

# RELIGIOUS MUSIC OF INDIA

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE FROM A 16TH CENTURY JAINIST PAINTING ON COTTON, GUJARAT, INDIA



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RECORDED IN INDIA UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ALAIN DANIELOU FOR THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND HIGHER EDUCATION



FOLKWAYS FE 443

BHAJANA—I AM THY SERVANT  
RAGA KAMAVARDHANI  
VEDIC CHANTING—TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD  
RAGA BHAIRAVI  
HYMN TO SHIVA  
RAMA LILA  
RAGHUPATI RAGHAVA RAJA RAMA  
KIRTANA—THE BLACK PARROT

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# RELIGIOUS MUSIC OF INDIA

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# RELIGIOUS MUSIC OF INDIA

Recorded in India  
under the direction of Alain Danielou,  
Research Professor, College of Music and  
Fine Arts, Banaras Hindu University, for  
The National Council on Religion in  
Higher Education. Introduction,  
transliteration, translation and scores  
by Alain Danielou.

## INTRODUCTION

In Indian music all scales, all intervals are established by relation to one fixed sound, the tonic. There is no absolute pitch in Indian music; every artist places his tonic at the pitch most convenient to him. For easier comparison of the different scales we shall follow the Indian system of notation and define them as if the tonic were C.

The tonic is the unmoving center, the fundamental unity in relation to which all the descriptive or expressive elements are evolved. The performers and hearers gradually identify themselves with the tonic. It is only when the tonic ceases to be heard as a note but becomes the unnoticed norm of our perception of melody—just as the beats of the heart are the unnoticed rhythm which defines our relation to time—that we begin to perceive the music.

This identification with the tonic, the reduction of all the world of music to its basic unmanifest unity is the essential factor which allows the utilization of music as one of the forms of Yoga, one of the ways of spiritual attainment. The absolute fixity of the tonic during a musical performance and the resulting identity of each expressive interval with a given frequency is essential for the magical effect of sounds. The meaning of each sound being associated with a given pitch, sound and idea become entirely superimposed and can thus act upon the hearers without the intervention of mental activity.

TARAPADA KUNDU SINGING KIRTANA





## BAND 1: BHĀJANĀ--I AM THY SERVANT

The Bhajanā is a song of devotional love which plays a very important part in the religious as well as the musical life of India.

This Bhajanā was written in Sanskrit by the Oriyā composer Jagannāthā Dāsā (1490-1550). It is sung by Swami D. R. Parvatikar of Hyderabad, Deccan, who is under a vow of silence and never utters a sound except to sing religious songs. He accompanies himself on the Vīṇā, and is accompanied by a tablā (drum) and ghungarus (a string of very small bells tied on a ribbon, used for religious songs and dances).

This song is sung in the Rāgā Kalingaḍā which is consecrated to the Lord Shiva; it is a chromatic mode in the scale of Bhairavā with second and sixth minor. In the recording the mode is transposed to D flat with the predominant notes the minor sixth and the major third.

### Translation

To the "Remover of Sorrow" I bow.  
O thou who dwellest in all things,  
Those who are near to thee are freed from sin.  
I am thy servant, thy servant am I.

Thou art the soul of all that lives,  
the ruler of life,  
Away from life, (yet) the giver of life,  
Thou art the support of life, the form of life,  
the Progenitor of the Lotus-born,  
the Lord of life.  
I am thy servant, thy servant am I.

O thou who dwellest in all things,  
Those who are near to thee are freed from sin.

In all action thou art the doer,  
The act accomplished, the skill of doing,  
The giver of the fruits of action,  
Thou bindest with action and freest  
from the burden of action,  
Conqueror of the law of action:  
Embodiment of action, Destroyer of evil deeds,  
I am thy servant, thy servant am I.

O thou who dwellest.....

Thy name is Time, (1) ruler of Timeless Time  
Beyond time, witness of the three forms  
of time, (2)  
Impeller of Time, and the undoer of Time,  
Progenitor of Time, Embodiment of Time.  
I am thy servant, thy servant am I.

Thou art the pillar of duty,  
by thee duty's greatness grows.  
First among those who know the righteous path,  
Thou art the store of duty, subtle as duty,  
Protector of the law, O Seer of righteousness!  
Friend of the virtue of abstinence.  
I am thy servant, thy servant am I.

O thou who dwellest.....

Thou art made of the secret words  
and diagrams,  
O seed of the Magic Word!  
Thou art the Teacher who givest  
The great initiation of the royal path.  
Conqueror of the Power of Word!  
Mysterious is thy name.  
The hidden word leads to thy greatness,  
O Resplendent Spirit who art the magic word.  
Lord of the Moving Universe, O Krishna,  
I am thy servant, thy servant am I.

O thou who dwellest.....

- (1) Time here also means Death.
- (2) Past, present, future.

### Text

Hari                      Āum      Vāsudevā  
Remover of Sorrow I bow In-dwelling deity

tavā vigatāghā      sanghā      tavā dāso-ham  
thy removing-sin contact thy servant I am

tavā dāso-ham.      jīvāntaraḡatā      jīvā  
thy servant I am living in-dweller life's

niyāmakā jīvā      vilaksanā jīvanadā  
ruler      from life removed      life giver

jīvādhārakā      jīvārūpā      Rājīvābhavā  
life's support life's shape of the Lotus-born

janakā      jīveśvarā.      Tavā dāso-ham  
the progenitor life's deity thy servant I am

