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Sri Dana-keli-kaumudi

Prastavana (Prologue)

Nandi-sloka

May the sight of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī's kila-kincita ecstasy, which is like a bouquet, bring good fortune to all. When Sri Kṛṣṇa blocked Radharani's way to the dana-ghati, there was laughter within Her heart. Her eyes grew bright, and fresh tears flowed from Her eyes, reddening them. Due to Her sweet relationship with Kṛṣṇa, Her eyes were enthusiastic, and when Her crying subsided, She appeared even more beautiful . * (1)

All glories to Radha's love for Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of the demon Mura. Although it is all-pervading, it tends to increase at every moment. Although it is important, it is devoid of pride. And although it is pure, it is always beset with duplicity . * (2)

(Thus end the nandi-sloka.)

Sutradhara: Enough with all these words! (looking about) Aha! How is it that a great circle of saintly people, people glistening in the moonlight of my nandi-sloka, now trembles with ecstatic love at the foot of Nandisvara Hill?

(again looking about) Dancing, and his hairs erect, one devotee finds his body blossoming with joy. Withered, and his face pale, another devotee finds his heart broken. Roaring, another devotee runs about. Falling, another devotee lies motionless. What has happened. to these peaceful devotees, that now they are overcome with love for Lord Krishna? (3)

(thinking for a moment) Ah! I know the reason. They have become wild by drinking the kadamba nectar of spiritual love. Because, .

When love develops in the heart of a devotee, he cannot check the transformation of his sentiments. His heart is just like the ocean at the rising of the moon, when the ebb tide cannot be checked. Immediately there must be movement of high waves. Although in its natural state the ocean is always grave and unfathomable, when the moon rises nothing can check the ocean's agitation. Similarly, those who are pure devotees cannot on any account check the movement of their feelings within . * (4)

(looking again) Still, Lord Krishna's pastimes are more beautiful than anything in the world.

(shaking his head, he calmly says:) Lord Kṛṣṇa's affectionate joking quarrel with

Sri Rādhā enters the ears of the swanlike devotees and stops them from tasting anything else, even things others think to be the purest nectar. (5)

(An actor cheerfully enters.)

Actor: Its seven features strong, its text beautiful in two ways, and its plot avoiding many twists, this artistic play shines like the glory of a great empire. (6)

Sutradhara: O actor who has crossed to the farther shore of the ocean of expert skill in acting and dancing, you know very well how, asked by my friends, I will now present a one-act play that bears the name Dana-keli-kaumudi. Meditating on the Deity I worship, I will now pray for His blessing. (He folds his hands)

Glory to the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose holy name attracts they who know what is sweet, whose good character delights King Nanda, and whose handsome form is a festival of bliss. (7) (see footnote 1)

Actor: Master! Look! Look! O master of all poets, your beautiful poetry has made like stunned deer the circle of devotees who know how to taste nectar. Motionless, they do not even know who they are.

Sutradhara: Filled with graceful poetry, why should the nandi-slokas at the beginning of this play not delight the devotees who know how to taste nectar? (8) (see footnote 2)

A Voice From Behind the Scenes: Aha! Good! O teacher of the actors, you speak the truth. Reciting beautiful poetry, Nandimukhi will today delight the prince of Vraja, a prince who is the crown of all who know how to taste nectar.

Sutradhara: How, accompanied by Subala, did the forest goddess Vrnda come here? We must get the other actors for the play.

(The Sutradhara and actor exit.)

(Thus ends the prastavana, or prologue.)

Viskambhaka (Interlude)

(Conversing with Subala, Vrnda enters.)

Vrnda (this is the person who spoke words behind the scenes): Subala, why does this good news not make your face blossom with happiness?

Subala: Vrnda, I don't understand it very well. Please explain it clearly.

Vrnda: By the order of Her superiors, and accompanied by Her friends, Radha has gone to sell butter at the yajna pavilion at Govinda-kunda's shore. By Purnamasi's order, Nandimukhi went to tell Krsna of this.

Subala:(joyful), Vrnda, why did Her elders sent Radha, who is splendid with all sweetness and charm, on such a petty errand?

Vrnda: The sages said that every gopi who on this day personally sells them fresh butter for this yama will find her every wish fulfilled. (9)

Subala:Who is the great man that will perform this yama?

Vrnda: His name is Vasudeva Maharaja.

Subala:Why did he leave Mathura to perform his yama in the forest?

Vrnda: With wretched Kamsa still alive, how can that yama be done in Mathura? Vasudeva appointed Garga's son-in-law Bhaguri to perform the yama here.

Subala:This must be a wicked yajna, a yama of black magic.

Vrnda: No. No. It is meant to drive away calamities. It is meant to drive all calamities from Vasudeva's son Balarama, and from Balarama's friend Krsna, whom Vasudeva loves more than His own son..

Subala:(thinking for a moment, he cheerfully says) Then the desire our dear frind Krsna has long held in His heart, the desire to tease Radha and the gopis by demanding that they pay a toll at the ghata will now be fulfilled.

Vrnda: Subala, that pastime of demanding a toll is a great treasure for persons like you. Come, let us go to the Manasa-ganga. (They both do that)

Subala:Vrnda-, I hear swans sweetly cooing in the forest by the river's right bank.

Vrnda: That's not the cooing of swans. That's the jingling of the gopis' anklets. (She looks again and happily says) Look in the distance! Surrounded by friends like Herself, and carrying, on a red silk cloth coiled around her decorated head, an unmoving golden pot glistening with butter, smiling Radha walks to the Manasa-ganga. (10)

Subala:Ah! Vrndavana forest is like a circle of clouds sweetly decorated by the splendid rainbow of Sri Radha and lightning flashes of Her friends.

Vrnda I think it very bold and foolhardy to try and describe Radha's sweetness, sweetness is beyond the power of words. (Bowing her head, she shyly says) Who in this world is qualified to praise Radha? Even though, turning away from glorious and jealous Goddess Laksmi as is she were only a pile of straw, without any shyness Lord Krsna honors me, I still have no opportunity to serve Radha? (11) So be it. Still, I will place the fragrance of Radha's beauty on my words. (glancing at Subala) Fools may say, "The beauty of the moon and the lotus comes from the glory of Radha's face." What kind of praise is that? The truth is that when they glimpse Radha's face from far away, the great host of splendid nectar moons and lotus flowers give up all pride in their own beauty. They are completely devastated. (12) (see footnote 3)

Subala:How glorious is its beauty!

Vrnda Subala, you bring peacock-feather-crowned Krsna behind the dark pavilion at the summit of Govardhana Hill. After first watching the gopis' beautiful pastimes, I will eventually meet you there.

(Accompanied by Subala, Vrnda exits.)

Sri Dana-keli-kaumudi

(Accompanied by four friends, Rādhā enters.)

Rādhā: Ah! How these forests charm My eyes. Lalita! Look! Look! Splendid with footprints marked with a flag, thunderbolt, elephant goad, and lotus, and glorious with flower-buds that brush against My toenails, these forests delight My heart and make it tremble. (13)

Lalita: (smiling) Viśākhā! Look! Look! The beautiful nectar sweetness of the flute making them forget the actions of their bodies, the animals in this forest can never keep their minds from being rapt in meditation. (14)

Rādhā: (aside) Perhaps the prince of Vraja will suddenly block our path as we carry this butter. (openly) Friend Lalita, what did smiling Purnamasi say as we left today?

Lalita: She said, Today you will see something wonderful."

Rādhā: Lalita, please ask a question of all-knowing Purnamasi.

Lalita: What is the question?

Rādhā: What great vow did Nandimukhi and the other girls follow in their previous births?

Lalita: Why do You think they followed great vows?

Rādhā: Alas! Alas! O intelligent one, even you ask a question like this! With the black bumblebees of their eyes they always drink the nectar of the wonderful sweetness of the lotus flower of Kṛṣṇa's face, a lotus flower splendid with the pollen of gently swinging shark-earrings, a sweetness the slightest fragrance of which persons like you cannot approach from far away or touch even in your dreams. Therefore I say you should accept initiation into the performance of great vows and you should burn in a great fire of austerities until what Nandimukhi and her friends have attained is not far from your grip.

Viśākhā Rādhā, is anyone more fortunate than Nandimukhi and her friends and more fortunate than the gopis? There is one girl, a girl who must have followed great vows, who is more fortunate than all the people of Gokula.

Rādhā: (eager) Viśākhā, who is that girl, the crest jewel of all fortunate girls?

Lalita: (aside) Who is like You?

Rādhā: Friend, I understand. I understand. You speak the truth. It is the flute, the flute that with its sweet and playful music that makes all of Gokula wild, the flute that itself becomes wild with bliss by tasting the sweetness of the nectar at Kṛṣṇa's lips, that you praise with these words. It is not anything else. (15)

Lalita: (smiling) True. Made of the best bamboo, and its soft. Music making the hearts of the great souls tremble, the yellow flute is the most glorious and sweet. (16) (see footnote 4)

Rādhā: Friend, why do you smile? By the grace of Her affectionate friends this unfortunate person has only twice or thrice seen Kṛṣṇa's face. Still, His sweet delightful face churns this person's heart and makes Her forget everything. Even though She always think of Him, She cannot get Kṛṣṇa to come before Her eyes. (yearning) O friend with the slender waist, let Us perform austerities to take birth among the bamboo reeds. Please know that is the best of all births. Only by performing many austerities was the flute able to taste the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's bimba-fruit lips. (17)

(Vṛnda enters.)

Vṛnda Ah! Your hearts rapt in talking, You do not notice how You now walk on the path to Indradhvaja Hill.

Everyone: (turning) Friend Vṛnda, you speak the truth. Govardhana is already behind us. Let us take the southern path to Govinda-kunda. (They all do that.)

Vṛnda (aside) Campakalata! Look! Look! Extracting all the wonderful sweetnesses of Lord Kṛṣṇa's other beloveds, the demigod Brahma happily created Rādhā to please Him. Delighted with Rādhā, Lord Kṛṣṇa no longer desires any other girl. (18)

Rādhā: (glancing to the right) Ah! How charming is the humming of the bees among the blossoming lotus flowers at Manasa-ganga Lake.

Vṛnda (giving a hint) Look at that passionately buzzing male bee, the lower part of his body yellow with pollen. Shaking his head, and loudly buzzing, he plays among the female bees, again and again forcing them to stop. (19)

Rādhā: (aside) With these words Vṛnda reveals her heart. (openly) O Vṛnda, these fortunate female bees happily play with their beloved. There are some unfortunate girls who, even though they worship the sun-god, still cannot see their beloved even from far away. My dear friend, if I cannot hear of the glorious activities of Kṛṣṇa, it is better for Me to become deaf. And because I am now unable to see Him, it would be good for Me to be a blind woman . * (20)

Vṛnda: Friend Rādhā, day and night You are glorious with pastimes. Why are You so unhappy?

Lalita: Friend Rādhā, why do You look so tired and bent?

Vṛnda Why do You, delicate like butter, carry a pot of butter? Your head, meant as the resting-place of jasmine flowers, must suffer. Be kind and place the pot on my

head.

(21)

Rādhā: Friend, the weight of the pot does not make Me tired. Look at these many ornaments Lalita forcibly placed on Me, even though I tried to stop her.

Viśākhā: Aha! Rādhā, stand still for a moment. I will remove the ornaments. (She removes the ornaments.)

Vṛnda: Lalita, seeing Rādhā even without ornaments, Goddess Laksmi becomes embarrassed. Why take so much trouble to decorate Rādhā with all these jewel ornaments? (22)

Rādhā: O Vṛnda, I heard from the sages that all the doe-eyed girls bringing butter to this yajña will be rewarded with a host of ornaments.

Vṛnda: You will get not only ornaments. All your desires will be fulfilled. Folding your hands, you should honor the holy places on Govardhana Hill, for it is they who will fulfill your desires. (They all do that.)

Campakalata: Friend Citra, on our right glistens the summit of Govardhana, the wonderful king of mountains, a summit decorated with a lake sacred to Brahma, the potter who made all living beings..

Citra: Friend, in that place lives Lord Narayana, who loves His devotees like a father.

