

SRILA PRABHUPADA:

THE TRANSCENDENTAL ART MASTER



At our very first meeting, Swamiji, who later became known as His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, told us to paint pictures of Lord Krishna. It was in January of 1967. Only a month prior to this, both Gary and I had been art students at the University of Texas in Austin. As soon as Swamiji heard we were studying art, he engaged us in doing transcendental artwork. And he became our “transcendental art master.”



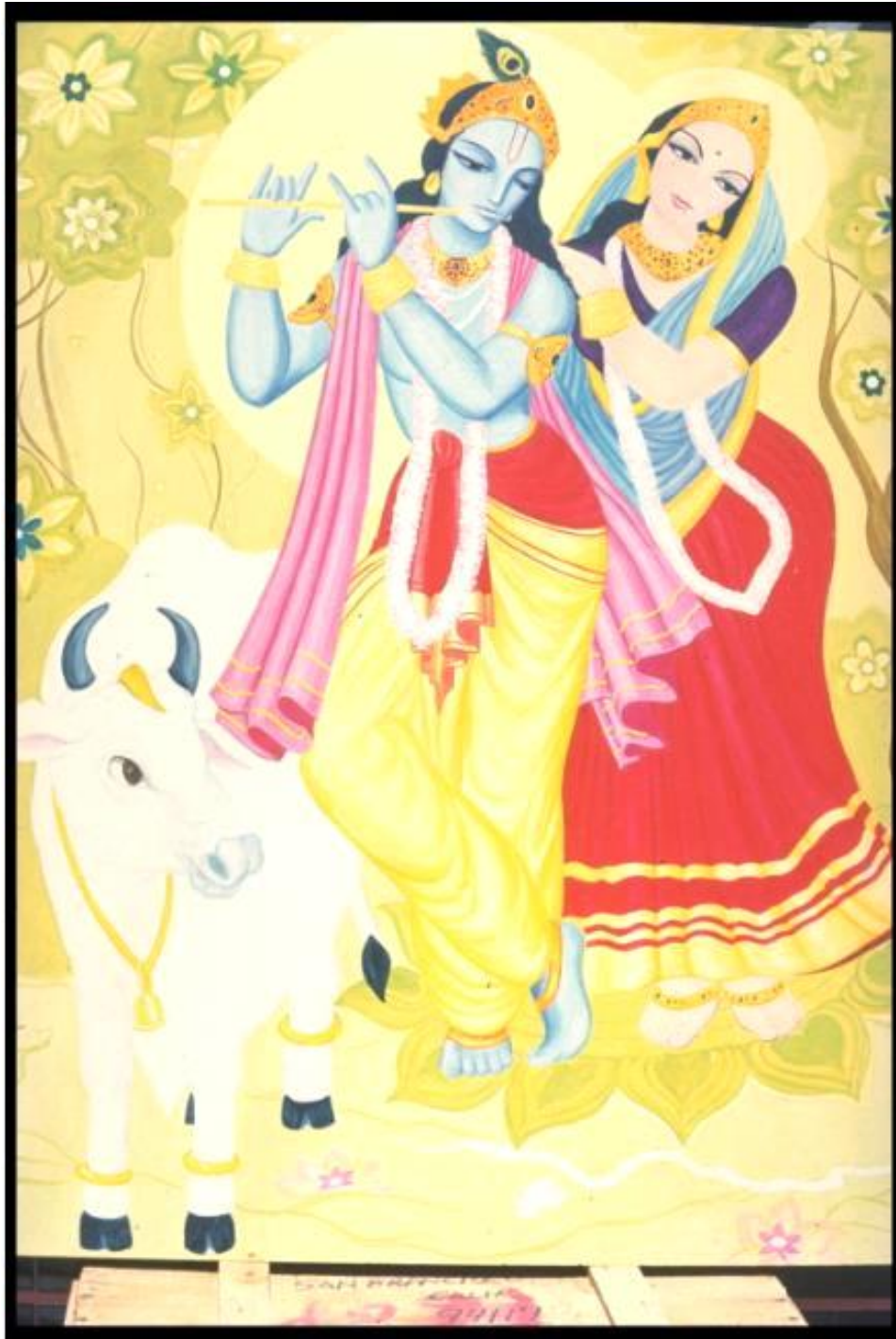
When we met Swamiji, as he was called then, we had been away from the University for little more than a month. So we were never really “hippies.” Almost immediately, we were initiated by him and given the names, Goursundar das and Govindadasi.

During my first year of college, I had studied under Thomas Payne, one of the best watercolor artists in America. I had also

excelled in life drawing, as I had a flair for drawing the human figure. Between my second and third year of college, I studied art in Europe, in France and Italy, and for a short time in Holland. So I was familiar with the Medieval and Renaissance Schools of art, as well as those of the Dutch Masters, and the art history of Europe, as well as England and America. Yet nothing could have prepared me for the wonderful world of transcendental art that Swamiji, SrilaPrabhupada, was about to bring to the realm of mankind.

My first assignment was a huge painting of Radha and Krishna, beside a Surabhi cow, near a desire tree in the Vrindaban background. The painting was four foot by four foot; Swamiji gave me a small book jacket to copy. It was the cover of his SrimadBhagavatam that he had

brought from India. Then he described the details.



So only days after meeting His Divine Grace, I was painting daily on this large work, while my husband, Goursundardasa, read aloud to me the first three volumes of Swamiji's SrimadBhagavatam. These three volumes that had traveled with Swamiji from India were the only books we had. Though they sounded like "Indian English," in places, they were wonderfully inspiring; one of my best memories in life is painting and hearing from those early volumes of SrimadBhagavatam.

However, since I was a new devotee, I often had to ask questions about the work. Swamiji welcomed my questions; he clearly wanted me to paint everything exactly as he described. So I would go to his nearby apartment, where Hayagriva was often present as well, working with Swamiji on the manuscripts of his books. Hayagriva would ask questions about the

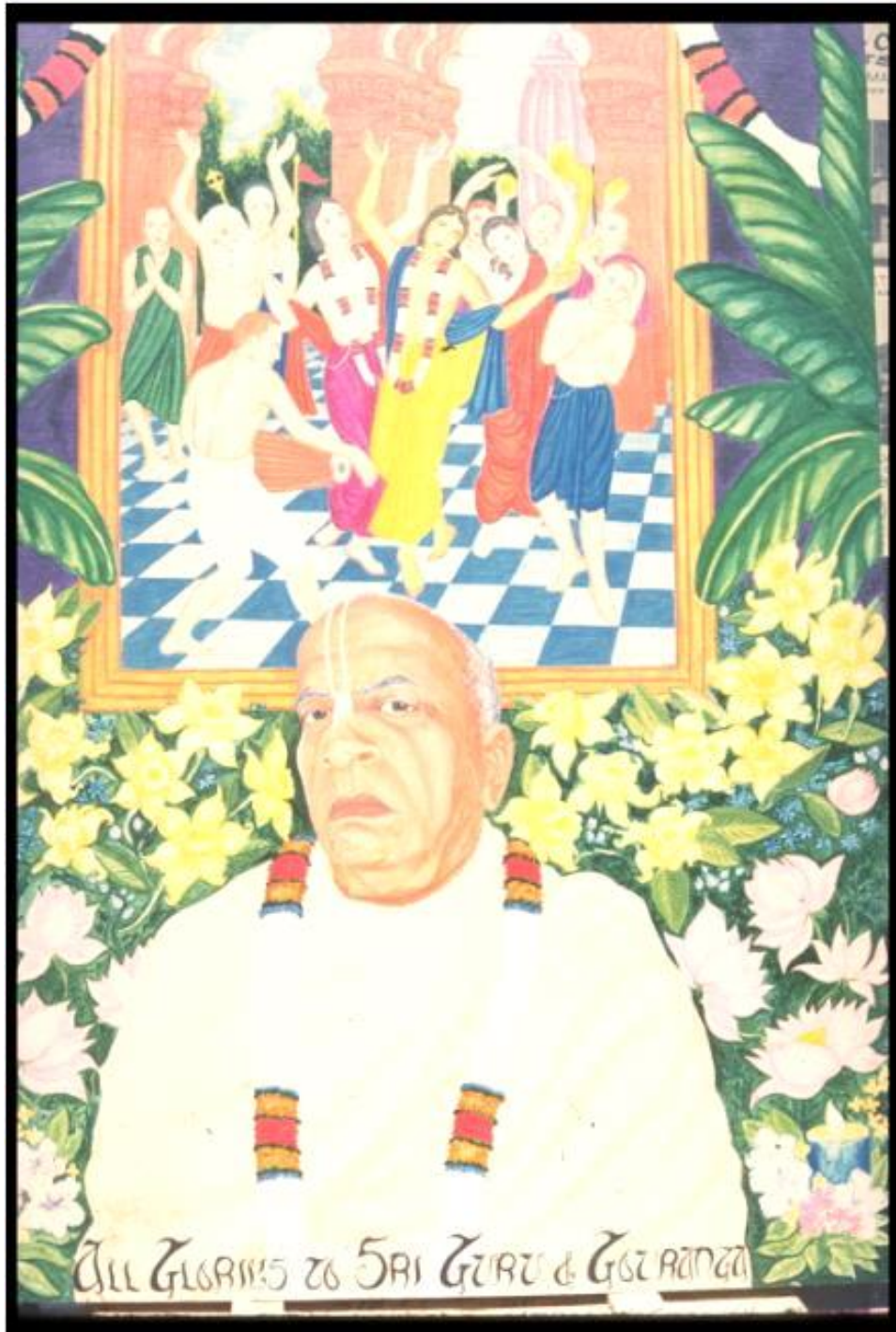
manuscripts, and I would ask questions about the artwork. Swamiji welcomed our questions; in fact, he encouraged them.

Since the book cover he had given me was quite small, I had to ask him about various details. For example, I had no idea what color to paint Krishna's eyes. So, on one occasion, I went to Swamiji's apartment to ask about this. He was sitting in his rocking chair in the tiny living room, chanting on his japa beads. He welcomed me with a big sunshine smile.

After offering my obeisances, I asked, "Swamiji, what color are Krishna's eyes?"

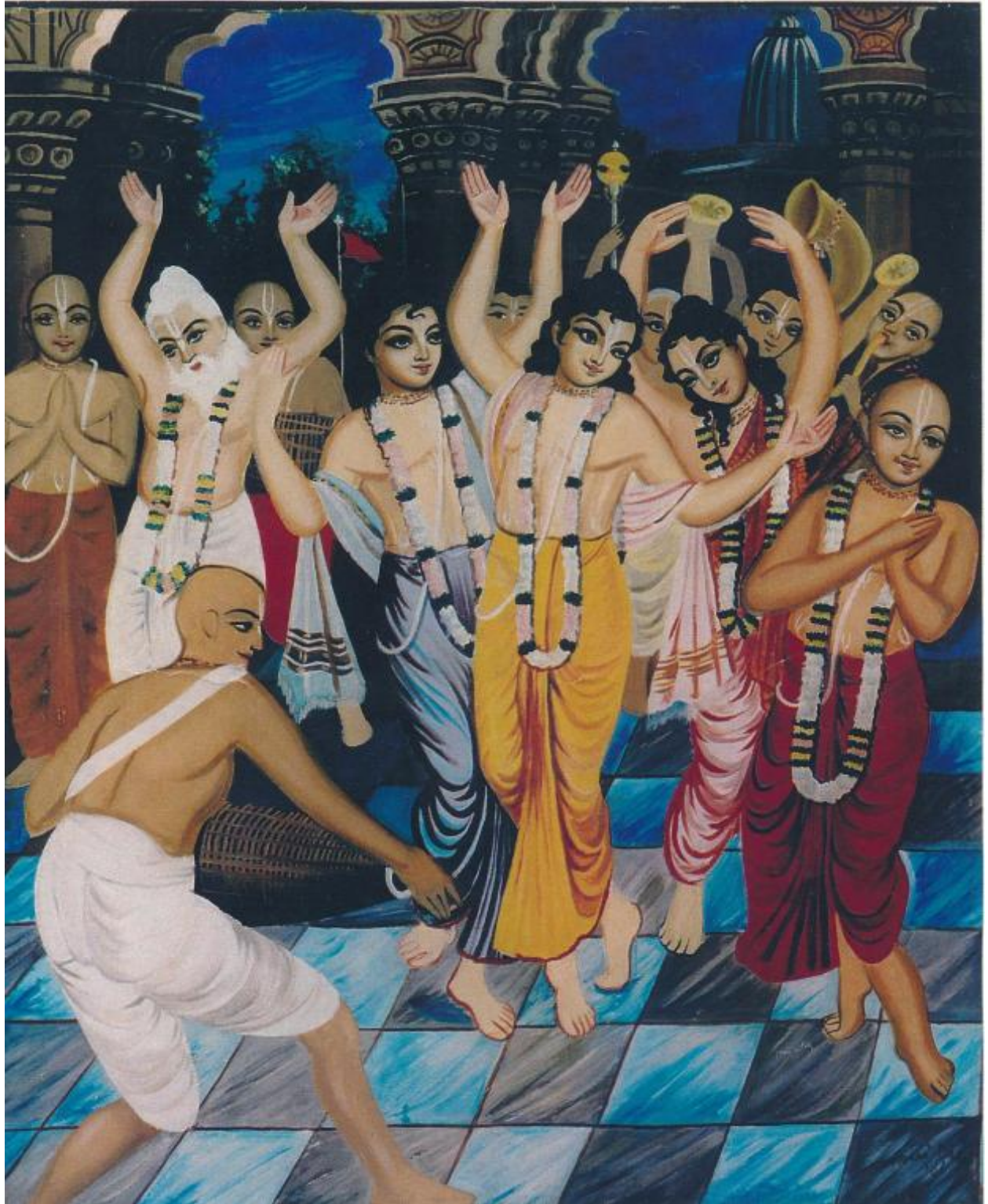
For a few long moments, Swamiji was quiet. Then, with a faraway look, as if he were actually gazing at Lord Krishna across the room, he said, with absolute certainty, "Blackish!"

I had the distinct feeling that he simply looked into another dimension, one that I could not see, and into Lord Krishna's lotus eyes. This was one of the first of many mystical experiences while working with SrilaPrabhupada.



As soon as the large painting of Radha Krishna was complete, and hanging on the Frederick Street temple wall, Swamiji called me to his

apartment. There, he gave me several snapshots of himself that had been taken by Mukunda. He told me to choose one of them, and to paint a portrait of him, sitting on the Vyasasana in the newly formed San Francisco temple. He specified that the painting of Lord Chaitanya's Sankirtan Party should be hanging on the wall behind him, and that "Lord Chaitanya's Lotus Foot should be just touching the top of my head."



This large painting, four foot by three foot, was to be positioned on the Vyasasana whenever he went away to preach in other places. It was to be treated as if SrilaPrabhupada, the Acharya, were present there in the painting.

Admittedly, this painting was much more difficult for me. Though I had excelled in life drawing from models, and faces and figures were my speciality, painting SrilaPrabhupada's expressions proved to be quite a challenging assignment.

Nevertheless, within a month, the painting was successfully completed and hung above his Vyasasana. He seemed pleased with it. It was by then around March of 1967, and Swamiji was planning his return to New York.

Goursundar and I traveled with him; he flew and we went by car, crossing the nation in only

four days and nights. When we arrived, he had been in New York for only two days.



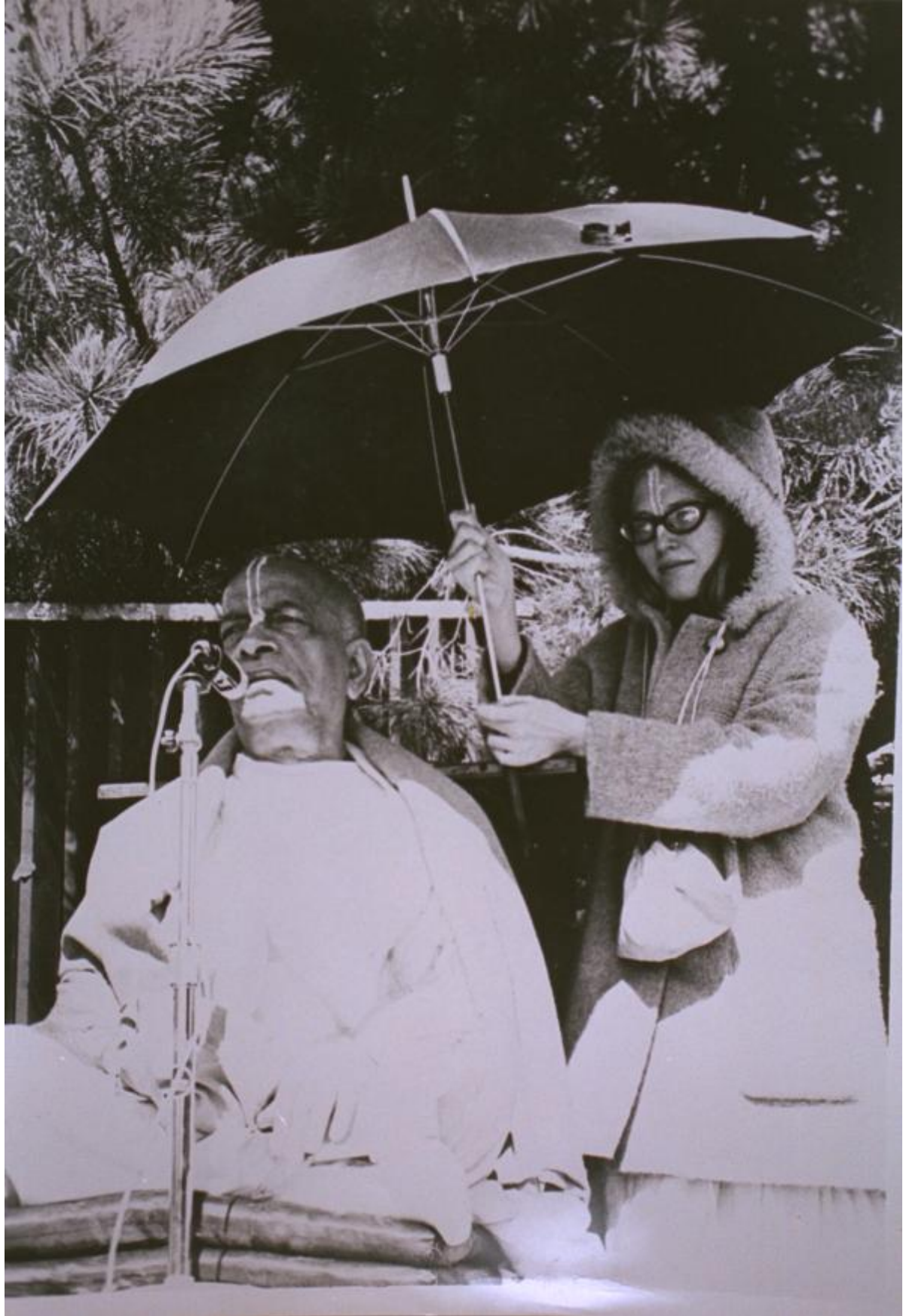
There, Swamiji introduced us to the small New York group of devotees, as “his artists from San Francisco temple.” We were immediately welcomed as part of the New York devotee family, sharing prasadam with such wonderful devotees as Brahmananda, Gargamuni,

Rupanuga, Rayarama, Achyutananda, Satsvarupa, Jadurany and others.

We were given work space in “Swamiji’s art studio”, which consisted of the tiny living room in his upstairs apartment. There, just after Swamiji’s morning class breakfast prasad, we spent our days. At night, after his evening class, we slept on the floor of the 26 Second Avenue temple. We later stayed at Satsvarupa and Rayrama’s apartment, until we found a tiny place of our own.

We often found ourselves in Swamiji’s apartment late into the evening, clustered around him like a family, listening to his wonderful talks about Krishna. We were truly just like a transcendental family, and he was our beloved spiritual father. There was only an atmosphere of spiritual love. There was, at this

time, no money, no power, no politics, so no positions to defend, and no conflict amongst us. It was a special time when Swamiji was the center of our world, and we all joyfully served him as brothers and sisters.



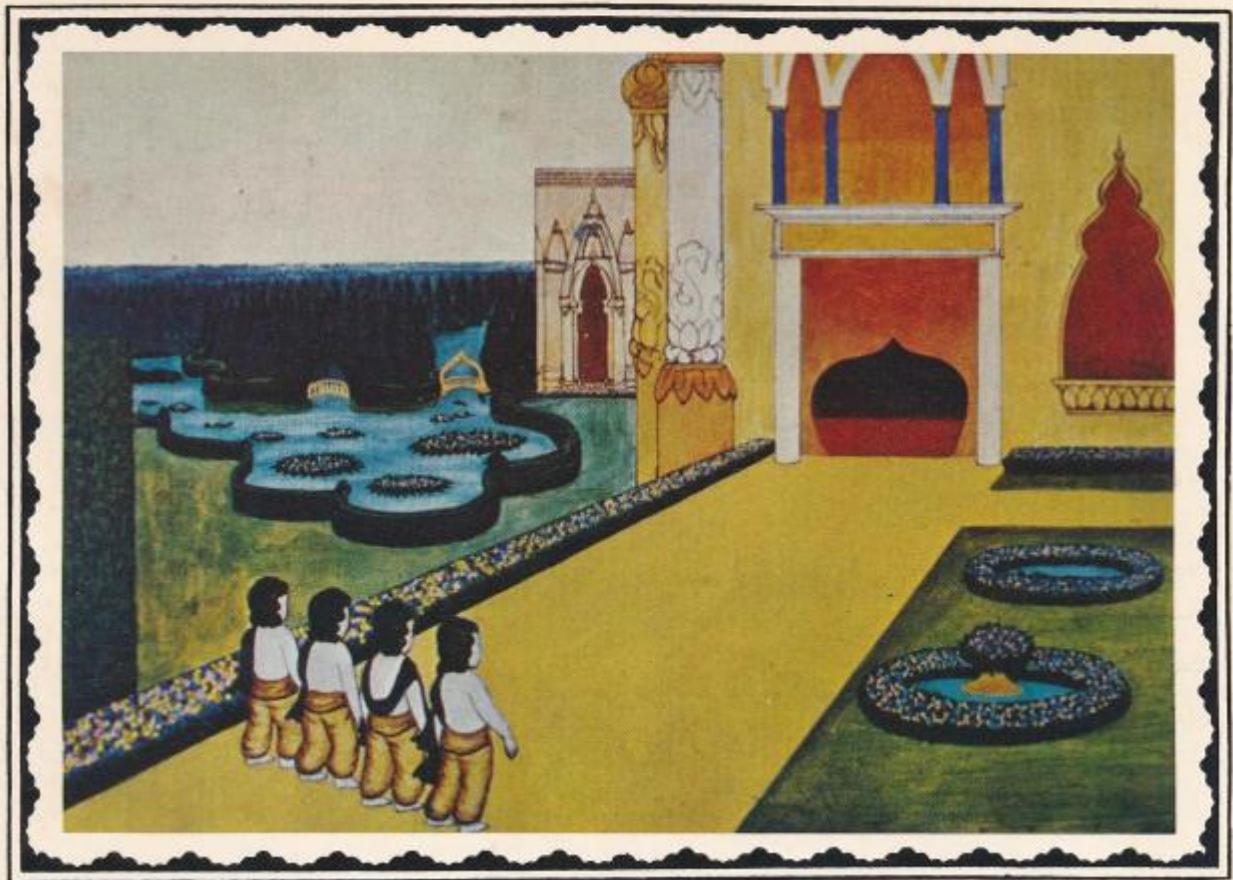
Throughout the day, Swamiji would walk in and out of his tiny living room cum art studio. His small apartment had a tiny kitchen, a bathroom, and two rooms, with a window between them. Swamiji would work and sleep in one room, and the other room, the living room, was the art studio. There, Jadurany sat painting in one corner. Goursundar and I sat on the floor painting in another corner. The atmosphere was delightful and intimate, as Swamiji would watch our work and often give encouragement and guidance. He seemed to enjoy walking in and out of the art studio, many times a day, looking at our work, and giving directives.

Our first assignment in New York was to paint a whole series of pictures to illustrate the story of

PrahladMaharaj. Swamiji wanted this series to be used as a children's slide show, in order to educate them about Krishna consciousness. So the drawings were designed with children in mind. Since these paintings were to attract young children, he wanted them to be simple and colorful.

Prahlad

A Story for Children from the Ancient Vedas of India



**Indeed, this Prahlad series was later used in slide show presentations in London and other

places, and also printed into a soft-bound children's picture book called "Prahlad."

Prahlad



Prahlad is the hero of this story. But the story of Prahlad began long before Prahlad was born. It began with four saintly persons called Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana, and Sanat Kumara. They had been living for millions of years, but they still looked just like little boys of four or five years old.

These four boys had often heard of the wonders of Lord Krishna, the Supreme Person. They very much wanted to visit Krishna in His shining palace. It was way beyond the stars in Vaikuntha, the spiritual sky. Vaikuntha means “the land where there is no fear.” There, everything is full of light, so there is no need of sunlight, moonlight, or even electricity.

These boys were the best little boys in the world, so they felt sure that Lord Krishna would let them enter His kingdom. That is why, one day, they went beyond the stars to the spiritual sky. When they got close to Vaikuntha, they could hear the sound of water flowing in the fountains. They could smell the fragrance of heavenly flowers. Then they approached the main gates.



The four boys stood at the entrance to the palace. They were surprised by what they saw. Two powerful guards stood at the doors. They were dressed in yellow silk and held golden clubs in their hands. The names of these gatekeepers were Jaya and Vijaya.

The gatekeepers were very strict. They had to bar the way to all who were not perfectly free from sin. They thought that the little boys didn't belong in Vaikuntha. They never imagined that such small boys would want to visit Lord Krishna.

"Only those who are spotless and pure can enter here!" said the guards. The little strangers stood their ground. They were so anxious to see Lord Krishna that they threatened the guards.

"Let us enter, or we shall curse you," they warned, but to no avail. And curse them they did, which is how the two gatekeepers happened to take birth in the material world.



uddenly the Lord of Vaikuntha appeared at the gate. Lord Krishna knew what had happened, because He is in everyone's heart.

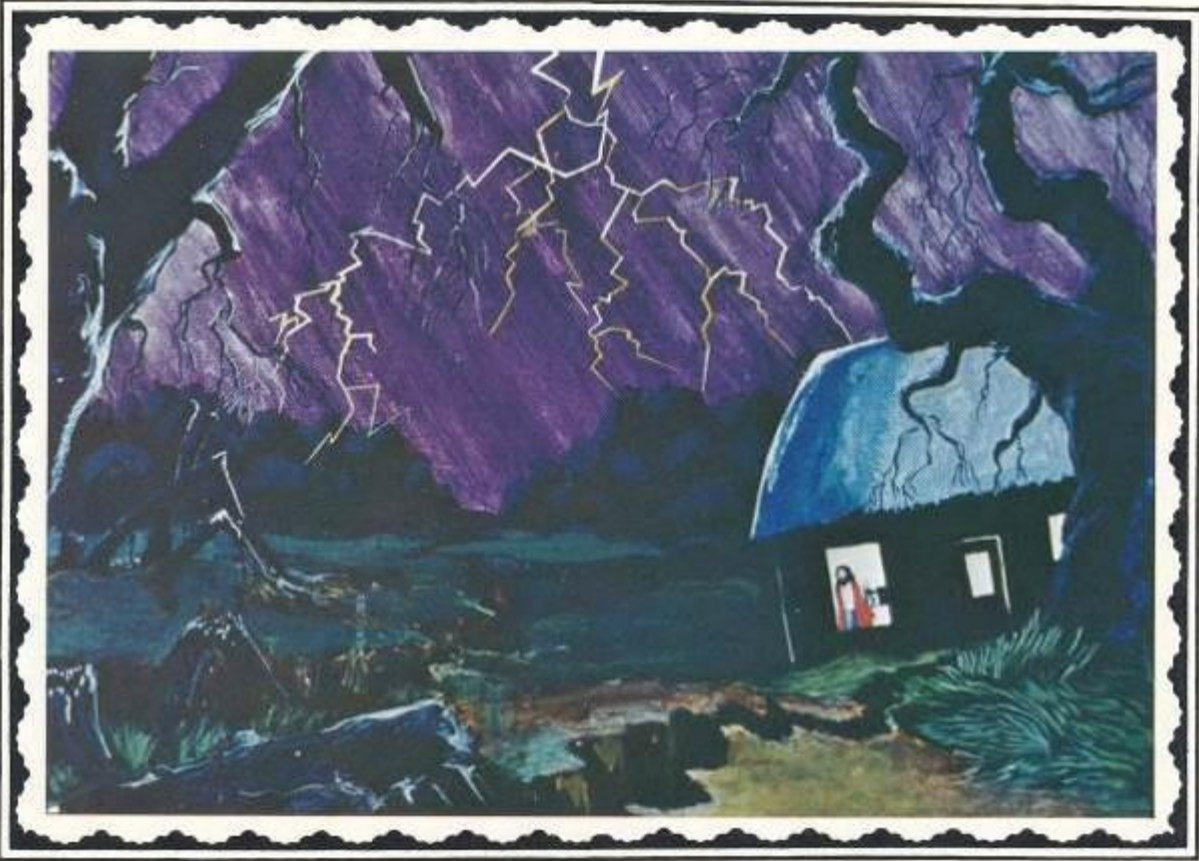
Jaya and Vijaya prayed to Him with folded hands. "O Lord of lords, O King of kings! Please save us from the curse of these young boys. They have punished us because we said they were unfit to enter Vaikuntha. We beg You to take away this terrible curse. They have condemned us to take birth in the material world. There we will suffer from the miseries of birth, death, disease, and old age."

