Me again. At the time of the *varāha-kalpa* [a name for the present era] I will go with You to the earth to relieve the earth’s burden and allow the devotees to see Me. O Sridama, hear My words! By a partial expansion of yourself you will become a demon. During the *vaivasvata-manvantara* [another name for the present era] you will fight with Me and die by My hand. Of this there is no doubt. By My blessings you will then attain the form you had before.”

Sri Narada said, “O austere king! Because of this curse, Sridama took birth among the *yakṣas* in the home of Sudhana. He was named Sankhachuda and he became a follower of Kuvera. That is why the spark of light from Sankhachuda entered the body of Sridama.

“I glorify Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is one without a second, for whom nothing is surprising, who has the power to assume any form, who is self-satisfied, who enjoys transcendental pastimes, and who stays in His own abode. A person who hears these pastimes attains the most pure and sacred supreme transcendental abode.”

— Garga Muni. *Sri Garga-saṁhitā*. English translation by Kusakratha Das. Krishna Library. Culver City California. 1990.

THE STORY OF GOPAL JIU

In the remote village of Gadeigiri, east-central Orissa, ISKCON has constructed a large temple to glorify the village deity named Gopal. The Giri family of Gadeigiri village has worshiped Gopal for more than 250 years and witnessed Gopal’s many unique and amazing pastimes. Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja was born to a daughter of the Giri family, and from his early childhood rendered various services to Gopal. Throughout his life Gour Govinda Swami would always go to visit Gopal whenever possible. He left this world while gazing at a photo of Gopal. The last word he spoke was, “Gopal”. On the request of some of our readers we present the following account, which is adapted from, “Gopal Jiu: The Beloved Deity of Srila Gour Govinda Swami”.

The village of Gadeigiri is a quiet place much like other small villages in India, consisting mostly of mud huts with thatched roofs. The residents

take their daily bath in the local pond, keep cows, and cook over cow dung fires in the same way their ancestors have done for thousands of years. The main sources of livelihood are rice cultivation and the selling of brass utensils. In front of almost every house one will find a shrine for the sacred *tulasī* plant, and it is common to hear the sound of the *mahā-mantra*: “*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*” being sung. The residents of Gadeigiri are very devoted to Gopal. The long-standing tradition in the village is that the first fruit or flower that appears in any garden must be offered to the Gopal deity, and it is understood that by doing this those trees and shrubs will thus give their fruits and flowers abundantly.

The village Gadeigiri is named after its founder, Gadai Giri, who migrated from the district of Midnapur in the seventeenth century. He was a businessman who regularly came to the area to sell utensils and bell-metal items. Every year Gadai Giri would come during the rainy season, stay four or five months, and then return to Midnapur. Gadai Giri was a gentle and saintly person. He would rise early each morning and perform *kīrtan*. Then after taking some flat rice and water he would go out selling brass utensils door to door. When evening arrived he would spend the night in some village and join with the local people in their daily custom of singing *kīrtan* and reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Appreciating Gadai Giri’s saintly qualities, the local *zamindar* (feudal landlord) offered to give him some nearby land. Gadai Giri received from him a large segment of land, including an area for cultivation. He cleared a small section of the jungle and built a house and a small temple wherein he established a deity of Dadhi Baman. When Lord Jagannath is worshiped without his brother Baladeva and sister Subhadra He is known as Patita Pavan or Dadhi Baman. Gadai Giri left his brass business and simply engaged himself in *bhajan* and *kīrtan*. Many wandering *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs* came to join with Gadai Giri’s *kīrtan*. Gradually other people came to stay permanently, and a village developed in that place in Gadai Giri’s name.

Gadai Giri had only one son, who was named Gopal Giri. Gopal Giri was influenced by the devotional qualities of his father and was very devoted to Lord Jagannath. Every year he would go to Puri to see the Ratha-

yatra festival. He was also very attached to performing *saṅkīrtan*, and was expert in many different styles of *kīrtan*.

Gopal Giri had a desire to worship a deity of Gopal. Unable to find such a deity, he decided to go to Puri, thinking that if he would render service to Lord Jagannath there, then somehow Gopal would come to him. Arriving in Puri, he stayed in the area known as Kundei Benta Sahi, near Grand road. As he was very scholarly, he easily obtained service in the office of the king, where he became the *poddar*, or cashier for the temple of Lord Jagannath. Gopal Giri led a very regulated life. While staying in Puri he would daily go to see Lord Jagannath, and at the temple he would sit on the *bāiś pāhāca*, the twenty-two steps inside the compound leading up to the main *darśana* area, and there he would read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the evening he would take *prasādam* and go home. Every Sunday he would go to the Satalahari Math, a temple near the ocean, where he would sit and read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and chant *harinām*. He was very attached to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

During the Ratha-yatra festivals in Puri he would approach devotees and *sādhus* coming from Vrindavan and ask them to bring him back a deity of Gopal. They would readily agree, “Yes, yes. Next time I will bring a Gopal deity for you.” But no one ever brought a deity.

