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## MUSIC: MUNDANE VS SPIRITUAL

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

**Tamal Krishna** [taking the role of a materialist]: But your music is of one chanting. It is very limited.

**Prabhupada**: First of all you finish this limited, then you go to the unlimited. You have no experience of this limited, what to speak of the unlimited. Krishna has described you as *mūḍhās*, fools. You may try to take

credit in so many ways, but our conclusion is to follow the footsteps of Krishna. You are all *mūḍhās*.

**Devotee**: Some people may express God by chanting Hare Krishna, but we can also express God through our musical talent.

**Prabhupada**: We are doing. We decorate God so nicely [indistinct]. We are doing art, painting, cooking art, so many varieties of different arts that we are offering to Krishna. There's no scarcity of art.

**Tamal Krishna**: We are trying to attain the Supreme through our own music.

**Prabhupada**: No. That is another nonsense. We are trying to please the Supreme by the supreme music. *Golokera prema-dhana hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* — these sounds are not mundane. These are Vaikuntha sounds. *nārada-muni bājāya viṇā rādhikā-ramaṇa-nāme* — it is brought by Narada Muni. It is not manufactured here.

**Tamal Krishna**: Don't you think that the great musicians like Bach were inspired by God to make music?

**Prabhupada**: But they [indistinct] do not believe in God. So that is another thing. This music [we are singing] is being imported from Vaikuntha, many millions and millions of miles away. This is not just music of mundane sound. Otherwise, why are you not tired even after repeating it for many, many days? Any mundane sound, if you repeat it, you cannot prolong it. But we are only chanting Hare Krishna, and you can also chant and hear it.

**Yashodanandana**: You have said that variety is the mother of enjoyment. So we are enjoying many different songs.

**Prabhupada:** Unless there is variety, how we are enjoying?

**Yashodanandana** [playing the role of a materialist]: Yes. You only have one song, but we have many songs.

**Prabhupada:** That's all right. Who cares for you?

**Yashodanandana:** So many people.

**Prabhupada:** No.

**Tamal Krishna:** But there are so many symphonies...

**Prabhupada:** That is our credit. We have got one song, and we are attracting so many. You have got many songs, but you attract yourself only.

**Devotee:** When there is a symphony orchestra, ten, twenty thousand people come to hear.

**Prabhupada:** But who takes it seriously?

**Devotee:** They all do.

**Prabhupada:** They hear and go away. That's all. Temporary, temporary.

**Devotee:** But then they also buy the record and listen at home.

**Prabhupada:** That's all right, but our song, we are chanting always. Where is that song you have got? Just like George Harrison. He has to make new records. Nobody cares for the old record. Although he is a big musician, his business will stop if he says, "I have given one song, that's all." [laughter] Who will care for it? That is our credit.

**Devotee:** But they will say only a select few are interested in that Hare Krishna song. Not so many people.

**Prabhupada:** That's all right. Not just a select few. We're increasing the number to many thousands. You cannot say only a select few. A select few was in beginning, because I was chanting in Tompkins Square Park. But that it is not select few, it will increase even though the song is the same. That is our credit. 🍌

— Conversation in Hyderabad. 14 April 1975.

## PRAYERS FOR SERVICES IN THE ARTS

**Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode**  
**Bhajana-rahasya 8.21-22**

Pride in one's service is found in these words of the Goswamis:

*navam divyam kāvyam svakṛtam atulam nāṭaka-kulam  
prahelīgūḍhārthāḥ sakhi-rucira viṇā-dhvani gatīḥ  
kadā snehollāsair lalita-lalitā-preraṇa balāt  
salajjam gāndharvā sara-sama-sakṛc-chikṣayati mām (21)*

When will Gandharvika Radha teach me the divine new poems she herself has composed, as well as her plays, the hidden meaning of her riddles, and the way

to play delightful tunes on the viṇā? All this she will do with affectionate enthusiasm after being encouraged to do so by the persuasive Lalita Devi. (Raghunath Das Goswami's *Sva-saṅkalpa-prakāśa-stotram 2*)

[Rendering in Bengali verse:]

*svakṛta-nāṭaka āra navya kāvyā tati  
gūḍhārtha prahelī divya viṇā-rava gati  
lalitāra anurodhe snehollāse kare  
sa-lajja gāndharvā more nibhrte śikhābe*

When will Gandharvika Radha teach me her original plays and poems, her clever riddles with their hidden meanings, and her many new delightful tunes on the viṇā? On Lalita's request, she will do this in a secluded place with affection and enthusiasm.