tavā dāso-ham.      Vāsudevā  
thy servant I am In-dwelling deity

vigatāghā      .....etc.  
removing-sin

Karmā karmā  
action of action

kṛtākarmā      kṛtāḡamā  
accomplished action the deed's skill

karmāphalāpradā      karmājītā  
of action the fruit-giver conqueror of action

Karmābandhā      mahākarmā  
by action binding from the great action

vimochakā, karmāvighrahā  
liberating the embodiment of action

vikarmānāshā.      Tavā  
destroyer of evil action thy

dāso-ham      tavā dāso-ham.  
servant I am thy servant I am

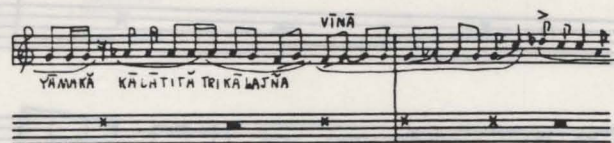
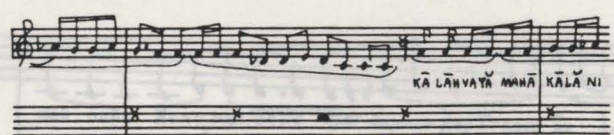
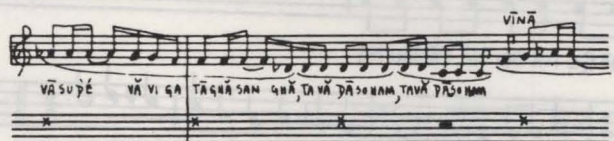
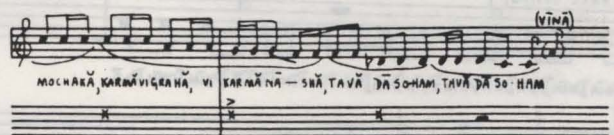
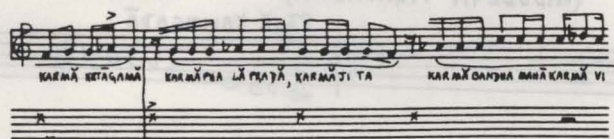
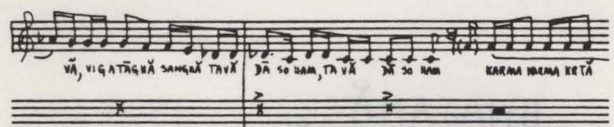
Vāsudevā.....etc  
In-dwelling



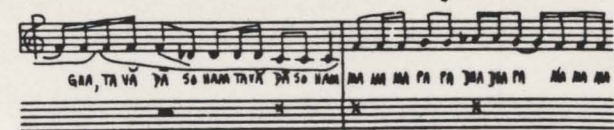
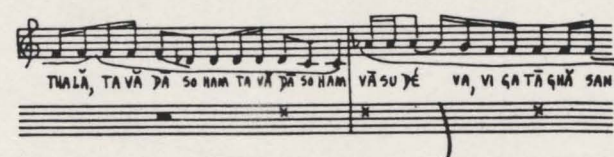
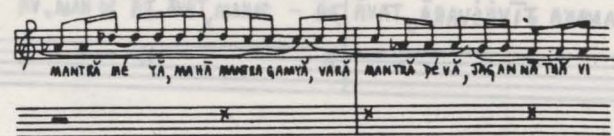
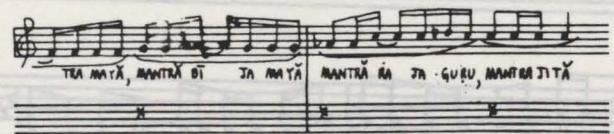
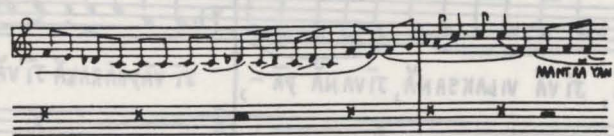
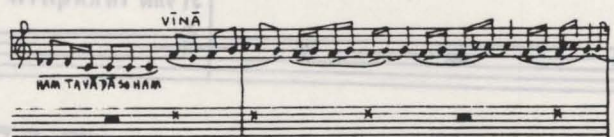
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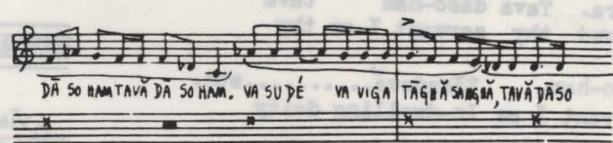
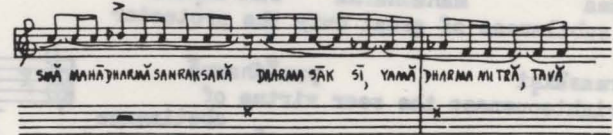
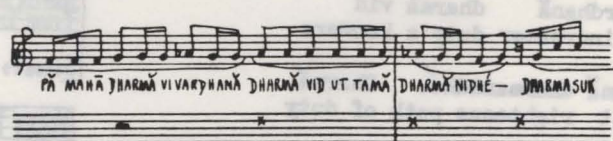
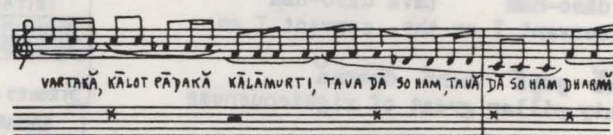
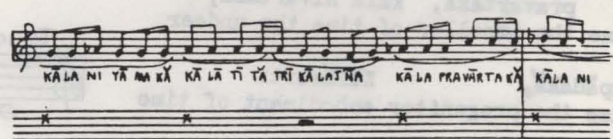
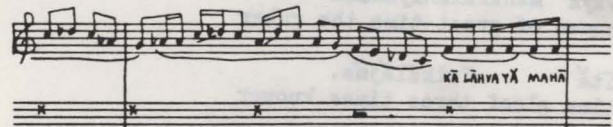
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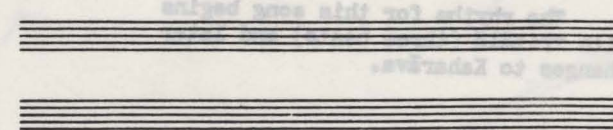
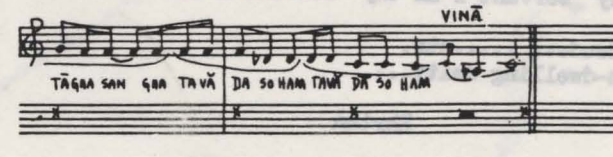
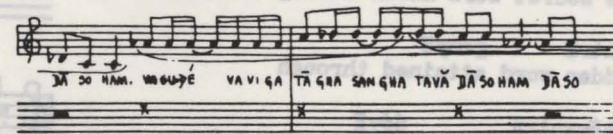
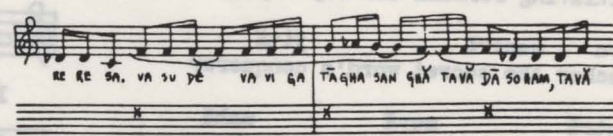
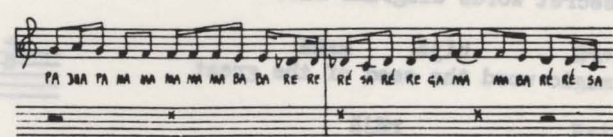
D



C



E





Д

RĀGĀ KĀMĀVARDHANI

Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Tonic C" and "Raga". The score is written on ten staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "p" (piano) and "P" (piano). The score is divided into sections labeled "Tonic C", "MAIN THEME", and "FIRST VARIATION". The "Tonic C" section is the first staff, followed by the "MAIN THEME" section. The "FIRST VARIATION" section begins with the third staff and continues through the remaining staves. The notation is dense, with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, suggesting a fast tempo. The score is written in a clear, legible hand, with some corrections and erasures visible.