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami tells this story:

Gopal Giri was serving in Puri as a government cashier. He was always thinking in his mind, “If I can get a Gopal deity I’ll offer worship to Him.” But he thought, “How can I go to Vrindavan?” He had a strong desire to get a deity.

At that time this deity of Gopal was in Vrindavan with a *sannyāsi vaiṣṇava*, a renunciate. He was doing *madhukari*, begging, and he was keeping that deity in his *jhola*, [a cloth tied as a bag]. During the day he would go out and do *madhukari*, then in the evening he would cook whatever he had begged and offer it to Gopal. In this was he was leading his life.

One night this Gopal deity told the *vaiṣṇava*, “You take me to Gopal Giri, the son of Gadai Giri.” He wants to offer Me worship. I want to go there. Take me there. But the *vaiṣṇava* thought that it was only a dream. He did not take it seriously. After a few days Gopal came again in a dream and beat him with a cane on his legs. It

was such a severe beating that his legs were bleeding. The *sannyāsi vaiṣṇava* woke up and begged apology, “Please forgive me for my offense. I did not take Your order seriously. But You have beaten me so severely, how can I go there with such wounds on my legs?” Gopal said, “When Gopal Giri touches you it will be healed, otherwise you cannot be cured. You go there at once, don’t make any delay.”

So he started walking. At that time there was no communication system, no train or bus. The only way was by walking. It took him two and a half months to reach Puri. At this time Gopal Giri was staying in a rented house at Kundhei Benta Sahi in Puri. The *vaiṣṇava* reached Puri in the evening and stayed near the Jagannath temple. Early the next morning he inquired, “Who is Gopal Giri? I want to meet him.” Many people knew Gopal Giri; he was famous as the cashier of the Jagannath temple. So he quickly found Gopal Giri at his rented house.

Gopal Giri had just finished his bath and was putting on *tilak*. The *vaiṣṇava* arrived and offered his obeisances to Gopal Giri. He then took the deity from his bag and presented Him to Gopal Giri. Gopal Giri was amazed, “What is this? Who are you, and where has this deity come from?”

The *vaiṣṇava* replied, “You wanted Gopal to worship. So Gopal has come from Vrindavan. I was in Vrindavan carrying this Gopal. He told me to hand Him over to you, and He beat me. He showed Gopal Giri his legs and said, “If you touch it, it will be cured,

otherwise it will not be cured.” So Gopal Giri immediately touched him and the injury was gone.

Gopal Giri was very happy that Gopal had fulfilled his desire. He couldn’t go to Vrindavan, but Gopal had come to him. Gopal Giri went to the market and purchased rice, *dāl*, and vegetables. He prepared *prasād* and gave some to the *vaiṣṇava*. Then he went to the king and offered his resignation, saying, “I don’t want to serve any more.” When he returned to his room he opened his bag and told that *vaiṣṇava*, “You can take as much money as you want.”

The *vaiṣṇava* said, “No, I don’t want any money. I only want to do service for Gopal. Wherever Gopal goes, I will go. I want to go and serve Him. I am not one to sell Gopal. I am a servant. I won’t take any money.”

Later on, Gopal Giri again went to see the king. The king asked him, “Why did you resign?”

“I have a temple in my village and I had a desire to get a deity of Gopal to worship.”

The king was very pleased and said, “All right, your desire is very noble. I have no objection. But sometimes you must come to Puri with your *kīrtan* party and chant in Jagannath’s temple.

Gopal Giri also had a deity made of Radha and installed Her. Their temple was a mud hut. He made all arrangements for Gopal, providing agricultural property so that in the future there would not be any difficulty for Gopal’s maintenance. Gopal Giri was a wealthy person. His family had landed property and they were famous for *kīrtan*. Every day *kīrtan* was going on. At last that land has come to me. Now we are taking care, constructing a nice temple for Gopal.

The king gave Gopal Giri some extra months’ salary and allowed him to go. Gopal Giri then sent a message to Gadeigiri for a *kīrtan* group to come to Puri to accompany Gopal to His new home. When the Gajapati king heard the *kīrtan* of the Gadeigiri villagers he became very pleased. It is written in the *mādaḷā-pāñji*, the history book of the temple of Lord Jagannath, that whenever the *kīrtan* party from Gadeigiri comes they should be allowed to perform *kīrtan* in the temple.

Gopal Giri installed the Gopal deity in Gadeigiri and requested the renunciate from Vrindavan to perform Gopal’s daily worship. After serving Gopal for twenty years, the renunciate departed this world and was given *samādhi*, ritual burial, near Gopal’s temple. After this, Gopal Giri engaged other renounced *vaiṣṇavas* for the daily worship of Gopal. ❀

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

a free bi-monthly service provided by:

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c/o ISKCON Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir
National Highway No. 5, IRC Village
Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India, 751015
Phone: (0674) 557026
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