"Hear Me, My gatekeepers," said the Lord. "These four boys are My devotees. I cannot take away their curse. But I shall give you this choice. You may go to that miserable material world for seven lifetimes as My devotees, or for only three lifetimes—but as My enemies. And if you go as My enemies, I shall have to kill you each time!"



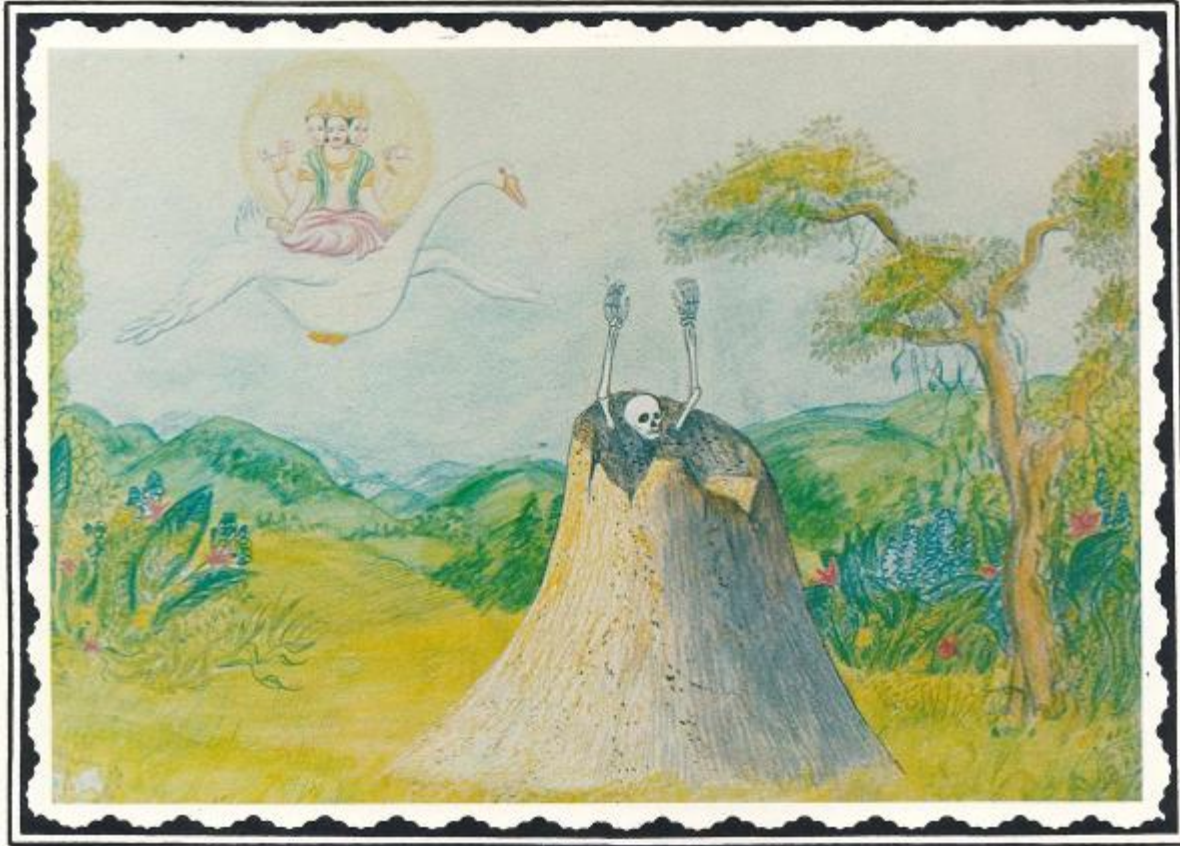
Jaya and Vijaya thought it over. Finally they decided to be born as enemies of Lord Krishna. That way they would be able to get back to the spiritual sky more quickly. Any time spent away from the Lord was painful for them. They were willing to play the part of demons if it would speed up their return to Vaikuntha.

So Jaya and Vijaya took a long journey. We can't imagine how far they had to travel. They went spinning down and down until they reached the universe of dense darkness. The universe is shaped like an egg. It is covered by seven layers, each one ten times thicker than the one before. Jaya and Vijaya had to pass through layers such as air, fire, and water, until they finally reached the inside of the universe itself.



Inside the universe, the planets were scattered like specks of dust. On one of these small planets a terrible storm was raging. The rain beat down on a house in the middle of a forest. Claps of thunder and bolts of lightning sent the birds crying from their nests. The dogs and jackals howled. All night long the wind roared.

On such nights, demons are born. Because of the curse of the four small boys, the gatekeepers Jaya and Vijaya were forced to be born as demon babies on that terrible night. Jaya, the elder child, was named Hiranya Kashipu. *Hiranya* means gold, and *Kashipu* means soft bed. He was expected to have lots of gold and a very soft bed to sleep in when he grew up.



Hiranya Kashipu grew up into a fierce and terrible man. He wanted to rule the whole universe. So he started a war with the demigods, who are in charge of ruling the universe.

At the same time, Hiranya Kashipu had another ambition. He wanted to live forever. Of course, no man can live forever. Not even the demigods can. Only the Lord and His servants in the spiritual world can live forever.

But Hiranya Kashipu was very determined to get his wish granted. He stood on his toes for many years, with his arms held high in the air. He stood there for so long that he turned into a skeleton and was almost covered by a giant ant hill. He stood there for such a long time that by his will power he was able to control the forces of nature. He became so powerful that the earth began trembling in fear.



Everyone became afraid of Hiranya Kashipu's growing power. From his head there came a scorching light. The whole universe became unbearably hot. People from all the planets approached Lord Brahma, the chief of the demigods, to complain.

So Lord Brahma went to visit Hiranya Kashipu, who had become an obvious threat to the safety of the whole planet. Lord Brahma knew that there must be a reason for his long and painful meditation. He must want some special reward. So Lord Brahma said: "Your mystic powers are disturbing everyone. Do you want some favor from me? Is that why you are standing on your toes?"

Hiranya Kashipu at once demanded: "Please grant that I shall not be killed during the day or at night, inside or outside, on the ground or in the sky, or by man or beast, or by any weapon."

"All right. Your wish is granted," said Lord Brahma. Hiranya Kashipu bowed low to Lord Brahma and said, "Now I shall live forever."

"We shall see, foolish human," thought Lord Brahma, who knew that no man can live forever.



While Hiranya Kashipu was in the mountains standing on his toes, the demigods attacked his palace. In the palace they found Hiranya Kashipu's wife, Kayadhu, who was going to have a baby. The demigods were afraid that the baby might become a great demon like his father, Hiranya Kashipu. So they wanted to take Kayadhu away.

But suddenly the great sage Narada Muni appeared and said, "Release this woman! It is not right to steal another man's wife."

"But she is carrying the child of Hiranya Kashipu!" said the demigods. "He will probably turn out to be a demon like his father."

"No," said Narada. "The child within her body is a great devotee. Let her come with me, and I shall protect her. I shall teach her and her child how to love God." So Kayadhu went with Narada Muni.

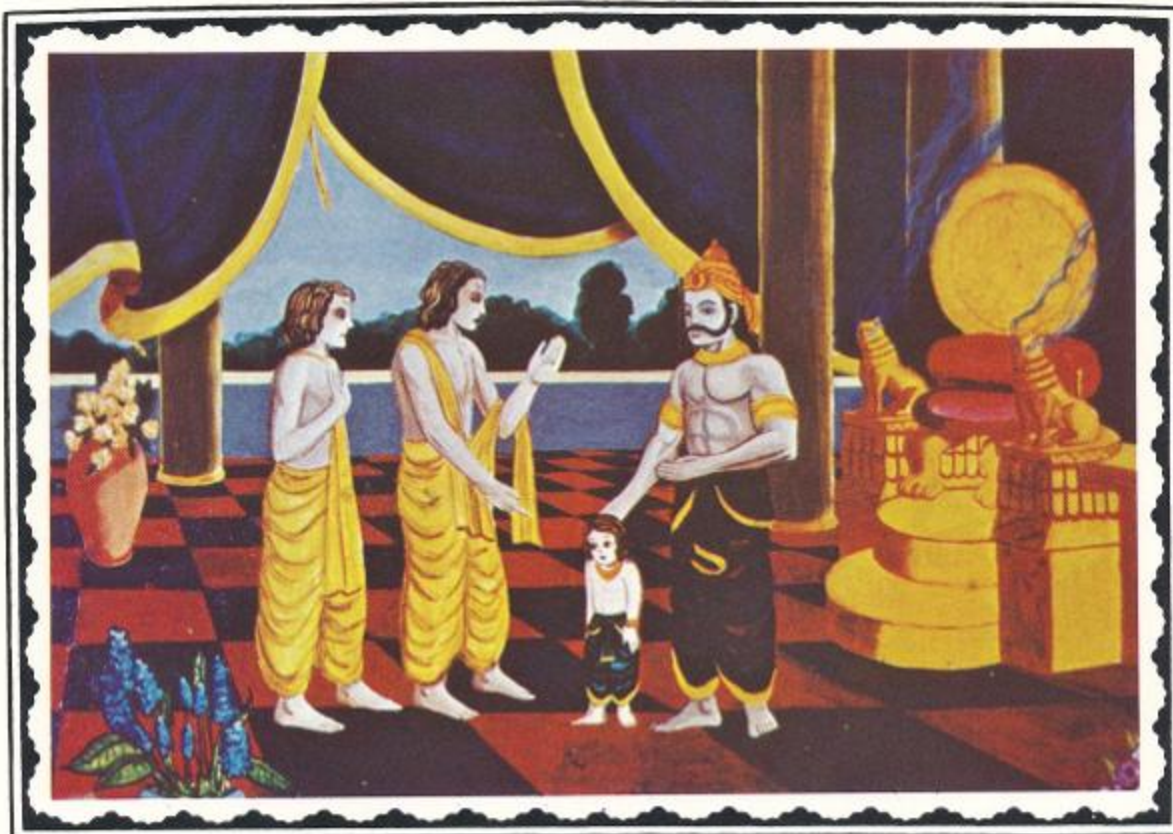
While Queen Kayadhu listened to the teachings of Narada Muni, the baby Prahlada was also listening from within his mother's body. That is how he learned to be a devotee of Krishna even before he was born. He could hear the voice of Narada Muni singing a wonderful song of praise to Lord Krishna. This is what Narada sang: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. When Prahlada was born, he was a remarkable child. He had a face that shone like the full moon.



Meanwhile, Prahlad's father, Hiranya Kashipu, had once again become the most powerful king in the universe. He forced all the demigods to take orders from him. But from the very first he could not control his little son Prahlad. The thundering voice of Hiranya Kashipu would have frightened an ordinary boy. But not Prahlad.

When Prahlad was five, Hiranya Kashipu sent him to school. His teachers were named Shanda and Amarka. These men were very good at teaching children how to become wicked demons.

Shanda and Amarka started teaching Prahlad how to break the laws of God. But Prahlad wouldn't listen. They threatened him with punishment and tried to force him to learn. But Prahlad just pretended to listen. He was thinking of his real teacher, Narada Muni. Narada used to say: "We are all part of Krishna. So always remember Krishna and never forget Kṛṣṇa." Prahlad sat and thought of beautiful Krishna, while his teachers taught their low and wicked lessons.



fter Prahlad had been in the school for some time, Hiranya Kashipu sent for him. The king looked at his son with interest. “Speak!” he commanded. “Tell me what you have learned from your teachers.”

Prahlad said: “I have learned that everything belongs to Lord Krishna and that we are all the Lord’s servants.”

“You fool!” shouted Hiranya Kashipu. He could not understand how a little prince could say something like that.

He looked around at his palace, which was fully decorated for his pleasure. The walls were hung with black velvet and embroidered silk. Diamonds and rubies sparkled everywhere. “Everything belongs to me!” screamed Hiranya Kashipu. Then he turned accusing eyes on Shanda and Amarka. “Who has spoiled Prahlad?” he howled.

But no one knew. So they promised to protect Prahlad in case a devotee of Krishna was coming to the school in disguise.



fter a while, Hiranya Kashipu again sent for Prahlad. His teachers Shanda and Amarka were sure that this time Prahlad was better educated. Hiranya Kashipu seated little Prahlad on his lap and said to his child: “My dear son, what is the best thing you have learned from your teachers?” He expected to hear about money, or killing animals.

But again Prahlad talked only about devotion to Krishna. He said that there are nine ways to worship God, and that a person who knows these nine ways knows everything worth knowing.

The King was furious. He shouted at the teachers. But they said it was not their fault. They said Prahlad was naturally a devotee. They said no one was teaching him these things.

“You rascal!” shouted Hiranya Kashipu to Prahlad. “Where have you learned this?” But Prahlad would not say.



Hiranya Kashipu got so angry that his eyes glowed like red-hot copper. He threw Prahlad from his lap onto the ground. He shouted to the servants: “O demons, take away this boy! He deserves to be killed! He is only five years old, but he will not obey his father.” The only thing that Hiranya Kashipu wanted was treasure and pleasure. He could not understand Prahlad.

“He certainly doesn’t act like a son of mine! Such a disobedient boy must be killed.” On and on he raged. He nearly tore out his hair in fury. “Guards!” he shouted. “Come and take him away! This boy Prahlad has turned out to be my enemy. How could such a disaster happen to me? My own son is a devotee of Krishna. I cannot control him. Take him away and kill him!”



Prahlad bowed his head as four guards came and dragged him off to the torture chamber.

The servants of Hiranya Kashipu were terrible demons. They had fearful faces with sharp teeth and reddish coppery beards and hair. They came toward Prahlad shouting, "Chop him up! Pierce him!" Yelling and screeching, they tried to kill him with their sharp weapons.

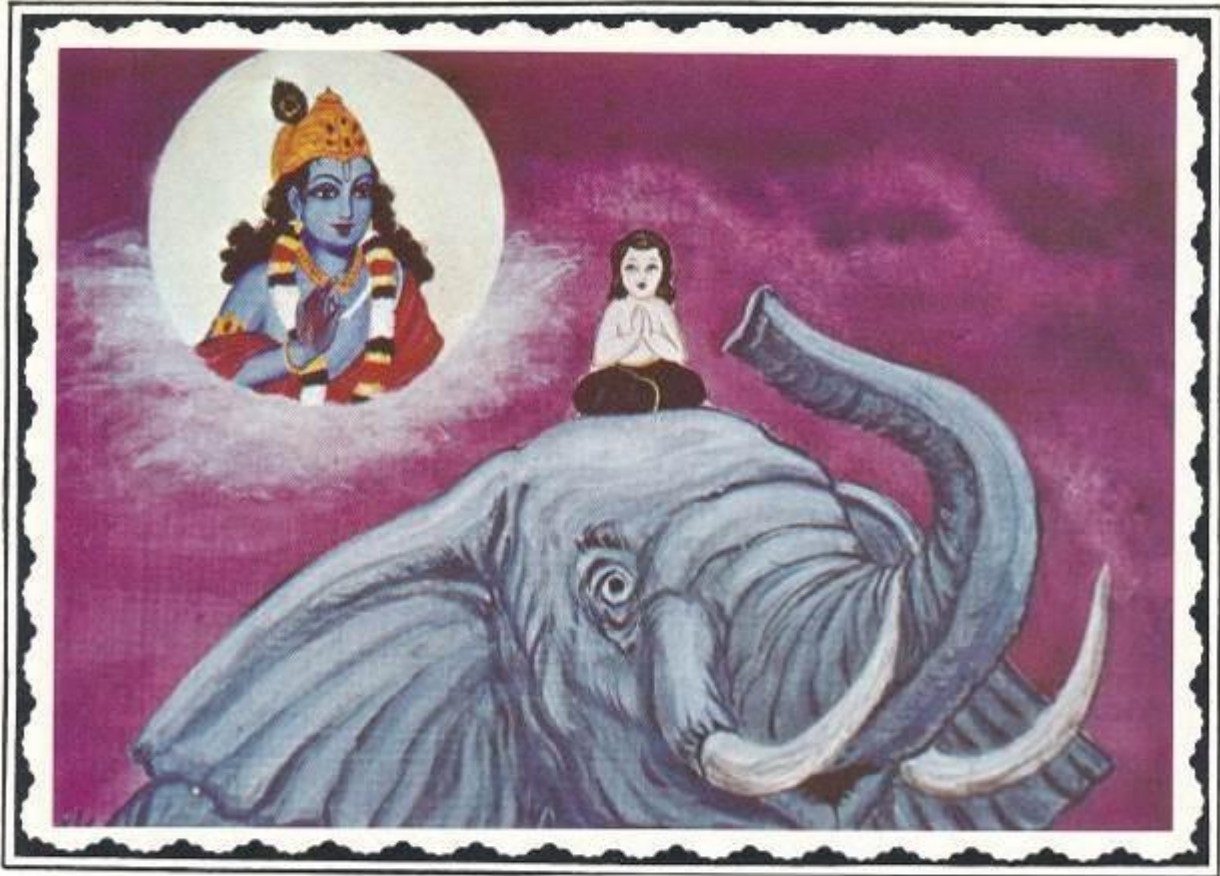
But Prahlad was not afraid. He felt completely safe, just like a baby on the lap of his mother. And although Prahlad's body was very soft, the guards could not stab him with their sharp spears. Thus Lord Krishna protected him. Krishna loves all of His children. But He gives special protection to those who love Him.

Prahlad did not struggle or cry, because he was always chanting the holy names of Krishna: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.



Next the demons decided to destroy Prahlad with a killer elephant whose feet were as hard as rocks. This elephant was trained to trample on the king's enemies. The elephant's trainer used to prod him with an iron goad. This hurt so much that the elephant would scream in pain and run amuk, smashing everything to dust under its feet.

When the elephant saw Prahlad, its eyes were burning with rage. But Prahlad looked at the dangerous beast fearlessly.



The wild elephant stood over Prahlad, waving its head from side to side. Then the elephant swung out its trunk and pulled Prahlad to safety, twelve feet above the heads of his father, the elephant trainer, and a crowd of demons. The trainer was the only one who knew how to control the elephant. But this time he could not. He danced around on the ground with his goad, menacing the elephant.

The elephant swung clear and began to walk away. "Oh no!" bawled Hiranya Kashipu. "Get that miserable child. He is making my life unbearable."



If Krishna protects you, no one can kill you, and if Krishna wants to kill you, no one can protect you. When the demons finally caught up with Prahlad, Hiranya Kashipu ordered him thrown into a pit of snakes.

The snake pit was in a damp cellar. The whole bottom of the snake pit was a tangled mass of moving bodies. Snakes coiled and uncoiled their long bodies. They were constantly moving back and forth over the oozing mud. A bite from one of the snakes would kill a person in only a few seconds.

When Prahlad was thrown into their midst, the snakes made angry hissing noises. They stared at him with their glittering eyes. But Prahlad stood completely still. Then one large snake glided from the shadows. It stretched its neck up over Prahlad as if to protect him.

When the guards came they were utterly amazed. "He's not dead!" they said. "And he's made the snakes into tame pets!"



Hmmm . . .” said Hiranya Kashipu. “This boy must have some power over animals. So this time I will throw him from the top of a cliff. His nice personality will not help him from falling and smashing on the rocks below.”

So Hiranya Kashipu took Prahlad up to the top of a high mountain. Then Hiranya Kashipu gave him a good push, and Prahlad fell. He was turning round and round, headed straight for the rocks, when Krishna appeared. Krishna stretched out His beautiful arms and caught Prahlad as he fell through the air.

Prahlad never doubted Krishna. He was never afraid, even while he was falling down and down. He knew that Krishna would save him.



Kiranya Kashipu still did not give up. If he could not throw Prahlad down from a cliff, then he would boil him alive. So the demons put Prahlad into a big pot of boiling liquid.

But Prahlad didn't struggle. Prahlad didn't cry. The power of his faith was stronger than any harm his father tried to do. That means that any devotee can take shelter of Krishna, just as Prahlad did. Because he was thinking of Krishna so hard, Prahlad didn't even mind the hot boiling liquid, and his body was not burned.



N“f heat doesn’t do it, then perhaps cold will!” growled his father. He sent Prahlad up to the northernmost part of the planet. It was always winter there, and the sun never shone. Snow fell in big soft flakes. Chilly winds blew over the hills. No man could live there for more than a few hours without a fire or shelter.

They sent Prahlad out to die in the freezing cold. Although he wore only a dhoti, he did not seem to feel the cold. He hardly noticed the snow falling. His love for Krishna kept him warm.



Nam not being hard enough on that boy!” thought Hiranya Kashipu. He then sent Prahlad to a place where a hurricane was raging. This hurricane could pick up a house and whirl it into the sky. Then it would smash the house into a bundle of broken sticks.

But Prahlad believed that he had nothing to fear. All night long the wind roared, and lightning flashed across the sky. The storm raged all around him, but the child managed to hold onto the trunk of a palm tree.

He was not afraid. His face was lit up with a smile. He was thinking of his beloved Krishna.



Hiranya Kashipu tried starving the boy. For many days he gave him no food. Anxiously, he waited for signs of success, but his waiting was in vain. Prahlad Maharaj had no need of food; he was completely satisfied with chanting Hare Krishna and absorbing his mind in thoughts of the Supreme Lord.

His demoniac father then gave him poisoned food, but because Prahlad was a devotee and wished only to serve God, he first offered the food to Krishna. By the supreme power of the Lord, the poison lost all effect.

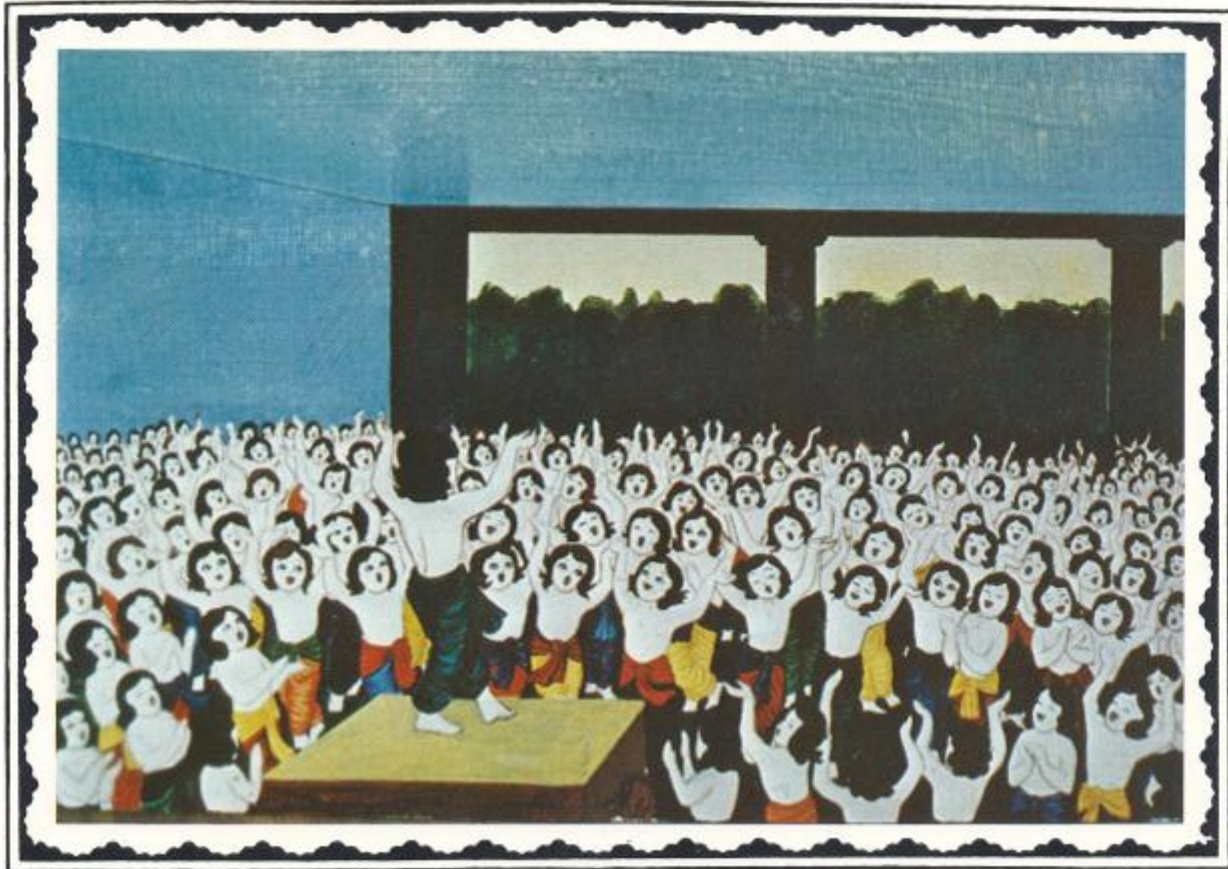
Hiranya Kashipu remained silent and despondent, his face downcast. But Prahlad's two teachers approached him and reassured him, "You need not be so morose and full of anxiety. Prahlada is nothing but a child. When he grows up, he will change in his intelligence and adapt to our ways."

Being reassured by the statements of Shanda and Amarka, Hiranya Kashipu agreed, and he requested them to give Prahlad further lessons in mundane affairs.

Even though Prahlad Maharaj did not care for the instructions, he was very humble, and he submissively went with his teachers.



When Shanda and Amarka went home to attend to their household affairs, Prahlad's friends would call him to play. Smilingly, Prahlad would teach the boys about the uselessness of materialistic life. Because of their affection for Prahlad, the boys gave up their playthings and sat down to hear him. Prahlad instructed them, "My dear friends, when we are young we should spend our time engaging in the service of the Lord, instead of uselessly wasting our lives trying to find happiness, which comes and goes of its own accord. We are all looking for our dearmost friend. That dearmost friend is Krishna, and if we please Him, we shall all be eternally happy."



Prahlad spoke with so much faith that the children believed him. His love was so great that the other boys could feel it too, just by hearing him speak. He laughed happily when they all began chanting the holy names in loud voices. Again and again they lifted up their little arms and danced.

That is how they discovered that even a child can experience the wonderful feeling of love for Krishna. To learn how to love God is very easy, if you are lucky enough to meet a great devotee like Prahlad.

He led the chanting in his clear voice: "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare."

The teachers heard the sound of the children chanting, and they rushed into the classroom. When they saw what was going on, they stared at the children in amazement. They decided to take Prahlad back to his father. That seemed to be the only thing to do.