**SWAMI D.R. PARVATIKAR PLAYING VINA**



### BAND 3: VEDIC CHANTING

Ritual chanting of verses from the end of the third part of the Taittiriya Upanishad of the Krishna-Yajur-Veda. Done by Paṇḍitā Rāmjī Shāstri Draviḍā, a Tamilian now residing in Banaras.

The chanting of the Yajur Veda is done on three notes which, in the present recording, are G A B. The middle one is the tonic. This corresponds to the scale B<sup>♭</sup> C D, B<sup>♭</sup> being the low note, C the tonic or high note, and D the sounded note. In the Sāman chant, at the end of the recording, the voice is more sustained and the pitch is raised by one half-tone; an ornamental note, one fourth below the tonic, is added. The scale becomes (F) A<sup>♭</sup> B<sup>♭</sup> C which corresponds to (G) B<sup>♭</sup> C D with D as the tonic.

Vedic chanting is the oldest form of chanting known. It has survived for at least three thousand years to our day with very little alteration. The simple system of notation by numbers used from earliest times to represent the notes, together with oral tradition, has been sufficient for the method of chanting to remain identical in all parts of India.

The chanting of Vedic verses forms an essential part of every Hindu religious ceremony, particularly of the great rituals. As a rule, Vedic verses should not be heard by others than high caste Hindus, which makes it difficult to get authentic recordings. This recording was made in Banaras in 1951 by a Pandit noted for his ability to chant the Vedas correctly. This passage is taken from the Krishna, or Dark Yajurveda. There are two traditions of the Yajurveda, known as the Krishna (dark) and Sukla (white). They are chanted in a slightly different style and the priestly families which preserve one of the forms do not usually know the other. The last paragraph of the chanting is sung in a style resembling that used for the Sāma Veda.

#### Translation

##### Taittiriya Upanishad end of third part

Never send away any one who comes to the house. This is a meritorious discipline. Hence by some way or other one must secure a good stock of food. He (the householder) tells them (the visitors), "The food is ready." The wise man no doubt (offers) in the best way the prepared food and he too gets in return the best of things. No doubt (he who gives) in an average way the prepared food will get average things and surely (he who gives) in the worst manner the prepared food will get the worst of things.

The power of preserving lies in speech. The power of acquiring and preserving dwells in the breathing and excretive energies. The power of doing is in the hands. The power of moving in the feet, the power of releasing in the anus. These are (divine symbols) to be worshipped in the human (form). Others are found in the heavenly (forms). The power of satisfying is in the rain, the virile power is in lightning, fame is in cattle (i.e. wealth), light in the stars. In the male organ are the power of procreation, the seed of immortality, and pleasure. In Ether are all things.

Having worshipped That (Divinity) as the support of all, he finds a support. Worshipping That as the Great, he becomes great. Worshipping That as Mind, he gains mental power. Worshipping That as deserving of reverence, all things desired bow before him. Worshipping That as the Principle, the Brahman, he becomes one with the Principle. He who worships That as the Angel of Death sees all the enemies who wish him ill destroyed and also all the kinsmen he dislikes.

He who dwells in man and in the sun is one. He who knows this when he leaves this world, crossing beyond his physical individuality (which is made of food), crossing beyond his subtle individuality (which is made of breath), crossing beyond his mental individuality, crossing beyond his intellectual individuality (made of knowledge), crossing beyond his transcendent individuality (made of joy), moves in these worlds enjoying all he wishes for, taking any form he pleases. He remains singing this chant:

Wonder! Wonder! Wonder!

I am the food, I am the food, I am the food. I am (life) the food-eater, I am the food-eater, I am the food-eater. I (as Divinity) bring them together, I bring them together, I bring them together. I am (the Cosmic Intellect), first born from "Absolute Reality". I am the navel of Immortality. Before the gods (I was). He who gives me verily protects me. I the food, devour the eater of food. What is the whole universe before me? He who knows this shines like the Sun. Such is the Nearest Approach.