Acceptance of Vishakha Sakhi, whose voice defeats the singing of the cuckoo, as a guru for learning the art of music is given in the *Stavāvalī, Prārthana:*

*kuhūkaṅṭhī-kaṅṭhād api kamana-kaṅṭhī mayi punar  
viśākhā gānasyāpi ca rucira-śikṣām praṇayatu  
yathāham tenaitat yuva-yugalam ullāsyā saganāl  
labhe rāse tasmān maṇi-padaka hārān iha muhuḥ (22)*

When will Vishakha, whose voice is sweeter than that of a koyil, teach me how to sing pleasingly so that I may bring satisfaction to the divine couple and all their companions during the rāsa dance and receive a jewelled necklace from them as a reward? (Raghunath Das Goswami's *Sva-saṅkalpa-prakāśa-stotram 5*)

[Rendering in Bengali verse:]

*kūhu-kaṅṭha tiraskarī viśākhā sundarī  
gāna-vidyā śikhāibe more kṛpā kari*



### Nāma-tattva

## KRISHNA CHANTS THE NAMES OF DEVOTEES

**Ādi Purāṇa quoted in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11.464**

*śraddhayā helayā nāma raṅanti mama jantavaḥ  
teṣām nāma sadā pārtha vartate ḥṛdaye mama*

[Krishna says to Arjuna:] "O Partha! In my heart I always chant the names of those who with faith or contempt chant my name."

— Sanskrit transliteration from Gaudiya Grantha Mandir: <http://www.granthamandira.com>





Wall painting in Jagannath Puri. Photo by Gour Govinda das (Philip Cargonia)

In Odisha, Jagannath is watching you from everywhere

*sei gāne rādhā kṛṣṇe rāse ullasiba  
maṇi-padakādi paritoṣika pāiba*

When will the beautiful Vishakha mercifully teach me the art of singing like a koyil bird? [When I show my learning] at that time, Radha and Krishna will be overjoyed by my singing and will give me a reward of a jewelled necklace and other ornaments. 🍊

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## THE TRADITION OF DEVOTIONAL PAINTING FOR LORD JAGANNATH

### Part 2

Madhavananda Das

### Paṭa-citra and Jagannath

The artists of Odisha are known as *citrakāras* – literally “picture makers”. In Odisha society they are considered to be *śūdras* by caste. The ancestral surnames they use are Maharana, Mahapatra, Das, Datta-mahapatra, etc. The Datta-mahapatras of Puri are considered to be descendents of the *śabara* king Vishvasu, who, according to *Skanda Purāṇa*, was the first devotee to worship Lord Jagannath.

For hundreds or perhaps thousands of years the Datta-mahapatras and other *citrakāras* have been in charge of making the decorations and pictures in Lord Jagannath’s temple and on his *ratha-yātrā* carts and other conveyances. *Paṭa-citra* paintings are integral parts of the numerous festivals, worship and rituals of Lord Jagannath.

The *Mādaḷā Pāñji* – literally “drum chronicle” – is the official historical record of the worship of Jagannath. It lists thirty-six types of servants that were formally recognized by King Anangabhim Dev (ruled 1190-1198) as worshippers of the deity. One of the listed servants was the *citrakāra*<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, the *Kaṭaka-rāja-vamśāvaliḥ*<sup>2</sup>, which, like the *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, also details the history of the kings in charge of the worship of Jagannath in Puri, mentions that King Narasimhadev (ruled 1552-1577) ordered three paintings to be made each year by the *citrakāras* of the deities of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra<sup>3</sup>. These paintings, known as *aṇasara-paṭi*, were installed annually as temporary deities and worshiped during the two-week *anavasara* period that follows *snāna-yātrā*, Jagannath’s public bath. During this time the deities are repainted by *citrakāras* of the Datta-mahapatra family, and some of the outer layers of the deities’ bodies are replaced. Even today, the devotees are not able to see



A traditional Odia palm-leaf picture called a Talapatra, and the iron pen used to engrave them called a lekhana.

Jagannath for the duration of the *anavasara* period and hence suffer pangs of separation, which are somewhat mitigated by being able to behold the *anasara-paṭi*.

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Finally, at the completion of the two-week period, the deities give audience on the day before the *ratha-yātrā* festival. That day, huge crowds of jubilant pilgrims come to see their beloved Lord, thus extinguishing the burning fire of separation in their hearts. This event is known as “*navayauvana* [newly youthful] *darśana*”, indicating Jagannath’s fresh new appearance. 🍊

#### Notes

1 *Mādaḷā Pāñji*. Edited by Artavallabha Mohanty. Cuttack. 1940. Odia. 32-33. There are many different versions of *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, some of which do not include the *citrakāras* in the list of thirty-six servants.

2 A Sanskrit work compiled in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from older records likely from the Jagannath temple. It is also an historical record of the Jagannath temple in Puri and of the *Gajapati-vamśa*, kings who were ruling Odisha. It is considered to be part of the broad corpus of works known by the same title “*Mādaḷā Pāñji*”. See Dr. G. C. Tripathi and Dr. Hermann Kulke’s introduction to *Kaṭaka-rāja-vamśāvali*, page i.

3 *Kaṭaka-rāja-vamśāvali*, text 85. From the text it is clear that previously only one painting was made of all three deities together. Thus the offering of the *citrakāras* predated the reign of Maharaja Narasimhadev.



Unknown photographer

A paṭa-citra artist at work in a village near Puri