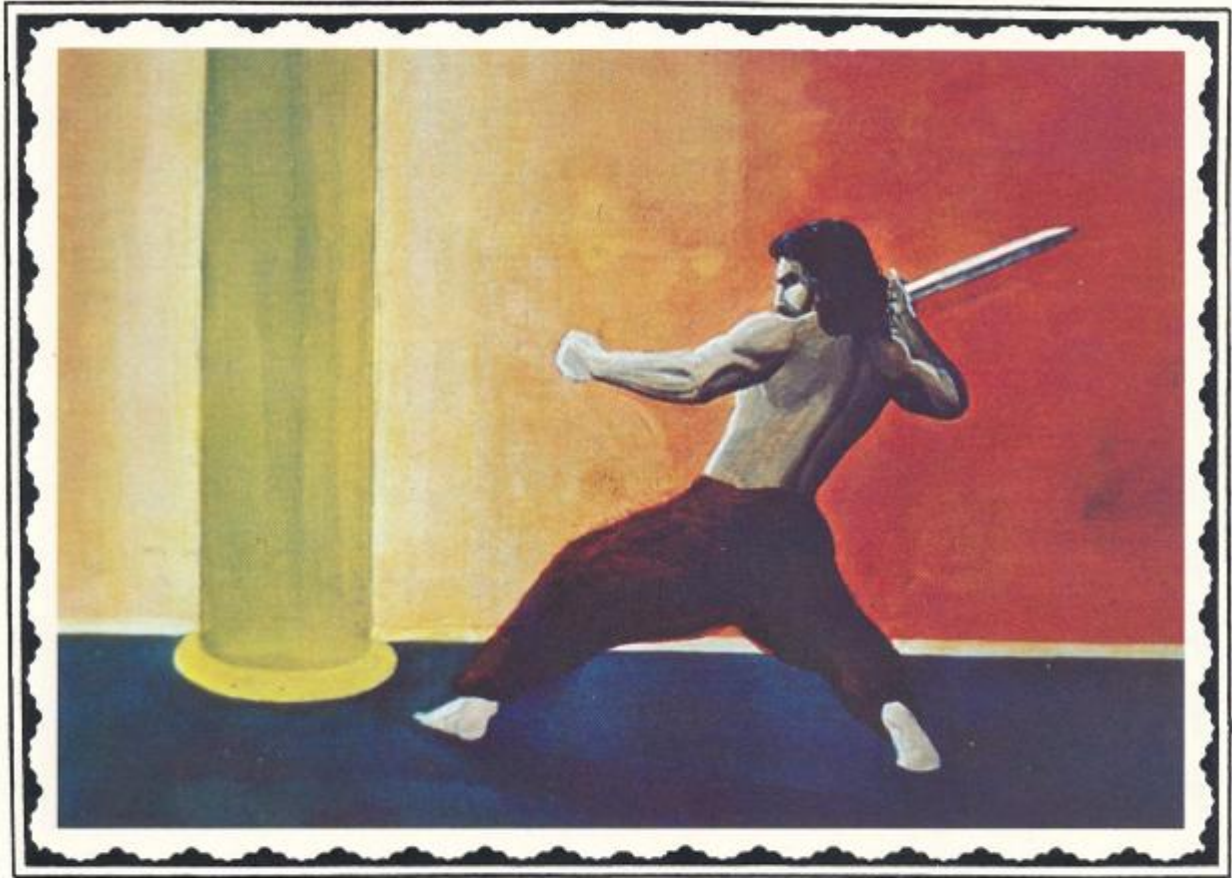


So into the throne room they brought Prahlad. “My dear king,” said Shanda, “I wonder if your son is in his right mind.”

The king glared at his little son as if he could find the secret in the boy’s eyes. But Prahlad smiled back quite pleasantly. His eyes were as bright as polished marble, but they told his father nothing.

“What does all this mean?” asked the king. “I have heard reports that you are teaching the other boys to become devotees of Krishna. You may have defied me with some magic tricks before, but this is worse! Now you are taking the part of a teacher. You are teaching the boys about a Supreme Being who is not me! You talk about some other God, who is supposed to be everywhere. But where is He? Why can’t I see Him? Is He in this pillar?”

Prahlad fearlessly replied, “Yes, my Lord is present everywhere.”



Hiranya Kashipu took his sword in hand and got up from his throne. He then struck his fist in great anger against the marble pillar. With a growl he turned to Prahlad. "It's all nonsense!" he shouted. "And because you are always talking nonsense, I'm going to cut off your head!"

Just then, a fearful sound came from the pillar. Hiranya Kashipu looked around nervously to see where the loud sound had come from. He had never heard anything like it before. The terrible thundering sound was proof that the Lord was indeed inside the pillar.



N ll of a sudden a wonderful being jumped out of the pillar. His top half looked like a lion, and His bottom half looked like a man. But actually He was Krishna. This special lion form of Krishna was named Lord Nrsinghadev. He came out of the pillar to encourage Prahlad, saying, "Don't worry, I am here."

Then He shook His head angrily, looking at Hiranya Kashipu with burning eyes. His shining mane made His head look very large. His teeth were pointed, and His tongue was as sharp as a razor.

In spite of all this, Hiranya Kashipu was not even afraid. He thought that he would never die, because he had a promise from Lord Brahma. Hiranya Kashipu thought that Lord Brahma's promise would cover all conditions. But he never imagined anyone like Lord Nrsinghadev.

Proudly, Hiranya Kashipu took up his club and attacked the Lord. And for a while Lord Nrsinghadev returned his blows. But He was just playing with the foolish demon king, as a cat plays with a mouse before killing it.



Finally the Lord made a loud, shrill laughing sound. Hiranya Kashipu closed his eyes in fear of this loud laughter. Then the Lord pounced on him. The demon squirmed in terror. Then Lord Narsinghadev placed the king on his lap and very easily tore him to pieces with the nails of His hand.

Because God is the most wise person, He killed Hiranya Kashipu without breaking Lord Brahma's promise.

He killed him neither inside nor outside, but in the doorway. It was neither on the land nor in the sky, but on the lap of the Lord. It was neither during the day nor at night, but in the twilight. And the demon was killed neither by man nor beast, nor by any weapon, but by the Lord's own sharp nails.



Lord Nrsinghadev then sat down on Hiranya Kashipu's throne. Shining rays of light blazed from His enormous head. No one dared to approach Him. Only Prahlad came forward.

The Lord was glad to see how bravely His little devotee came and bowed before Him. He flashed His teeth in a smile and placed His hand lovingly on the boy's head. It was the very same hand that had killed Hiranya Kashipu with its sharp nails.

Prahlad began to speak. At last he was seeing his Lord face to face. His voice trembled with joy.

"My father tried to destroy me, but You were always there to save me. Now You have finally killed him, in a second. But I only hope that you will not send him to hell."

Lord Nrsinghadev said: "Because you are My devotee, I shall save your father from hell. And your forefathers for twenty-one generations will also be saved."



ow Prahlad,” said Lord Nrsinghadev, “what is your desire?”

“My dear Lord,” Prahlad answered, “I have no desire. I do not want anything from You.”

The Lord very much wanted to give Prahlad *something*. But Prahlad smiled, shook his head, and said, “I want nothing for myself.” Prahlad loved all the children in the world, and it made him very sad to think that they might never hear Hare Krishna. He remembered how his teacher, Narada Muni, used to sing and play on his vina. How glad he was that Narada had come to teach him.

“There are so many people in the world who are running after money, clothes, and jewels. What are these toys in comparison with You?” asked Prahlad. “If You are set on giving me something, then here is my desire. Would you please allow me to serve my teacher, Narada Muni, in his great work of teaching people how to chant Hare Krishna? I shall help him to make everyone happy.”

It so happened that at that time, Swamiji was daily translating the part of SrimadBhagavatam that described the pastimes of PrahladMaharaj and Lord Nrsinghadev. So he was constantly absorbed in the mood of Nrsingha Lila.

Since that canto was not yet available, we did not even know the story of PrahladMaharaj! However, he was speaking daily in his morning class on this pastime, and he gave us more and

more description as we worked. Swamiji guided us every step of the way.

In fact, Swamiji often posed for us to help describe the events in the story! On one occasion, he posed for the demon Hiranyakasipu, standing on his tippy toes with his arms held high, in the middle of our little art studio--but only for a minute. This was to illustrate Hiranyakasipu's yogic penance. On another occasion, he wrapped himself in a long white cloth, like a dhoti, and posed as Krishna, in a "three-fold bending posture." This was so that Jadurany and I could see Krishna's special posture, and sketch the way the folds fell in the type of dhoti Krishna wears. There were many such instances.

Surprisingly, on numerous occasions, (nearly every day) Swamiji would pose for Lord Nrisinghadev! He seemed to love to demonstrate Lord Nrisinghadev's leap from the pillar! In fact, he seemed to delight in doing this! He would raise his hands like claws, his eyes would get big and show the white on top, and he would roar like a lion--showing us how Lord Nrsinghadev should look while attacking Hiranyakasipu! He would perform this pastime daily--often more than once. I later realized that he was simply absorbed in Nrisingha Lila, translating SrimadBhagavatam each morning, and speaking about PrahladMaharaj in class every day. This was indeed his lila absorption at that time, and it was spiritually delightful, as well as instructive.

On one occasion, Swamiji told me to paint Prahlad being tortured by demons. He said they should have horns and pitchforks and knives and look very mean and ugly. Truly, I had no idea what such demons should look like! So I researched ugly monsters in comic books. Then I made composites of them, giving them ugly faces, long claws, horns, and pitchforks. I then presented the sketches to Swamiji.



He studied the sketches carefully, then said, “Yes, this is good. These are good demons. Even now, there are many such demons in dark jungles of Africa and other places, even in the snowy places like the Himalayas.”

Swamiji said this in such a matter-of-fact manner, and with such certainty, that I was taken aback. After all, I had never heard of such things in my so-called well-rounded college education! Horned demons with pitchforks?

Surprised, I gasped, “Oh! I didn’t know that!”

Calmly, almost dead-pan, Swamiji looked at me with serious compassion and said, “There are many things you do not know.”

He said this with such wisdom and compassion, that for a moment, I realized I was standing at the threshold of real knowledge, and that all true knowledge would be coming from him.

Those early days in “Swamiji’s art studio” were surely some of the best days of my life. I can look back and they still seem more real and alive than many of the other events that have been a part of my life later on.

Those wonderful art studio days lasted from March to May, and then tragedy struck.

Swamiji had a stroke, a near fatal stroke. It had to be the worst day of our lives. Jadurany and I hung by the window that separated his bedroom/workroom from the living room art

studio. Tears streamed down our cheeks as we watched Brahmananda and Satsvarupa sit Swamiji up, and open his Bhagavatam at his request. Trembling and breathless, Swamiji read from the SrimadBhagavatam. Even if it were his time of death, he was determined to give every breath for glorification of Lord Krishna! And he was determined to teach us everything he could, in whatever short time he had. I witnessed his incredible compassion and loving concern for us, his spiritual children.

Swamiji instructed us to pray to Lord Nrisinghadev for protection and to ask that he be allowed to remain with us in this world. He had so much more to teach us! Even when he went to the hospital, we continued to chant the

Nrisinghdev prayers; we were praying fervently for his recovery.

We took turns going to the hospital to see him, to bring him foods, to massage his lotus feet, and to shower our love and express our desire for his speedy recovery. It was an intense time. We all loved him so much that he was in the center of our minds, our hearts, and our conversation day and night. In such a short time, he had become like our beloved father. We all felt we could not live without him.

After only a week or so, Swamiji left the hospital. Rayarama and Brahmananda arranged a house for him at the New Jersey seashore. Goursundar and I were selected to go there and stay with him, and care for him,

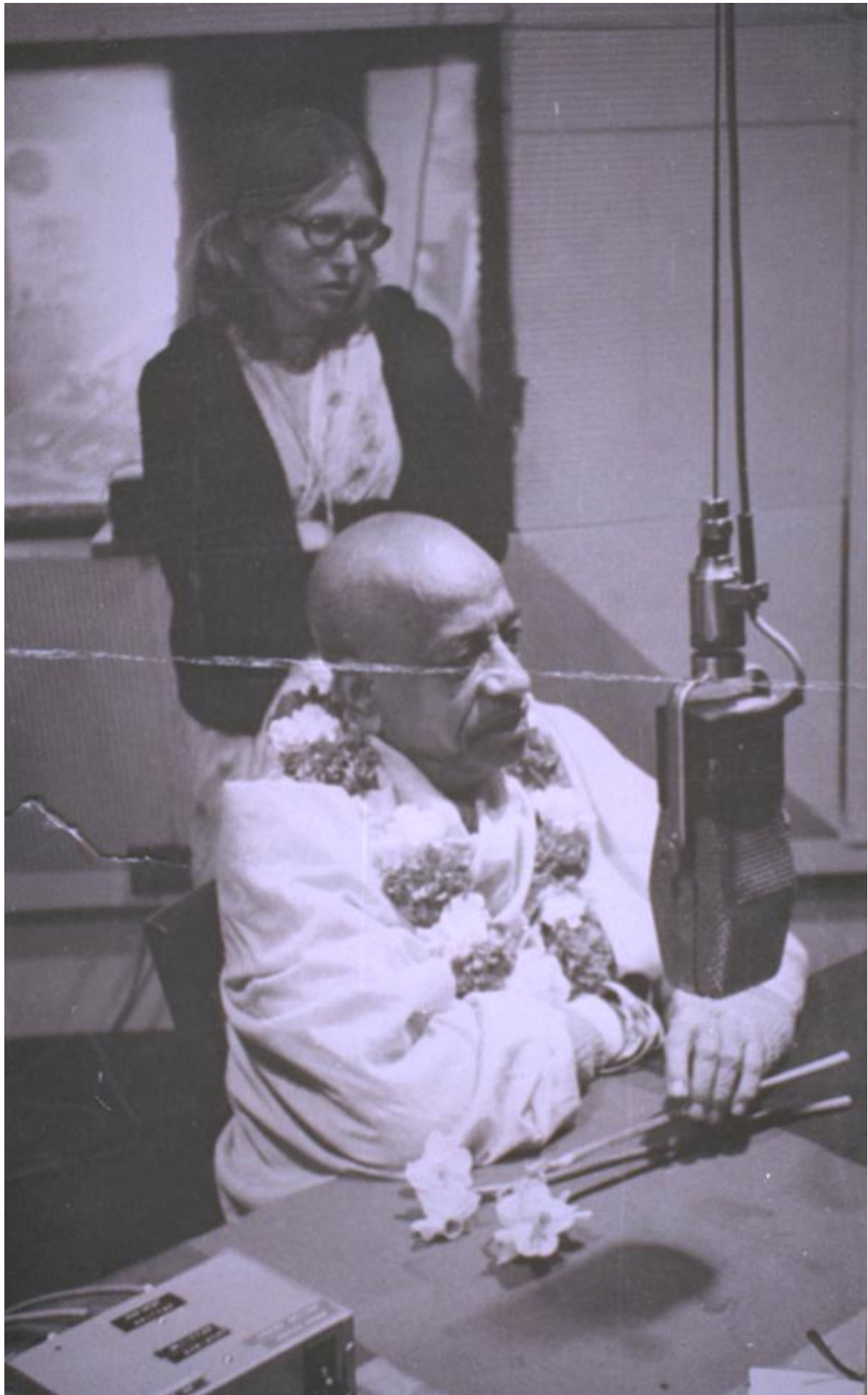
along with Kirtanananda. Ostensibly, it was because we were artists, the only married couple, and we could be spared from the busy schedule of work and temple duties. Several of the devotees had day jobs, and others were needed for cooking and maintaining the temple programs. But I knew there was a deeper reason.

That fateful night of Swamiji's stroke, with my face pressed against the window weeping, I had some deep realizations. As if guided by Lord Krishna within my heart, I understood that he would not be with us long, and that what he was doing was the most important thing in the universe. So I made a vow. It was a secret vow; I told no one of this, not even my

husband. But Lord Krishna in my heart witnessed my vow.

I vowed that as long as he was here in this world, I would do whatever I could to help him, to make him comfortable, and to make his mission the absolute center of my life.

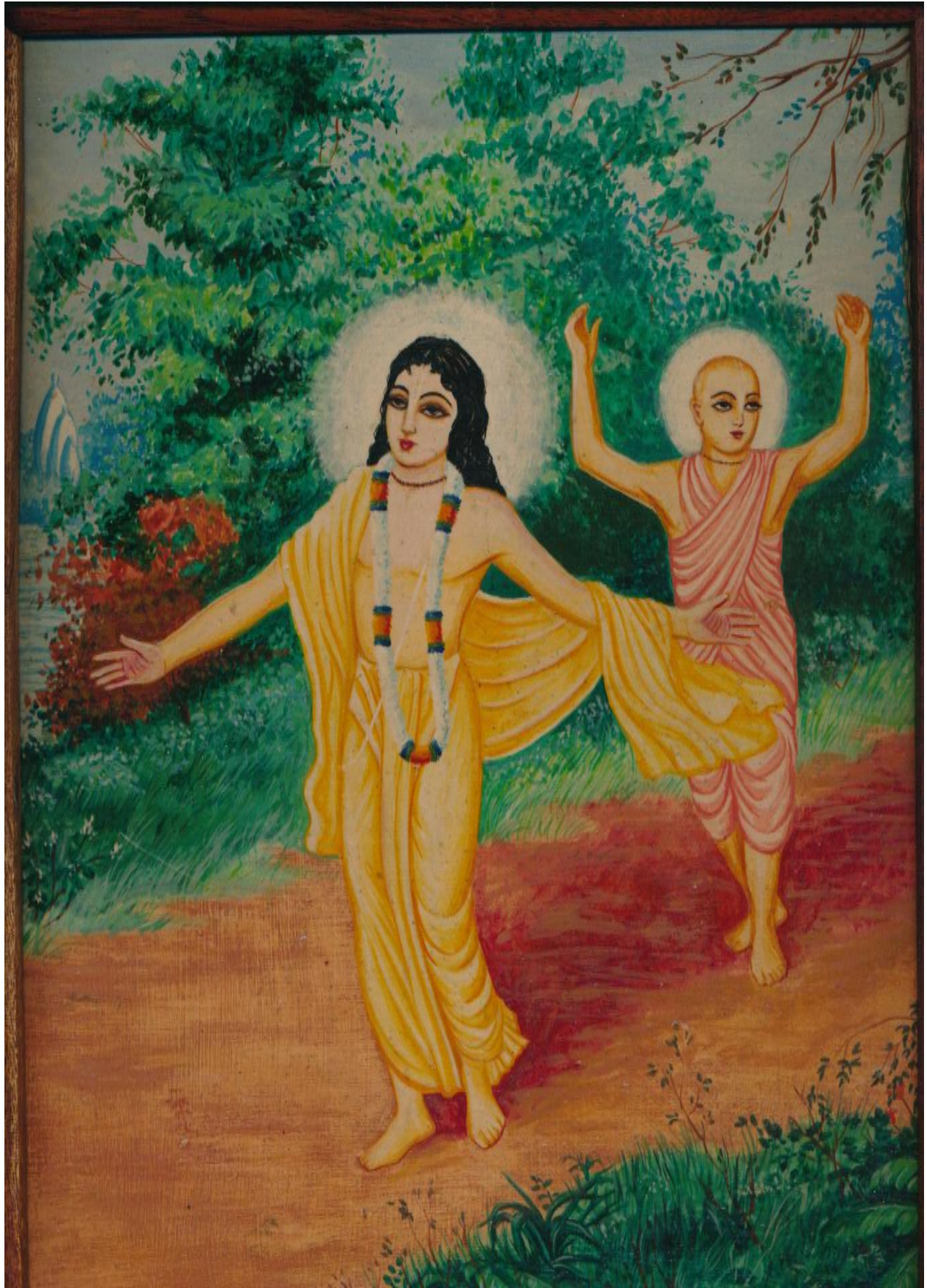
Whatever that meant--scrubbing floors, cleaning his refrigerator, preparing his medicines, cooking, cleaning, typing letters, transcribing his books, or painting pictures for him. It was a simple vow of absolute love and surrender, with nothing held back. And it was coming from the heart of a simple young girl. But it was sincere, straight from the heart. I was determined to make his life as easy as possible so that he could do his all important work for Lord Krishna, and for humanity.



still believe it was for this reason that I was taken by Rayarama to the New Jersey seashore, to the beach rental, in order to clean it thoroughly and prepare it for Swamiji's arrival. That became my focus, my service, and my life. I was dedicated to making him comfortable and well cared for.

So when Swamiji arrived, the apartment was spotless, and fragrant with many vases of fresh picked roses. Daily, I picked bagfuls of sweet smelling roses, and he often said, "Flowers are Krishna's smiling!" Swamiji would hold a rose in his hand, and breathe in its fragrance, and say it took away his headaches. He was especially fond of yellow roses, and would often say, "I think this yellow rose is the most fragrant!"

During those three wonderful weeks in Long Branch, New Jersey, I did only one small painting. It was of Lord Chaitanya traveling with Lord Nityananda. It was a copy of a picture from India. At first, Swamiji encouraged us to copy Brijbasi prints and other Indian works, while he gradually guided us into this new style of art. This was much like my art teachers in college had done. Until we developed a style to his liking, he wanted us to study the devotional artwork of India. He was not so favorably inclined toward the artwork of Europe.



Perhaps because I had also studied the works of the Medieval and Renaissance masters while in Europe, I understood the importance of having devotional mood imbibed into paintings. The religious paintings of old masters in Florence, Venice, Rome, Paris, and elsewhere were often filled with “bhava,” devotional spirit, and I had first hand experience of this. Many of these works evoked spiritual feelings in the minds and hearts of their viewers. The old masters usually had apprentices who did their bidding, laying in backgrounds and blocks of color, but the paintings were usually designed and completed by the masters’ own hands. And the paintings, usually of a religious nature, were a reflection of the masters’ own mood of devotion.

The mood of devotion that Swamiji wanted reflected to the world was indeed his mood of devotion. We were simply apprentices, much as the old masters had apprentices who painted while the masters guided their hands. The old masters would design the compositions, and instruct their apprentices, even in the finest details. But, in the end, they would strive to imbibe their own devotional spirit into the work.

Swamiji went even further than this--because he could. Swamiji actually implanted his devotional mood into those early paintings, via his apprentices! This is why, on later seeing changes to his books, he said, "Why have you removed those early paintings? They were full of bhakti!" They were full of his devotion!

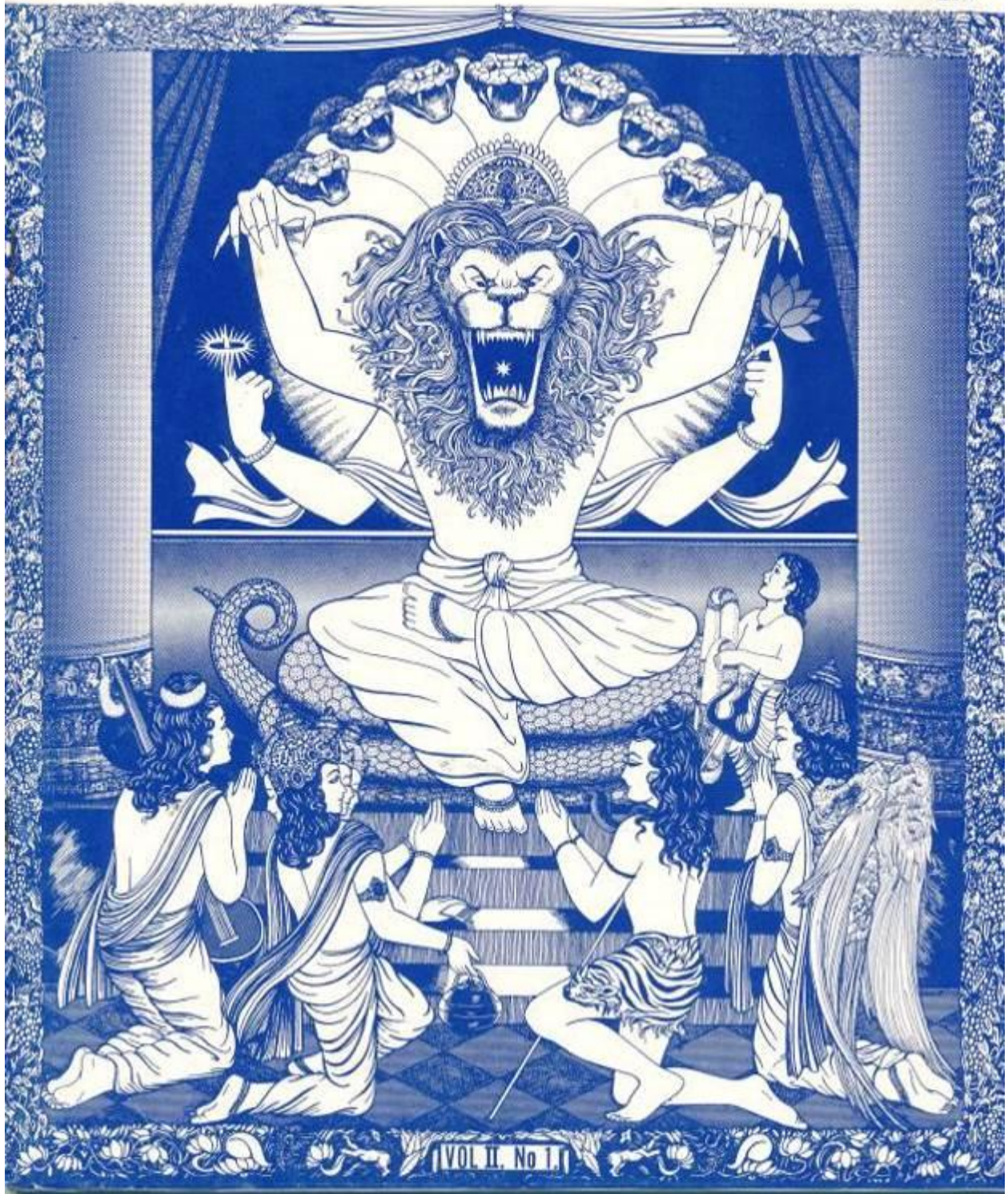
Swamiji guided our hands as well as our hearts. His mystic potencies enabled him to do that. The old masters could guide the hands of their apprentices; Swamiji could guide our hands, our minds, and our hearts so as to get the desired result. We were his apprentices in every way, through and through.

Soon after our brief stay at the Jersey seashore, Swamiji left for India to recover his health. He went to Vrindaban, to “get well or to leave this world.” We anguished with the fear that he would never return, so we prayed constantly that he would quickly get well, and come back to us.

Goursundar and I went to the Montreal temple for the months that Swamiji was away in India. Having been trained by him for several months, we continued to do line drawings for his Back to Godhead magazine. We designed covers, did illustrations, and tried to make the magazine more attractive, though we were limited to black and white due to printing costs.

BACK TO GODHEAD

25c



BACK TO GODHEAD

35c

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VOL. II. No 2.

