

Radha the Beloved of Jagannath

Madhavi Devi

This poignant song shows that Madhavi Devi saw her beloved Lord Jagannath as Shyamasundar Krishna, the beloved of Srimati Radharani.

*śrī-nanda-nandana se jaga-bandana
candana carchita aṅga
sākṣāt vrajendra kumāra sehari
nilādri-bhavya vibhava*

The darling son of Nanda,
He is adored by the whole world.
His body is decorated and worshipped
With fragrant sandalwood paste.
The handsome young son of Braja,
Hari is the sweetest treasure of Niladri. ¹

*pahuḍa kālare prema romāñcare
rādhā nāma aṅge jaḍi
prema pulakare gajadantavara
palañke thānti pahuḍi*

As he retires for the night,
The name of Radha, he holds close to his heart
In tight embrace, full of amorous excitement. ²
Thrilled with love's passionate ecstasy,
He sleeps on the bedspread decorated with ivory.

*śrī gīta-govinda kānta padāvalī
khaṇḍuare rādhā-nāma
premare aṅgare dhari rasabhare
vilāsa karanti hari*

The tender, sweet verses of Śrī Gīta-govinda ³
Bearing the name of Radha,
Are woven into this *khaṇḍua*.
This the Lord holds close to his limbs,
Dallying in luxurious love play,
Full of tender feelings.

*sehi rādhā-nāma kṛṣṇa-priya dhāma
khaṇḍuā mo śire thāu
rādhā-kṛṣṇa nāma jihvāre jaḍita
hoiṇa jivana jāu*

May this *khaṇḍua* ever adorn my head,
The one on which Radha's name inscribed,
The same that is Krishna's favorite abode!
May my life come to an end
While my lips with the names
Of Radha and Krishna are attached!



The sweet treasure of Niladri

*mādhavi dāsiku bāndhavi vicāri
karuṇā-kara śrīhari
tava śrī-caraṇa caraṇa tulasi
mo śira bhūṣaṇa kari*

O Hari, consider Madhavi as your companion
Be benign and show me compassion!
Do let me make for my head an ornament,
Of a few leaves of *Tulsi* sanctified by your feet! 🌿

— Translation by Subas Pani

Notes

1 Niladri is another name for Jagannath Puri.

2 Every night there is an offering to Lord Jagannath's heart of *tulasi* leaves which have words from *Gītā-govinda* written on them. See the article in this issue entitled "Jagannath and Gita Govinda".

3 Translator's note: This refers to the elaborate ritual of *Baḍa-śṛṅgāra-veśa* and *Baḍa-śṛṅgāra-dhūpa* performed every evening in the Sri-mandir. The *Gītā-govinda khaṇḍua*, a colorful tie and dye silk textile of Orissa with the words of Jayadeva's immortal composition *Śrī Gītā-govinda* woven into it, cover the deities during this ceremony. [For more about the *Baḍa-śṛṅgāra-veśa* and the *Gītā-govinda khaṇḍua*, see the article in this issue, "Gita Govinda Thakur".]

Bibliography

— Sadashiva Ratha Sharma. *Śrī Śrī Jagannātha O Jayadeva*. Kalinga Student's Store. Cuttack. 1984. Oriya. P. 60. The author of this book mentions that he had discovered this poem in San-gitasara, from Braja Kishore Mohanty of Benapur.

— Subas Pani. *Blue Hill, Hymns to Lord Jagannath*. Published by Rupa & Co. New Delhi. 2004