Vṛnda: Look! Look! Friend, Like Lord Sesha, this mountain has many heads. This mountain is better than Lord Sesha, for on its heads, chest, and stomach Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys pastimes with His beloveds. (23) (see footnote 5)

Lalita: (glancing at Rādhā) Look, O beautiful fair friend, please cast Your glance on Govardhana's charming rock where Kṛṣṇa, the king of them who taste nectar, sat and gracefully drew with musk many pictures and designs on Your breasts.(24)

Campakalata: (aside) Friend, listen. Splendid with flying white cranes and glistening lightning flashes, that cloud makes the dark pavilion on top of Govardhana Hill twice as glorious. (25) (see footnote 6)

Rādhā: (glancing at Vṛnda, She trembles and says) A person like the moon now stands before us, a moon who is the friend of the gopis' eyes, a nectar moon who breaks the darkness of peacefulness in the lotus-eyed gopis, a moon that with its flute music makes the whole world tremble with amorous desires, a moon dressed in splendid yellow garments, a moon now standing on the summit of Govardhana Hill. (26)

Vṛnda: Friend Rādhā, listen. Waving His arms, arms that have the power to fulfill every desire of every doe-eyed girl in all the worlds, and splendid with a chest that

has taken a vow to make every saintly gopi fall passionately in love with Him, He who is the crown of all who know how to taste nectar is now splendidly manifest before us. (27)

Rādhā: (filled with wonder) Many times Kṛṣṇa walked on the pathway of My eyes, but I never saw such wonderful sweetness in Him. O friend, My eyes have no power to capture even a single drop of the splendid handsomeness that shines on even one of His limbs. (28)

Vṛnda: Whenever You see Him You say He is a wonder You have never seen before. Is Kṛṣṇa really a new person every time You see Him, or do Your eyes, made wild by love, forget that You have seen Him before? (29)

(Asking questions of Nandimukhi, and accompanied by Madhumangala, Subala and other, Kṛṣṇa enters.)

Kṛṣṇa: (eager) Who is this girl? Standing by Govardhana Hill, moving the bows of Her eyebrows, and shooting arrows of sidelong glances past Her glistening jewel earrings, She wounds and bewilders Me. (30) (He looks again) Aha! Can this be My beloved, the dove who makes Her nest in My heart? (He is pleased with Nandimukhi. He happily says) Now I have found My Rādhā, who is graceful, artistic, and passionately in love with Me, whose graceful words decorate My ear, and who is like a vina that makes graceful sweet sounds with ornaments of many notes and quarter-notes in the different ragas. (31)

Nandimukhi: O bliss of Gokula, I will hide for some moments, so they won't see me by Your side. (She does that.)

Kṛṣṇa: Friends, Sound the bugles and other instruments. Declare My authority to collect the toll at this ghata. I will also place the flute to My bimba-fruit lips. (Everyone does that.)

Vṛnda. (aside) Ah! Dizzy by hearing the playful music of Kṛṣṇa's flute, these girls are now stunned like trees. (looking about) The sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute makes the trees and vines burst with flowers. It is thunder that brings sudden silence to the cuckoos' cooing and the brahmanas' chanting at sunset. It is a playful breeze that fans flames of love in the moon-faced gopis. It is a thunderbolt that shatters Rādhā's mountain of peaceful composure. (32)

Kṛṣṇa: (Casting a sidelong glance at Rādhā, He says) Her lotus mouth yearns to make friendship with expert joking words. Her two eyes yearn to make friendship with crooked glances. Her two feet yearn to make friendship with languid playful steps. In Rādhā's body everything yearns to make friendship with Kamadeva's friend, the splendor of youth. (33)

Rādhā: (Carefully concealing Her true emotions, She tilts Her neck and says, as an aside) The bumblebee eyes of every girl lick the graceful splendor of His lotus-petal limbs. The waves of His pastimes eclipse even the playful graceful young

elephants. This rake who stays in the forest by this hill has devoured My steadiness and peace. (34)

Kṛṣṇa: (descending from the summit of Govardhana Hill, He happily gazes at Rādhā) Rādhā placed a necklace on Her large breasts, a crown on Her curly hair, and mascara on the eyes that reach to Her ears. Jealous that its friends received better gifts than they, I fear that the eyes of this doe-eyed girl have given up all inclination to be honest and good. (35)

Lalita: (aside) The king of rapacious swindlers now descends. Let's casually walk along as if we don't even see Him.

Rādhā: Friend, let's walk slowly, slowly. This crooked hillside path is strewn with stones. (Casting glances at Kṛṣṇa, She walks.)

Kṛṣṇa: Not showing the slightest respect to Us, these sweet-talking, anklet-jingling girls playfully walk by! Go with Arjuna and quickly bring them back.

Subala: (Accompanied by Arjuna, he quickly goes.) Aha! Arrogant girls eager to sell butter! Without any respect to the master toll-collector, you walk along as you like. Come back and explain yourselves to us.

(Pretending not to have heard, all the girls, openly showing their contempt, continue walking.)

Subala: (running after them, he calls out) Ha! Don't tarnish your own glory! Come back at once!

All the girls: (Annoyed, and filled with contempt, they turn around.) Degraded flesh-eater, why should we turn back because of you?

Subala: First touch your heads to the earth and offer respects to the great king of the toll collectors.

Viśākhā: (smiling) And why, O Subala, should we not bow down before the prince of the gopas? Still, since we have taken a vow to carry butter to an extraordinary yajñā, noble Purnamasi has forbidden us to bow down before anyone but a brahmana.

Arjuna: (gently laughing) Viśākhā, our king of the toll-collectors now also follows a vow. It is not wrong for one follower of a vow to bow down before another follower of a vow.

Lalita: What vow?

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) The name of the vow is "daily gift of clothing to a hundred million poor brahmanas". (see footnote 7)

Lalita: Then it is right that You collect the tolls. Otherwise it would be very hard for You to keep that vow.

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling, and looking at what stands before Him) Friend Madhumangala, listen. Motionless, perspiration flowing over the golden ornament on Her neck, and Her eyes almost closed out of fear of Her five friends, Rādhā has become like a painted statue. (36)

Madhumangala: (First he whispers something in Kṛṣṇa's ear. Then he speaks aloud.) Dear friend, You are now blessed with good fortune. Look. Standing by Her proud friends, Rādhā is now stunned with fear.

Vṛnda: (smiling) Your chest is broad and hard. Your waist is like a lion's waist. Your arms are like snakes. Your eyes are like a tiger's eyes. You are like a wild elephant pretending to be a man. You tell me: Why should Rādhā not gaze at You with frightened eyes? (37)

Lalita: The word "fear" never enters the ears of gopis protected by Lalita. What meaning can the word "fear" have for us when our prince of Vraja, who has taken a vow always to protect the people of Gokula, stands before us?

Kṛṣṇa: Lalita with the beautiful limbs, gracefully you speak. Accompanied by your circle of friends, please sit on this white rock and do what is right.

Lalita: Prince of Gokula, look! The sun-god with his burning rays of light now climbs the circle of the sky. Therefore we must now bid You goodbye, for we are anxious quickly to go to the yajña pavilion.

(Knitting His eyebrows, Kṛṣṇa hints that Madhumangala should act.)

Madhumangala: Lalita, it is not right for us to take today a toll from you. Your delicate waists must be about to break by carrying from early morning this heavy burden of butter. Now you have come to this toll-station. Therefore you may now go with pleasure after giving a small token payment just to spare us from being accused of being negligent in our work.

Viśākhā: Ha! Never before have I seen a toll-station by Govardhana Hill.

Kṛṣṇa: Viśākhā, you speak the truth. How can persons like you see this toll-station? Even as you look at it you claim that you cannot see it.

Lalita: (aside) Friends, first we should try to pacify them.

All the girls: What you say is right.

Lalita: O bliss of Gokula, it is not right for a glorious person like You, a person who is the crown of all good people, to be hostile to persons like us, persons pure and saintly by nature, persons who live in the same town with You. Therefore

please let us go at once.

Kṛṣṇa: (sympathetic) O delicate girl, I am shackled by the order of the forest king, whose orders may not be disobeyed. By his order I do this cruel work of collecting tolls. I am not independent. What can I do?

Viśākhā: Are You ordered by Kamsa?

Kṛṣṇa: No. No.

Viśākhā: By whom, then?

Kṛṣṇa: By the person whose sidelong glance makes Kamsa and a host of others tremble, by He who bears the name "Kamadeva".

Lalita: Ha! I never heard of any king that bears the name "Kamadeva".

Madhumangala: (loudly laughing) Ha! Ha! Wonderful! Wonderful! They never heard of mighty Kamadeva, whose hillside capital city bears the name Pramadamajan (the blossom of delight), whose council of ministers includes Madhumangala, Subala, Vijaya, and a host of others, and whose pastime place is a host of glorious gardens!

Kṛṣṇa: What more need be said? The deer, bees, and cuckoos are all his messengers.

Campakalata: (laughing uproariously) Lalita, don't be angry with the prince of Vraja, even if He will not excuse this toll, for the spies of the king of thieves walk everywhere.

Kṛṣṇa: Lalita, you know what is right. Put down your pots, and We will settle this toll.

Viśākhā: Fascinating boy, to stay at a toll station for even a single sesame seed's worth of time is a great suffering for saintly girls born in good families.

Citra: (politely) O bliss of Gokula, please hear the truth. If a toll of even a single coin is paid for it, butter meant for a yajña at once becomes impure. This we have heard in the Vedas. Otherwise we would not mind paying five copper coins.

Lalita: Friend Rādhā, This heavy burden must trouble You. Set down Your pot for half an hour.

(All the girls set down their pots.)

Kṛṣṇa: Friend Subala, Lalita and her friends are the first guests today at our toll-station. Therefore it is right to honor them with five gifts of betel nuts.

Subala: (opening a jewelled box) Lalita, please take five betels. (He places the box before her.)

Viśākhā: Subala, of what use are betels to us? We have already said that we are following a vow.

Lalita: Subala, why do you stare at my face? Viśākhā does not trust you. She angrily said to me: "These toll collectors use drugs to make their victims fall asleep. I heard they are infamous for that." What is the use of these betel leaves?

Madhumangala: Of what use are these betel leaves to your bimba-fruit lips! Blessed be you. You have saved us five betel leaves.

Kṛṣṇa: (He chews a betel leaf. Moving His eyebrows, He offers Rādhā the betel leaf He has chewed.) Rādhā, without fear please take this betel leaf purified by the brahmana of My teeth. Then please take from this box as many betel leaves as You wish.

Lalita: My friend will not accept what has come from the mouth of a person purified by enjoying a hundred thousand lusty girls. If She did, how would She purify Herself after that?

Subala: Lalita, we acted badly. By God's grace we are now corrected by you. Now let us consider the payment of the toll.

Campakalati: Are you all brahmanas, that we should now give to you?

Madhumangala: Saintly Campakalata, I am a learned brahmana from a good family. Please fill my belly with candies made of butter and sugar.

Viśākhā: Friend Campakalata, pretending to be toll-collectors, they are only begging to fill their bellies. Give them a twenty sankha coin.

Kṛṣṇa: Hungry friend, even though you are the leader of us gopas who always give generously to others, still you cannot even get some butter to fill your belly. Alas, how you have become attacked by poverty!

Rādhā: Friend Lalita, saying, "We give generously to others", these boys praise themselves. Perhaps they will give some valuable gift to you girls with very fair complexions.

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) O girl with the fairest complexion, You speak the truth. I take My greatest wealth, and now give it as a gift to You. (As a hint that He would like to embrace Rādhā, He embraces Subala.)

Rādhā: (The hairs of Her body erect, She says in an aside) Even in front of His elders, independent Kṛṣṇa places you on His broad lap and embraces you, making the hairs of your body stand erect with joy. Then He places His snakelike arm on

your shoulder. O Subala, in what holy place did you perform how many austerities in your previous births? (Filled with envy, She knits Her eyebrows. Then She speaks openly.) Lalita, see how the king of the forests mocks chaste girls like Me. (38)

Lalita: (speaking words with a hidden meaning) O bold cuckoo bird, why do you foolishly fly to the budding mango tree you see? At that tree a black bee stays. O cooing bird,
you will not easily approach it.