#### Text

Na kañcana vasatau praty-ācakṣita  
never any one in the house send away

Tad vratam tasmād  
this meritorious discipline hence

yayā kayā ca vidhayā bāhv annam  
by this that and method much food

prāpnuyāt. Ārādhy asmā annam  
should be got ready to him food

ity āchakṣatē. Etad vai mukhato  
thus he tells this no doubt in best way

annam rāddham. Mukhato -smā  
food prepared in the best way by him



annam rādhyatē. Etad vai  
food is received this no doubt

madhyato -nnam rāddham.  
in average way food prepared

Madhayto -sma annam rādhyatē.  
in average way by him food is received

Etad vā antato -nnam  
this no doubt in the worst way food

rāddham. Antato -smā annam  
prepared in the worst way by him food

rādhyatē. Yo evam Veda.  
is received he who thus knows

Kṣema iti vāci. Yoga  
preservation in speech acquiring

kṣema iti prāṇa āpānayoḥ.  
preserving in breathing and excretive

Karm eti hastayoḥ. Gatir iti  
action in the hands motion in

pādayoḥ. Vimuktir iti payau.  
the feet release in the anus

Iti mānuṣīṇ samājñāḥ.  
thus relating to the human to be worshipped

Atha daivīḥ. Tīptir  
Now relating to the heavenly. satisfaction

iti vṛṣṭau. Balam iti vidyuti.  
in the rain virile power in lightning

Yaśa iti paśuṣu. Jyotir iti nakṣatreṣu.  
fame in cattle light in constellations

Prajātir amṛtam ānanda  
begetting sons immortal ambrosia pleasure

ity upasthe. Sarvam ity ākāśe.  
thus in the male organ all thus in Ether

Tat pratigṛh ety upāsīta  
that the support thus having worshipped

Pratigṛhavan bhavati. Tan maha  
supported he becomes that the great

ity upāsīta. Mahān bhavati.  
thus having worshipped great he becomes

Tan māna ity upāsīta. Nanyante  
that mind thus having worshipped they bow

-smai kāmāḥ. Tad brahm ety  
to him desires that the Principle thus

upāsīta Brahmavān bhavati.  
having worshipped Principle he becomes

Tad brahmapaṇḍ parimara  
that of the Principle appointed to kill

ity upāsīta. Pary eṣam  
thus having worshipped towards him

mriyante dviṣantaḥ sapatnāḥ. Pari  
die hostile enemies towards

ye -priyā bhrātṛvyaḥ.  
he who displeasing relatives

Sa yaś c āyam puruṣe yaś c āsāv  
He who and in this man who and in that

āditye sa ekaḥ. Sa ya evamvit  
sun he one he who thus knows

Asmāḥ lokāt pretya. Etam anna mayam  
from this world going this food made of

ātmanām upasañ - kramya. Etam  
individuality crossing beyond this

prāṇa mayam ātmānam  
vital breath made of individuality

upasañ-kramya. Etam mano mayam  
crossing beyond this mind made of

ātmanām upasañ-kramya. Etam  
individuality crossing beyond. this

viññāna mayam ātmānam  
knowledge made of individuality

upasañ-kramya. Etam ānanda may  
crossing beyond this joy made of

ātmanām upasañ-kramya. Imal  
individuality crossing beyond in these

lokān kām ānnī kāma  
worlds as desired in food desired

rūpy anusañcaran. Etat sāma  
in shape moving about this chant

gāyann āste.  
singing he remains

Ha Om vu Ha Om vu Ha Om vu  
wonder wonder wonder

Aham annam aham annam aham annam.  
I the food I the food I the food

Aham annādo Om ham annādo Om ham  
I food-eater I food-eater I

annādaḥ. Aham ślokaḥ I aham  
food-eater I their uniter I

ślokaḥ aham ślokaḥ.  
their uniter I their uniter

Aham asmi prathamajā rta Om sya.  
I am the first born of absolute truth

Pūrvam devebhyo mṛtasya nā Ombhāyi.  
before the gods of immortality the navel

Yo nā dadāti sa id eva mā  
who me gives he by this verily me

Om vāḥ. Aham annam annam adantam  
preserves I the food the food eater

ā Om dmi. Aham viśvam bhuvanam  
devour I the whole of the worlds

abhyabhavā Om. Suvar na jyotiḥ.  
disregard sun like light

Yah evam Veda. Ity upaniṣat.  
he who this knows. thus nearest approach.



# BAND 4: RĀGĀ BHAIRAVĪ, PLAYED ON FLUTES

# RĀGĀ BHAIRAVĪ

Whenever a religious ceremony or a household ritual is performed, the atmosphere should be purified by the auspicious sound of wind instruments and drums. To this end a small orchestra of oboes or flutes, accompanied by drums and cymbals, is installed before the entrance of the house or temple and plays almost continuously. This music is a necessary feature of all marriages, initiations and other religious ceremonies.

In Indian music the modes or rāgās are not merely scales but a scheme of expression corresponding to a particular emotion.

Bhairavī, the Dorian mode, is the mode dedicated to the Feminine Principle, the Divine Mother. Most songs in honor of the goddess and many other religious songs are composed in this mode. Bhairavī represents a balanced, soft, tender, peaceful emotion. It is here played on two flutes of the most primitive type, very difficult instruments to play, made of hollow bamboo with seven holes, and open at both ends. The sound is produced by placing the lips against the edge of one end.

This is a recording of flute playing at the entrance of the temple, made up of a slow exposition of the theme and improvised variations. The flute players are Shyām Lāl and Kanhaiyā Lāl, professional musicians of Banaras. They are accompanied by a double drum played by Atvaru Prasad, and by a Vinā giving the tonic fifth and octave.

TONIC C

RĀGĀ

MAIN THEME

FIRST VARIATION FLUTE

EXPRESSIVO

VINĀ





BAND 5: HYMN TO SHIVA

This is a Hymn of Praise to the god Shiva, composed in the South Indian style by the performers. It is sung in Sanskrit by Mr. T. M. Krishnaswāmī Iyer, a retired Chief Justice of the Trivandrum High Court, a Tamilian, seventy years old; and Mr. P. K. Bālasubrahmaniam, a college student at Madras University, twenty years old, and also a Tamilian. The singing is accompanied by small cymbals (Karatālī), a reed drone, and a Tanpurā, a string instrument giving the tonic, fifth and octave.

Translation

O Supreme Deity, wed to the Peace of Night,  
Eternally young, Lord of Numbers,  
To Thee we bow, O Cosmic Dancer,  
Abode of Mercy,  
Lord of the Mountain,  
Destroyer of the three cities,  
O Fortune, Beloved of thy devotees,  
Treasure of all qualities.

O Remover of Pain, Remover of Sorrow,  
Giver of Peace,  
Consort of the Mountain's Daughter,  
O Auspicious Lord of Sleep, Giver of Rest,  
Wed to the Fair Goddess,  
Lord of the Mountain,  
Destroyer of the three cities,  
O Fortune, Beloved of thy devotees,  
Treasure of all qualities.

One eye on thy forehead,  
The crescent moon on thy brow,  
The fearful poison in thy throat,  
O Embodiment of all that is auspicious,  
Lord of the Mountain,  
Destroyer of the three cities,  
O Fortune, Beloved of thy devotees,  
Treasure of all qualities.

Text

UmāMaheśvarā  
O Supreme Deity wed to the Peace of Night

Kumārā Ganapatē  
Eternally young Lord of Numbers

Namāmi Naṭanā Kṛpānidhé  
To Thee we bow Cosmic Dancer Abode of Mercy

Kailāsa-paté Tripuradahanā  
Lord of the Mountain Destroyer of the  
three cities

Śrī Bhaktā-janā-priyā  
O Fortune beloved of thy devotees

Guṇā-nidhé  
Treasure of all qualities

Harā-Harā  
O Remover of Pain, Remover of Sorrow

Śambho Girijā-Bandho  
Giver of Peace Consort of the Mountain's  
daughter  
Śivā-Śivā Śaṅkarā  
O Auspicious Lord of Sleep Giver of Rest

Gaurī-paté Kailāsa-paté  
Wed to the Fair Goddess Lord of the Mountain

Tripuradahanā Śrī  
Destroyer of the three cities O Fortune

Bhaktā-Janā-priyā Guṇā-nidhé  
Beloved of thy devotees Treasure of all  
qualities

Lalāṭā-nétre  
One eye on thy forehead

Chandrā-śekhara  
The crescent moon on thy brow

Alāhala-Kanthā  
The fearful poison in thy throat

Maṅgalā-mūrti  
The Embodiment of all that is Auspicious

Kailāsa-paté Tripuradahanā  
Lord of the Mountain Destroyer of the  
three cities

Śrī Bhaktā-janā-priyā  
O Fortune Beloved of thy devotees

Guṇā-nidhé  
Treasure of all qualities.