BACK TO GODHEAD

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KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS NOH



BACK TO GODHEAD



VOL 1. NO 1

All Glories to Sri Guru and Gouranga







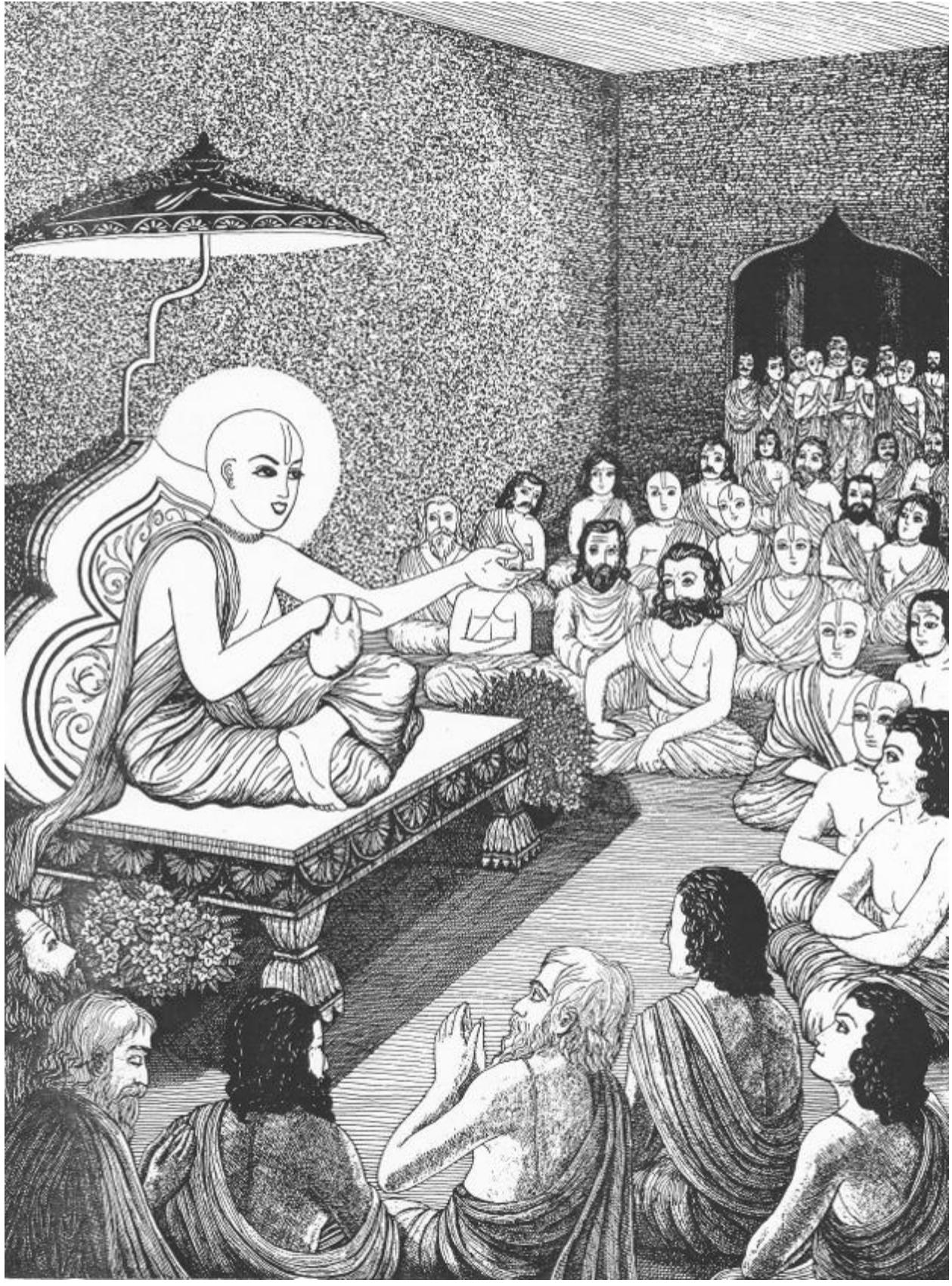
THAKUR HARIDAS

Part II

from the book "Sree Krishna-Chaitanya
by Professor Sanyal

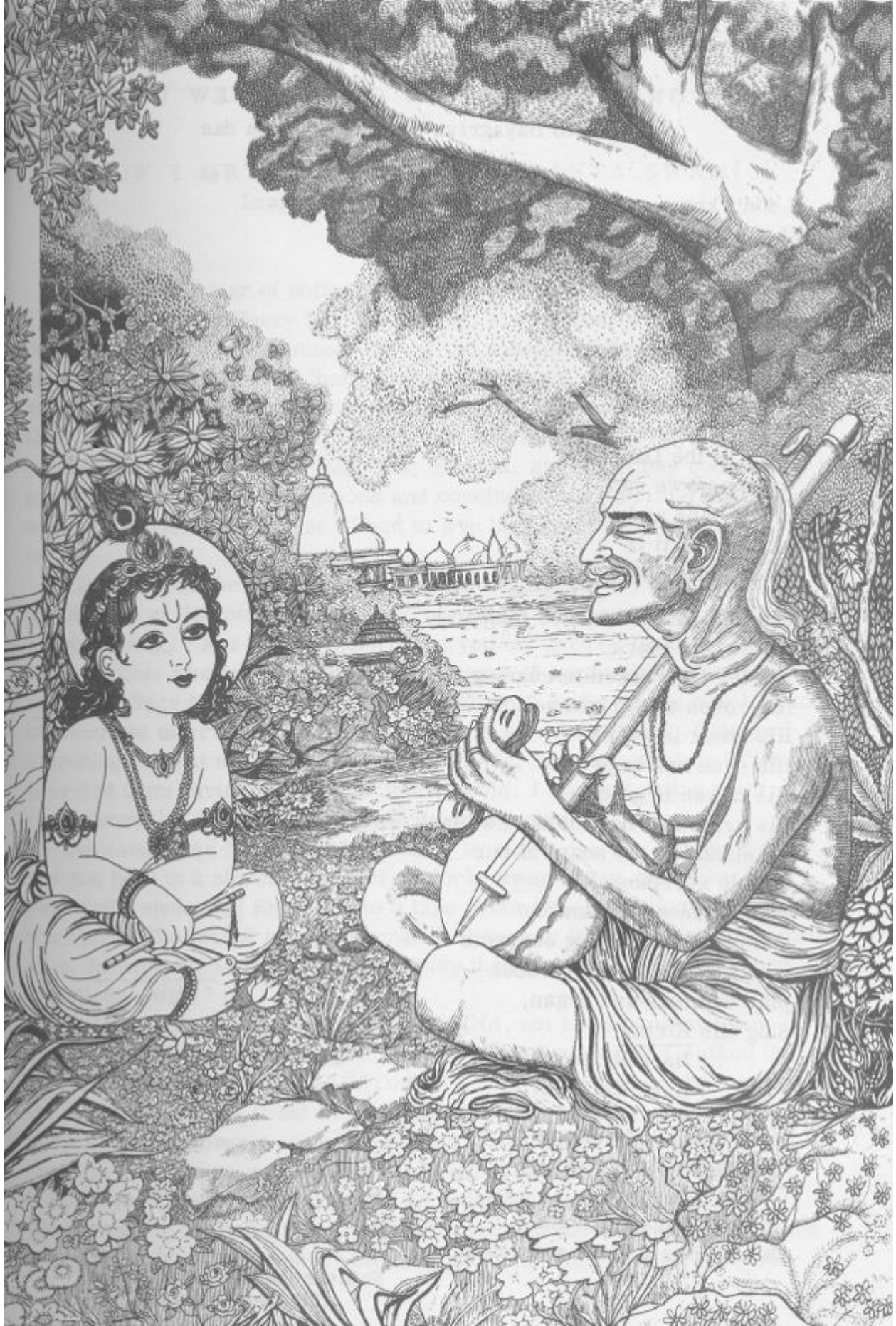
[In Part I, Professor Sanyal has described how Thakur Haridas was accosted by a harlot, at the instigation of Ramchandra Khan. Instead of falling to the woman's wiles, however, the Thakur converted her to the path of Krishna Consciousness.]

The immoral life that was being actually led by the harlot did not stand in the way of her redemption. The point is made absolutely clear by the fact that she went to Thakur Haridas for the purpose of seducing him. This shows also that her instinctive faith in sadhus was not coloured by any conventional moral sentiments. This

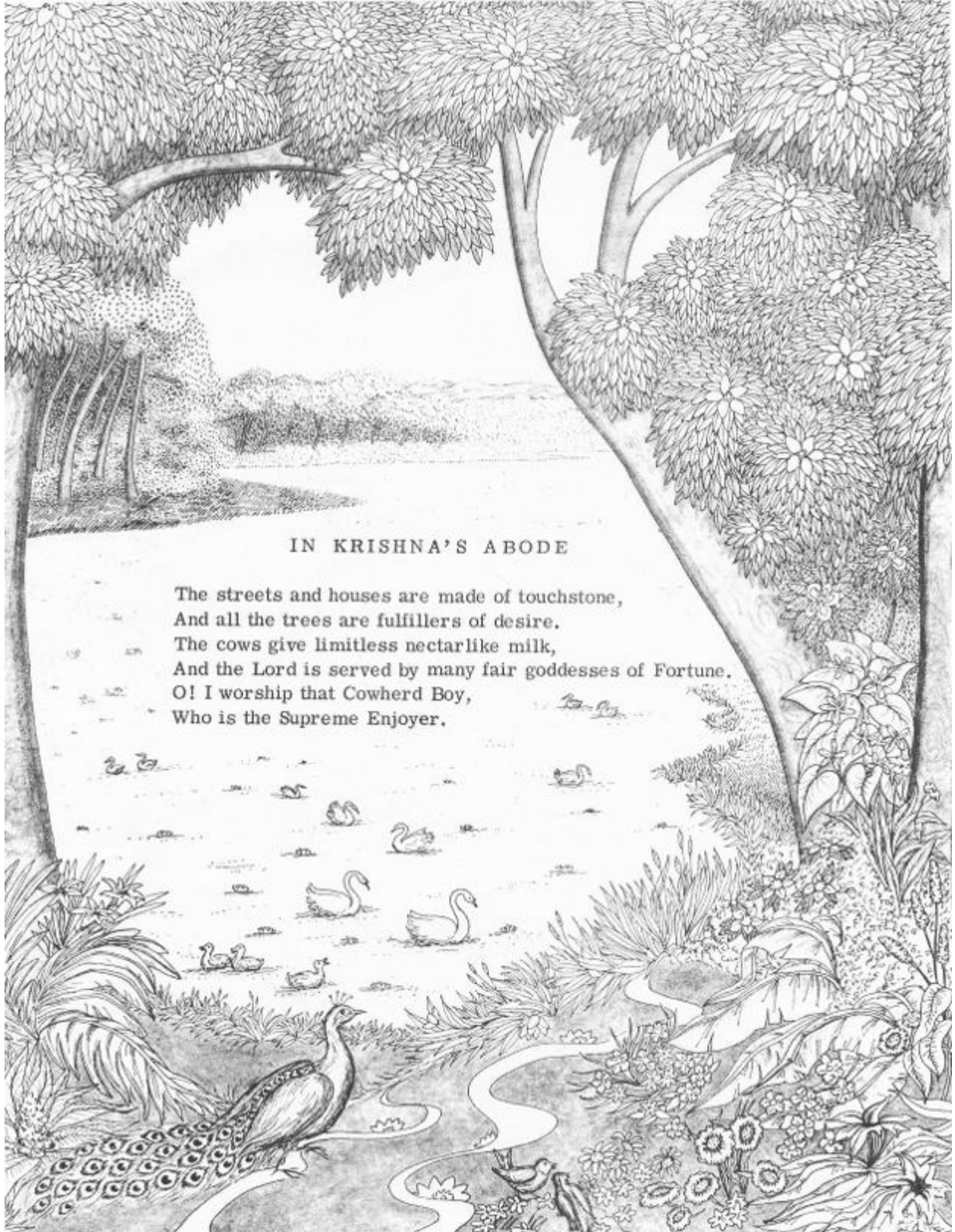








It was at that time, feeling great separation from Swamiji, that I designed a drawing of Krishna returning home from the forest with thousands of cows. It was indeed a special drawing, for though I had never seen Vrindaban, or even photographs of it, just from Swamiji's many descriptions of Vrindaban, I was able to create a picture that did indeed look very much like Krishna's Vrindaban.



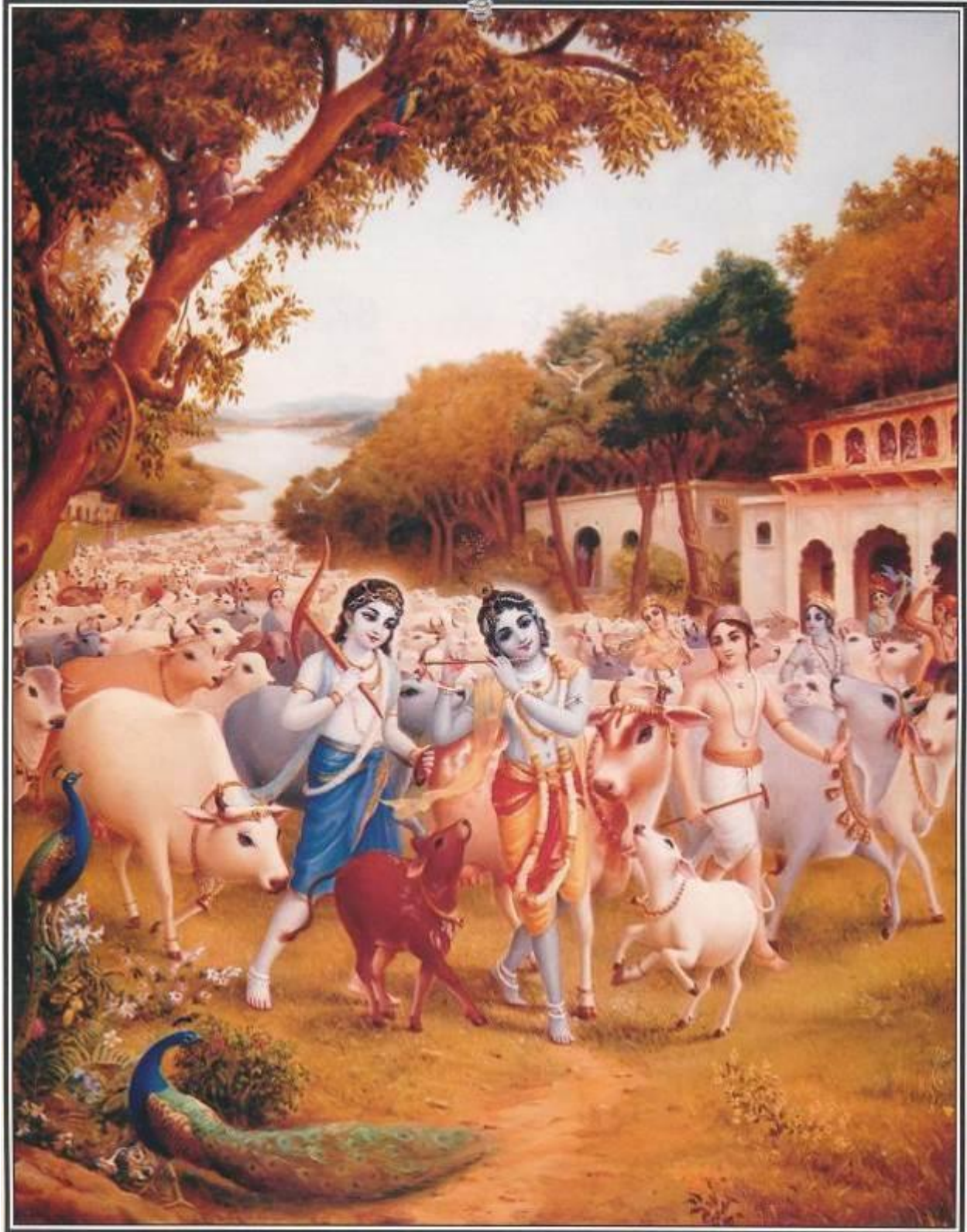
IN KRISHNA'S ABODE

The streets and houses are made of touchstone,
And all the trees are fulfillers of desire,
The cows give limitless nectarlike milk,
And the Lord is served by many fair goddesses of Fortune.
O! I worship that Cowherd Boy,
Who is the Supreme Enjoyer.



While doing this drawing, I was seeing cows and cowlads in my minds' eye for weeks! I selected one particular cowlad to be Swamiji, and sent him a copy of the picture, denoting that the cowlad on the far right of Krishna was my depiction of him.

Years later, this early drawing of Krishna's Vrindaban was artfully colored in by some of the later BBT artists, and is still used today in many of the books and temples. It is a painting that is full of bhava. That is because it is Swamiji's drawing--not mine. It is full of his devotion. Remember, I had never even seen Vrindaban. But he was able to convey it to me so perfectly that the mood of Vrindaban is indeed present in that picture!



And he was also able to guide me from within my mind and heart just how he wanted it done. This is the deeper, more spiritual, understanding of transcendental art. It doesn't come from us; as artists, we have to open ourselves so that SrilaPrabhupada's devotion comes through us. This mood requires surrender of the arrogant and rebellious attitude that "I am the doer." Or "I am the artist."

Art, like music, can come from the heart, or it can come from the lesser planes of consciousness, such as the mind or false ego. True transcendental art comes from the heart, and is infused with devotion, and that devotion can be felt even by the casual viewer. SrilaPrabhupada would often say that our

paintings were “windows to the spiritual world.” And he alone amongst us knew what the spiritual world must look like!

Music, especially kirtan, can come from the heart and fill the soul with love of God. SrilaPrabhupada’s singing, so full of bhakti, strikes the chords in our heart, and feeds our souls. Such is the power of transcendental music, with the pure soul’s chanting of the Holy Names.

Sometimes, we hear good kirtanias singing, but because there is more concern with musical expertise and delivery than with connection to God, the sounds become material and do not have the same effect. We all know instances of this, when the kirtan leader is more self-

absorbed, more concerned with the thought of “sounding good,” and is thus more self-conscious than Krishna conscious.

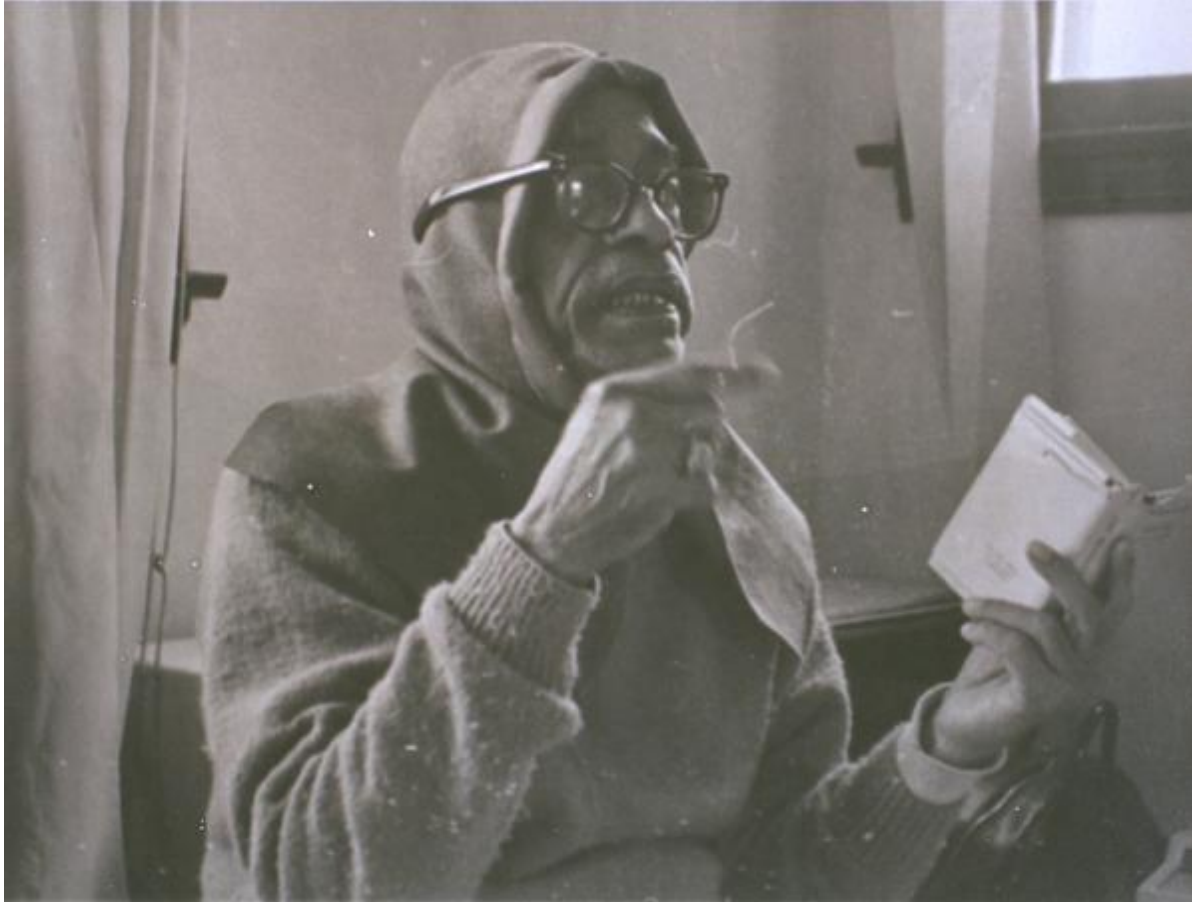
Art is like that too. If the artist is trapped within the mental plane, and is thus more concerned with fame and false ego, than serving God and Guru, then the work loses its transcendental quality. And it fails to touch the heart of the viewer. It becomes material, and though it may have some spiritual subject matter, it does not carry the scent of bhakti.

We have all had ecstatic kirtan experiences when the kirtaniyas leave their ego at the door, allowing the magic of kirtan to spontaneously unfold. And we have all experienced kirtans that did not stir our hearts. Art is like that as

well, and transcendental art, following the guidelines laid down by the Acharya, will have the desired effect. It will stir the emotion of the soul.

When an artist thinks, “Oh, I am an artist, this is my creation!” that is one level of consciousness. It may have its place in life, for worldly subject matter, for entertainment, for the fulfillment of personal ambitions, and ego gratification. But this consciousness is not useful in the creation of transcendental art. All this can be understood from the direct teachings of SrilaPrabhupada to his artists, his apprentices, especially those who spent much time with him in his little art studio.

Swamiji returned from India on December 14, 1967. Goursundar and I traveled from Montreal to San Francisco, and were there to greet him at the airport. From that day, until January of 1969, over a year later, we were with him every day. Goursundar gave him massages, and worked on the translation of ChaitanyaCharitamrita, and I did the cooking, the cleaning, taking dictation, and typing his letters, transcribing his tapes of Nectar of Devotion and ChaitanyaCharitamrita, as well as packing his trunk for travel. I simply wanted to assist him and make sure he was comfortable in every way possible. So I did whatever I could think of--even making little hats for him to keep his head warm in the early morning hours while he worked, translating his glorious books in the presence of the Lord.



During that year of traveling and serving Swamiji, who came to be known as “SriPrabhupada” in May of 1968, there was little time for artwork. While with him, however, I did at least do the cover for his Bhagavad Gita As It Is, and the several illustrations for Teachings of Lord Chaitanya.

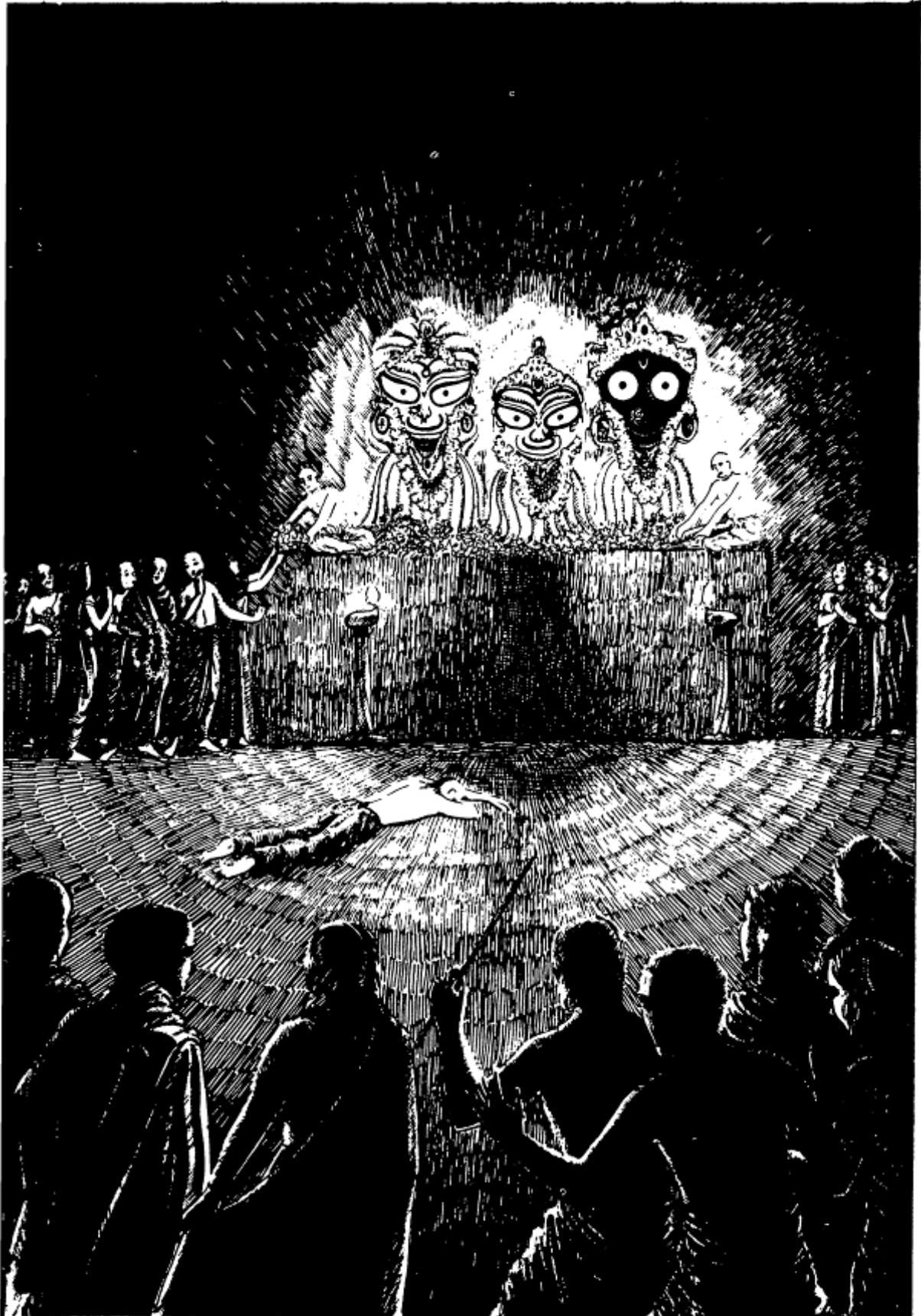
These drawings were directed by him quite specifically. He would often stand behind me and look over my shoulder as I worked.



First he would describe how the picture should look, and give an example, sometimes even a sketch, of the composition. I would take notes on his instructions, then I would make drawings and show them to him, and after that, he

would make corrections and advise me on improvements, and then at last he would give his final stamp of approval. Then, while I was working, he would often come to see how the picture was developing. This was the common practice.

In this manner, during that same year of 1968, SrilaPrabhupada guided me every step of the way in producing the line drawings for Teachings of Lord Chaitanya. He described the compositions, decided which figures would be present and what they would be doing in each drawing, and what backgrounds should be shown.