Viśākhā: The straight avoid the crooked. This is seen when a straight arrow, placed on the crooked, curved bow, quickly runs from the bowstring. (40)

Citra: O master of the tolls, if You were a real toll-collector You would set up Your toll-station on a crossroad by the Yamuna's bank, where many people pass.

Campakalata: Pure-hearted friend Citra, please stop. These boys are thieves who live deep in the forest. They pretend to be toll collectors only to rob people.

Kṛṣṇa: Friend Subala, Citra is our friend. We should indeed set up our toll-station at the entrance to Vraja Village. Many restless-eyed girls have already fled into the forest.

Subala: Dear friend, You speak the truth. Look! At the beginning a thousand girls followed Rādhā. Now there are only four.

Rādhā: (aside) At sunrise Kundalata sent Me to the yajña with a great host of other girls.

Madhumangala: Subala, please know that these girls will come. When the beauty of springtime comes, the cuckoo birds cannot stay away.

Viśākhā: (smiling) The beauty of these girls' feet will turn Your toll-station into a blossoming asoka tree. (see footnote 8)

Kṛṣṇa: (looking to the left, He cheerfully says) How the shore of Brahma-kunda is decorated by so many young girls splendid like gold!

Lalita: (smiling) The Puranas say, "A greedy man sees the whole world full of money, and a lusty man sees the whole world full of lusty women." The truth of these words now stands before our eyes.

Madhumangala: Friend, she doesn't make fun of You for no reason. The "girls" You see are only swans yellow with lotus pollen.

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) Friend, if they don't come, why should We worry? On this auspicious day let Us begin the collection of the toll.

Rādhā: (frowning) Who is the crest jewel of the bold and reckless? Who is the person who even with only words will try to collect a toll from the girls of Gokula? Especially from the girls who worship the sun-god?

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) O girl with the beautiful face, I will teach You good manners. Doe-eyed girls should not speak so boldly when the glorious king of the forest gardens is present.

Rādhā: Friend Lalita, you have fallen into the hands of an arrogant crooked toll-collector. It is not good to be gentle with Him.

Kṛṣṇa: Friend Subala, you heard the hard thunderbolt of Her words! (He bites His half-extended tongue.) This is very bad!. Ah! Very bad! This girl filled with the pride of youth calls Me, who am the crowned ruler of the kingdom of this toll-station, an ordinary person, a mere toll-collector, a leader of the cunning cheaters!

Lalita: It is not surprising that this toll-collector in the fearsome forest is always embraced by a flute full of holes, a hard stick, and a crooked curved buffalo-horn bugle. (41) (see footnote 9)

Subala: Drunken babbling fools, you should not insult the king of all generous men.

Rādhā: Even if He is a king, what is that to Us? How can the king of snakes succeed in attacking a mongoose? Even biting the animal with its teeth, the snake will not attain anything good. (42) (see footnote 10)

Kṛṣṇa: Girl with the crooked sidelong glance, you speak words that please My heart. Listen to this: (cheerfully) O Rādhā, Your graceful form is like Lord Siva's. He carries a crescent moon on his head, but Your forehead is a crescent moon. His body is covered with ashes, and Yours is glorious with great splendor. His eyes glisten with fire, but Your eyes glisten as they gaze on the path where Kṛṣṇa will come. He is accompanied by Karttikeya, and You are accompanied by Viśākhā. With the fire of a sidelong glance He burned Kamadeva to ashes. With the effulgence of Your sidelong glance You make the passions of Kamadeva come to life. O Rādhā, because Your form is like Lord Siva in all these ways, please accept Me as the rake who will be Your king of snakes. (43) (see footnote 11)

Lalita: Kṛṣṇa, Lalita is a cunning deer not easily caught in Your traps. This Your friends know well. Give up Your useless arrogance.

(Kṛṣṇa looks at Subala.)

Subala: Lalita, how can they not know? When the master of the forest garden caught these girls stealing His flowers, He took away all their jewel ornaments. Then these glorious girls, who all worship the sun-god, had to apologize with blades of grass between their teeth. The wonderful glory of these activities glistened before our eyes.

Kṛṣṇa: Friend, I had forgotten those happy pastimes. It is good that you reminded Me. (smiling) How many times by this hill did I take away their necklaces and all their possessions? How many deer-eyed girls did I initiate into jaina-dharma? The poor girls begged Me with plaintive words and hid their faces. Then the blossoming vines became their friends and gave them kindness. (44)

Viśākhā: What is the use of beating the dindima drum of cruel, crooked pride?

Lalita: Friend Viśākhā, yesterday, when we told her how ripped open Rādhā's priceless-jewel bodice, Purnamasi spoke many words against Him. But at that moment a wild madman suddenly entered. Again and again calling out the name of the famous Gandharva Ha-ha, He babbled many incoherent words. Who did not feel pity on Him?

Subala: That bramble-forest Purnamasi cannot come here. I don't see anything to stop us from robbing these girls.

Campakalata: Glory to the shining sun of Lalita's great power, a sun that thwarts the power of thieves! You fool. (glancing at Kṛṣṇa) Ferocious Lalita is here. Boy, will not get even a single broken coin. (45)

Kṛṣṇa: (angry) Vṛnda, you have joined the gopis' side. So be it. See how I become a kokila bird that expertly snatches the flower-bud of a toll payment from the mango branches of these restless gopis.

Lalita: Thieves who steal from other's houses must be stopped. Now this boy is surrounded by the flower hands of a host of mango trees, mango trees protected by a host of ferocious bumblebees. This boy makes your jasmine-garlanded friends, and Me also, burst into laughter. (see footnote 12)

Kṛṣṇa: (playfully smiling) O golden-limbed girl, please say whether You wish to pay the toll, or to be My guest in a cave. (46) (Angry and disdainful, Rādhā is silent.) To no lotus-eyed girl are You inferior. Your beauty and pastimes have no precedent. Your cunning makes You uncivil. Why, then, Should You not stand silent without speaking any answer? (47) (see footnote 13)

Nandimukhi: (slowly approaching) O lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, to You noble Purnamasi sends a message.

Kṛṣṇa: Nandimukhi! Tell Me at once. What does the noble lady command?

Nandimukhi: She says, "Our girls headed by Rādhā today must bring some butter to a yajña. Therefore please be lenient in asking a toll from them."

Kṛṣṇa: (pretending to be happy) I accept this command as great mercy placed upon My head. (glancing to the side) Friend Madhumangala, The butter of the young girls who worship the sun-god is very sweet. This is well known in Gokula.

The proper toll is three tahkas of gold for every tahka of butter. However, because they are under the care of noble Paurnameśi, these girls need pay only one tahka.

Madhumahgala: Dear friend, Four tahkas make one karsa, four karsas make one pala, one hundred palas make one tula, and twenty tulas make one bhara. (48) In this way the mathematicians speak. These gopis headed by Rādhā each have one mahabhara of butter.

Lalita personally said this.

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) Then! Then!

Madhumangala: Fifty bharas make one mahabhara. Therefore these five gopis owe eight million tahkas of gold. To that I add a toll collector's commission of four hundred thousand tahkas, for a total of eight-million four-hundred thousand tahkas as of gold

Kṛṣṇa: Friend greedy for nectar, when you say the commission is added, you lie. Bribed by these girls, you made the toll less than it should be. That is why you say the toll is only eight-million four-hundred thousand tahkas of gold.

(Madhumangala puts his mouth to Kṛṣṇa's ear, but then, without whispering anything, he pulls back.)

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) Yes, yes. I understand. I understand. Well done. The girls should place this payment before the toll station.

Citra: O king of generous men, if the toll for five pots of butter is eight million four-hundred thousand tahkas of gold, then what is the price of the butter itself?

Kṛṣṇa: Citra, don't talk like that. If the butter were not priceless, why would the far-sighted sages performing the yajña offer many priceless jewels in exchange for it?

Nandimukhi: Lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, these girls find it difficult to pay eight million four-hundred thousand tahkas of gold. Please be kind to them and think of a way to make it easier for them.

Madhumangala: Dear friend, Nandimukhi said that each one of these girls has beauty worth more than eight million four-hundred thousand tahkas of gold. . .
(His idea only half completed, he smiles and closes his mouth.)

Kṛṣṇa: Friend, that is an excellent idea. Nandimukhi's idea is that one of these girls may be accepted as the toll-payment.

Lalita: (with a derisive smile) The baby parrot yearns to eat the grape, but has no power to do it.

Kṛṣṇa: These girls are not very much different. Still, lively lotus-eyed Lalita pleases

Me.

Vṛnda: O prince of the forest, Rādhā has hidden Her jewels. Opulently decorated Lalita should be worth as much as the toll payment.

Kṛṣṇa: O bewildered girl, look at Rādhā. Her teeth are sikhara jewels. Her lips are rubies. The sweetness of Her smile is a row of glistening pearls. Her face is a candrakanta jewel. Her hair is a host of glistening sapphires. She is the most glorious of all the jewels of young girls. How can it be right to turn away from Her? (49) (He draws near to Rādhā.)

Rādhā: (pretending to be terrified) Friend Viśākhā! Protect Me! Protect Me!

Viśākhā: O wild elephant Kṛṣṇa, only when this strong rope of Lalita is untied will You be able to plunge into this nectar lake, a lake surrounded by flowering Campakalata vines and many other flowering vines and trees.

Lalita: O wild elephant born in the Vindhya Hills dear to Agastya Muni, it is not right for You to attack in this way.

Vṛnda: (aside) Friend Lalita, with sweet words I ask you: Please be silent now. Let us watch these two fight a great battle of joking words, words glistening with ecstatic love.

Kṛṣṇa: O little girl who roars ferociously only at home, where will You run? If You do not pay the toll You will find it difficult to take even one step from this place.

Rādhā: Must we merchants run in fear of the toll-collectors?

Kṛṣṇa: Excellent. Excellent. Be still for a moment while I remove the necklace of stars on the rain clouds over Your breasts. I will make the sun rise on those stars.

Rādhā: The night of those stars is very long and dark. It is not clear that the sun will ever rise on it.

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) When the brilliant sun, the sun that is like a great eye that makes the lotus flowers bloom, rises, then the necklace of stars is taken away, and the garment of darkness falls.

Rādhā: O sun, your effulgence will not stay when the dark Rahu planet rises

Kṛṣṇa: Look at the mark of My invincible cakra. How can the Rahu planet rise now?

Rādhā: (laughing) O mark of the cakra, your poison has no power. O snake of debauchees, the poison in Your fangs is useless. Why are You so cheerful? Go to Your cave and kiss Your snake flute.

Kṛṣṇa: Girl of the tolls, You speak the truth. Wishing to show His displeasure, the ferocious elephant of lovers uproots You lotus girls with His trunk and then raises His great tusks to celebrate.

Rādhā: Please know that this lotus girl will not give You even a single coin.

Kṛṣṇa: O beautiful passionate girl, do You wish to give Yourself instead of the coin? The king wants money. He will not be pleased to get only a girl.

Rādhā: (with derisive laughter) O ringleader of the thief toll collectors, please be kind. Be kind. Be kind to this person and pay the toll for Her.

Kṛṣṇa: Ferocious girl, You are a great scholar learned in the art of selfishness. Your words are marked with a series of jokes, but in the end Your true intention comes out. Now please hear the truth. O girl with the withered limbs, a man like Me is embarrassed even to touch a girl like You, a girl whose neck is almost broken by the heavy burden of a great pot of butter. Therefore be humble. Don't try to mock Me with Your proud laughter. (50)

Rādhā: When You are mocked, You think people are glorifying You. That is called the height of pride. When a flower garland is placed on Your horns, You think everything has become auspicious. When someone gives You a jambu stick, You think You are being honored. You blossom with happiness. (51)

(All the girls loudly laugh, making a great sound.)

Kṛṣṇa: Now My words will take their rest. My hands will now remove Your diamond necklace.

Rādhā: Are Your flower-petal hands foolhardy enough to try and touch My thunderbolt diamonds? What is the use of the foolish pride that comes out of Your mouth? As all You boys watch, I will go away.

Kṛṣṇa: Your long hair is like wings. Flapping those wings, You will fly away.

Rādhā: Boy who serves a thousand parrots. I am not a parrot that I will fly to You.