PANDIT ANARNATH MIRRA PLAYING THE MRIDANGA, IN RAMA LILA



A

## HYMN TO ŚIVĀ

TONIC C

RĀGĀ JANPUṬĪ

RHYTHM - ĀDĪ TĀLĀ (3 MAIN STROKES IN 4 DIVISIONS AND 8 UNITS)

U-MĀ MA-HEŚ-VA-RĀ KU-MĀ-RĀ GA-NĀ-PA-TĒ U-MĀ MA-HEŚ-VA-RĀ KU-MĀ-RĀ

GA-NĀ-PA-TĒ U-MĀ MA-HEŚ-VA-RĀ KU-MĀ-RĀ GA-NĀ-PA-TĒ NA-NĀ-NĪ

NA-TĀ-NĀ KR-PĀ-NĪ-DHĒ KR-PĀ-NĪ

NA NĀ NĪ NĀ NĀ

DHĒ NA NĀ NĪ NA-TĀ-NĀ KR-PĀ-NĪ-DHĒ NA NĀ NĪ NĀ

NA KR-PĀ-NĪ-DHĒ KAILĀ-SĀ-PA-TĒ

NAHĀ NAHĀ SĀMBHU GIRĪ-JĀ BĀNDHO ŚIVĀ ŚIVĀ ŚĀNKARĀ

GAURĪ-PATĒ NAHĀ NAHĀ SĀMBHU GIRĪ-JĀ BĀNDHO NAHĀ NAHĀ

SĀMBHU GIRĪ-JĀ BĀNDHO ŚIVĀ ŚIVĀ ŚĀNKARĀ GAURĪ-PATĒ

KAILĀSĀPATĒ TRĪPURĀ-DA-HA-NĀ ŚĒI KAILĀSĀPATĒ TRĪPURĀ-DA-HA-NĀ ŚĒI

KAILĀSĀPATĒ TRĪPURĀ-DA-HA-NĀ ŚĒI BHAKTĀJĀ NĀ PRIYĀ GU-NĀ-NĪDHĒ

B

KAILĀSĀPATĒ KAILĀSĀPATĒ TRĪPURĀ-DA-HA-NĀ ŚĒI KAILĀSĀPATĒ

TRĪPURĀ-DA-HA-NĀ ŚĒI KAILĀSĀPATĒ TRĪPURĀ-DA-HA-NĀ ŚĒI BHAKTĀJĀ

NĀ PRIYĀ GU-NĀ-NĪDHĒ BHAKTĀJĀ NĀ PRIYĀ GU-NĀ-NĪDHĒ BHAKTĀJĀ

NĀ PRIYĀ GU-NĀ-NĪDHĒ NAHĀ NAHĀ SĀMBHU GIRĪ-JĀ

BĀNDHO NAHĀ NAHĀ SĀMBHU

GIRĪ-JĀ BĀNDHO NAHĀ NAHĀ SĀMBHU GIRĪ-JĀ BĀNDHO ŚIVĀ ŚIVĀ ŚĀNKARĀ

D

BHAKTĀJĀ NĀ PRIYĀ GU-NĀ-NĪDHĒ LALĀTĀ

NĒTRĒ LALĀTĀ NĒTRĒ LALĀTĀ NĒTRĒ CHANDRĀ ŚĒ-KHĀ-RE

LALĀTĀ NĒTRĒ CHANDRĀ ŚĒ-KHĀ-RE ALANĀLĀ KANTĀ MANGĀLĀ

MĀ-TĒ ALANĀLĀ KANTĀ MANGĀLĀ MĀ-TĒ KAILĀSĀPATĒ KAILĀ-

SĀPATĒ KAILĀSĀPATĒ TRĪPURĀ-DA-HA-NĀ ŚĒI BHAKTĀJĀ NĀ PRIYĀ GU

NA NĪ DHĒ



# BAND 6: RĀMĀ LĪLĀ

Popular Hinduism is known to the masses of India through the epics Rāmāyaṇā and Mahabharata. Since most of the people cannot read, they learn the stories of the epics through listening to the singing of the stories in popular performances, usually outdoors. Such performances of the Rāmāyaṇā are known as Rāmā Līlā, the Play of Rāmā.

This Rāmā Līlā is taken from the Hindi version of the Rāmāyaṇā by Tulsī Dāśā (16th century), and is sung here in the ancient style of psalmody known traditionally as the Chant of the Sage Naranda. It is accompanied on the large drum (Mridangā) and the small cymbals (Manjirā) played by the singers. It is sung by Pandit Amarnāthā Mīśrā, the High Priest of the Sankatā Mōcanā Temple in Banaras, and a group of Brahmin Paṇḍits: Sarju Prasādā Mīśrā, Viśvanāthā Tripāthī, Rāmādhari Mīśrā, Dalsingharā Pandē, Rājā Rāmā Mīśrā, and Adya Shankarā Mīśrā.

## Translation

**Spoken:** Their heads adorned with lovely square hats on their black curly hair, from nail to head the two brothers looked beautiful, charming in every limb.

**Sung:** The townspeople heard the news That the king's son had come To visit their city. They left their houses and their work And ran to see him Like poor people run to loot. Having seen the bearing and beauty Of the two brothers, All eyes became happy, Having fulfilled their destiny. The girls crowded the windows of houses, Looking with love at the form of Rama, The charming. They spoke to each other with emotion, O sister! His beauty beats that Of a thousand cupids. Among gods and men, genii, Inhabitants of the underworld and sages, Such beauty never was heard of. Vishnu has four arms and Brahma four faces. Shiva has five faces and a fearful appearance. Is there any god in the world, O sister, Whose beauty may be compared to his?

## Text

**Spoken:** Rucirā cautaṇī subhagā  
lovely square hat adorned

sirā mēcakā kuñcitā kēśā Nakhā  
head black curly hair from nail

sikhā sundarā bandhu dou  
to head beautiful brothers the two

sobhā sakalā sudesā.  
appearing in every limb beautiful

**Sung:** Hē dēkhanā nagarā bhūpāsutā  
to see the town the king's son

āyē, Samāchārā pura-bāsinhā pāyē.  
came the news the citizens got

Hē! Hā! Hāyē dhāmā kāmā sabā tyāgē,  
running house work all they left

Manāhun rankā nidhi lūṭanā lāgē  
like the poor wealth loot busy

Nirakhi sahaṇā sundarā dou bhāī  
seeing bearing beauty the two brothers

hohiṇ sukhi lochanā phalā pāī  
became glad the eyes the fruit having got

Juvatī bhavanā jharakhanhi lāgī  
girls house windows placed

nirakhahiṇ Rāmā rūpā anurāgī.  
looking Rama's form with love

Kahahiṇ parasāparā bacanā saprītī  
say to each other words with love

Sakhī! inhā koṭi kāmāchabi jītī.  
O sister he thousands Cupid's beauty beats

Surā narā asurā nāgā  
Gods men genii inhabitant of underworld

muni mahiṇ Sobhā asi kahūṇ suniyatā  
sages among beauty such anywhere heard

nāhiṇ Bisnu cārī bhuṇṇā vidhi mukhā cārī  
not Vishnu four armed Brahma faced four

Bikatā veṣā mukhā pañcā purārī  
fearful appearance faces five Śivā

Aparā devā asā ko jagā āhī  
other god of his in the world is

Yahā chabi sakhi paṭatariya jāhī.  
whose beauty O sister compared could be

## RĀMĀ LĪLĀ

TONIC C

RĀGĀ

RHYTHM: > CHAUTĀLĀ (4 BEATS)

STROKES ON THE

CHANTED

RUCIRĀ CAUTANĪ SUBHAGĀ SIRĀ, MĒ CHAKĀ KUÑCITĀ KĒŚĀ NAKHĀ SIKHĀ

SUNDARĀ BANDHU, DO - U SO - BHĀ SAKA - LĀ SUDĒŚĀ.