Lord Chaitanya Fainting in the Temple of Lord Jagannath



Sanatan Gōswami's Resignation from the Government Service
of Nawab Hussin Shah of Bengal (15th century)



Rupa Goswami and His Younger Brother Anupam (Ballava) Meeting
Lord Chaitanya at Prayag (Allahabad)

TEACHINGS
of
LORD CHAITANYA

A TREATISE ON FACTUAL SPIRITUAL LIFE



BY

A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI

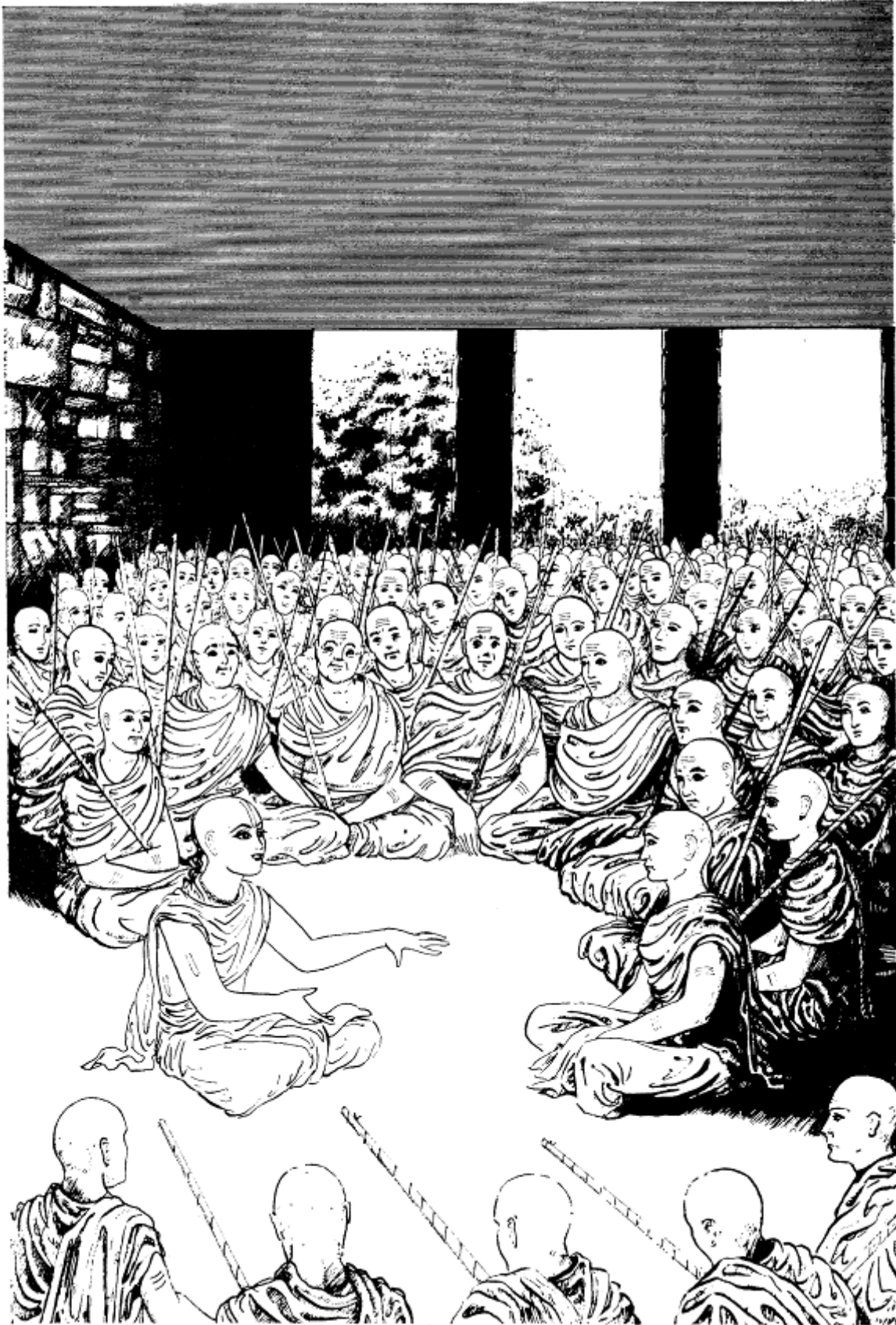
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Lord Chaitanya Meets Prakasananda Saraswati at Benares



Ramananda Roy Talking on High Level Krishna Consciousness with Lord Chaitanya

For example, the picture of the angry Kazi who comes to find RupaGoswami staying home from work to recite SrimadBhagavatam, along with Brahmins, was described by him exactly.

“Make the room very opulent, as they were receiving large salaries in the employ of the Muslim government,” is an example of one directive. “The kazi should appear very angry; he depended upon them to run his government, and they did not come for their work.” This is another example.

Another one that I recall is, “Both the brothers fell flat before Lord Chaitanya, like a rod.”

Another example, “Lord Chaitanya sat down at the door, by the shoe-keeping place, showing

his humility and simplicity before the congregation of Mayavadsanyasins.” There are many such directives, and I took careful notes on most of them.

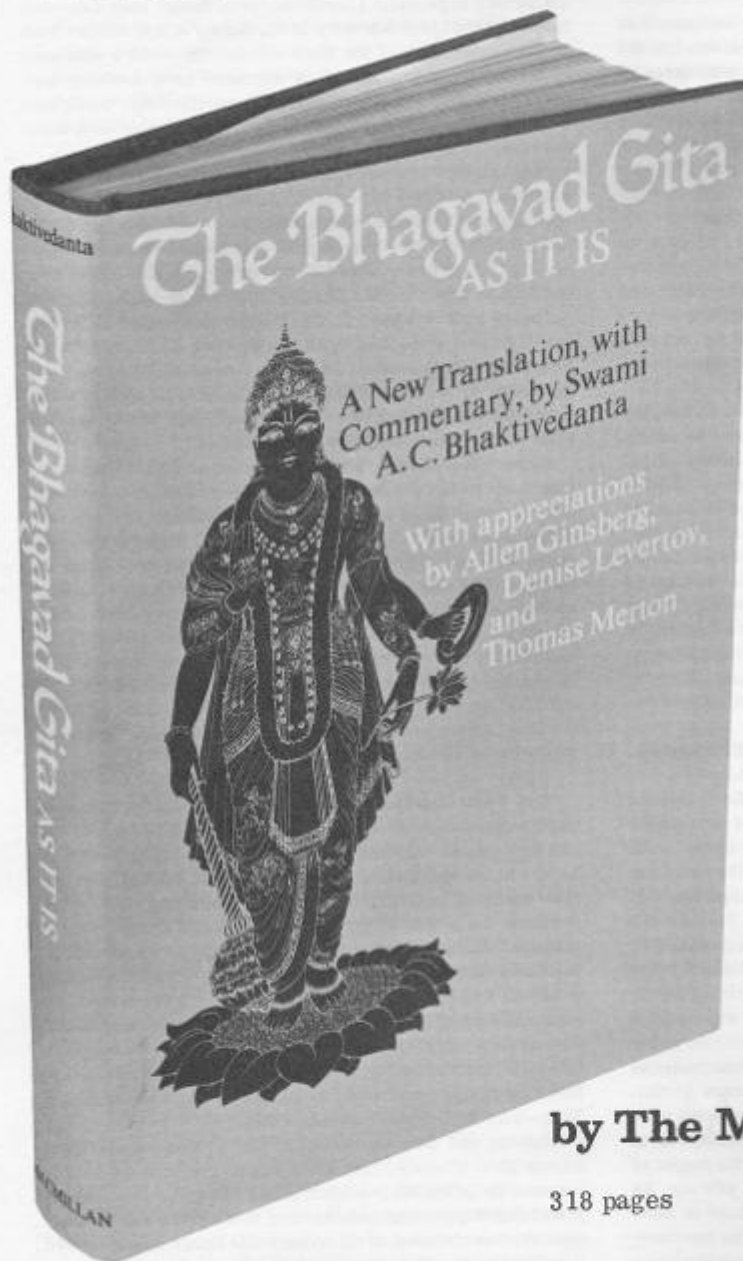
Most significantly, Swamiji’s guidance was essential for the picture of Lord Chaitanya fainting in the temple of Lord Jagannatha. No Westerner has been allowed in this temple, and I had never even been to India! Our only information was coming directly from SrilaPrabhupada. He described that the temple was dark inside, except for the ghee lamps on the altar, and the priests were sitting atop the tall platform, where the Deities of Lord Jagannatha, Lord Baladeva, and Lady Subhadra also sat. This particular drawing was done slowly and carefully with many consultations

with SrilaPrabhupada--who was, after all, staying in the next room. So it was quite easy to consult with him on every detail!

During that same year of travel with SrilaPrabhupada, 1968, I also did the line drawing for the cover of the first MacMillan Bhagavad Gita As It Is. This original Bhagavad Gita cover was to be a drawing of the Universal Form. It was a large line drawing, perhaps 18" x 24." Because there was to be so much detail, I had to work large, so that it could be later reduced and still have clean lines. The drawing was to depict the thousands of heads and arms and hands of the Lord, with the four-armed figure of Lord Vishnu prominently featured in the center.

My drawing was completed and approved by SrilaPrabhupada, but, unfortunately, MacMillan chose to edit my drawing down to a single Vishnu form. They chose to remove thousands of heads and arms from my drawing, as well as to remove thousands of pages from SrilaPrabhupada's Gita. The result was the small lavender paperback Bhagavad Gita As It Is, printed in 1969.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA AS IT IS



The most clear, readable, and relevant presentation of this timeless document ever published. Swami A.C. Bhaktivedanta offers neither dogma nor dry scholarship, but fresh, direct insights into the Absolute Truth and the overwhelming experience of free consciousness, Krishna Consciousness.

hare KRISHNA

SWAMI A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA is the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness which has centers in every major city in the United States, Canada, England and Germany.

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In 1969, though SrilaPrabhupada's manuscript for Bhagavad Gita As It Is had already been completed and had been given his final stamp of approval at that time, and even personally handed over to MacMillan for printing-- for financial reasons MacMillan chose to edit it severely, removing hundreds of pages of text. Since finances were limited, SrilaPrabhupada accepted this severely chopped manuscript, saying "A blind uncle is better than no uncle," a Bengali proverb that means, "something is better than nothing." SrilaPrabhupada often quoted this proverb when he accepted something that was less desirable.

But SrilaPrabhupada was not at all satisfied with this severely edited Bhagavad Gita. He

wanted his full manuscript printed. MacMillan complained of repetition in the text, which meant more cost; SrilaPrabhupada's argument was that repetition was necessary for teaching his students, and the world, this philosophy of Krishna consciousness. He was not very happy with their cutting edits, as he had completed his Gita as he wanted it printed in 1969, and did not want it changed.

So as soon as he was financially able to do so, he printed his complete and approved edition of Bhagavad Gita As It Is in 1972, along with his forward dated May of 1971. For SrilaPrabhupada, this was the crown jewel of success.



Bhagavad-gītā

As It Is

His Divine Grace
**A.C. Bhaktivedānta
Swami Prabhupāda**

Founder - Ācārya of the
International Society for
Krishna Consciousness

And this was indeed the beginning of mass book distribution. People were attracted to the mystical message of the Gita, with SrilaPrabhupada's colorful painting on the front cover, a painting of Lord Krishna, carrying his mystic conch, Panchajanya, into battle, and driving the chariot of Arjuna. This painting was designed by SrilaPrabhupada, and executed by his apprentices, Jadurany and Baradvaj. This new unabridged and completely approved Bhagavad Gita As It Is was a great landmark in his preaching success!

SrilaPrabhupada was very happy with it. He proudly showed it to guests whenever he could, and was often seen sitting in his room, reading it. He would comment with amazement,

“Krishna has written these books! I have not written. Krishna Himself has dictated!”

During that year of travel with His Divine Grace, the year 1968, there were other incidents of artistic instructions as well. Even though I was not doing much artwork, as my time was filled with caring for SrilaPrabhupada and typing his correspondence and transcription work, Jadurany continued to paint and would ask questions whenever possible. She wrote many letters to SrilaPrabhupada, and since I daily took dictation of his replies, I became more and more conversant with what he expected of his artists.

On one occasion, when SrilaPrabhupada and Goursundar and I arrived in San Francisco,

there was a new painting of Narada Muni hanging on the temple wall. I was impressed. It was one of Jadurany's latest works. Jadurany's technique had improved immeasurably, and her proportions were also much better. Her colors were more subtle, so the painting showed great technical improvement over her past works. Looking at it from a purely technical point of view, as a trained artist, it was indeed much better than her work in past. So I mentioned it to SrilaPrabhupada, commenting that "Jadurany has improved her oil painting technique so much!"

SrilaPrabhupada glowered and winced. He said, "I do not very much like this new style painting!" I was shocked. This painting was

obviously adapted from some Renaissance work of the old masters; it looked a bit like a figure from a Renaissance painting, that was then modified with an orangey saffron dhoti and a vina placed in Narada Muni's hand. Technically, it was good.



“Why?” I exclaimed. “What is it that you don’t like, that you find so distasteful?” I was truly concerned.

“Narada Muni is an eternal brahmachary!”
SrilaPrabhupada exclaimed. “She has made him
look like a meat-eater and a woman hunter!” I
was stunned.

Later, SrilaPrabhupada explained this in more
detail. He said, “Cheeks gone down. ‘Galtobra.’
This is the face of a meat eater, and a
womanizer. And a wine drinker!” I noted that
the figure did indeed have a lustful and wanton
look about the face. It was not a face full of
spiritual luster and innocent beauty.

While sitting in front of his desk, taking
dictation for a letter to Jadurany, he explained
further. I asked, “So, how should this be

corrected? What should his face look like?
What needs to be done?”

SrilaPrabhupada pointed to a Brijbasi print hanging on the wall near his desk. “Like this,” he said. “These are the faces of milk-drinkers, rounded and beautiful. They have moon-like faces!” He explained that Krishna has the “moon-like” face of a milk-drinker, and so do His servants like Narada. No “nonsense muscles,” or “squared jaw,” as is shown in Western art, especially in Renaissance art. Renaissance artists, such as Michelangelo, were famed for their elaborate portrayal of the musculature of the human body.

Even in art school, I recalled, the female face was said to be rounded, like an egg, and the

male face was said to be squared off, like a flower pot. This was indeed what the old masters taught. But SrilaPrabhupada wanted all the faces to be round and full. My husband did not particularly like my drawings of moon-like round faces; he sometimes teased me, calling them “balloon faces,” and “balloon figures.” But this is what SrilaPrabhupada liked, this is what he wanted, and he clearly did not like the figures from the Western schools of art! He wanted us to use for reference the Indian styles of art, showing the beauty of the “transcendental form.”

And, it suddenly dawned on me, the people of that era, the European Renaissance, were indeed meat-eaters, wine drinkers, and womanizers! I quickly contacted Jadurany, and

she created her future paintings based on SrilaPrabhupada's instructions on this, and his explanation of "galtobra."

Perhaps it was safe to assume that we could draw upon European art for some things, but not for all. And certainly not for figures or for faces! Nor for the dark and foreboding colors often found in the backgrounds of old masters' paintings. Dark surroundings were not to be a prominent feature in our transcendental art style.

Transcendental art, Swamiji explained, was meant to depict the spiritual world. That means it has to be bright, shimmering, colorful, and effulgent. The faces and figures should be soft and supple, rounded and child-like, full of

innocence and sweetness. The backgrounds should be bright and full of colorful beauty, with birds and flowers gracing every part of the landscape. Since Swamiji had the vision and experience of the spiritual world, and how it was to be depicted--and I certainly did not--I tried to model my artistic style after what he wanted. That should be the goal of any artist who is attempting to paint transcendental art.

Another incident took place while we were staying in Los Angeles. SrilaPrabhupada wanted Goursundar and I to make Deities of GourNitai, dancing with upraised arms. To do this, we first had to perfect a drawing that was approved by His Divine Grace. Because my husband Goursundar was more expert with

male figures, this drawing was first done by him.

Goursundar had studied male body structure, and had also been a weight trainer, so he knew the exact muscles that would show in upraised arms. He carefully drew the upraised arms of Lord Chaitanya and Lord Nityananda having some very gentle hint of muscles, both in the upraised arms and in the upper chest. The muscles were not very pronounced at all; they were quite subtle, only hinted at.

But SrilaPrabhupada immediately nixed it. “No! No muscles showing!” he said. “This is not transcendental form--this muscles, this is human form. Human bodies have muscular

forms, but not transcendental bodies. They are smooth and beautiful.”

SrilaPrabhupada explained that transcendental form is always smooth and graceful. “Arms like the trunk of the elephant,” he described. Muscles and veins should never be shown in pictures of Krishna or any transcendental beings.

“This fleshy muscle and vein form is the body of human beings. Not transcendental beings!” SrilaPrabhupada taught that we could not simply take a photo of a human being, and paint it blue for Krishna, or golden for Lord Chaitanya!

Rather, he explained, the transcendental form has long sloping arms, like the elephant's trunk, delicate hands, graceful feet, large head, high forehead, arching brows, waving hair, lotus eyes, and curved, sweet smiling lips. The transcendental form does not look at all like the mundane beauty of human beings.

There are many examples of this in Indian art. South Indian sculptures show the graceful beauty of transcendental form, as well as the classical paintings of the famous Nathadwar painter, B. G. Sharma. In the Vedas, there are even examples given, such as "hair like a snake" (wavy dark hair), "moon-like face" (rounded sweet face), "lotus-like eyes" (eyes elongated and lovely like lotus petals), "nose like a parrot" (graceful aquiline nose that slopes down

slightly--not like the turned up human nose), “eyebrows like bows” (eyebrows arched and smooth like the bow and arrow), “lips like the bimba fruit” (plump, reddish and sweet) “arms like the trunk of the elephant” (long, slender, smooth and rounded), “neck like a conch” (rounded and smooth), “chest like a conch” (rounded and curved toward the waist), “thighs like the elephant” (strong smooth thighs), and so on. Some of these descriptions are actually described in Vedic texts, such as the ShilpaShastra, and are designed to guide transcendental artisans in both painting and sculpture.

During the time we were with SrilaPrabhupada, from January of 1967 until March of 1969, there were numerous other sketches and

illustrations I was told to do. One that comes to mind is the design of the “certificate” for his planned Bhakti Shastra program--this was planned even before his first MacMillan Bhagavad Gita was printed. SrilaPrabhupada designed it with small pictures in each corner, of himself and of Lord Krishna as well. It was used early on, but not widely distributed. I still have the original design he gave me. Because the calligraphy had to be done by hand, it was too time consuming. However, he did plan this certificate to be given to all of his disciples, and all of those who completed his Bhakti Shastra program. One example is here, given to my senior Godbrother, Rupanugadasa.

Another small project was a cartoon, which he entitled, “Child of Kali Yuga.” In this cartoon,

he described that there is a mother, a father, and a child sitting at the dinner table. The mother is trying to feed the child milk, but the child is reaching for his father's cigarettes and liquor. This was to be a small cartoon printed in Back to Godhead, illustrating the degradation of the Kali Age, but I don't think it was ever used.











There was another more elaborate cartoon called the “The Story of Dr. Frog.” This was, of course, a cartoon series illustrating the famous story of Dr. Frog, who could not see beyond the walls of his little well. It was to illustrate the

materialists' narrow-minded perspective that prevents them from perceiving the spiritual realm. This was also to be printed in Back to Godhead, but I don't think it ever was. We did, however, print it in our small newsletter, New Navadwip News, that we distributed in Hawaii. I still have the printed copy, as well as the original artwork of this illustration.

FROG PHILOSOPHY
DR. FROG, PH.D.



HELLO HOW ARE YOU!
 I'VE JUST SEEN THE OCEAN...
 IT'S MIGHTY, MIGHTY **BIG**
 AND IT'S ALWAYS IN **MOTION!**



WELL YES, I SEE
 YOU'VE COME BACK AT LAST,
 BUT THIS OCEAN—TELL ME...
 HOW MUCH IS IT VAST?



LATE ONE DAY ON A PLANET
 RESEMBLING **HELL**
 ONE FROG MET A FROG
 DOWN IN A **WELL...**



AND FILLING HIS
 FROG'S BELLY
 WITH AIR, SAID...
SEE!
 HOW BIG IS THE OCEAN
 COMPARED TO ME!



WELL, IT'S CERTAINLY
 INCONCEIVABLY **BIGGER**
 THAN ANY PUFFED-UP FROG
 WILL BE ABLE TO **FIGGER!**



LOOK! I'M INCREASING MY SIZE.
 QUICKLY SAY!
 IS IT GREATER THAN ME?
 I'M UNCOMFORTABLE THIS WAY!!



I'M ASKING YOU AGAIN...
 I'VE NOT REACHED **MY LIMIT**
 HOW LONG COULD IT TAKE ME
 TO HOP IT OR SWIM IT?!



OH NO! PLEASE STOP!
 YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND AT ALL!
 JUST DEFLATE!
 BEFORE YOU EXPLODE YOURSELF
 ONTO THE WALL!!



THE OCEAN CAN'T BE ANY LARGER THAN ME
WRONG AGAIN! THE OCEAN'S
 LARGER, BUT GIVE UP BEFORE
NOW!!

POW!

ONE SHOULD NOT FALSELY JUDGE THOSE
 THINGS ABOUT WHICH ONE KNOWS NOTHING.
 THE RESULT COULD BE FATAL. THE SPIRIT-
 UAL REALM HOLDS OUT NO WELCOME TO
 SELF-CONCHIT. THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH IS
 TO BE LEARNED FROM THE EXPERT IN
 KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS.—MAY 7PM—

The International Society For
 Krishna Consciousness

Sri Sr Pradyumna Chaitanya Temple

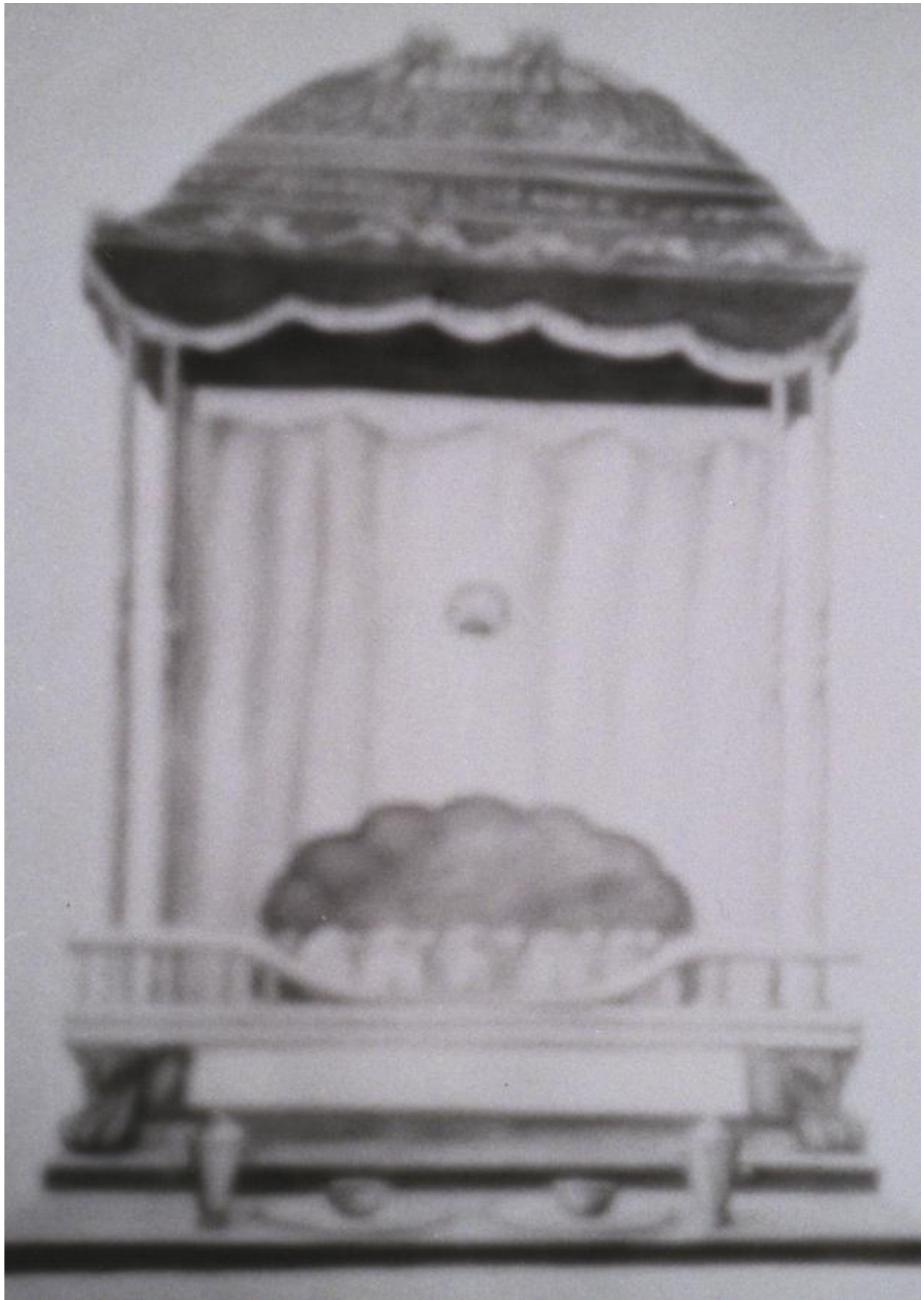
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Phone 941-0360

There were other small projects, for example, designing altars, ratha carts, and so forth, too numerous to mention. One very noteworthy project, however, was the illustration of Lord Vishnu on Garuda. This was one of my favorites, since I am so fond of Garuda.

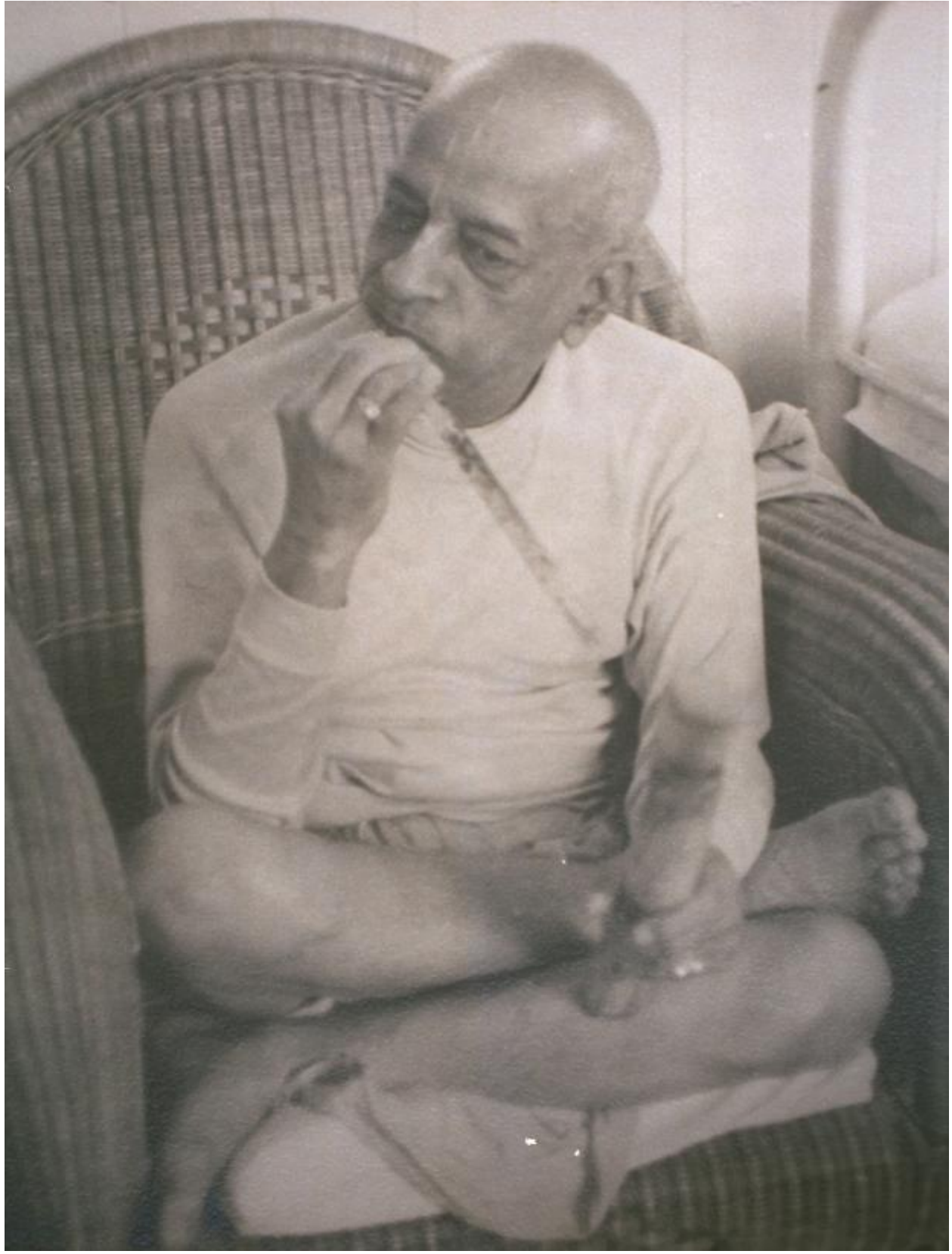
SrilaPrabhupada described that we should show in the painting that when Garuda flaps his wings, the sound vibration of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra is “coming out with each flapping of the wings.”