Kṛṣṇa: You are a parrot I will place in a cage. You are the wager I won when I threw dice on the dice board. (52) (He yearns to hold Her in His arms.)

Rādhā: You are pathetic. Pathetic. You serve Kamadeva so earnestly that You do not fear the sin of touching a chaste girl devoted to Her husband.

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) Passionate, ferocious girl, it is true that You are bound by vows to an always-angry husband. That is why I am so eager to serve You.

Rādhā: (with love and anger) O pandita learned in crooked argument, stop. If You touch a chaste girl You will suffer a great calamity.

Kṛṣṇa: O girl so proud to be so exalted, am I so lowly that I should not even touch You?

Rādhā: Arresting others' wives in the middle of the forest is Your way of acting like the great souls. It is a mockery of their actions.

Kṛṣṇa: Passionate, beautiful girl, You think Yourself the best of girls. Because You are so exalted, please pay this toll.

Rādhā: Bewildering boy, this girl is not the kind of person boys like You think She is. What is the use of Your proud pretense to be snake charmer who makes the two snakes of Your eyebrows dance? Your toll will not be paid.

Kṛṣṇa: O generous girl, now that I see You are eager to pay the toll, the dancing girl of My eyebrows trembles in a great festival of joy and begins to dance. (53)

Rādhā: I am a heavy golden statue. Even fire cannot harm Me. Even though You are a great snake with many hoods, Your fangs are useless against Me. (54) (see footnote 14)

Kṛṣṇa: Rādhā, You are indeed a wonderful iron statue, and I am a magnet drawn to kiss iron. Therefore please accept My embrace. (55)

Rādhā: (recoiling a little) Get back. Get back. (in a tone of distress) Don't embrace Me.

Kṛṣṇa: Why should I not embrace You? You are the crest jewel of girls. You were the payment given to Me in place of the toll of eight million four hundred thousand tankas of gold. (56) (Desiring to embrace Her, He approaches.)

Rādhā: (hurriedly stepping back) Lalita, do you see this as a game?

Nandimukhi: Friend Rādhā, why keep pretending? How far can You run from Him?

Lalita: (stepping forward) Although we will not place on the edges of our ears this talk of paying a toll that You rascal plunderers speak, I wish to tell You something.

Kṛṣṇa: Cruel, hard girl, say what you like.

Lalita: Today Your friend said that each of these girls is worth more than eight million four hundred thousand tankas of gold. My dear friend Rādhā is famous in this world as the most valuable of all these girls. She is worth much more than Your toll payment. Thief, why do You think You have the right to grab Her by force? (57)

Kṛṣṇa: (aside) I have no words to answer. (He pretends to hear something.)
Subala, what is that deep, unclear, unchanging sound I hear from far away? It makes Me tremble. (He whispers in Subala's ear.)

Subala: I will go and find the cause of that sound. (He exits.)

Kṛṣṇa: O Lalita of the harsh words, It may be that Your friend Rādhā is worth eight million four hundred thousand takhas of gold Still, She is not worth more than ten million takhas of gold. Therefore I, the great lover, will be forced to accept you as the payment for the remaining thousands of gold tankas.

Rādhā: Nandimukhi, well have you followed noble Purnamasi command. Now the toll is increased to ten million takhas!

Nandimukhi: Friend Rādhā, how is her command not followed? After all, Kṛṣṇa is still charging only one third of the full toll.

(Accompanied by a friend, Subala enters.)

Subala: Dear friend, the lion like king of the gardens is victorious in battle. The jubilant sounds of his army have deafened the circle of the directions.

Kṛṣṇa: Dear friend Ujjvala, do you not carry a letter from the king?

Ujjvala: Yes. Here is the king's letter placing You in charge of the toll-station.
(Kṛṣṇa silently reads the letter.)

Vṛnda: O king of heroes, we also would like to hear the letter. Please untie Your mouth and read it aloud.

Kṛṣṇa: (reading aloud) Some ferocious, crafty, arrogant girls with beautiful eyebrows cleverly avoid paying the proper tolls. You must be careful to catch them. If You see them cheating on the toll-payments, You should charge them a penalty a hundred times the amount of the toll. (58)

Nandimukhi: O king of all generous boys, how can these girls pure by nature ever desire to cheat on paying the tolls?

Kṛṣṇa: Still, the forest king's command must be obeyed. (approaching a little closer) Ah! It is very surprising. Even though they have not quite passed out of childhood, I can see these girls are very buxom. (looking again) Why do such waves of golden glory come from their breasts covered with beautiful bodices?

(Rādhā casts at Him a crooked sidelong glance.)

Kṛṣṇa: (Filled with wonder, He says in an aside) Playfully tugging at Her garment, She tries to hide the fact that the hairs of Her body are standing erect. Her lips continue to sweetly smile, and She gazes at Me from the corners of Her restless

eyes. In vain She is angry by hearing My words. In vain She tries to chase Me away by knitting Her eyebrows. (59) (openly) Excellent! Excellent, O king of the gardens! Truly it is said: "The king is most intelligent." (casting a glance to the left) Nandimukhi, look! Look! Hiding ten gold pots on their chests, these five girls have tricked the toll-collector!

All the girls: (knitting the bows of their eyebrows, they angrily say) Rake, go home!

Kṛṣṇa: (aside) Vṛnda, look at Rādhā. She is like a lioness with crooked eyebrows. Tormented by Lord Siva, Kamadeva worshiped these five saintly girls. Obtaining great skill from them, angry Kamadeva now aims at Me the five sharp arrows of sidelong glances he places on the bows of their eyebrows. (60) (He is overcome.)

Madhumangala: (aside) Why don't You control Yourself? From the corners of their eyes those girls are looking crookedly at us.

Kṛṣṇa: (concealing His feelings) Friend Madhumangala, I was stunned by the great wonder of the crookedness of these crooked eye browed girls. So be it. What does it matter to Us? The toll on the craftily concealed golden pots should be doubled, then multiplied by fifty, and then multiplied by a hundred.

Madhumangala: Listen. The king's share of the toll is four billion coins. Your share, O master of learning, is six hundred forty million coins. My share, as the accountant, is two hundred fifty million coins. Then eleven hundred million coins is the share of the guards headed by Subala.

Kṛṣṇa: Then the total toll is five billion coins.

Rādhā: (smiling) I don't see that You have any big money-chests. Where will the money go?

Kṛṣṇa: Enough with these jokes? O deer-eyed girl, happily pay the toll we have calculated. (61) (see footnote 15)

Nandimukhi: (approaching Kṛṣṇa, she angrily says) O charming boy, why do You falsely increase the toll for the pots of these honest girls, girls dear to our noble Paurṇamasi?

Kṛṣṇa: Nandimukhi, there is nothing false in the calculation. It is correct. These five girls do indeed have fifteen pots.

Nandimukhi: O king of heroes, persons like myself, who are followers of saintly and austere Paurṇamasi, do not speak unless we know the truth for certain. If You still doubt my words, then come and see for Yourself. (She takes Kṛṣṇa to Rādhā.) The obstinate prince of Gokula does not believe my words. Please be kind. Lift a little the edge of Your garment, show the edge of Your breasts, and free Yourself and Your friends from the hand of this king of rapacious rascals.

All the girls: (angry) Fool! Go! Go!

Nandimukhi: (smiling) Why are You angry at this good advice?

Kṛṣṇa: What do we lose? Kṛṣṇa will not excuse even a single seed's worth of the gold that must be paid.

Viśākhā: (aside) First I will place the messenger Vṛnda before Kṛṣṇa. By first offering Him the flaming lamp of Vṛnda, I will begin the worship of the great fire Kṛṣṇa. (openly) O king of heroes, why, for only five pots, is the toll so great? Perhaps that is the actual toll. Still, to You, our kind and generous prince, we offer our dear friend Vṛnda in place of the toll payment.

Subala: How can one Vṛnda take the place of a toll of five billion coins. You cannot cheat us gopas so easily. We are expert at counting. We always count our cows. (62) (see footnote 16)

Lalita: (angry) Viśākhā, you are a great fool, for you wish to sell our dear friend Vṛnda for so cheap a price.

Madhumangala: Lalita, this false praise should stand still.

Lalita: O brahmana boy, listen. The demigod Indra is better than the other thirty-three million demigods. He is their king, and He has a billion gold coins in his hand. Better than him is the demigod Brahma, whose wealth lasts for many trillions of years. Better than Brahma is Goddess Laksmi, who is the goddess of all wealth. Better than Laksmi is Vṛnda, whose unprecedented wealth makes even Laksmi seem an unimportant pauper. Even Lord Visnu Himself passionately desired to attain Vṛnda. This I heard from the Noble Purnamasi's mouth.

Viśākhā: (falling at Lalita's feet, she says in a plaintive, emotional voice) Friend Lalita, you can give advice to the best of persons. Still, to free myself from this present unbearable suffering I will do anything, even if others think my actions are wrong. Please be kind. Please give permission that Vṛnda may be offered to this Kṛṣṇa. Then we may quickly purify ourselves by smelling the oblations offered in the yajña.

(Lalita, seeming to smile, bows her head and is silent.)

Viśākhā: Lalita, I know what you hint by that gesture. For one day you will allow it.

Kṛṣṇa: Nandimukhi, look at this wonder. Why, I ask you, do these girl thieves not try to rob Me of My dancing shark-shaped earrings and use them to pay this toll?

Nandimukhi: O Rādhā who bring glory to Kirtida, it is not right to give Vṛnda to Kṛṣṇa as payment for this toll.

Rādhā: Friend Vṛnda, why are you silent? Tell Us what you think.

(Glancing at Vṛnda's face, from the corners of His eyes, Kṛṣṇa sends a hint.)

Vṛnda: King of the rakes, Your glances strike me in vain. Vṛnda follows the queen of Vṛndāvana.

All the girls: (with derisive laughter) Goddess of shyness, where have you fled? Please be merciful to us! Be merciful!

Vṛnda: Friend, queen of Vṛndāvana, at this time I have a request.

Rādhā: Friend Vṛnda, what is it? Say it.

Vṛnda: Honest people say toll-collectors are worse than people addicted to gambling. It is not right for us to stay among toll-collectors. We are honest people. If these people want to collect tolls, let them do it somewhere else.

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) It is true. These girls were never enjoyed by any man. That is why they are beautiful without compare. They are fit to be enjoyed by a king. This Vṛnda was already enjoyed by Visnu. He enjoyed her for a long time. That is why her beauty is all gone. What is the use of her?

Rādhā: (laughing) The wise say: "Some men are brahmacaris only because they are frustrated in finding a woman. These men are horse brahmacaris."

Madhumangala: (aside) Viśākhā, I am a very expert accountant. Give me a bribe, and I will arrange that your toll will be small.

Viśākhā: Noble sir, I will give you fresh sugar candy.

Madhumangala: Viśākhā, you must be joking.

Viśākhā: By the sun-god, I promise I will give it.

Madhumangala: (happily approaching Kṛṣṇa) Dear friend, when they were filled with jealous anger, I expertly pacified a billion beautiful girls. Then again, at the time of the dipavali festival I was the acarya who worshiped a billion cows. Therefore, on the occasion of this great festival, please give me a billion coins as daksina, a daksina I have never asked for or received in the past.

(Smiling, Kṛṣṇa is silent.)

Madhumangala: (aside) Viśākhā, you know it is said, "Silence is the mark of consent." Therefore now give what you promised.

Viśākhā: (smiling) Take your sugar candy. (She offers him some broken pieces of

pottery.)

Madhumangala: (loudly laughing) Rogue, keep your broken pottery. Keep it. I will get my revenge on you. (He approaches Kṛṣṇa.) Dear friend, why should You delay by acting gently. You should collect the toll.

Kṛṣṇa: Friend Madhumangala, I am like a black bee. Therefore this girl bee Rādhā should be given to pay the toll.

Vṛnda: The blossoming vine Campakalata is the only proper offering to be placed before the black bee Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa: Vṛnda, you don't understand. Only Rādhā should be offered to Me, for even when She is spelled backwards, She is still a Dhara, a stream of nectar.

Citra: O great hero of Gokula, You Yourself said these girls are beautiful without peer. How, then, can it be right for You to take even one of these five?