SUNG

HE! DĒKHANĀ NAGARĀ BHUPĀSU - TĀ A - - - YĒ, HĀ! DEKHANA NAGA -

RĀ BHU - PĀ - SU - TĀ - A - - - YĒ, SAMĀCĀRĀ PURĀ BĀSINA PĀ

ETC

- - - - YĒ, SAMĀCĀRĀ PURĀ BHĀSI - NĀ PĀ - - - YĒ

(EVERY HALF LINE IS REPEATED TWICE ON THE SAME TUNE)



## BAND 7: RAGHUPATI RĀGHAVĀ RĀJĀ RĀMĀ

Raghupati Rāghavā Rājā Rāmā is one of the most popular Kīrtanās in India, the song which was sung daily in the prayer meetings led by Mahatma Gandhi. It is sung in praise of the god Rāmā, the divine incarnation of dharma (righteousness, or integrity, or duty), and his beautiful wife Sītā, the model of feminine virtues.

The Kīrtanā is a form of religious entertainment found chiefly in Bengal. It consists of the singing of a religious poem by a soloist, each verse being repeated by a chorus with the singing occasionally giving place to recitation, dancing, and instrumental interludes. Kīrtanās often last for several hours and usually create in the participants a state of religious exaltation.

Many Kīrtanās are the composition of ancient poets such as Jayādevā (12th century), Chandi Dāsā and Vidyāpati (11th century) and in many cases are still sung in the original melody which has been handed down traditionally. Although the text is available with indications of mode and rhythm, the detail of the execution has rarely been written down.

It is generally agreed that Bengalis are the best Kīrtanā singers. This one is sung, in Sanskrit and Hindi, by a group of Bengalis now living in Banaras. The soloist is Śrī Tārāpadā Kundu, accompanied on the Khol (drum) by Balāi Chānd Mukhopadhyāyā. The chorus is made up of Rākhāl Chandra Dāsā, Śiva Lāl Dāsā, Marmathanāthā Sarkār, and Haripada Dāsā, all of whom accompany their singing with small cymbals.

There are many variations of this song, all based on the raga, or mode, known as Mixed Kafi. Before the Kīrtanā begins, a Hymn of Praise to Rāmā is chanted; in the Kīrtanā, each verse is first sung by the soloist and then repeated by the chorus.

### Translation

**Chanted:** I bow to Rāmā the charming, elder brother of Lakṣmaṇā celebrated in the clan of Raghu, beautiful husband of Sītā.

With all royal attributes, merciful, sum of all qualities, dear to priests, righteous.

Lord of kings, one with truth, son of Daśarathā (king of the ten chariots), dark in color, the image of peace.

Delight of the world, jewel of Raghu's clan, descendant of Raghu, enemy of Rāvaṇā.

We bow before him, the greatest of Raghus.

On whose right sits Lakṣmaṇā holding a bow, on whose left is the beautiful (Sītā) daughter of King Janakā.

Before him stands the son of the wind (the divine monkey Hanumān).

To Rāmā the charming, pleasing as the moonlight, to Rāmā the gracious, the Supreme Spirit, to the Uncontested Ruler, the Lord of all, husband of Sītā, we bow.

**Sung:** Hail to the Lord of Raghus, The uncontested Ruler, King Rāmā the Charming, Purifier of the fallen, Hail to Sītā and Rāmā, Hail to Sītā and Rāmā, Sītā and Rāmā. Sing O my mind: Sītā and Rāmā.

**Text**  
**Chanted:** Rāmam Lakṣmaṇapūrvajam  
to Rāmā elder brother of Lakṣmaṇā

Raghuvaram Sītāpatim  
best in the Raghu clan husband of Sītā

sundaram, Kākutstham  
beautiful with all royal attributes

Karunāmayam guṇanidhim  
merciful above all qualifications

viprapriyam dhārmikam, Rājendram  
dear to priests righteous Lord of kings

satyasandham Dāśaratha-tanayam  
to truth united of Dāśarathā the son

śyāmalam śāntamurtim  
dark in color of peace the image

Vande lokābhirāmam  
I bow of the world the delight

raghu-kulā-tilakum  
of Raghu's family the jewel

Rāghavam Rāvaṇarīn  
descendant of Raghu enemy of Rāvaṇā

Dakṣiṇē Lakṣmaṇā dhanvī  
at his right Lakṣmaṇā with a bow

Vāmato jānakī  
on his left the daughter of Janaka (Sītā)

śubhā Purato Māruti  
beautiful in front Son of the Wind

yasyā tam namāmi Raghuttamam  
of whom to him we bow the greater Raghu

Rāmāya Rāma-chandrāya  
to the charming moonlight's delight

Rāmā-bhadrāya Védhasē  
Rāmā the gracious, the Supreme Being

Raghunāthāya nāthāya Sītāyā  
Lord of Raghu's clan the Lord of Sītā

pataye namah.  
the husband we bow

**Sung:** Jayā Raghupati  
hail to Lord of the Raghu clan

Rāghava Rājā Rāmā  
Descendant of Raghu King Rāmā

patitā pāvanā Sītā-Rāmā  
of the fallen the purifier Sītā and Rāmā

Jayā Sītā-Rāmā Sītā-Rāmā  
Hail to Sītā and Rāmā Sītā and Rāmā

Bhajā ré manā Sītā-Rāmā.  
Sing O mind Sītā and Rāmā



# Rhythm

The rhythm is the Bengali rhythm Dansa-Pahida, similar to the Northern Indian three stroke, called Tritālā. When this rhythm is used for a Kirtanā, the arrangement of strokes varies as the tempo is changed. There are four main beats (one being silent), and the time division is in sixteen units in slow tempo and in eight units in fast play.

According to J. C. Choudhury, this rhythm inevitably puts the hearers in a state of ecstatic trance when they feel the urge to stand up with upraised hands and start dancing. When the mood becomes more intense, in order to produce a climax the drummer must change his phrase, or pattern of strokes. Every rhythm has a particular rhythmic pattern which brings out a climax.