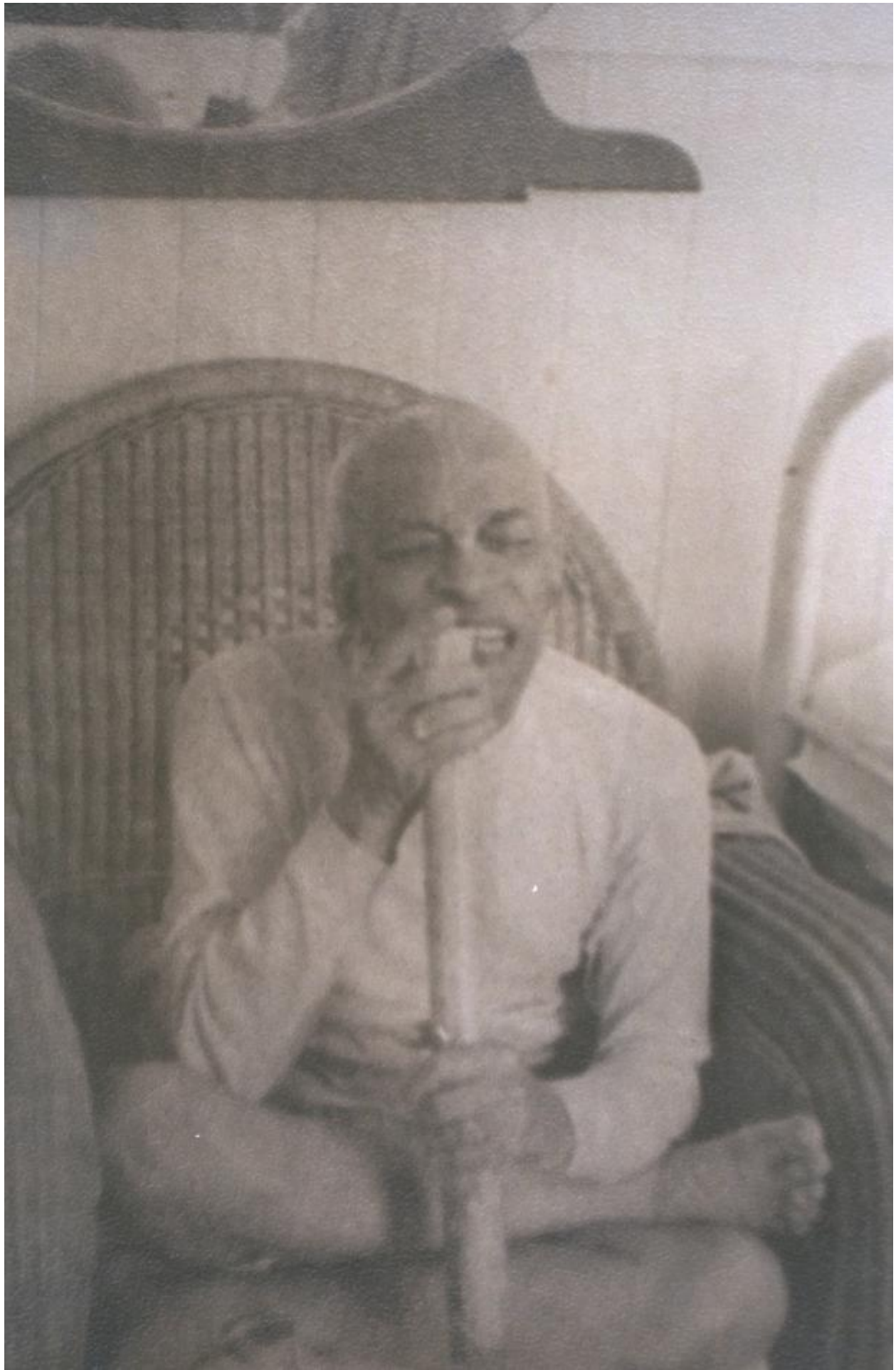




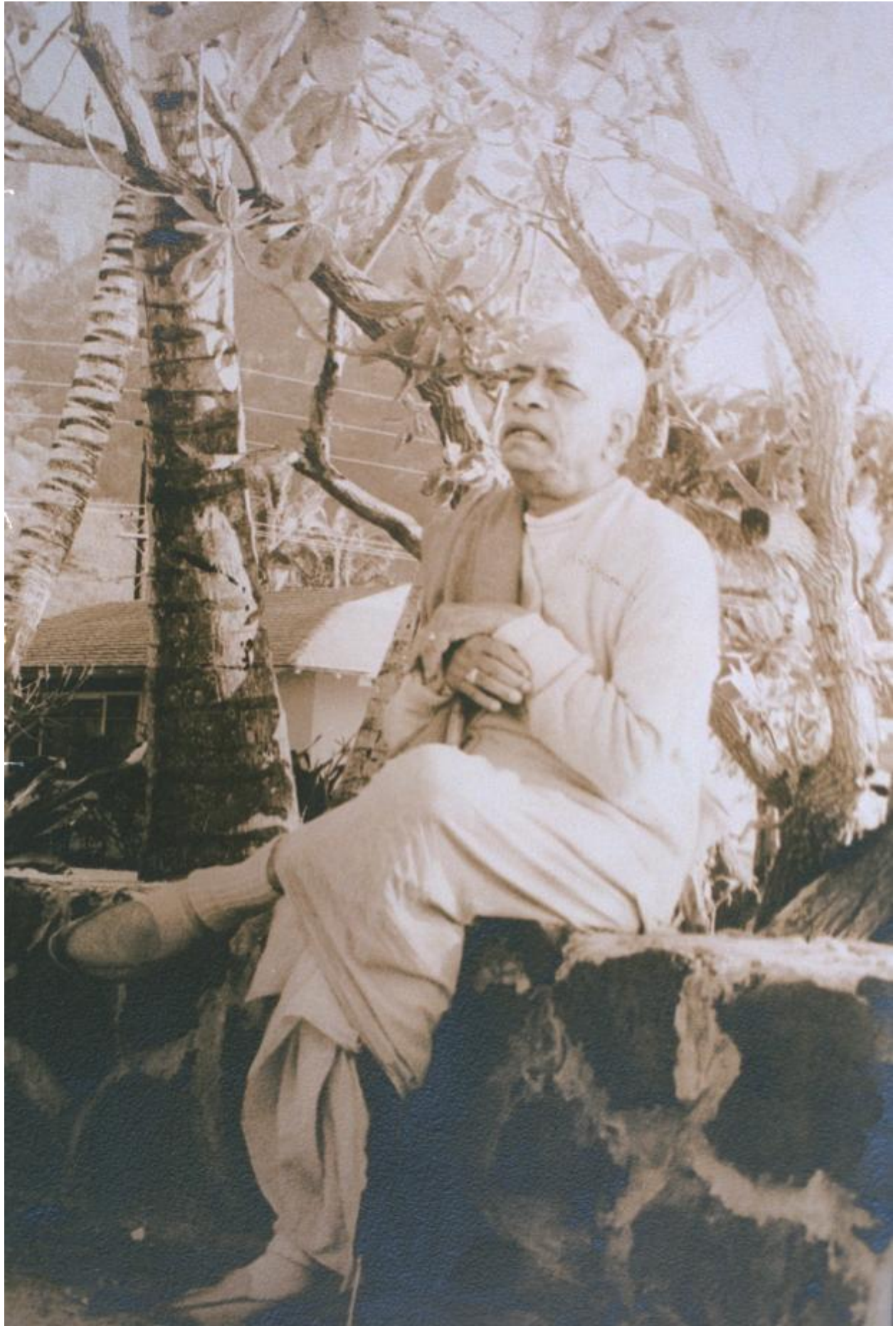
This picture was done while we were with SrilaPrabhupada, and Goursundar and I worked on it jointly. I drew the Great Bird, Garuda, and the Vishnu figure, and my husband did the background showing swirling sound vibrations coming from the wings of Garuda. It was also to be used in Back to Godhead, along with SrilaPrabhupada's elaborate description, but I don't think it was ever printed either.

In January of 1969, SrilaPrabhupada sent me to Hawaii to open temples in the Islands. He named the Hawaiian Islands "New Navadwip" after the nine islands of NavadwipDhama. He joined us soon after, in February and March of 1969, and spent about a month with us in a seaside house in Kaaawa, on the Eastern shore of Oahu.





During that time, he enjoyed walking daily to a nearby beach park, as well as eating fresh sugarcane from the fields. There were many more discussions during that initial visit to Hawaii, not only on transcendental art, but on his Bhagavad Gita as well. At that time, SrilaPrabhupada was greatly disheartened by one disciple's refusal to translate his Gita into another language, unless he received money to do so. This was a great disappointment for SrilaPrabhupada; it showed a lack of basic understanding of Krishna consciousness philosophy.



Sadly, it was also the beginning of a new philosophy: the philosophy that one can be paid for doing devotional service. It is an erroneous concept, SrilaPrabhupada explained: “Either you get the money or you get the bhakti. You don’t get both.” Serving the Spiritual Master is a voluntary thing, and if one is paid to do it, it simply becomes a job. The consciousness changes, and from that perspective, it then becomes self-interested material consciousness, not Krishna consciousness.

SrilaPrabhupada wanted everything to be done exactly as he prescribed, down to the details, without our taking it upon ourselves to create something new, or to in any way change things. This was always his greatest criticism of our

Western culture--that we would take things cheaply and change them or edit them according to our limited understanding. Or, as he would often say, “according to our whims.” He even once said, about his Western disciples, “Next, they will be asking me if they can kill cows to make mridangas!”

Once the Hawaii temples were established, I began to paint again. I did several large paintings for our temple walls. One was of Lord Brahma bowing before Lord Krishna, offering the prayers of Brahma Samhita. It still hangs in SrilaPrabhupada’s bedroom in the Honolulu Temple at Coelho Way. Another was a medium sized Gour-Nitai painting, which became the main “Deity” picture on our altar for many

months, prior to the installation of the Sri SriPanchaTattva Deities.



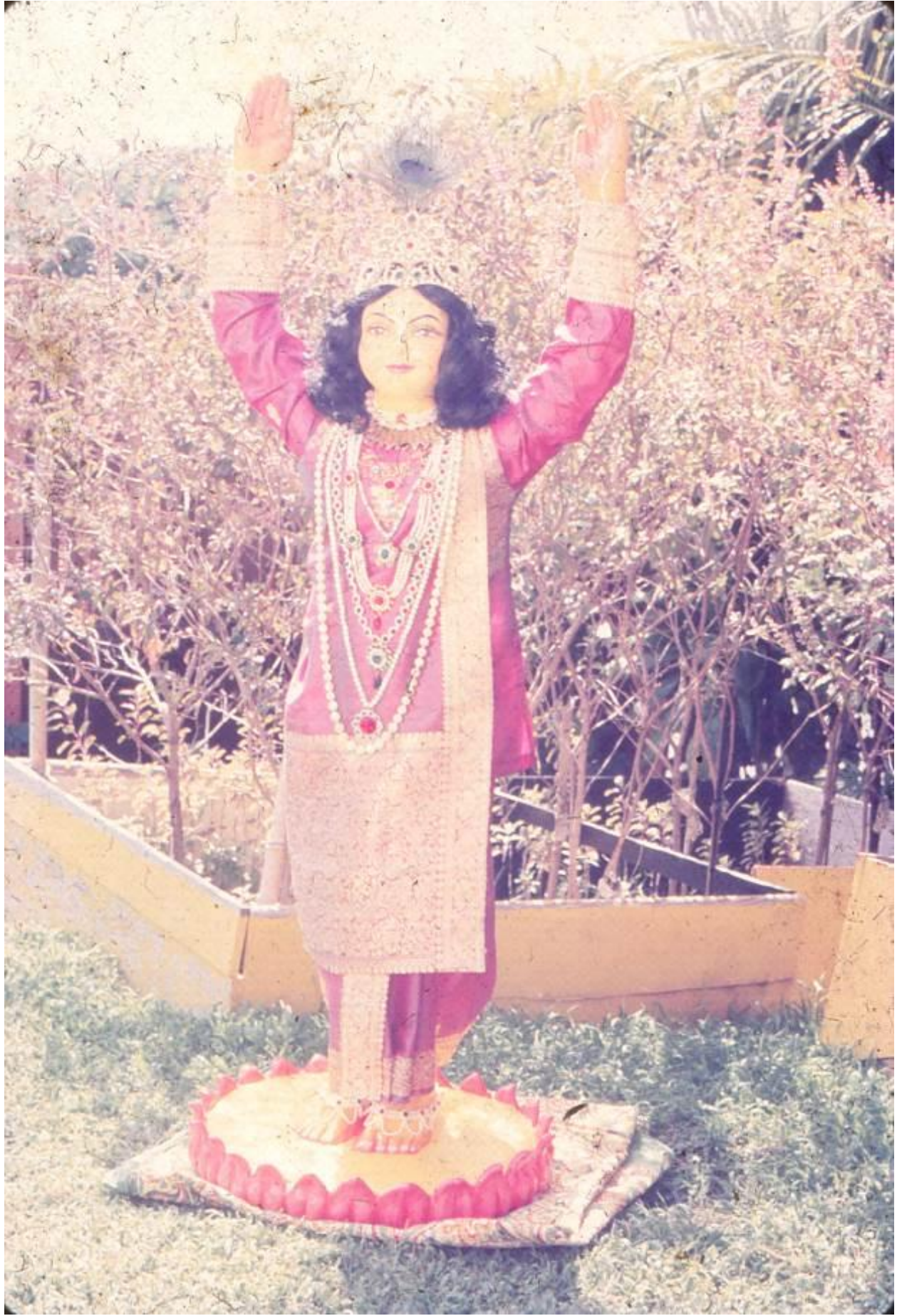
Soon after, on a visit to see SrilaPrabhupada in Los Angeles, he asked me to make GourNitai Deities for our Hawaii temple. He raised his arms to show me how to pose Them, and even selected the exact color of paint on a Sherwin Williams paint brochure! (he indicated the goldenrod color with a check mark; I still have that same paint brochure to this day.)

Truthfully, I had no idea how to go about this work, as I was more of an illustrator than a sculptor, but SrilaPrabhupada said confidently, “Krishna will guide you from within your heart how to do it.” Gradually, I came to understand that SrilaPrabhupada was also guiding me

within my heart as well--since I don't really know Krishna, but I do know SrilaPrabhupada!

This is the essence of the truth;
SrilaPrabhupada was able to guide us from within our minds and hearts from wherever he was. He didn't have to be in the same room to do so. He would guide, we would present, and he would correct. This was true in all spheres--painting, drawing, sculpting, cooking, editing, and preaching. In a most amazing way, SrilaPrabhupada was micro-managing his entire movement on every level! All we had to do was cooperate, and resist the temptation to change, modify, or correct whatever he was doing. We simply accepted that his vision was unlimited, and ours finite.

So, given this new project, I returned to Hawaii, and my husband Goursundar immediately constructed the metal armature for the Deities. This sculpture project took several months, but with the help of several of our wonderful Hawaii devotees, especially my dear sister and friend, Kushadevi, it was finally complete. We took photos of the finished Deity of Lord Chaitanya, and sent them to SrilaPrabhupada.







He received the photos of our Deity, and wrote back that he was indeed quite pleased.

However, he also added that he would like us to now make deities of Sri Advaita, Sri Gadadhar, and Srinivas, as well, thus creating the PanchaTattva Deities for Hawaii. This was the first instruction for the worship of PanchaTattva ever given by him!

So we went back to the drawing board and made PanchaTattva. Fortunately, by now, a very gifted sculptor, a grad student at the University of Hawaii, had joined us. Initiated as Vrishni das, he was a great help in making the molds and casting the forms of Sri PanchaTattva. This was another gift from SrilaPrabhupada, helping us in our service.

At long last, nearly a year later, when the PanchaTattva deities were finally completed, SrilaPrabhupada came to Hawaii to install Them. That was in May of 1972.

SrilaPrabhupada spent over a month with us at the beautiful seashore at Waimanalo, Oahu, enjoying daily walks on the beach. Goursundar and I stayed in the servants' quarters, next to the main beach house, where Shyamsundar, Pradyumna, and Nanda Kumar served SrilaPrabhupada for that month in Hawaii. It was a wonderful month of festivals!



After the PanchaTattva Deities were installed, I placed my painting of GourNitai on

SrilaPrabhupada's makeshift altar in the living room at the beach house. This painting had been the "Deity" picture on our Honolulu temple altar for many months.

SrilaPrabhupada sat before it each day, chanting his rounds in his rocking chair, or walking back and forth in front of it. He liked the painting very much. At the end of the month, he asked me for this painting









“Govindasi, what plans you have got for this painting of GourNitai?” he asked. “Now you have got your PanchaTattva Deities installed.”

“Oh, SrilaPrabhupada, I have no plans. Would you like to have it?”

“Yes,” he replied, “I will take it with me to my rooms in Los Angeles.” And he did.

This painting of GourNitai still hangs in his bedroom in Los Angeles. He loved it very much, as it was rendered in exactly the style he liked, and imbibed with his own mood of devotion. This is the esoteric meaning of transcendental art.

Around that same time I also painted a huge painting of the PanchaTattva, perhaps 4 foot by 5 foot. It hung in our temple room in the 1970's; now it hangs in SrilaPrabhupada's room in our Honolulu temple.



While creating that work, each evening as I painted, I did so with the mood that Krishna was working through my hands. Before

painting, I would meditate on Krishna, and on SrilaPrabhupada, and ask that Krishna's beauty should flow through my hands and onto the canvas. I would gaze at my hands and see that they were tools only; tools to be used in His service. I always did this before beginning every art work, and still do this even now.

But I had a special desire while painting that large PanchaTattva picture. I desired that this painting of Lord Chaitanya and His Associates would be so spiritually beautiful, and so full of bhava, that SrilaPrabhupada would be extremely pleased, so much so that he would even place his head at Lord Chaitanya's Lotus Feet. I had never desired anything like this before, and I never told anyone of this inner desire.

Many years later, this desire was fulfilled. It was in the late 1970's. I was in SrilaPrabhupada's upstairs room at the Coelho Way temple in Honolulu. He was getting ready to leave for the airport. He was leaving Hawaii for some other preaching destination. The big PanchaTattva painting was always hanging opposite his desk, so he could gaze at it while he worked. So he had to pass by it on the way to the door. Just when he came to the big painting, he paused, looked up at the merciful figures of Sri PanchaTattva, then gracefully bent down to touch his head to Lord Chaitanya's Lotus Feet. I was astounded. I did not say anything, but I remembered my desire. And now, my desire had been fulfilled.

And I knew he also knew that was my inner desire. He once wrote me a letter from India, saying, "I know your mind." He knew everything within my mind and heart, and this was further proof of it. For example, he even knew that I loved the name "Govinda." I had uttered it repeatedly while reading Herman Hesse's book, Siddhartha, years before I met him, while still in college. So he named me "Govindadasi" even though my first name started with a "B", for Bonnie. In that moment, I was reassured that he not only knew my heart then, but for eternity as well. And I am grateful to have been so fortunate to have come in contact with such a great spiritual personality as SrilaPrabhupada. Surely, there is no greater fortune in all the three worlds!

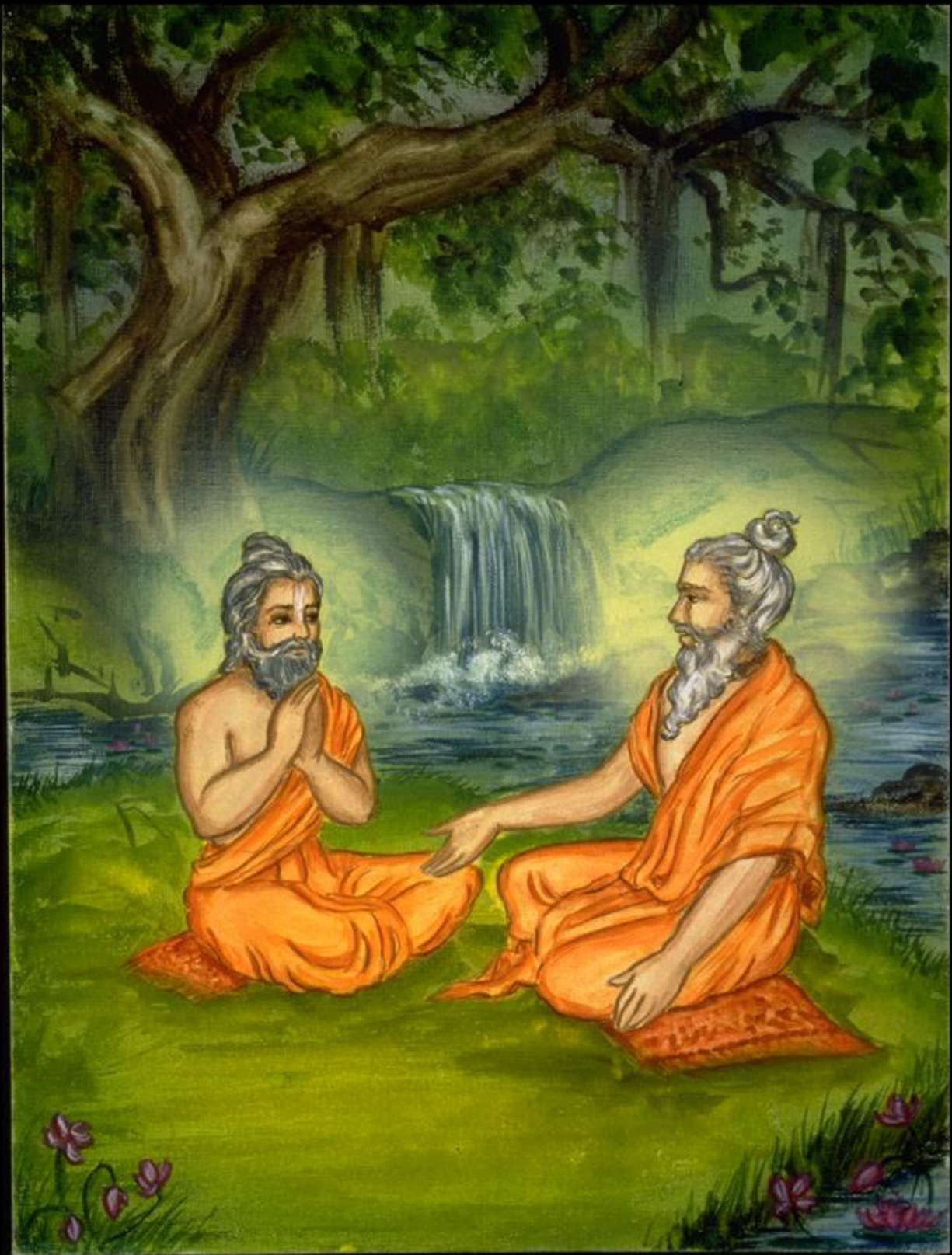
SrilaPrabhupada's letter to Jadurany, Sept 4, 1972, "If you think of me and work for me, then I am in your heart. If you love somebody he is in your heart. It is common thing, everyone understands it."

SrilaPrabhupada once explained to me that the Vaishnava Acharya is always in touch with his disciples. Because Krishna is in the heart of each and everyone, and the Acharya is always in direct contact with Lord Krishna, in this way, the Acharya is omniscient and omnipresent. Thus he is always able to be in contact with his disciples. Krishna enables him to see into their lives and to guide them as he sees fit. SrilaPrabhupada assured me that this relationship between master and disciple is

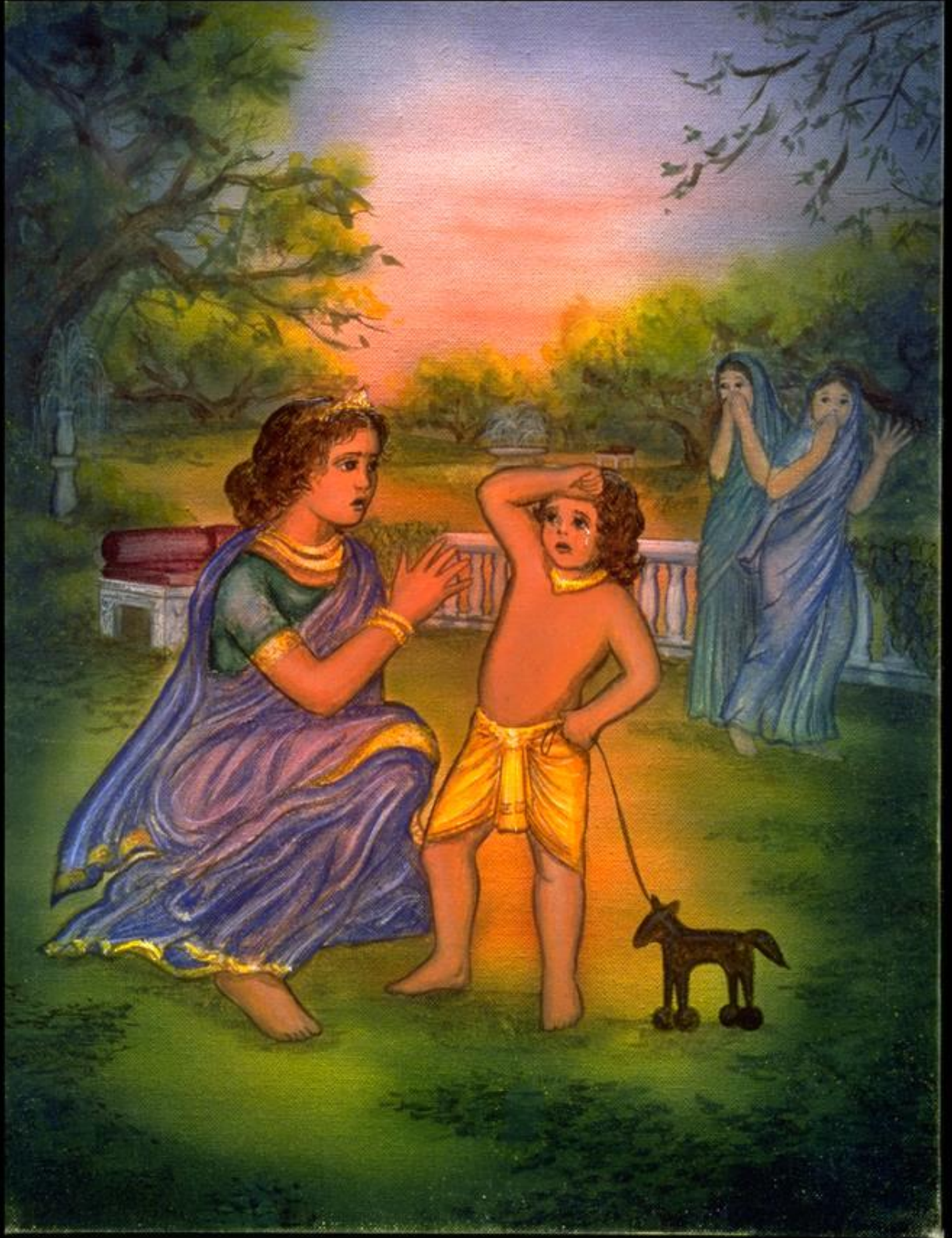
personal, and eternal, and that he, personally, will always be my Spiritual Master. I understood this philosophically, but this experience was added proof of this transcendental truth. And I bowed in gratitude.