Vṛnda: Friend Citra, You are glorious. With the delicate vine of Your words you have trapped the wild elephant Kṛṣṇa.

Madhumangala: Dear friend, when he said the toll should be increased by a hundred times, the king of the gardens really meant they should be increased without limit. By taking his words literally, we have offended him.

Kṛṣṇa: Friend, well done. Well done. Feeding your friends with food sweet like nectar, you are the ruler of the kitchen. When he said the word "hundred", Our king did indeed mean an endless number, for in the Smṛti scriptures it is said: "When they cheat and deceive others for a long time, ferocious, arrogant, wealthy thieves may be punished in any way the judge decides." (63)

Lalita: Without carrying big sticks we should not stay for even a moment in the company of these gopas. Therefore it is right that we should carry sticks.

Kṛṣṇa: Even though all five girls are not worth as much as the toll, I will take the second one. As the moon increases, so She will increase in value.

Rādhā: (with a sarcastic laugh) Alas! Vṛndāvana forest has now become a fearful place. The ferocious king of the elephants has now attacked Vṛndāvana forest, which was so pleasant for so many girls, girls with restless eyes like khanjana birds, girls who picked flowers to worship the demigods. The valley by Govardhana Hill was the only place we could go. Alas! Even here this highwayman, this arrogant king of the toll-collectors attacks Us. To whom can We call for help?

Kṛṣṇa: Nandimukhi, you heard the wild arrogance of Her insulting words, words calling Me a highwayman when in fact I am a protector of the roads, a protector famous for His purity! For Her offense I will now punish Her by squeezing Her

tightly in My arms.

Nandimukhi: (Standing before Him, she stops Him from doing that.) Ferocious fighter, I am a follower of austere Paurṇamasi. You cannot squeeze this saintly girl before my eyes.

Kṛṣṇa: I am the son of a king of cow pastures. I am the crest jewel of teenage boys. How can I overlook the great heat that comes from the arrogance of these wild girls? (64)

Lalita: Kṛṣṇa, You speak the truth. You do not offend. By the unprecedented mercy of the goddess of toll-collecting very quickly You are wonderfully learned in the science of being the most expert rogue.

Kṛṣṇa: (arrogant) You refuse to pay the toll and then You insult the toll-collector. I think You want to start a battle on the rugged slopes of Govardhana Hill. (65)

Rādhā: Charming boy, how much must We tolerate? It is said, "When the wood is rubbed again and again, fire is born even from sandalwood." No one can place the blame on Us.

Kṛṣṇa: What is the use of all these clever words, words that fool only the foolish? Goddess, please be kind. Either pay the toll I wish, or fight. (66)

Vṛṇḍa. You are famous as a warrior. How can these weak girls fight with You? (67)

Kṛṣṇa: O girl who walks in the forest, you don't even know the truth about yourself. Look. These doe-eyed girls are each one a great army of Kamadeva. Their broad hips are Kamadeva's chariots. Their splendid motions are Kamadeva's warriors riding on elephants. Their graceful feet are Kamadeva's foot soldiers. Their curling hair is Kamadeva's conch shell trumpeter. (68)

Rādhā: Clever Kṛṣṇa, now I see Your toll-collecting was only a trick on Us saintly girls. Why need I say anything more? Protected by My friends, I will now go to the yajña.

Kṛṣṇa: Girl with the restless eyes, the heavy toll has You in its grip. How can You gain the power to leave? (see footnote 17)

Campakalata: Did Kamsa really appoint You to collect tolls?

Kṛṣṇa: Campakalata, I am in truth the toll-collector. I am not very satisfied with your failure to pay the toll. Therefore please allow Me at least to touch the golden pots you have hidden so carefully.

Lalita: O rake proud of Your skill in teasing innocent girls, look. Rejecting the king's toll, these clever gopis now playfully walk away. Go. Call for Your king of the gardens.

Kṛṣṇa: My arms are strong. Why should I call for him? The Kṛṣṇa lion can crush even an elephant's pride. How much effort must this lion expend to crush a herd of does? (69)

Rādhā: What can this lion do when ferocious sarabha beast Lalita stands before Him? (see footnote 18)

Kṛṣṇa: Lotus-eyed girl, now You must decide. You are glorious like a kalpa-lata vine that fulfills all desires. Again and again Your move the great archer's bows of Your eyebrows. Either pay the full toll, or, accompanied by Your friends, fight. (70) (see footnote 19)

Lalita: (with a crooked glance) You are famous for Your ability to fight. You crushed Sankhacuda when he tried to kidnap the gopis. It is natural that You want to fight. (see footnote 20)

Rādhā: Friends, We have rested enough. Our fatigue is now over. Let us pick up our butter pots and go.

Kṛṣṇa: Friend Subala, at once decorate the toll booth with these five pots. When that is done, I will personally take the fifth girl, who is so fond of punaga flowers. (see footnote 21)

Subala:(walking) Lalita, these heavy pots must be a great trouble for you to carry. I will carry them for You to the toll station. Then you can walk easily.

Lalita: (glancing at him with a smile of contempt) To hell with you! O counselor to king of cunning thieves, what male is so brave and fearless that he will even try to steal even a single blade of grass from Lalita even as she sleeps?

Subala:(hesitating, he turns back) Dear friend, I am only one person. How can I carry all five pots? Bring our friends and we will all carry them.

Kṛṣṇa: Friend, your name "Subala" means "very strong", but in truth you are very weak. You are frightened by Lalita's empty threats.

Subala:(with a playful smile, he says in an aside) Dear friend, what is the use of Your triumphant pride that exists only in words? Your great power has already been placed before my eyes. On the day when You were playing dice with Rādhā, She falsely declared victory, and then Lalita stole Your flute and hid Your Kaustubha jewel, and then the smiling gopis all stared at You, You were completely terrified.

Kṛṣṇa: Clever liar, be quiet. Who is this pathetic Lalita? She is like a banana tree trembling in the hurricane wind of My power.

Lalita: Viśākhā, you should bow down before your dear friend's brother, Sridama.

He is a great yogi. By practicing pranayajña he defeated the wind god and made the banana trees that are the gopis bloom with happiness.

Viśākhā: (smiling) Lalita, you reminded me of something very glorious. I remembered our playful friend Vṛnda smiling when she saw the dark cloud Kṛṣṇa, embraced by Sriidama under a banyan tree on Govardhana Hill. (71) (see footnote 22)

Arjuna: Among us boys which friend is not glorious? Which friend is bereft of glory? O beautiful eyed gopi girls swimming in arrogance, what is it to you whether we come or go? Please tell. (72)

Kṛṣṇa: (glancing at Rādhā) If, after giving it careful thought in Your heart You do not wish to pay the gold coins, then please enter this mountain cave, a cave wonderful with pictures drawn in mineral colors. (73) (He steps in front of Rādhā.)

Lalita: (standing between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) Rake, listen to this. Thinking himself unworthy to attain the good fortune of touching Her lotus feet, Rādhā's husband offers respectful obeisances to Rādhā from far away. (in the middle of these words, Rādhā angrily stares at Lalita.)

Lalita: From childhood not a single one of Her limbs has known the slightest fragrance of any male. Eager to serve, the glory of youth becomes stunned with awe and cannot even touch Rādhā's limbs. My friend Rādhā is the queen of chaste girls. Any male who attempts even to glance at Her is said to be the most bold and aggressive of men. How, then, can any male even think of touching Her? Therefore, go away.

(All the girls smile.)

Madhumangala: (laughing) Lalita, what is the use of all your proud talk? Ask your friend Rādhā. From Durvasa Muni's mouth She heard how my dear friend was from childhood the most staunch of brahmacaris.

Subala: Lalita, Madhumangala is the son of a great sage. You can believe all he says. My dear friend Kṛṣṇa is fixed in a vow of celibacy. He is terrified of women.

Arjuna: Yes. I know it well. Again and again I have seen Him tremble in fear and the hairs of His body stand erect when He simply hears the tinkling of some girls' bracelets.

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) Lalita, your objection is not good, for when two people who share the same nature and the same goals enjoy the sweetness of staying together as friends, the goals they both vow to attain are easily reached.

Rādhā: (Giving Kṛṣṇa a crooked glance from the corner of Her eyes, she disdainfully turns away from Him and says) Rake, even when You try to be

outrageous You are not very good at it. Why must You again and again grind what is already ground into flour?

Kṛṣṇa: (aside) Vṛnda, look! Look! Even though My joking words create in Her a great festival of bliss, and even though She yearns to hear them again and again, Rādhā will not openly place Her ears to hear them. Even though She mocks Me with waves of crooked words, Rādhā pleases Me a hundred times more than My gopa friends. (74)

(Gently laughing, Rādhā clings to Lalita's neck.)

Lalita: Kṛṣṇa, Your glories are famous in Gokula. You are our prince. Therefore we are inclined to remain silent about all this. However, if You cross the line of morality how can we stay away from our prescribed duty?

Arjuna: What is that duty you would stay away from?

Lalita: Protecting Vṛndavana from the gopa boys. What other duty do we have?

(With a mocking laugh, Arjuna shakes his head.)

Viśākhā: (smiling, she approaches) Lalita, our dear friend Rādhā, the queen of Gokula's girls, has a command for us.

Lalita: What is it?

Viśākhā: While they are busy taking care of the cows, cows expert at trampling the grass and vines, all these arrogant gopa boys fill their bellies with fruit and decorate themselves with flowers and buds. At this rate they will soon destroy all of Vṛndavana. You should tell them they must either stop or pay a toll to compensate what they have done.

Madhumangala: (angrily) Crooked-talking girl, be quiet. If you don't be quiet, the offense you commit will not be slight. My dear friend's kindness to you is of no use now. He kindly and politely allowed you barbaric girls to enter Vṛndavana. Ah well, lamenting it won't help.

Campakalata: Polite and kind? It is you who are the barbarians. Without stopping to think, you talk nonsense.

Lalita: Told a hundred times, he does not hear. He sees, but he does not remember. Deprived of the two eyes that are the Sruti and Smṛti sastras, he is blind. Please don't speak badly of him. (75)

Viśākhā: Friend Nandimukhi, do you remember the great coronation festival of our dear friend Rādhā?

Nandimukhi: Viśākhā, who is this world has the power to forget that great

festival?

Citra: Nandimukhi, even though I saw it with my own eyes, my ears still yearn to hear of that great festival. Please tell of it.

Nandimukhi: Citra, please listen. Vṛnda went to Purnamasi and said, "O queen of yoga, Rādhā should be crowned queen of Vṛndavana, for a disembodied voiced from the sky commanded this or us."

Vṛnda (aside) The "voice from the sky" was only a trick. It was Kṛṣṇa who commanded me to tell these words to Purnamasi.

Nandimukhi: Then, called by austere Purnamasi, five goddesses came here.

Arjuna: Who were they?

Vṛnda: The first was the famous goddess that escaped Kamsa and flew into the sky. Then came the sun-god's daughter and two wives. The fifth goddess was Manasaganga. (76) (see footnote 23)

Citra: Then? Then?

Nandimukhi: Then Chaya, the sun-god's younger wife, said, "Noble Purnamasi, we cannot disobey your command. We place your command on our heads. Still, what is this small thirty-two mile kingdom of Vṛndavana in comparison to the sublimely glorious girl Rādhā? Therefore this coronation ceremony does not make my heart happy." Then Purnamasi glanced at Ekanamsa, and Ekanamsa spoke these words to glorify Vṛndavana: "Friend Chaya, please listen. O beautiful goddess, in Mathura-mandala shines a glory greater than the glory of the Vedas, yajñas, mantras, holy places, austerities, Svargaloka, the demigods in Svargaloka, the siddhas, the great sages, the Lord's spiritual potency of citsakti, and the Lord's abode of Vaikunthaloka. However, in Vṛndavana shines a glory greater than even the glory of Mathura-mandala. (77)

Citra: Then? Then?

Nandimukhi: Then, seeing a shower of flowers fall from the demigods in the sky, everyone blossomed with happiness. Then Goddess Yamuna said, "Noble Purnamasi, eager to come, and carrying a splendid divine basket, my dear friend Goddess Sarasvati shyly waits in the sky. Please invite her to come here." Requested by these words, Purnamasi respectfully called her. Then basket, Brahma's daughter Sarasvati came there and, opening the divine basket, began to speak. (Nandimukhi is interrupted.)