A

## RAGHUPATI RĀGHAVĀ RĀJĀ RĀMĀ

TONIC C RAG (MIXED KART)

RHYTHM

1. SLOW TEMPO

MAIN RHYTHM: TIME DIVISION

STROKES on the DRUM: GĀGĀGĀ TAK GĀGĀGĀ TAK GĀGĀGĀ TAKĀ NĒTA KĀMĀ TĒTĒKĒTĒ TAK TĒTĒKĒTĒ TAK

2. FAST TEMPO

MAIN RHYTHM: TIME DIVISION

STROKES on the DRUM: GĀGĀ GĀGĀ GĀGĀ TĀ HĀ JĀ JĀ JĀ GĀ GĀ GĀ TĀ HĀ JĀ JĀ

3. CLIMAX TEMPO

MAIN RHYTHM: TIME DIVISION

STROKES on the DRUM: DĀKĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ DĀKĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ DĀKĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ NĀGĀSĒ

THEME

RAGHUPATI RĀGHAVĀ RĀJĀ RĀ - MĀ, PĀ - TĪ - TĀ PĀVANĀ SĪTĀ RĀMĀ

SĪTĀ RĀMĀ SĪTĀ RĀMĀ PATĪTĀ PĀVANĀ SĪTĀ - RĀMĀ

CHANTED

RĀMĀM, LAKṢMANĀM, RAGHUVĀKAM, SĪTĀ PATIM, SUNDARAM, NĀGĀSTRAM, KĀRU

NĀMAYAM, GUṆĀNĪDHĪ, VĪPRĀ PRI-YA-MĀ, DĀRMIKAM, RAJENĠĀ, SATYASANDHAM,

DĀSĀRĀTHĀ TĀNAYAM, ŚYĀMALAM, SĀNTANURĪTAM, VANĠE, LOKĀ DĀIRĀMAM, RAGHU

KULĀ TILĀKAM, RĀGHAVAM RĀVANĀRĪM. DĀKṢĪNĒ LAKṢMANĀBHĀNĪ, VĀMĀ -

B

TE JĀNĀKĪ ŚUBHĀ, PUKĀTĀ MĀRUTĪ YASYĀ, TAMNĀMĀMĪ RAGHUTĀMĀM

RĀ MĀ YĀ, RĀMĀCĀNĠRĀYĀ, RĀMĀCĀNĠRĀTĀ VĒJHĀSĒ RĀMĀNĀTĀYĀ NĀTĀYĀ,

SĪTĀ YĀH - - - PĀTĀ YĒ NĀMĀM JĀTĀ RAGHUPATĪ

RĀ GHĀVĀ RĀ JĀ RĀ MĀ

PATĪTĀ PĀ VANĀ SĪTĀ RĀ MĀ

CHORUS

RAGHUPATĪ RĀ - GHĀVĀ RĀ JĀ - RĀ MĀ PATĪTĀ PĀ - VANĀ

SOLO

SĪTĀ RĀ MĀ JĀY JĀY RAGHUPATĪ RĀ GHĀ VĀ RĀ - -

JĀ RĀ MĀ PATĪTĀ PĀ VĀ - -

CHORUS

NĀ SĪTĀ RĀ MĀ RAGHUPATĪ

RĀ GHĀ VĀ RĀ JĀ - - RĀ MĀ

PATĪTĀ PĀ VĀ NĀ SĪTĀ RĀ MĀ

SOLO

JĀY SĪTĀ RĀ MĀ SĪTĀ - - RĀ MĀ BHĀJĀ RĒ - - MĀ NĀ

C

CHORUS

SĪTĀ - RĀMĀ SĪTĀ RĀMĀ SĪTĀ - RĀ MĀ BHĀJĀ RĒ - -

MA NĀ SĪTĀ - RĀMĀ JĀYĀ SĪTĀ RĀ MĀ SĪTĀ - RĀ MĀ

CHORUS

BHĀJĀ RĒ MĀ NĀ SĪTĀ RĀ MĀ SĪTĀ RĀ MĀ

SĪTĀ - RĀ MĀ BHĀJĀ RĒ MĀ NĀ SĪTĀ - - - RĀ - -

SOLO (FASTER)

MA JĀYĀ RAGHUPATĪ RĀ - GHĀVĀ RĀ JĀ RĀ MĀ, PATĪTĀ

CHORUS

PĀ - VANĀ, SĪTĀ RĀ MĀ RAGHUPATĪ RĀ - GHĀVĀ, RĀ JĀ RĀ

MĀ PATĪTĀ PĀ VĀ - - NĀ SĪTĀ RĀMĀ



# BAND 8: KĪRTANĀ--THE BLACK PARROT

This Kīrtanā was written in Bengali by Chandi Dās in the fourteenth century, in the style known as Māthurā, one of the main types of Kīrtanā. The mode is a mixed one in the scale of Jayajayavantī. In this form of popular singing, the restrictions of classical music concerning the variations of the mode need not be observed.

The primary instrument is the Khol, a special drum used chiefly in Bengal. Small cymbals, called Karatālī, are used by each singer of the chorus. The singer is Śrī Tārāpadā Kundu and the drummer is Śrī Balāi Chandra Mukhopadhyāyā. The chorus is sung by Śrī Rākhāl Chandra Dās, Śrī Siva Lāl Dās, Śrī Marmathanāthā Sarkār, and Śrī Haripada Dās.

In the beginning is a prelude with voices and instruments such as is used in the ceremonial worship of deities. It is here an invocation to the first teachers from whom the tradition of Kīrtanā has come down, Nītāl and Gourā, the first two disciples of Chaitanya, the founder of the Vaiṣṇavā faith in Bengal. Hari is one of the names of the god Vishnu.

The Black Parrot tells how Krishna, the Eternal Beloved, left his beloved Rādhā and the cowherdesses of the forest of Vrindāvan and came to Māthurā the capital of his kingdom. Vrindā, the spirit of the forest and the maid of Rādhā, came to Māthurā and approached King Krishna to tell their sorrow in an allegory in which he is represented as a black parrot and his latest love in the city as a hunch-backed girl.

## Translation

Invocation: O Nītāl O Gourā! O Lord of Sītā! O Beloved! All be joy! Sing Hari, the divine name of the Remover of Sorrow. Hail to Hari! Ever sing Hari! O Gourā! O Nītāl! O Gourā! Sing Hari! Hari!

Spoken: From the Sacred Forest of Vrindā, today Vrindā (the maid) came to (the city of) Māthurā. Our Lord (Krishna) the herdsman sits in his royal robes. She entered the royal council and went to the king saying, "Mahārājā, our bird has been stolen". The king asked, "How can the bird be recognised?" Vrindā then said:

Sung: This bird of ours is a black parrot beautiful to see. He was caught in the net of our glances, kept in the cage of our hearts. We treated him with honor, and bound him with the chain of our thoughts.