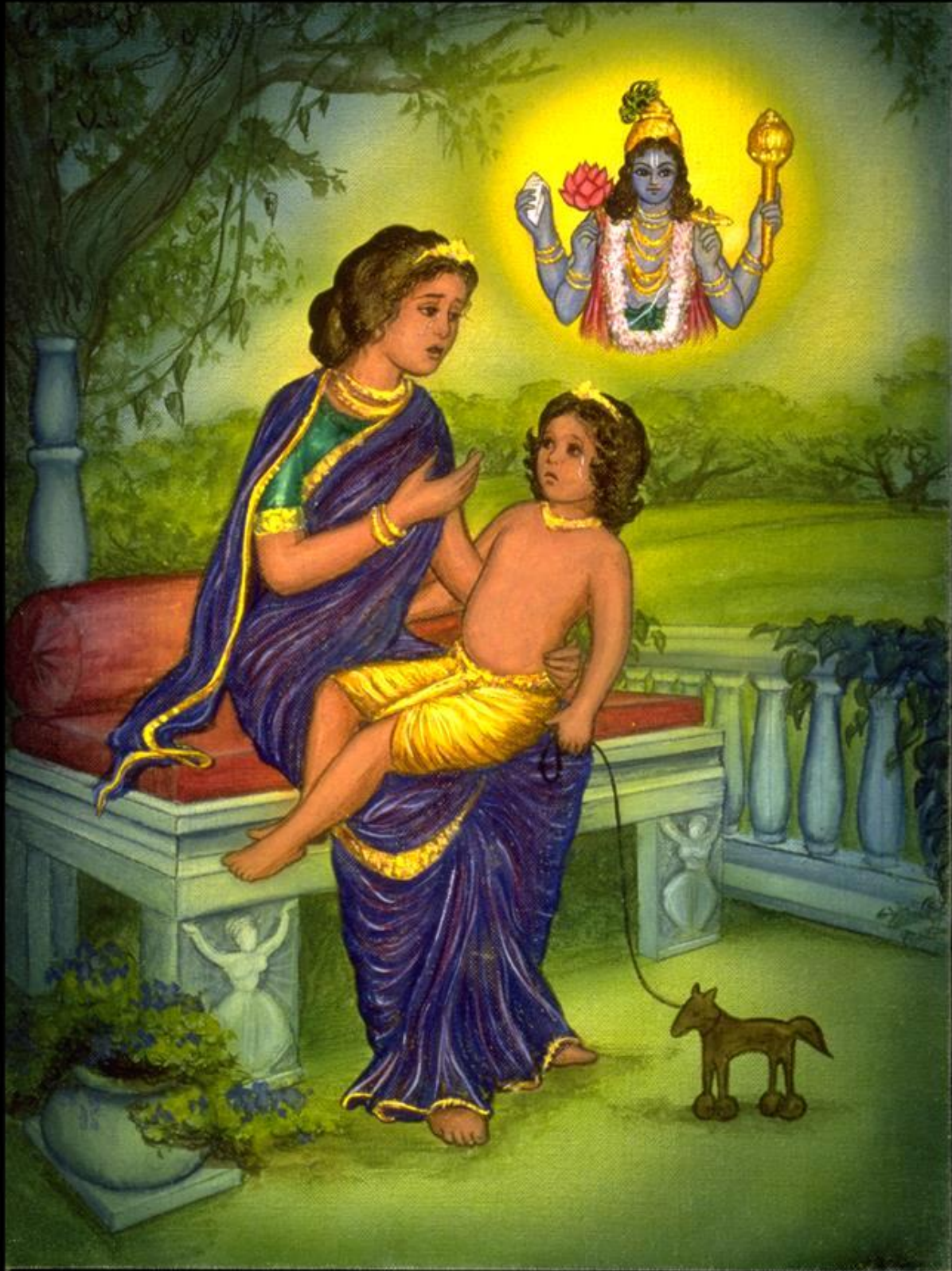
Sometime in the mid-70's, I did another series of paintings for what was to become the story of Dhruva Maharaj. This was a series of approximately 25 small paintings illustrating the SrimadBhagavatam story of Prince Dhruva, designed for children. This was also done under the guidance of SrilaPrabhupada. He looked at each one of my illustrations and gave his stamp of approval, and told the BBT to print this as a childrens' book. However, it was never printed, as the project somehow got lost in the

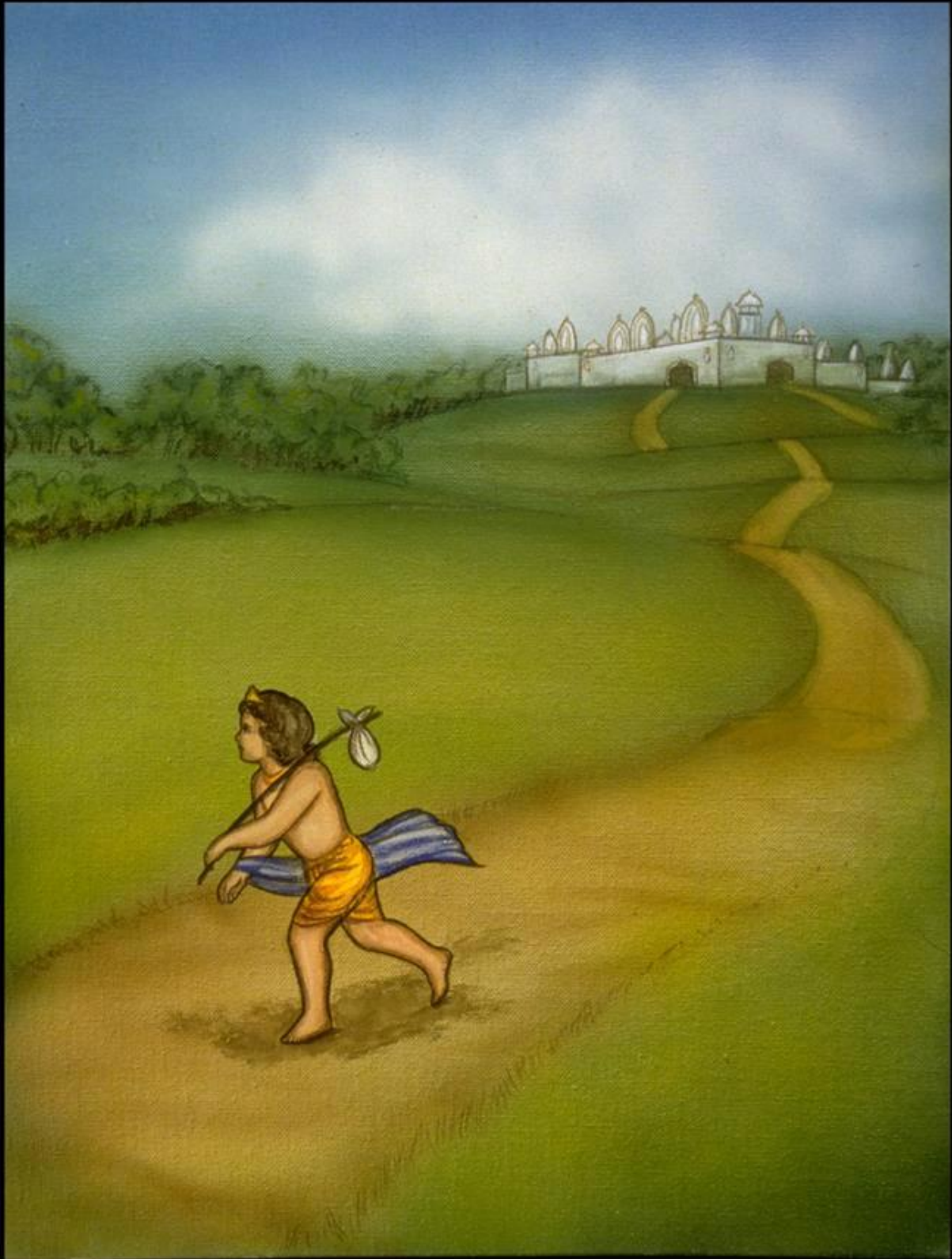
political upheaval after SrilaPrabhupada's
departure from this world.