Vṛnda: (eagerly interrupting Nandimukhi, she happily says) She said, "Th rough my hand Brahma's wife happily gives this lotus garland, affectionate Saci gives this gold tiara, Kuvera's wife gives these jewel ornaments, Varun a's wife gives this

parasol, Vayu's wife gives these two camaras, Svaha gives these two silk garments, and Dhumorna gives this jewel mirror." (78)

Citra: Then? Then?

Vṛnda Then, as the demigods in Svargaloka played many musical instruments, making a great sound that delighted all ears and filled the sky, and as Tumburu and the Gandharvas sang in the clouds, and as the apsaras danced in the sky, the beautiful"yebrowed goddesses joyfully began the coronation ceremony of Sri Rādhā. (79)

(She shyly glances at Nandimukhi.)

Citra: Then? Then?

Nandimukhi: Then, as Kṛṣṇa watched, on Paurpamasi's order these goddesses, accompanied by your friends and also by the goddesses of the various sacred rivers that purify the worlds, placed Rādhā on a throne and, with nectar water from jeweled pots, performed the coronation ceremony and crowned Rādhā the queen of Vṛndavana.

Campakalati (the hairs of her body erect) Then? Then?

Nandimukhi: Then, raising her hand, Sarasvati said, "My mother, Savitri", affectionately sends this fragrant garland. Hearing these words, Ekanamsa took the garland and placed it around Kṛṣṇa's neck. Goddess Yamuna then playfully said, "Aha! Filled with love for their relatives, even the wise sometimes act without thinking of what is right." Hearing these words, Ekanamsa said, "Yamuna, how did I act without thinking of what is right?" Hearing that, Yamuna" said, "Goddess, the garland was meant for our sister Rādhā. Why did you give it to your brother?" Hearing that, Goddess Ekanamsa laughed, took the beautiful, splendid, and fragrant garland from Kṛṣṇa's neck, and placed in on the neck of our dear friend Rādhā, and said, "Here. Please take Your garland."

(Kṛṣṇa smiles.)

Viśākhā: Then? Then?

Nandimukhi: Then, saying "What is the use of a garland that has come close to such a hard heart?" Sarasvati laughed, cheerfully took the garland from Rādhā, and placed it again around Kṛṣṇa's charming neck.

Lalita: Then, taking musk from Kṛṣṇa's chest, Ekanamsa placed a tilaka marking on Rādhā.

Vṛnda (joyful) Then noble Paurnamasi joyfully said, "O joyful blossoming trees, please enjoy pastimes with your wives, the vines that climb on your limbs. O birds, please join with the bees and make a place of happy pastimes. O beasts, please

make everything very charming, for, accompanied by Her friends, who are the generals in command of Her great armies, and, appointing the gardener Vṛnda Her glorious prime minister, Srimati Rādhā now rules your country. (80) (She is stunned with bliss.) Then the kunda vine Kundalata pushed out a hundred buds, the suman ah vine Citra pushed out a host of wonderful sprouts, the graceful nava-malika vine of Lalita smiled with a host of flowers beginning to open, and the campaka vines of Campakalata and Viśākhā fully blossomed with many flowers. (81)

Lalita: Nandimukhi, you forgot what Goddess Yamuna said then.

Nandimukhi: How could I forget her words to us? She said, "From this day forward our dear friends headed by Lalita may happily pick any flowers they wish in this pastime forest." Hearing those words, Ekanamsa said, "Still, the glory of these abundant flowers always depends on the springtime of Kṛṣṇa."

Vṛnda: (glancing at Rādhā, she joyfully says) We cannot forget how Goddess Ekanamsa decorated Your forehead with pictures and designs drawn in fragrant ointments, or how Chaya decorated You with a crown of flowers, or how Samjna and her friends carefully decorated Your braided hair, or how the two celestial rivers Manasa-ganga and Yamuna fanned You with camaras, or how Sarasvati held the jeweled parasol above You. (82)

Rādhā: (bashfully) Vṛnda, please stop.

Kṛṣṇa: (aside) Yearning to see Her, I fixed My eyes on Her.

Rādhā. But then, bashful in the presence of the goddesses, I bowed My head. When I suddenly saw Rādhā reflected in the Kaustubha jewel on My chest, I was so overcome with joy I stumbled and almost fell to the ground. (83)

Subala: (aside) Arjuna, the site of Rādhā's coronation is called Unmada-Rādhā by the people, for there Rādhā was filled with joy .

Madhumangala: (aside) Dear friend, I remember everything. These gopis are not proud for no reason.

Rādhā: Friend Vṛnda, calculate the forest toll for eight years.

Vṛnda (smiling) O queen of Vṛndavana, the great number of cows and cowherd boy are beyond counting. Why should I make a great effort to calculate their numbers?

Lalita: O Viśākhā, the queen of Vṛndavana gives this command: "Seize by force the jewel ornaments of this brahmana boy who thinks he is so clever."

Madhumangala: (aside) O dear friend, it will be very difficult for us to counter their words. The only solution for us is to run away.

Kṛṣṇa: O dog staying in a cow-barn and barking at everyone, don't be afraid of getting hit by Lalita's stick. The sudarsana cakra now stands before you.

Rādhā: (gently embracing Kṛṣṇa with a sidelong glance) Subala, enough with your shameless arrogance. Please pay the toll for walking in the forest.

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling, He glances at Rādhā) You may be the queen of one forest, but He is the king of twelve forests. Your realm is small, but His realm is all that exists in all the worlds. You are a small princess under His dominion, but He is the great emperor Kamadeva. Therefore, O Rādhā, please hear what is good for You: Don't try to force Him to pay this toll. (84)

Viśākhā: O Subala, that may be. The king of the gardens may have appointed Him toll-collector. Still, how does that free Him from having to pay the toll in our dear friend's forest?

Subala:(angry) Viśākhā, you are a fool. You stagger about like a wild girl in a daze. You talk on and on, even though You know nothing of the truth.

Viśākhā: (with a sarcastic smile) What is that truth? Tell it. I will listen

Subala:Why should I give a big explanation with many details. I will just tell the essence of it. Please listen. Please know that the great King Kamadeva has now assumed the form of my dear friend Kṛṣṇa. They are not different persons.

Arjuna: Viśākhā, even that is only a small part of His glory. Listen. Who is the person that will not find the great giant of his pride turned into a dwarf by the unprecedented, charming, sweet, ever-now festival of our dear friend Kṛṣṇa's being crowned king of all of Gokula, a festival that shines above all others?

Madhumangala: (delighted) O Lalita, Arjuna speaks well. The Upanisads affirm that these forests are Kṛṣṇa's forests.

Vṛnda: Philosophers learned in logic know a more recent command takes precedence over a previous command. When a new king is crowned, who pays attention to the previous king? (85)

Madhumangala: Stop talking so much. Our dear friend Kṛṣṇa is the king of this forest. Therefore you, the toll paying citizens, should give all honor to us, the royal entourage. You should offer us many sweet jalebhi candies.

Kṛṣṇa: Friend Subala,, please decorate the dark forest grove that bears the name Syajñala-mandapika. There we will keep these girls, girls who, for their failure to pay the toll, have now become our slaves.

Rādhā: Syajñala-mandapika is the sacred place where my dear friend Syajñala followed austere religious vows. Why will you desecrate it by turning into a place

for collecting tolls?

Kṛṣṇa: O queen of crooked girls, what does it matter how the circle of Rādhā's royal power turns? Kamadeva, the king of bowman, a bowman so great He easily hits the most difficult of targets, even hitting the target of others' hearts, has now come to this place where tolls are collected.

Rādhā: O boy who tastes the nectar of the flute, You are crooked in three ways: In Your beginning, middle, and end. Your sweet flute music devastates the world. That is why You are the king of the crooked. That is why You have become like Lord Siva. (86)

Kṛṣṇa: (slightly smiling) I bow down before You, who are crooked in eight places, in Your words, hair, eyebrows, glances, smiles, walking, veil, and heart. In this way You have become like Astavakra Muni. (87)

Campakalata: Even though it is not easy to see how You are crooked, You are crooked in a hundred thousand ways. Therefore You should enjoy pastimes with a person crooked like You are. Therefore it is right that we straight and pure girls should leave this place.

Kṛṣṇa: Saintry girl, without first paying the toll you will find it very difficult to leave this place.

Campakalati Saintry persons may travel any path they wish. Everyone knows that.

Citra: O best of men, You are glorified by many poetic verses. We are in the midst of performing a great religious ritual. Please let us go. (see footnote 24)

Kṛṣṇa: Citra, this king acts in a surprising way. Persons who perform religious rituals find it very difficult to attain liberation, but persons who simply desire to be with Him very easily attain liberation.

Nandimukhi: That is not against the views of the sages that authored the scriptures, for in the list of the four goals of life they placed desire next to liberation. Religious rituals they placed at the beginning, far away. (see footnote 25)

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling, He looks at Rādhā) O girl purchased for the price of the toll, now Your goal in life will be to please Your master. Now You should please the great king of the toll collectors by serving Him as He wishes.

Lalita: O charming boy, it is only after performing great austerities that a girl can attain the perfection of being this toll collector's maidservant. Because She never performs austerities, my friend Rādhā will find this perfection very difficult to attain.

Nandimukhi: O boy like an elephant playing in the forest, Lalita says that it is You,

the toll-collector, who in many ways should serve our friend Rādhā, the queen of the circle of all beautiful girls. What is the use of all that You may say that is different?

Kṛṣṇa: (delighted) Nandimukhi, Lalita's order may not be disobeyed. Therefore, wishing to serve, I will begin by placing these five blossoming twigs on the golden pot on Her chest. (He approaches Rādhā.)

Lalita: (knitting her eyebrows, she approaches Kṛṣṇa) O boy who think Yourself very clever, this vine of mischief should not grow any taller than it is.

Kṛṣṇa: O miserly girl, you have already sold Me this free girl, a girl independent like an elephant. She is the payment for the toll. You have already sold Me the elephant. Why must you quarrel over the goad that controls the elephant. (Slowly, slowly He walks.)

Lalita: Kṛṣṇa, You are not unaware how harsh and difficult Lalita can be. Why are You trying to show how great You are?

Kṛṣṇa: O girl who think Yourself very brave and strong, look. The king of all who are powerful now walks before you. Enough with this useless arrogance, this make-believe snake that will break only the weakest of eunuchs! Pay the toll at once.

Lalita O bell-ringer of the toll-collectors, if You insist on collecting the toll, then come to our doors at sunset, and we will give You some buttermilk, good and thick.

Nandimukhi: Lalita, is there no buttermilk at the home of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa who is the king of the gopas, Kṛṣṇa who is the master of a billion cows, that He must go to your house to get some?

Kṛṣṇa: Rādhā with beautiful large eyes, don't put Your hopes in Lalita's pretended stone wall of arrogant words. Don't think you can escape paying this toll. I will come close and tell You a secret. (He tries to place His hand on Rādhā's breast.)

Lalita: Thief who tries to rob an unattainable fruit, in Lalita's presence even the fragrant breeze cannot touch the edge of Rādhā's bodice. That You try to place Your hand there proves You are a fool.

Kṛṣṇa: Ferocious girl, what will you gain by trying to attack this coiling black snake? If it so much as hisses, you will fall unconscious. (88) (see footnote 26)

Lalita What will You gain by trying to frighten us in this pathetic way? Expert in casting spells, the snake-charmer Lalita stands here. Now that black snake cannot even raise its hood. (89)

Kṛṣṇa: Nandimukhi, toll-collectors are generally happy telling lies. My hand

honest. My tongue turns away from turns away from violence. Since this is so, how can these girls be blamed for their arrogant opposition to Me?

Lalita (with a playful smile) How can Your lips speak a lie? Purified by tasting the nectar lips of a thousand saintly girls, Your lips have become great saints. How can Your hands do anything violent? So filled with love they are, Your hands cannot bear that beautiful-eyebrowed girls be imprisoned even by their knotted sashes, what to speak of any other prison. (90)

Kṛṣṇa: (slightly laughing) Lalita, in truth you are the crest jewel of all girls who follow saintly vows. Attracted by I the mantra of your good fortune, Noble Purnamasi's assistant Nandimukhi is here.