Spoken: "This seems a beautiful bird. How did you feed him?" "Mahārājā, we fed him with the ocean of nectar. We brought him up and taught him to speak. We told him, Speak! Speak!, and were beating the rhythm with our hands. He used to cry the words 'Noble Rādhā'."

Spoken: "This is a beautiful bird. Then what happened?"

Sung: "The bird became deceitful. He cut his chain and ran away to the city of Māthurā."

Spoken: "This very city of Māthurā?" "Of course, yes. Great King." "Excellent! Then search for your bird, and I shall render justice." "Great King! I have completed the search and I found him." "Where?"

Sung: "Great King: while searching I heard that a hunchbacked girl had taken him. O Lord, I pray thee! this (bird is) our most cherished possession. It is our lady (Rādhā) who sent me." Asks Chandidāsa, the priest, "In your opinion, should she get it or not?" Now speak, speak! O King! Render justice! Will she get her mate bird or not? O Lord! Speak, speak! O King! Render justice! I am praying for your decision. Now speak! Speak! Render justice!

Invocation: Nītāl Gourā Sītānāthā  
O Nītāl O Gourā Lord of Sītā

Ogo Mā anandē, Hari Hari  
O Beloved Mother in delight Hari Hari

bolā Hari Hari joyā bolā Hari Gourā  
sing Hari Hari hail to sing Hari O Gourā

Nītāl Gourā Hari Hari bolā.  
O Nītāl O Gourā Hari Hari sing

## The Black Parrot

Spoken: Śrī-vrindā-vanā thēkē  
sacred Vrindā forest from

Vrindā ājā Māthurāyā chalēchhēnā  
Vrinda today to Mathura going

Māthurāyā jēyē āmārā Śrī Govinda  
to Mathura she went my Lord Herdsman

rājāvēśē basē-āchēnā. Sēi  
in royal costume sitting that

rājā sabhāyā giyē Mahārājārā-kāchhē  
royal council went to King

balāchhēnā "Mahārājā āmārā ēkāti pākhi  
saying O King our one bird

churi h'ye gēchhē". Mahārājā balāchhēnā  
stolen has been king says

"Pākhirā nīsānā?" Takhanā Vrindā  
What is the description then Vrindā

balāchhēnā  
says

Sung: āmārā ēkāti āyā sukā pākhi  
my one black parrot bird

sundara nīrakhi, dharimā nayanā  
beautiful to see caught of eyes

phāndē.  
in the net

Chorus: Ekāti āyā sukā pākhi,  
sundarā nīrakhi, dharimā nayanā phāndē.  
Pākhi hṛdayā pinjarē rākhimā  
the bird in the heart cage we kept

sādarē manohi śikalē  
with honor of our mind with chain

bāndhē. (Repeated by chorus).  
bound

Spoken: "Bada sundarā pākhi ki khētē  
very beautiful bird what food

ditē?" "Mahārājā"  
was given O King

Sung: khētē ditā sudhā nidhi  
food we gave of nectar the ocean

Tārē puṣi - pālī dharāimā tārē  
him we brought up we taught him

buli.  
to speak

Chorus: Khētē ditā sudhā nidhi.  
Tārē puṣipālī, dharāimā tārē buli.  
Khētē ditā sudhā nidhi, Mahārājā.  
Tārē puṣi pālī dharāimā tārē buli.  
(Fast) āmārā paṭhā paṭhā bali  
we read read told him

ditā kara tāli dākita  
we gave him hand time beat he used to call

Śrī Rādhā bolē. dākita Śrī Rādhā bolē.  
noble Rādhā words  
dākita Śrī Rādhā bolē.

Spoken: "Bada sundarā pākhi, tārpārā  
very beautiful bird after

ki h'lo?"  
what happened

Sung: "Pākhi h'ye avīsvāsi, kātiyā  
the bird became deceitful he cut

ānkasi pālāyē ēsēchhē Mathurā pure.  
the chain ran away has come to Mathura city  
(Repeated by Chorus).

Spoken: "Ki Mathurā pure?"  
this Mathura city

"Āngē hyān Mahārājā". Uttamāi tumi  
O yes truly O King Excellent you

anusandhāna karo, kothāyā sēi pākhi?  
search do where that bird

Āmi uchitā vichārā karāva."  
I right judgment will make

"Mahārājā, āmi anusandhānā karēchhi.  
O King I the search have done

Sandhan - o - pēyēchhi." "Kothāyā?"  
I found him Where

Sung: (Āmi) sandhānā koriyā pālāmā  
I after searching have

śunite, kubujā rēkēchhē  
heard the hunchbacked girl kept

dh'rē."  
hold of him

(Repeated by Chorus).

Sung: "O tāli āpanāri dhanā karitē  
to that our own treasure I do

prārthanā Śrīmatī pāthāila morē."  
pray Lady (Rādhā) sent me

Chorus: O tāli āpanāri.....et cetera  
Ogo! āpanāri.....et cetera

āmārā Chandīdāsā dvijē, tabā  
my Chandīdāsā the priest in your

tajabijē. āmārā Chandīdāsā dvijē,  
judgment

tajabijē. Mahārājā! Mahārājā! āmārā

Chandīdāsā dvijē, tabā tajabijē,

tāi pētē pērē kinā pērē?  
that should she get or not get

Ekhanā balo balo rājā vichārā k'rē.  
Now speak speak O King thinking do

Jārā pākhi sē pābē kinā  
her mate bird she will get or not

Ogo! balo balo rājā  
O Lord speak speak O King

vichārā k'rē  
thinking so

Ogo! jārā pākhi sē pābē kinā  
Ogo! jārā pākhi sē pābē kinā  
Ogo! jārā pākhi sē pābē kinā

Vichārā prārthi haiba āmi  
for the decision candidate will be I

Balo balo rājā vichārā k'rē.  
speak speak O King thinking do

(Repeated many times.)

## Rhythm

The rhythm (tālā) is one of twelve beats in two divisions, called Gada-Khemata. A group of rhythms suitable for dancing and tender lovesongs is known in Bengal as Khemata. Gada-Khemata is used only for light Kīrtanā. One division of twelve beats uses a clear stroke on the drum, the other division is distinguished by a dull, suppressed stroke. At the end of the song the rhythm is altered into a hybrid variation.







The recordings in this collection were made at the request of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education, 400 Prospect Street, New Haven, Conn., to supplement other materials gathered in India for the study of contemporary Hinduism.

These materials, which have been brought together by Kenneth Morgan of Colgate University, include colored slides of Hindu pilgrimage places and religious practices, and a book, An Introduction to Hinduism, written by Hindu scholars, and published by The Ronald Press.

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