Lalita: Nandimukhi, noble Purnamasi has vowed always to protect you. Run far away. What will this Kṛṣṇa do to us? That we will now see.

Nandimukhi: Lalita, You are in great danger. You have fallen into the hands of the king of violent thugs. I am your friend. I cannot leave you now.

Arjuna: Dear friend, have You forgotten how the king of gardens commanded us, "If any arrogant girls refuse to pay the toll, bring them to me at once.

Kṛṣṇa: (delighted) It is good that Arjuna reminded Me. Lalita, your gopi friends and My gopa friends will stay here at the toll station, and You and I will leave. We will make the fish of Our eyes swim in the flowing Ganga of gazing at the great king of gardens.

Lalita: Saintly Kṛṣṇa, crest jewel of all who are praised in eloquent verse, any girl who follows You alone to a secluded place certainly protects the good reputations of her mother's and father's families.

Kṛṣṇa: What is the use of all this elaborate talking? I will simply take the toll payment by force. (He approaches Rādhā.)

Lalita: (with a sarcastic smile) Delicate young boy, we really believe that You are brave enough to try and touch Rādhā's body here in the courtyard of my eyes. The gopi who is a strict moralist and who is famous by the name Lalita stands here eager to see You try it. Go ahead. Show Your power.

Kṛṣṇa: (slightly smiling) O great goddess Durga, I offer obeisances to you. O ferocious goddess, I offer obeisances to you. To kill the god of love You have put aside your garland of severed heads and assumed the form of this gopi.

Viśākhā: Friend Lalita, now you may defeat Him!

Lalita: (smiling, she says in an aside) The pastimes of playful talk will now come to an end. Now I will take the divine couple to a holy place and make Them swim in the flood of nectar They so yearn to enter. (openly) Viśākhā, please go and tell

noble Purnamasi that we are being teased and mocked.

Nandimukhi: (aside) Hiding in this grove of madhavi vines, noble Purnamasi has seen and heard everything. (openly) Lalita, noble Purnamasi now stands by Rādhā's side.

Rādhā: (smiling playfully, she says in an aside) Lalita, you love Me more than you love your own self. To rescue Me from this toll collector you were willing even to give yourself away. That I saw today with My own eyes. For that you are glorious.

Lalita: O devoted worshiper of the sun-god, O great poet, I am expert only in battles of words, but You are ferocious in battles of Kamadeva's arrows. Please be kind. Stay here for a while and shoot arrows of sidelong glances at this boy who thinks Himself a great hero. We will go ahead and wait for You.

Rādhā: (with affectionate anger) Go. O girl expert at hiding your true intention, go. Soon I will see you again.

Kṛṣṇa: (aside) I see that Lalita's anger is pacified. (openly) Well done, Lalita. Well done. You know what is appropriate. Stopping this needless debate, you will peacefully stay at the toll station.

Lalita: Boy expert at ferocious playing. The gopa boys play only by fighting each other with sticks. The gopi girls are not like them. The gopis know how to play in a civilized way.

Viśākhā (agitated) Lalita! There is a great danger! A danger!

Lalita: What is it?

Viśākhā: O girl who in your eagerness to quarrel has forgotten your duty, stop. The brāhmaṇa performing the yajña said that us girls carrying the butter should even cast a glance at any lusty man who likes to pollute respectable girls. (placing her forefinger by her nose) Shame. Shame. You spent a long time wildly gossiping with this cowherd boy.

Lalita: (with regret) Viśākhā, what you say is right. Bewildered, I forgot everything. Think of some atonement I can perform.

Vṛnda: (smiling) The sages say that meditation on the Supreme Lord Visnu, destroys all sins. Therefore you should meditate on Him.

(Touching her nose and ears, Lalita chants the name Visnu.)

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling) Lalita, you are indeed dirty with sin. Come here at once. I will make you so that sin no longer touches you. (Approaching, He embraces her.) (see footnote

27)

Lalita: (horrified, she moves back) Alas! Alas! I, a respectable girl, am now polluted by the touch of the ferocious rake fond of polluting others' wives!

Rādhā: (smiling) Lalita, get away from Us. You are polluted by the touch of this rake.

Lalita Aha! As a joke I told a lie. How can the snake of this rake's arm have to power to actually touch a person like me, the crest jewel, the sikhandini bird of saintly girls devoted to their husbands? (see footnote 28)

Rādhā: Liar, I know. I know. Stop it. Stop it. Standing erect, the hairs of your body bear witness against you.

Lalita: Alas, what they say of me is the truth. Now that You have polluted me, my friends will no longer even touch me. There is a saying, "Five persons with the same suffering lament together and make the pain go away." Now You may show the truth of that saying.
(see footnote 29)

Kṛṣṇa: O flower-vine Campakalata, here is a tamala tree whose branches scratch the clouds. Embrace it, and find yourself burst into flowers. (see footnote 30)

Campakalata: (trembling, she steps back a little) Rake, pollute Lalita again. I have heard it said, "She who is already fallen cannot fall down."

Lalita Perhaps I will soon see my dear friend Viśākhā decorated with five long, hard fingers. (see footnote 31)

Kṛṣṇa: Viśākhā, embrace this tamala tree and sit in its shade. Don't break your good fortune, as Campakalata has.

Viśākhā: (quickly withdrawing) Polluted Lalita, who do you try to prove the saying, "A wicked, shameless person pollutes others"? Your intention is clear. What is the use of trying to trick us? By the grace of God, as we girls worry, you have now become the perfect girl to be given away in place of paying the toll.

(Withdrawing a little, Lalita casts a crooked glance at Kṛṣṇa from the corners of her eyes.)

Kṛṣṇa: (smiling, He yearns to embrace Rādhā) O girl with trembling limbs, pushed by the great wind of Lali ta's crooked glances, I find that the budding twigs of My fingers now tremble. At this moment please don't pretend to be angry when You place Your eyes on gentle Me.

Rādhā: (frightened, She hides behind Viśākhā) Friend, now you should protect yourself, for it is said that if Rādhā is polluted, then Viśākhā is polluted also.

Lalita O Rādhā, when You are chased by a cruel hunter, by the crown of wicked and violent, why do You turn away from the lioness and take shelter of a doe? Decorate my lap, and Your fears will flee away.

Rādhā: (With many playful frowns She pretends to rebuke Lalita. Then, with a playful smile, She says) O girl who breaks the trust we place in you, For a long time you troubled Us. You took Us pure girls away from our homes. We came because We trusted you. Then, pushed by lust and greed, you broke your own vow and now you stand with tears in your eyes. O goddess, are you not ashamed to try to pollute Us saintly girls? (91)

Lalita: Alas! Alas! How will I be purified? Friend Vṛnda, please tell me.

Vṛnda Lalita, why do you worry? How is it possible that you have committed a sin? After all, in the holy place of this forest grove you have now begun to observe the religious vow
I of an all-night vigil to worship Kamadeva.

Kṛṣṇa: Eager to play, I have been slow about My duty. Now I must work again to collect the toll.

Nandimukhi: Lalita, look. Noon is coming. Say how much You think we should pay for the toll.

Lalita: O king of the toll collectors, five coins is a fair payment. Still, when I look at Your face I think I will agree to give You this jewel ring. (Taking the ring from Citra's finger, she gives it to Him.)

Kṛṣṇa: (pretending to be angry) Friend, throw this worthless ring on top of Govardhana Hill. (Pretending to throw it, Subala hides the ring in his hand.)

Lalita (angry) Vṛnda, you saw how the rare jewel ring was thrown away.

Nandimukhi: Friend, your action is like throwing a small coin into the respectfully extended hand of Kuvera, the master of nine great treasures, in hopes of getting a precious cintamani jewel in return.

Lalita: (aside) With a hint I will reassure Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who yearn to enjoy pastimes together. (she walks about and then says in an aside) Rādhā, it will be difficult for us to leave without paying the toll. We will pay the toll with Your necklace. (she takes the necklace, almost as if by force, and then says with a playful smile) Anxious girl, why are you so unsettled? The pearl necklace is Your messenger to Kṛṣṇa. It is given to decorate Him. Now make Yourself ready for a lover's meeting with Him in a secluded place.

Rādhā: O girl eager to enjoy, what is the use of this pretended seriousness? In the great yajña that is this dispute over a toll-payment, even though You are not gentle

by nature, out of love for your friends you have been made gentle. Even though you have nothing to give as payment for the toll, out of love for your friends, you now offer yourself as the payment.

Lalita: (glancing at Kṛṣṇa) O master of the toll gate, this priceless pearl-necklace is given as collateral. When gold is given to You in the evening, please return the necklace.

Kṛṣṇa: (happily accepting the necklace, He says aside) The central jewel in this necklace is the crest jewel taken from Sankhacuda, a jewel that Balarama kindly gave to Rādhā. This jewel makes the seed of My hope place forth a great sprout. (He decorates His neck with the necklace.)

Rādhā: (aside) Lalita, look at the good fortune that pearl necklace has attained. That necklace must have performed many great austerities.

Lalita: Having first served Your breasts, this saintly necklace now enjoys pastimes on Kṛṣṇa's chest. How can anyone describe Your great glory? (92)

Rādhā: O crooked girl, why must you talk like that? Look at the fortunate pastimes of that forest garland dark with many bees. O forest garland, why do you day and night hate us pure doe-eyed girls? Considering us less important than blades of grass, you decorate Kṛṣṇa's body from head to foot. You enjoy pastimes on Kṛṣṇa's broad chest. (93)

Madhumangala: Blessed Lalita-, the king of the toll gate is pleased with you. Now this hungry accountant can enjoy this pot heavy with butter. Now he will be happy in his body.

Visakhi Greedy boy, don't talk like that. That butter is meant for a yajña.

Madhumangala: Viśākhā, the yajnika-brahmanas who, forgetting the angirasa-yajña, fed all the gopas with many delicious foods from their own homes, became very fortunate. You girls, however, will not feed even one brahmana with some butter from others' homes, food meant for a yajña.

Kṛṣṇa: Lalita, you did well to give that necklace as a gift to the king of the toll gate. Now please give your attention to paying the toll demanded by the king of gardens.

Lalita (with love and anger) I know You. It is not wrong for You to tease us.

Nandimukhi: O great king of the toll collectors, please tell me the minimum toll they must pay, so I will know how to act when they haggle over the amount.

Kṛṣṇa: Nandimukhi, listen. You are an associate of noble Paurṇamasi. What more need I say to you? The toll I ask is one hundred thousand trillion coins. If you say that you do not have so many coins, what can I do? Give to Me the best girl, and

the others may go free. (94)

Nandimukhi: O bull of passionate boys, Citra will please Your heart. She will be given as the toll payment.

Kṛṣṇa: Citra- is already in My hand. She is not hard to get.

(Paurnamasi enters.)

Paurnamasi: Gentle boy on whose head gentle girls place a crown, You may very well desire this girl, but please know that She is valuable beyond price. She cannot be bought even by a hundred thousand trillion coins.

Kṛṣṇa: (embarrassed, He offers respects) Noble lady, I only wish to collect the toll. I do not wish to get your gopis worth perhaps a single coin each.

Rādhā: Noble lady, now that you have come we can see, by God's grace, the farther shore of this ocean of sufferings.

Paurnamasi: (aside) O girl with the slender waist, You agitated, sharp-tongued, inflamed with pride girls eager for a quarrel stubbornly refuse to pay this toll to the king of toll collectors, a king who rules as the only God in the whole forest circle. Why would You not have fallen into an ocean of sufferings? (95)

Lalita: Noble lady, look. We gave Him that rare necklace, and still we are not set free.

Paurnamasi: Lalita, look. The red dye of this pretended quarrel has reddened the silk cloth that is Kṛṣṇa's heart. That is why peacock-feather crowned Kṛṣṇa is so hostile to You. As long as He does not get His beloved, Kṛṣṇa will remain stubborn and arrogant.

Nandimukhi: Noble lady, please order us. Which of us must bear this burden?

Paurnama-si: O girl with the lotus eyes, the girl among You five who is most able to please Him should be given to Kṛṣṇa. (96)

(Slightly smiling, Lalita casts a sidelong glance at Rādhā. Worried, Rādhā clings to Vṛnda's neck.)

Vṛnda O noble lady, the slender-waisted girl says: "O all-knowing one, The girls gave wonderfully clever Lalita the task of protecting them in this grave danger. O noble lady,
Lalita now stands before you. She awaits your order.

Lalita: (smiling) When the jewel of the heart is already taken, what is the use of any further struggle?

Paurnamasi: What Lalita says is not wrong.

Rādhā: (speaking up) Noble lady, please be kind. Be kind. In this dangerous situation please don't make this frightened gentle person become a toll payment placed in the hands of that harsh toll collector. What horrible incurable disease did I get by touching that great black snake that lives in a cave in a garden on Govardhana Hill? No longer have I the power to know what is good and what is not good. Simply by glancing at Me, that snake has made Me as good as dead. Why do you wish to throw Me to Him? (97) (see footnote 32) Pretending to weep, with dry tears She falls at her feet.

Paurnamasi: (embracing Her with both arms) Child, don't cry. All will be good at the end.

Kṛṣṇa: Noble lady, I am truly fortunate that You came at this, the right moment. I have decided to pay this toll Myself.

Paurnamasi: (aside) O great treasure of handsomeness, This jewel of beautiful girls will now decorate Your neck. What do You care about this petty toll?

Kṛṣṇa: (joyfully, in an aside) By good fortune noble Paurnamasi has given Rādhā as the payment of the toll. (openly) O noble lady, only by walking on the path of your mercy have I found this jewel of a beautiful girl, a jewel effulgent with the moonlight of sweet and passionate love. There is no other way I could have found this jewel.

Paurnamasi: (with a playful smile) O king of gentle boys, I think of Her as a cintamani jewel, but to You She is a kinta-mani, a jewel of a beautiful girl.

Kṛṣṇa: (bashful) Now My words may rest from their efforts. O Nandimukhi, O companion of Noble Paurnamasi, it is by your wise counsel that I have attained the touch of the most beautiful of all girls.

Paurnamasi: (with a playful smile) O great teacher of clever pastimes, why should this pastime of teasing Her continue? Now that You have the cintamani jewel of a girl I gave, You will certainly find the Kanta-mani jewel of a beloved You seek. When the dawn comes, the sun will not fail to fill the sky with light. Now Your desire is fulfilled. (see footnote 33)

Vṛnda: On the full-moon night how can the moon be only a crescent?

Paurnamasi: Vṛnda, in the springtime the full moon night is very charming when the moon and the star Rādhā are together. (see footnote 34)

Vṛnda: It is the same on the full-moon night of the month of Vaisakha-. (see footnote 35)

Paurnamasi: O moon effulgent with playful skill, I promise You: this evening I will

give You the toll payment You desire. For now please allow these girls to go to the yajña.

Kṛṣṇa: (bashful) As the noble lady commands.

Paurṇamasi: O personification of all bliss, although these pastimes are very pleasing to my heart, there is one thing I wish to ask of You.

Kṛṣṇa: (delighted) Noble lady, command Me at once. What may I do to please You?

Paurṇama-si: A request made at the right moment will always bear its fruit. Therefore I now ask: O playful friend, O jester Kṛṣṇa, please enjoy glorious toll-pastimes with Rādhā and Her friends in this place eternally. (98) Also, O Kṛṣṇa whose graceful steps and glistening playful sidelong glances fill Vṛndavana forest with glory, please make fruitful the tree of desires that grow from persons who, renouncing all other work, live in a cottage in Rādhā's forest and yearn to serve You and Rādhā directly in this holy place. (99)

Kṛṣṇa: (happily agreeing) Noble lady, so be it. Come. Let us go each to his own duty.

(Exit all.)

Epilogue: May this flower-garland of a one-act play, a garland I created on His order, decorate for a moment the neck of my dear friend.

Staying on Nandisvara Hill, I wrote this one-act play in the year Saka 1471 (A.D. 1549).

Thus ends Sri Dana-keli-kaumudi.

Footnotes

Footnote 1

Verse 7: If the word sanatana" (eternal) here is interpreted to mean Srila Sanatana Gosvami, who is Srila Rupa Gosvami's spiritual master and elder brother, this verse may be translated:

Glory to Srila Sanatana Gosvami, whose tongue is always drawn to chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name, whose good character delights the saintly devotees, and who is a festival of bliss for Rupa Gosvami."

Footnote 2

Verse 8 When he speaks the word nandimukhi, the sutradhara refers to the nandi-slokas at the beginning (mukhi) of the play. However, the actor behind the scenes assumes this word refers to the girl Nandimukhi. The actor's interpretation of the sutradhara's words may be translated in this way:

Learned in graceful poetry, why should Nandimukhi not delight the devotees who know how to taste nectar?"

Footnote 3

Verse 12: Here the words "host of moons" (candravali) and host of lotus flowers (padmali) may also refer to two gopis counted as Radha's rivals. By accepting these words to refer to these two gopis, one may interpret the last part of this verse to mean:

The truth is that when they glimpse Radha's face from far away, splendid and nectarlike Candravali and Padma give up all pride in their own beauty. They are completely devastated."

Footnote 4

Verse 16: If interpreted to refer to Radha, this ambiguous verse may be translated:

Nobly born, sweet, charming, glorious, fair Radha finds Her heart trembles at the soft music of Krsna's flute."

Footnote 5

Verse 23: Govardhana Hill has a hundred peaks. Therefore it has many heads".

Footnote 6

Verse 25: The cloud is Krsna, whom the gopis now see. The lightning flashes are His yellow garments and the white cranes are His glistening necklace.

Footnote 7

Preceding Verse 38: These ambiguous words may also be interpreted, A daily gift of My lips to a hundred million delicate girls".

Footnote 8

Preceding Verse 41: It is said that when kicked by a girl, an asoka tree will at once burst into bloom.

Footnote 9

Verse 41: Here Lalita hints that because His friends are hard, crooked, and full of holes, Krsna shares with them these same faults.

Footnote 10

Verse 42: The mongoose is the snake's most able enemy. A snake attacking a mongoose will be defeated. This ambiguous verse may also be translated:

How can the king of debauchees succeed in attacking saintly girls? Even biting them with its teeth, he will not attain anything good."

Or, this verse may also be translated:

How does a debauchee attack saintly girls? His happiness is biting them."

Footnote 11

Verse 43: This verse has two meanings, which run side by side, each word having one meaning for Lord Siva and another meaning for Sri Radha. The verse is given below with the relevant Sanskrit words in parenthesis.

O Radha, Your graceful (siva) form is like Lord Siva's. He carries a crescent moon on his head, but Your forehead is a crescent moon. His body is covered with ashes (vibhuti), and Your's is glorious with great splendor (vibhuti). His eyes glisten with fire (krsnavartma), but Your eyes glisten as they gaze on the path (vart ma) where Krsna will come. He is accompanied by Karttikeya (visakha), and You are accompanied by Visakha. With the fire of a sidelong glance He burned (vidagdha) Kamadeva to ashes. With the effulgence of Your sidelong glance You make the passions of Kamadeva come to life (vidagdha). O Radha, because Your form is like Lord Siva in all these ways, please accept Me as the rake who will be Your king of snakes."

Lord Siva carries a snake. Only in this way is Radha different from Siva. Therefore Krsna here suggests that She accept Krsna as Her snake. Here the word "bhogesa" may mean either "snake" or "lover".

Footnote 12

Preceding Verse 46: The mango trees here are the gopis, and the ferocious bumblebees are their husbands.

Footnote 13

Verse 47: The words pascima, purva, daksina, anduttara in this verse may also be interpreted to refer to the four directions: west, east, south, and north. Therefore the playful second meaning of this verse may be:

You have no west, no east, and no south. Why should You also not have a north?"

Footnote 14

Verse 54: This ambiguous verse may also be translated:

"I stand, stubborn like iron, in Krsn a's path. That rake's desire to enjoy Me will be thwarted."

Footnote 15

Verse 61: This ambiguous verse may also be translated:

"Enough with these jokes! O deer-eyed girl, now You must happily give Your body as an offering to Me.,,

Footnote 16

Verse 62: The word for billion here is "vrnda". Therefore Subala says, "How can you offer us only one Vrnda" when the toll is actually five vrndas."

Footnote 17

Preceding Verse 69: These ambiguous words may also be translated:

"Girl with the restless eyes, My heavy hand has You in its grip. How can You gain the power to leave?"

Footnote 18

Preceding Verse 70: The sarabha beast is a huge ferocious monster with eight legs.

Footnote 19

Verse 70: These last words may also be translated, "or, accompanied by Your friends, offer Your body to Me."

Footnote 20

Preceding Verse 71: These amiguous words may also be translated: "You are famous for Your ability to fight. You robbed the gopis of their necklaces, crowns, and conchshells. It is natural that You want to fight."

Footnote 21

Preceding Verse 71: The ambiguous words "who is so fond of punnaga flowers" may also be translated "who is so fond of Me, the best of men" or "who is so fond of Me, the glorious snake of men".

Footnote 22

Verse 71: The last part of this ambiguous verse may also be translated: "...when she saw the dark cloud Krs"na glistening in the moonlight under a banyan tree on

Govardhana Hill."

or

"when she saw the dark cloud Krsna decorated with a necklace splendid like the moon as He sat under a banyan tree on Govardhana Hill."

Footnote 23

Verse 76: The first goddess is Krsna's sister Ekanamsa. Her escape from Kamsa is described in the beginning of Srimad-Bhagavatam's Tenth Canto. The sun god's daughter is Goddess Yamuna, and the sun-god's two wives are Samjna and Chaya".

Footnote 24

Preceding Verse 88: These ambiguous words may also be translated:

"O Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are glorified by many poetic verses. We are always engaged in Your devotional service. Please grant us liberation."

Footnote 25

Preceding Verse 88: The list is dharma (religious rituals), artha (economic development), kama (desire), and moksa (liberation). That is the sequence.

Footnote 26

Verse 88: This ambiguous verse may also be translated:

"Ferocious girl, what will you gain by trying to attack Krsna decorated with graceful earrings? His slightest whisper will make you bewildered with love for Him."

Footnote 27

Preceding Verse 91: The ambiguous sentence "I will make you so that sin no longer touches you." It may also be translated, "Now I will give you the touch of My arms."

Footnote 28

Preceding Verse 91: The sikhandini bird (peahen) is the ablest enemy of the snakes. No snake could defeat it.

Footnote 29

Preceding Verse 91: Here Lalita hints that Krsna should embrace the other four gopis.

Footnote 30

Preceding Verse 91: These ambiguous words may also be translated:

“O Campakalata”, here is the tamala tree Krsna, whose fingers scratch the gopis' breasts. Embrace Him, and blossom with happiness.”

Footnote 31

Preceding Verse 91: The word “visakha” may also mean “without branches”. The word for “five fingers” here is “sakha”, which also means “branch”. Therefore this ambiguous statement may also be translated:

“Perhaps I will soon see my dear friend, who is like a tree without any branches, decorated with five long, hard, new branches.”

Footnote 32

Verse 97: The ambiguous sentence “What horrible incurable disease did I get by touching that great black snake that lives in a cave in a garden on Govardhana Hill?” may also be translated:

“By touching that great black snake that lives in a cave in a garden on Govardhana Hill I caught a disease that can be cured only by Kamadeva.”

Footnote 33

Preceding Verse 98: The ambiguous words, “the sun will not fail to fill the sky with light” may also be translated, “the daughter of Vrsabhanu will not fail to serve the feet of Lord Visnu.”

Footnote 34

Preceding Verse 98: These ambiguous words may also be translated:

“When Rada and Krsna are together, Krsna's friend Purnamasi tastes sweet happiness.”

Footnote 35

Preceding Verse 98: The month of vaisakha is April-May. Some possible translations of these ambiguous words are:

“It is like that. On the full-moon night the star Radha, which is the star Vaisakha's friend, is full of glory.”

“Purnamasi now sees how Visakha's friend Radha is filled with happiness.”

“On this full-moon day Visakha sees how her friend Radha is filled with

happiness."