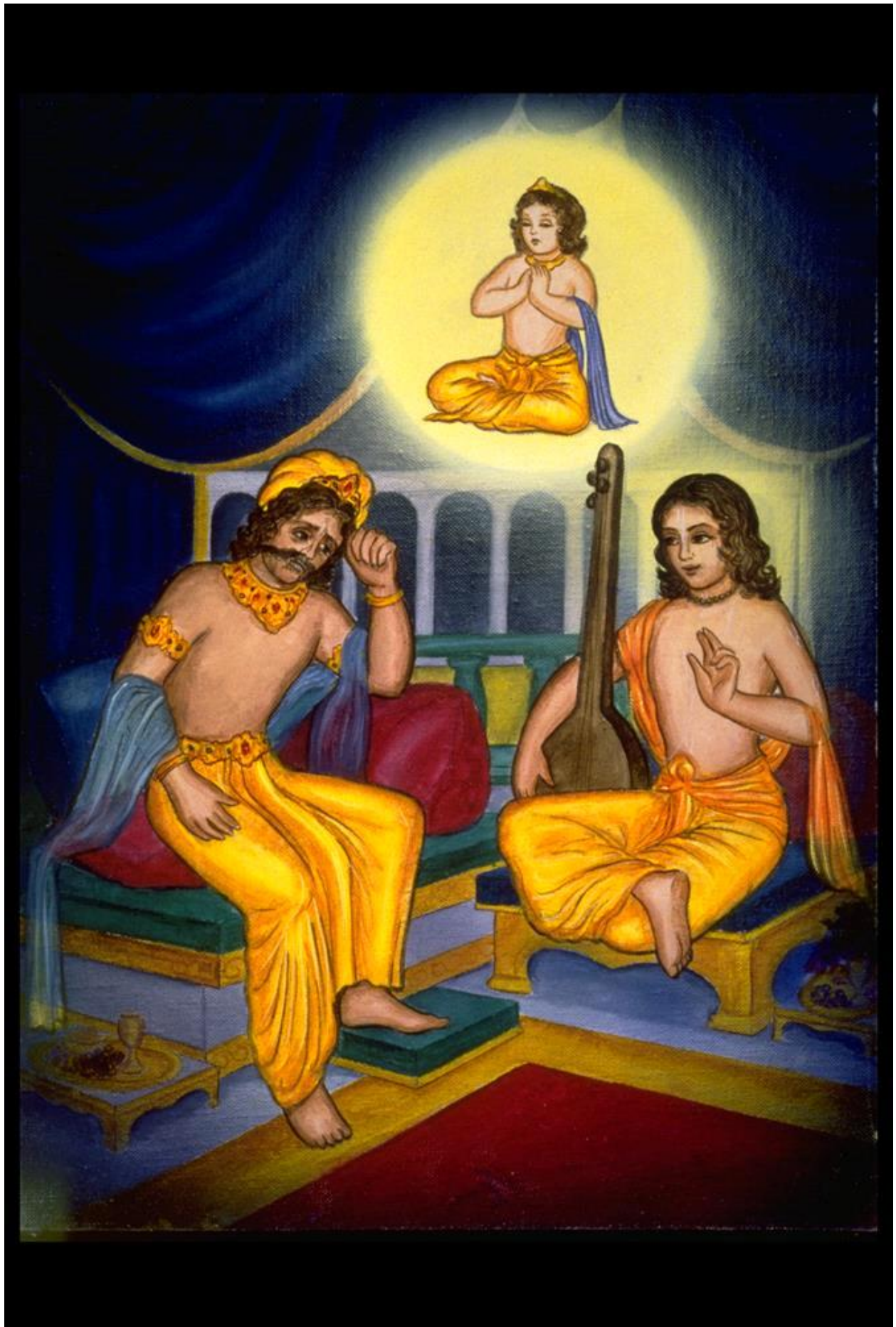






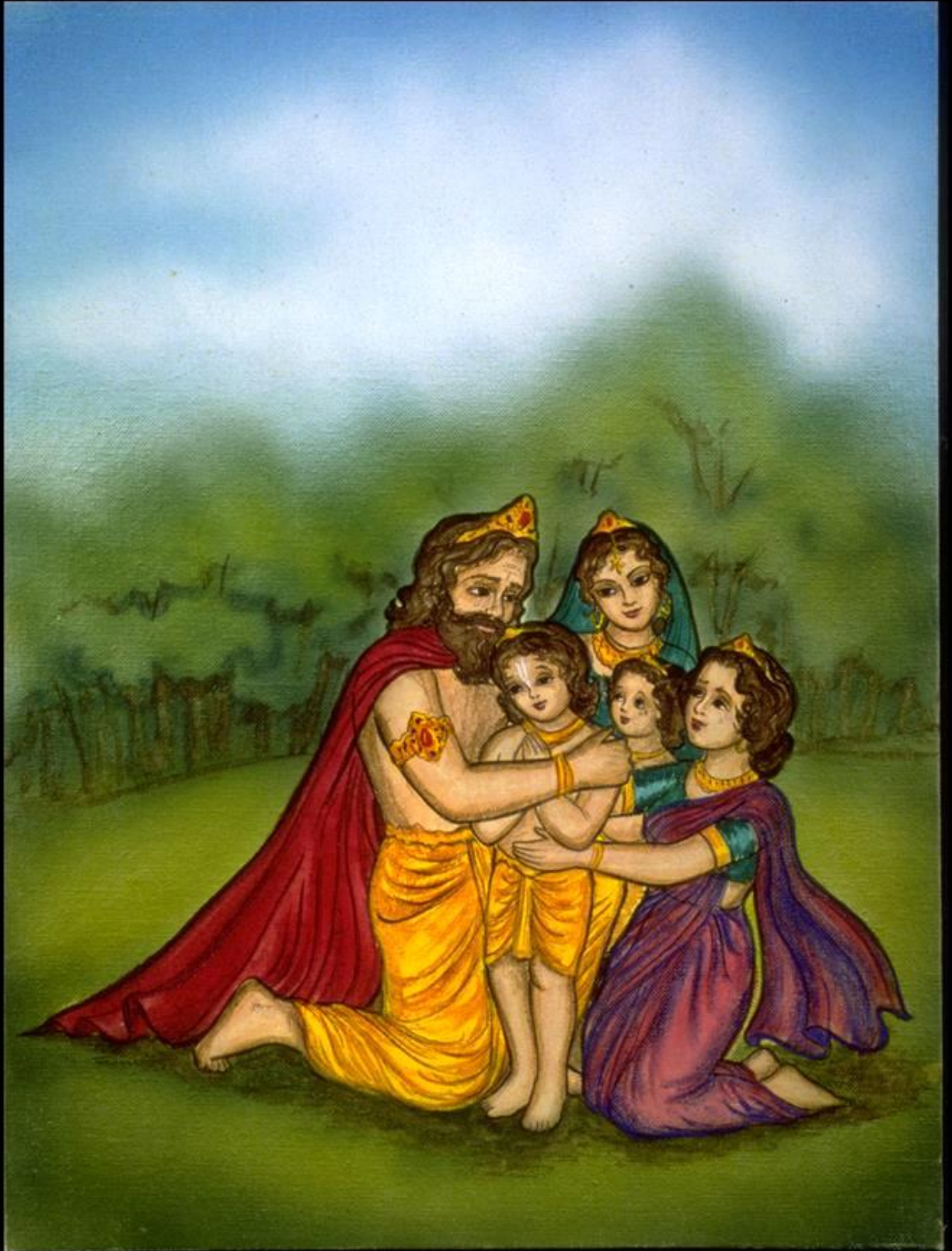


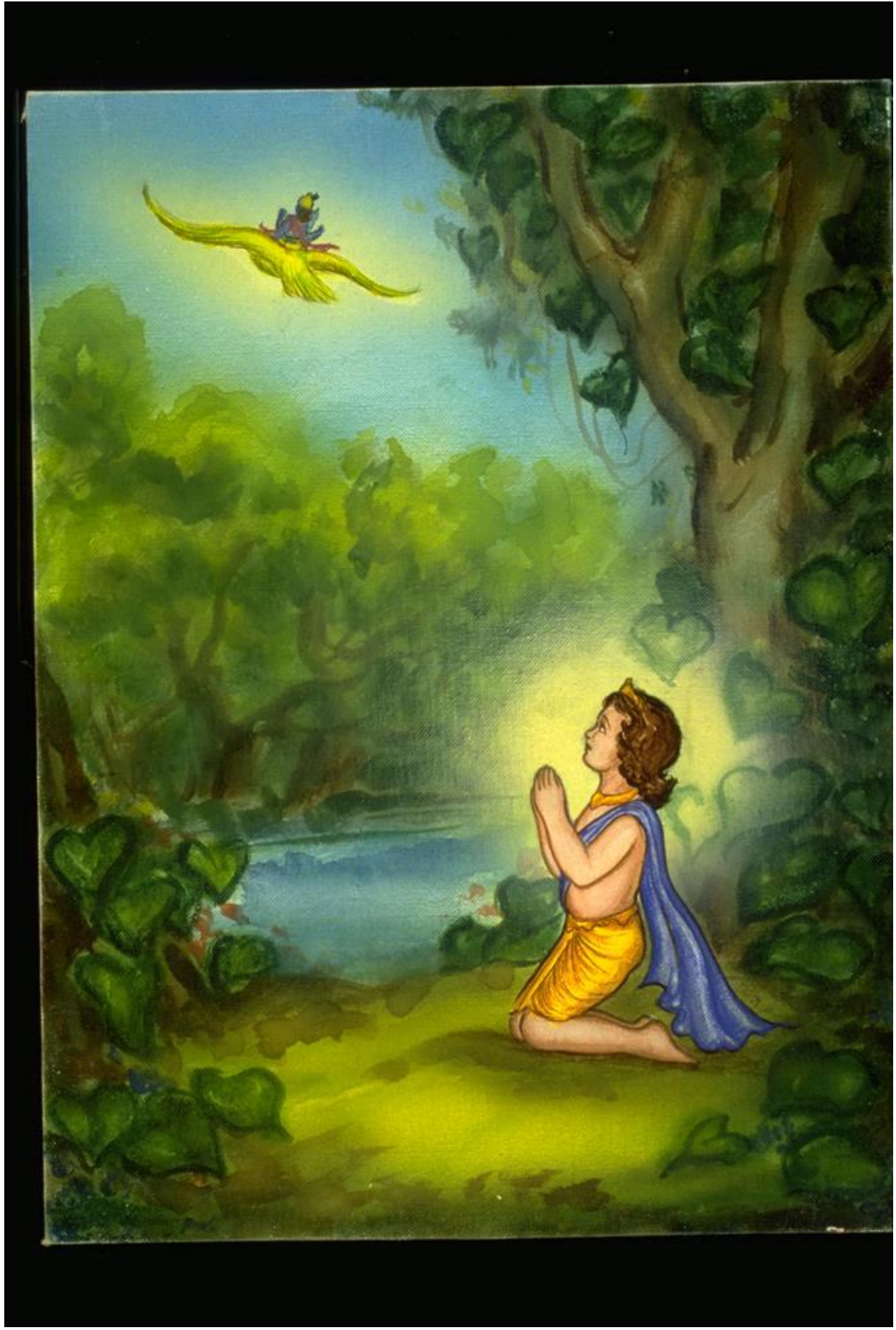


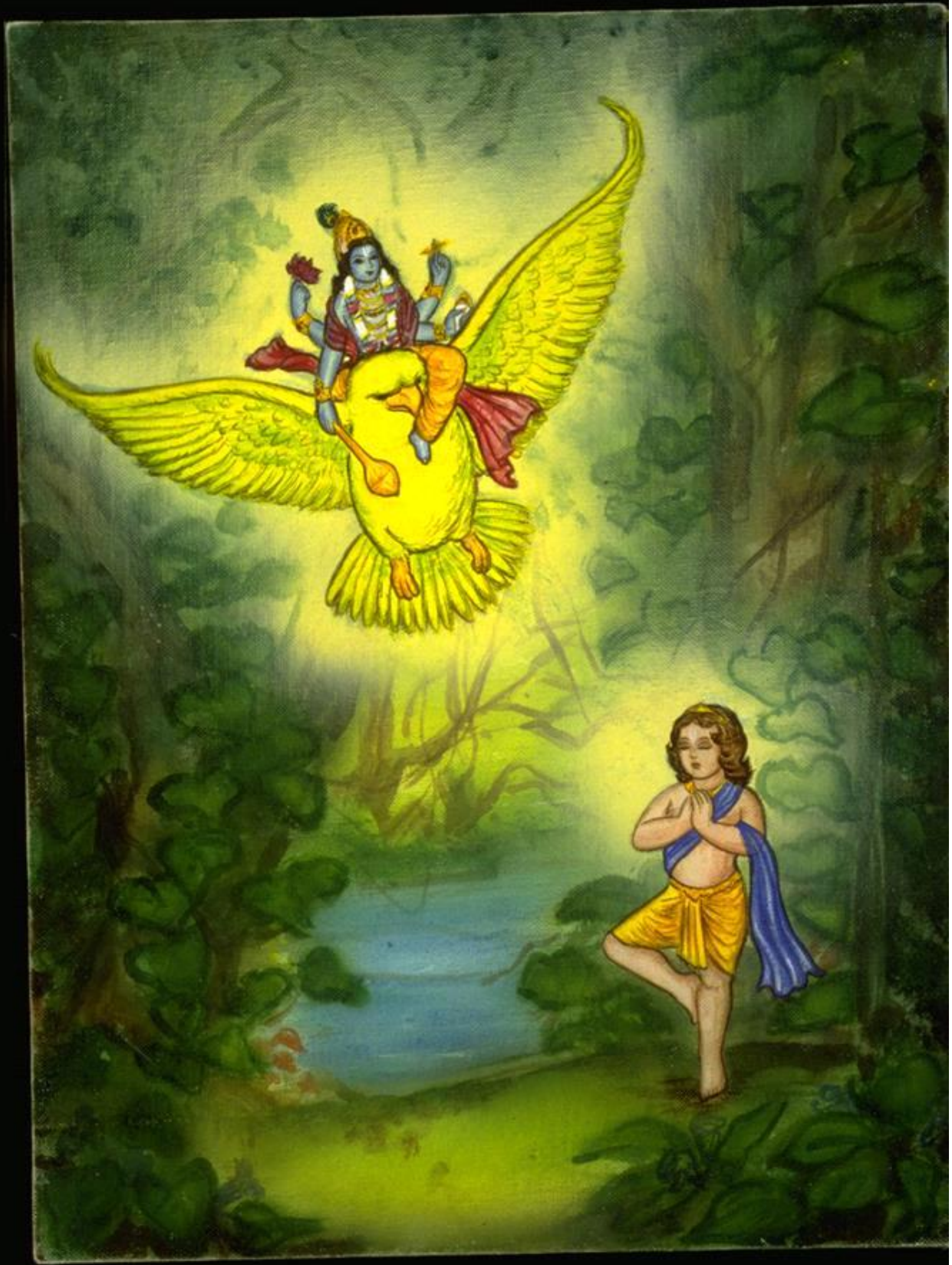




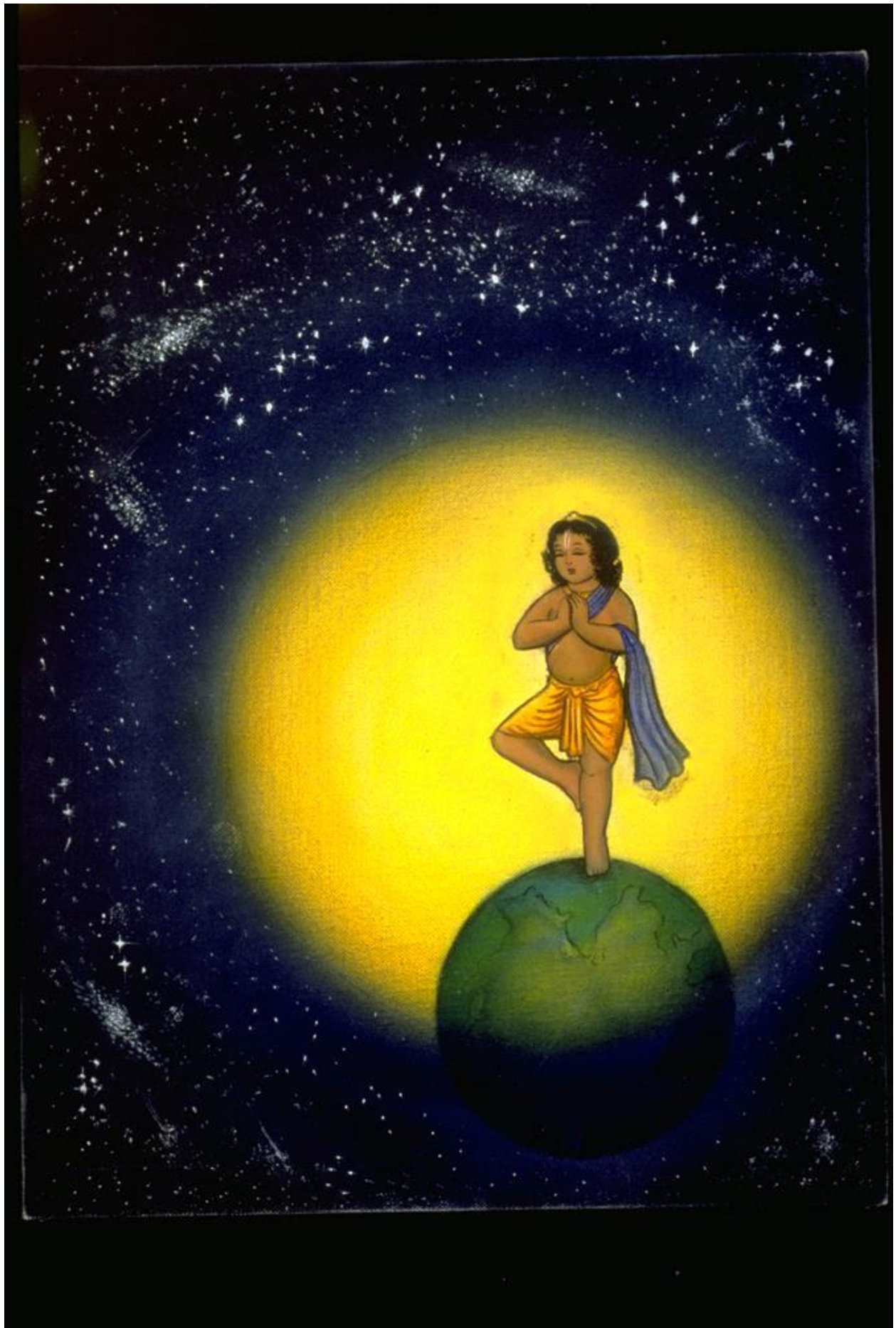




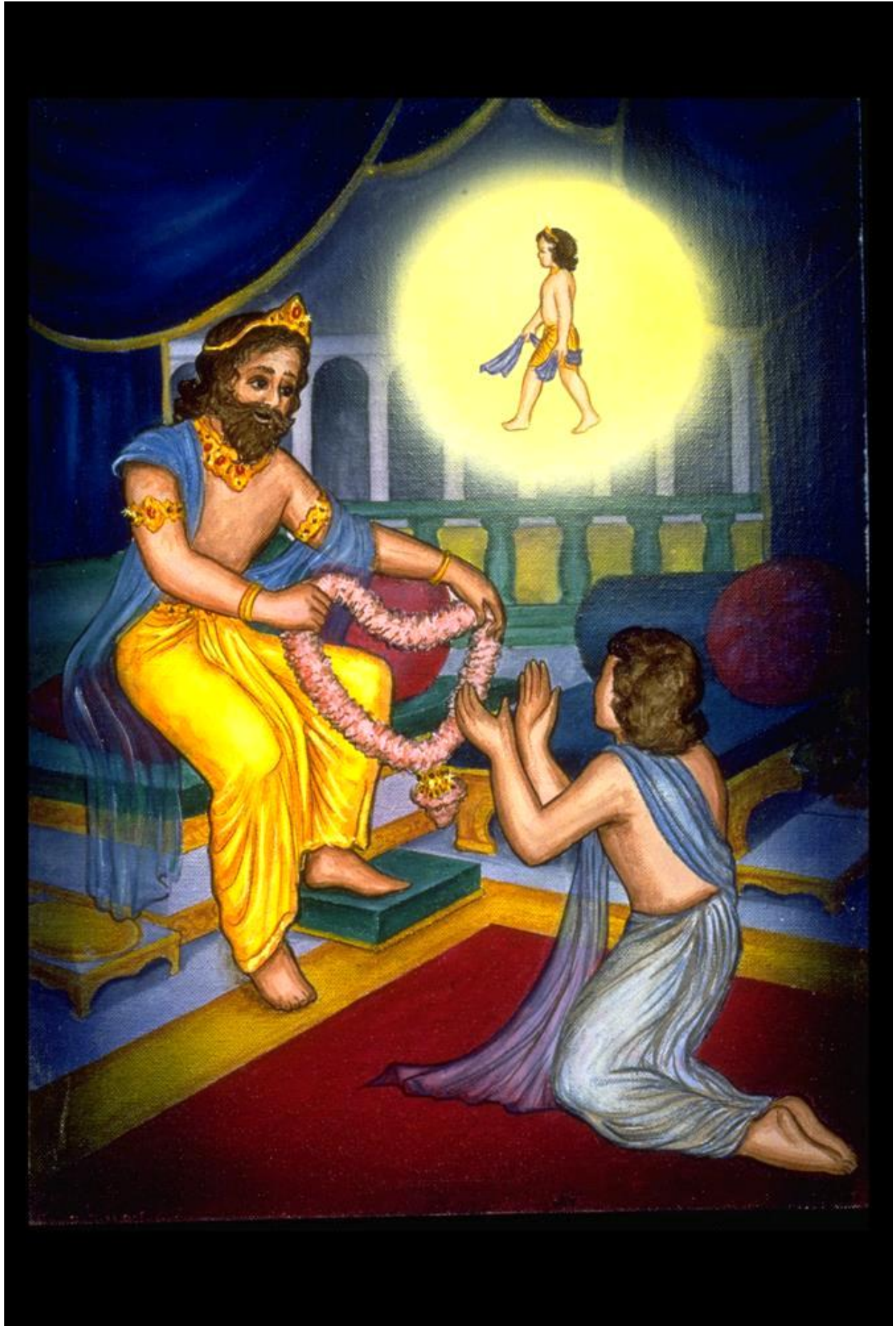










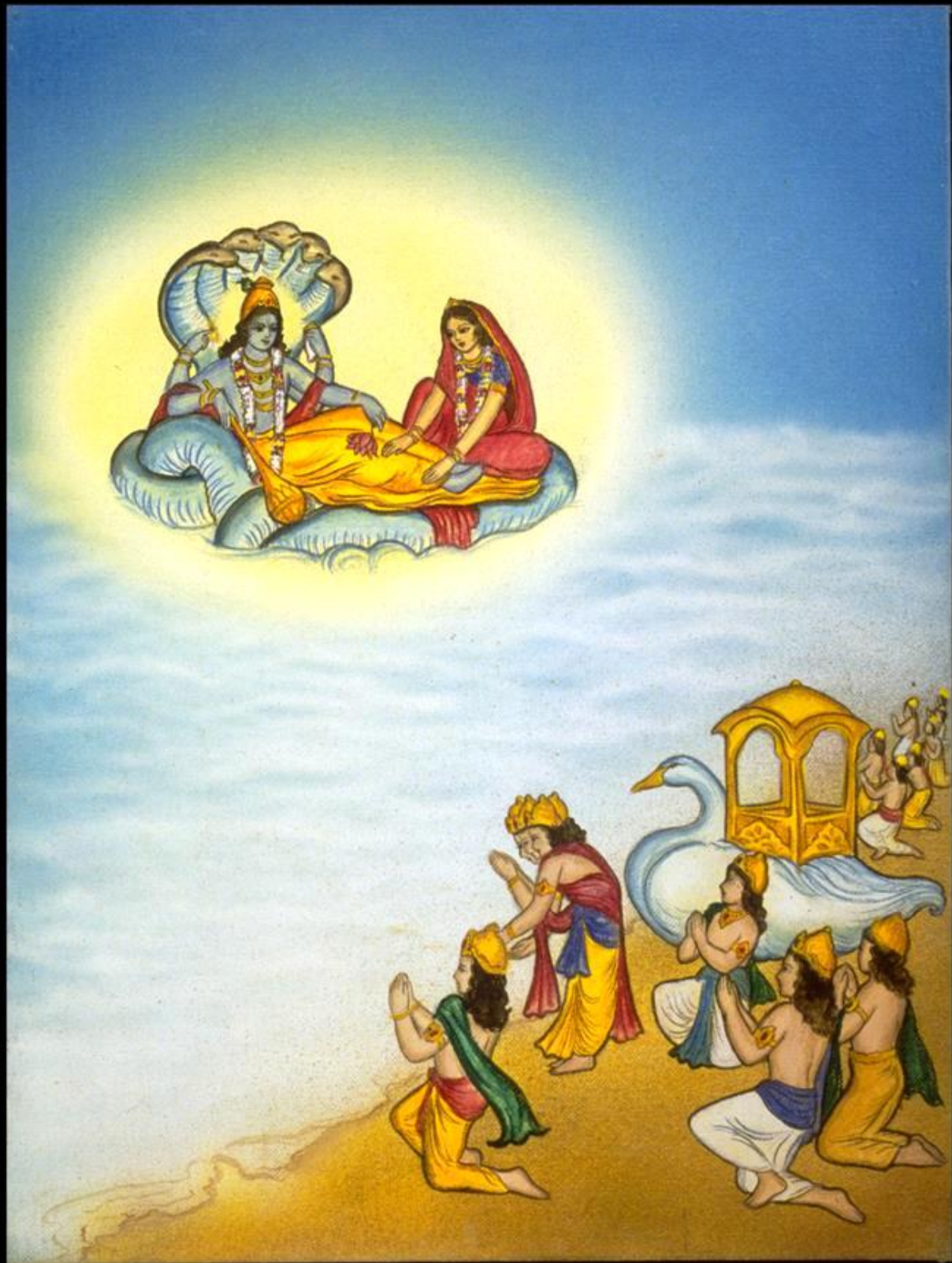


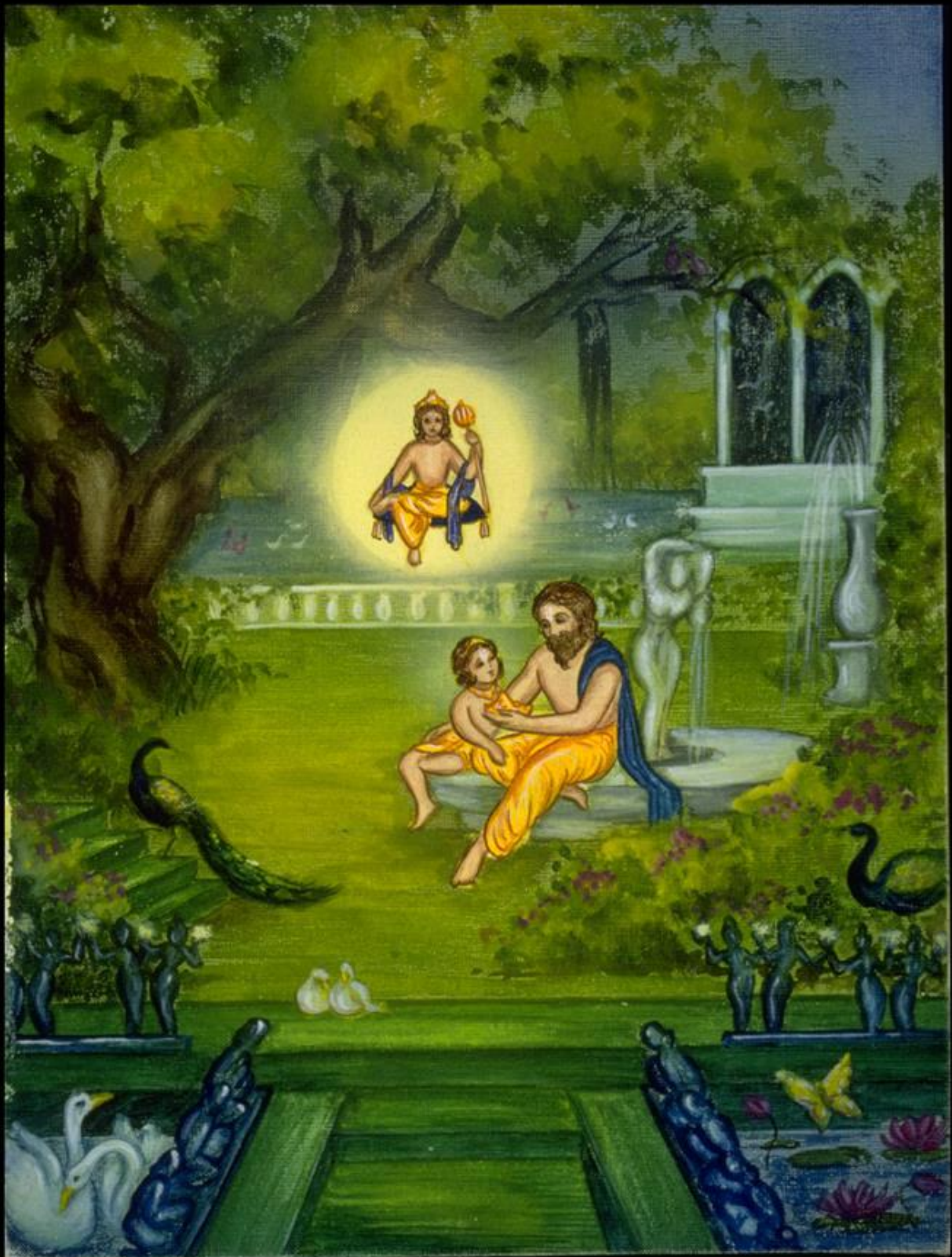


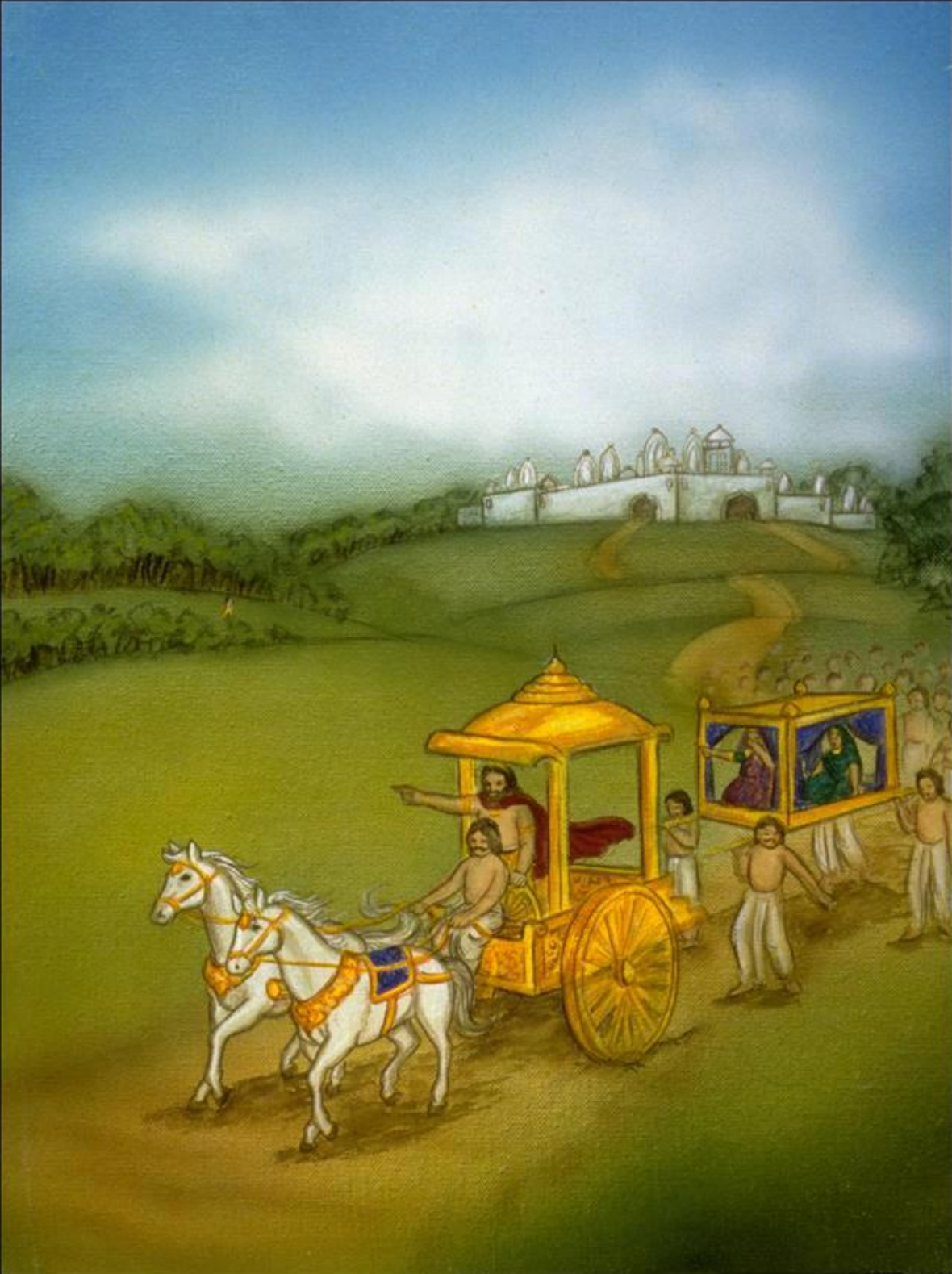












Because these were color illustrations, and the cost of printing color far exceeds that of printing black and white, I was never able to get this book into print. It still remains unpublished, after all these years, and in spite of the fact that it was SrilaPrabhupada's direct order that it be printed. It seems that at that time, ISKCON and the BBT had not yet realized the great importance of children's books, and so they were relegated to a position of less importance. However, it is important to note that SrilaPrabhupada himself, as early as 1967, started me on my first children's book, in the form of the Prahlad illustrations. He could foresee the great importance of giving spiritual

education to young devotees in the form of children's books.

Since coloring books are much less costly to print, I later shouldered the expense myself and printed five coloring books: Gopal, Krsna, Nimai, Jagannatha, and Damodara. These books were printed by me, and I maintain the copyright, but Prabhupada's original BBT (not the later company, BBTI) sold and distributed them widely in the 1980's. They are still available from such mail order companies as Krishna Culture, and others.

My first coloring book, Gopal, was very well received by SrilaPrabhupada. I traveled to Los Angeles to show him each of the illustrations before taking it to press. He was delighted. He

laughed and pointed to several of the drawings, even showing child-like joy, especially when he saw the picture of Krishna with the butterfly. That drawing seemed to be his favorite. The expression of love in Krishna's eyes, and the feeling of bhakti in the mood of the illustrations, was of primary importance to him. He wanted Krishna to be portrayed as very beautiful, very graceful, and very loving. He stressed these things far above technique. The "mood of bhakti" must shine through; otherwise, even if it is technically excellent, it is a mundane picture that will not ignite the spark of the soul. That was the first consideration.

Later, I did more coloring books, Krsna, Nimai, Jagannatha, and Damodara. Certain devotees were a great help to me in this project. I am

certainly indebted to IndraPramadPrabhu, my “graphic arts guru” who was kind enough to take time to skillfully guide me in the technical skills and tools of production.

IndraPramadPrabhu also designed the book covers for many of SrilaPrabhupada’s books, and even won awards for his design expertise. SrilaPrabhupada was extremely pleased with his work, and never wanted that any of his book covers be changed--even if they were translated into other languages. He repeatedly gave this instruction. His perspective on this was that people would come to recognize his books by their covers, even in their native language. He wanted the covers, as well as the artwork within, to be like “trademarks” just like there are trademarks for big corporations, or

for governments, or for publishing firms-- trademarks that never change. In this way, SrilaPrabhupada often said, his books could be immediately distinguished from those of the Mayavadis.

Some years later, in 1988, long after SrilaPrabhupada's departure from this world, I did an original painting of SrimatiVrinda Devi. At the time, I was in Vrindavan, and had the great good fortune of caring for a dying saint who was known as the "VrindaKunda Baba." His real name was MadhavaMaharaj, but due to his dedication to VrindaKund, and his ongoing project at that holy place, he was nicknamed "VrindaKund Baba" by the other sadhus, babas, and goswami families in Vrindaban.

Along with DeenabandhuPrabhu and Vidyadevi, and several other fortunate devotees, we cared for the aged saint for several months. In the course of that time, he became unable to walk and do darshan of his beloved Vrinda Devi. So under his guidance and direction, I did a painting of Vrinda Devi. This work was specifically designed and guided by Baba, a great devotee of Vrinda Maharani.



The painting gave him great joy. Each day I would hold it above his bed, as he was then bedridden, and he would chant his beautiful

Sanskrit mantras to the picture form of his beloved Deity Vrinda Devi. Then, with tears in his eyes, he would begin to exclaim, “ Oh, you have made exactly Vrinda Devi, She is exactly looking like this, thank you, thank you..”

Needless to say, seeing Baba’s spiritual joy was a great inspiration to all of us.

VrindaKunda Baba passed from this world in March of 1989, and donated his VrindaKund project to ISKCON. Now, every year, thousands of devotees benefit by going to Vrinda Devi’s temple for darshan. The painting of Vrinda Devi that he so loved, appeared on the cover of Back to Godhead magazine in 1993, along with the story of his departure from this world at SrilaPrabhupada’s Krishna BalaramMandir in Vrindaban.

From the perspective of transcendental art, this painting of Vrinda Devi achieved the desired result--that is, it invoked the mood of devotion. That is the purpose of transcendental art. This secret was known by some of the European masters, and it showed in their efforts to Christianize Europe.

This secret was certainly known by SrilaPrabhupada. He considered our transcendental paintings to “windows to the spiritual world” as well as the “transcendental trademarks” of the Hare Krishna movement. He never wanted them altered or changed. He ordered that they never be removed from his books. He wanted his book cover art to remain unchanged, even if the book was

translated into other languages. He complained if changes were made to his books, requesting that any pictures taken out should be put back in. SrilaPrabhupada never wanted them altered or changed. He taught us Vedic philosophy, but he taught us transcendental artistry as well.

Art was, in his opinion, a very very important part of his preaching work, and certainly a very important part of his books. He placed great importance on the paintings he directed, as well as on the sculpture project, called the “doll making project,” headed by BharadvajaPrabhu. SrilaPrabhupada knew that Krishna consciousness would only be successful if it was a cultural conquest, with art, music, drama, and sculpture leading the way. It was never intended by him to be converted into an

institutionalized religion. His own spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada, used to say, “if the Krishna consciousness becomes institutionalized, the essence will be lost.” Sadly, many of these artistic projects were lost, along with the essential direction of his movement, in the political scuffles after his departure in 1977.

Devotees like Jadurany Devi, Bharadvaja Das, Parikshit das, Pushkar das, Murlidhar das, and so many others who worked directly under the fastidious guidance of Srila Prabhupada can also provide a wealth of information about the transcendental art taught by him. It is my desire and intention to make every effort to preserve what Srila Prabhupada has given to humanity.

This is truly the greatest responsibility of all of us who are SrilaPrabhupada's disciples, and who have worked directly under his guidance.

Now, in 2014, so much has already been lost. I worry what it will look like 50 or 100 years from now--or more. SrilaPrabhupada's books that were printed and spoken from by him during his lifetime have already been drastically edited, and re-edited, time and again, after his departure from this world. Paintings that he designed have been removed from them as well. And since this precedent of change has been set, it is likely they will be edited again and again in the future, after we are gone. This has happened even though most of us, SrilaPrabhupada's disciples, know that he gave us numerous warnings not to change anything

in his books--not the paintings, not the covers, and certainly not the texts!

Yet, in spite of so many warnings, massive desultory editing has been done repeatedly, removing and adding whole swaths of text, as well as removing original pictures and adding “improved paintings.” The BBTI (the posthumously formed corporation that took over SrilaPrabhupada’s BBT) gives elaborate explanations that seem to cloud the entire issue. At present, there are at least six versions of his Bhagavad Gita As It Is, all edited and printed several years after his demise. Yet none of them bear the customary notations showing the editors’ names, date of edit, or number of edition. This chaotic shows the BBTI

as not only unprofessional, but irresponsible as well.

Nowadays, I cringe when I see paintings of muscular blue people with small heads, the modern idea of what Krishna should look like, now printed in SrilaPrabhupada's books and other ISKCON literature. Obviously, these are attempts to paint Lord Krishna as a "human being." SrilaPrabhupada's words ring in my ears; I recall his fear that "everything will be ruined after I am gone," and people will come to view Lord Krishna as an ordinary human being.

Of course, many of these newer paintings show excellent artistic technique, far superior to my own, yet they portray Lord Krishna with bulging

muscles, snipped and turned-up Western noses, wanton expressions on His and Radharani's faces, and poses that would never in a million years be approved of by SrilaPrabhupada.

I see Krishna Books printed on the same format as Grimm's Fairy Tales, with illustrations that would fit perfectly in a fairy tale book. They resemble the works of fantasy illustrators. The artists who are doing these works are undoubtedly highly skilled and have mastered excellent use of color and technique. But these paintings would never have been approved by SrilaPrabhupada.

Decorating his Krishna Books with pictures similar to fairy tale illustrations, certainly would

never meet with SrilaPrabhupada's approval. It simply gives readers the idea that Krishna Book is also no more than another fairy tale book. This message is a dangerous one; it depicts Lord Krishna as a muscular, bluish veined man, who kills demons much as any hero in any fairy tale fable.

Perhaps this article, along with example illustrations, combined with the statements of other artists who were personally trained by SrilaPrabhupada, can somehow help to stave off this loss of culture and art that has so besieged our beloved Master's ISKCON since his departure in 1977.

May SrilaPrabhupada bless us with the humility and the integrity to listen to those who actually

knew him, and worked closely with him. And may his kindness and mercy enable those who are firmly ensconced in their misconceptions, and “change disease,” become blessed with new realizations by the unfathomable mercy of SrilaPrabhupada.

In a lecture on May 21, 1976, Honolulu, SrilaPrabhupada stated “sudra means lamentation- simply changing.”

Sometimes people may be critical of the Indian Brijbasi style poster art, saying the artwork is not “realistic enough.” And perhaps it is the fear of such criticisms that enticed post-disappearance BBTI editors and publishers to make changes that SrilaPrabhupada would never have approved of.

As a teasing criticism, even my husband Goursundar often called my figures “balloon faces,” and “balloon people.” But this type of transcendental form is clearly what SrilaPrabhupada wanted. Transcendental form is synonymous with “milk-drinkers faces,” gently sloping arms and legs, feet sculpted to perfection, and delicate, aristocratic, even dainty, hands. There were never to be any muscles or veins showing; SrilaPrabhupada was quite clear about this. Muscles and veins are for human beings, as well as for Rakshasas. But never for Krishna.

Lord Krishna appeared in the world of human beings, and at that time, many people even considered Him to be a human being. But His

transcendental Form should not be confused with the mundane fleshy, clay-like forms of human beings. His form was always divine, transcendental and beyond the material nature. SrilaPrabhupada wanted that our paintings of Him should look like that-- transcendental.

If we depict Him looking like a blue-tinged muscular human being, he will look exactly like that: a blue-colored human. Then people will mistake Him for an ordinary man, a mere human, and the divine teachings could again be lost in time.

The act of removing SrilaPrabhupada's original paintings from Krishna Book, which he himself said were "full of bhakti" is a sure indication

that there is not a correct understanding of who he is and what he came to do. He often said he “came from Krishna Loka to write some books.” And “Krishna wrote these books,” “they are actually dictated by Him.” His books, and his paintings, done by artists under his direct supervision, are “full of bhakti,” his bhakti. They cannot be changed or deleted without his direct permission.

As SrilaPrabhupada’s disciples, it is our great responsibility to preserve the legacy of SrilaPrabhupada. Shortly after he left this world, post-disappearance politics drove many of SrilaPrabhupada’s disciples out of the ISKCON he established. Hellish havoc was wrought upon his ISKCON. Some estimate that perhaps 90% of SrilaPrabhupada’s disciples

stepped back from his movement shortly thereafter.

By default, those few that remained became over-night gurus, leaders, members of his GBC and even trustees in the BBT, or BBTI. Many of these leaders had not closely associated with SrilaPrabhupada, and since they had little experience, they made mistakes that follow us to this day. Such inexperienced members took full control, and began to change things that SrilaPrabhupada had said should never be changed--like his book texts and paintings, and his book covers.

Even the authentic procedures of Deity worship were changed, rather, reversed.

SrilaPrabhupada taught us to first offer

everything to the Spiritual Master, and through him, we would offer to Krishna. Now, in many modern ISKCON temples, the process is exactly reversed. Devotees are taught to offer first to Lord Krishna, and then to SrilaPrabhupada and the disciplic succession. This is a backwards understanding of the bhakti path SrilaPrabhupada taught.

His Bhagavad Gita As It Is, the crown jewel of his writing work, as well as others of his books, have been posthumously edited, without even informing prospective readers of this. There are no names and dates to distinguish the posthumously edited books from the original ones that were read, spoken from, and approved by SrilaPrabhupada during his time on earth.

The paintings of all the Acharyas in the disciplic succession, so carefully directed by SrilaPrabhupada, and placed in his original Bhagavad Gita As It Is, printed in 1972, have all been removed by BBT's (BBTI's) inexperienced editors. In the cover picture of the greatly modified Bhagavad Gita As It Is, printed some six years after SrilaPrabhupada left this world, Krishna carries a horsewhip in his hand, rather than Sri Panchajanya, His mystic conch. In short, after 1977, Maya had her way with SrilaPrabhupada's ISKCON.

Our only hope is, like Hansel and Gretel, to leave some traces of truth along the path, in hopes that those who come later will correct

things. SrilaPrabhupada's greatest fear was that "my books will be changed after my departure, and everything will be ruined."

Observing the Judeo-Christian histories, we can see how this did indeed happen to the teachings of Jesus Christ. And although the Biblical texts still bear some resemblance to the early teachings, and thus continue to inspire people all over the world, they have lost much of their philosophical base. They cannot stand up to the scientific community; the New Science has created the New Atheism.

According to edited versions, reincarnation does not exist, animals have no souls, so it is fine to kill them and eat them. The clergy that Jesus taught are no longer seen wearing simple robes and living the life of simplicity. Many

wear costly embroidered silks, expensive jewelry, grand head dresses, and other such costumes--none of which Jesus taught in his time on earth. And of course, there are other philosophical and societal changes that are too numerous, or too horrible, to even mention.

Can this happen to SrilaPrabhupada's teachings? Can this happen to Lord Chaitanya's glorious movement? Yes, it can. It has already been happening for over 30 years, moving down a road of change with no sign of turning back. Our only hope is, as SrilaPrabhupada often said, "From the children of your children, pure devotees will be coming out." Reinforcements are on the way.

We, as SrilaPrabhupada's disciples, place our hope in the future generations, and try to preserve what we can, in the hope that those who come later will do better than our generation has done. SrilaPrabhupada often said, to paraphrase, "Lord Chaitanya's movement will go on, because that is the Lord's prediction. If you want to help, that is very good, good for you and very good for others. If not, He will send someone else to carry on His mission on this earth. That is for certain."

"But if you don't want to help, then at least, don't hinder. Do not create problems, confusion and try to hinder this movement of Lord Chaitanya. That will not be good."

Quoting Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur,
the Spiritual Preceptor of our Srila Prabhupada:

“The idea of an organized church in an intelligible form, indeed, marks the close of the living spiritual movement. The great ecclesiastical establishments are the dikes and the dams to retain the current that cannot be held by any such contrivances. They, indeed, indicate a desire on the part of the masses to exploit a spiritual movement for their own purpose. They also unmistakably indicate the end of the absolute and unconventional guidance of the bonafide spiritual teacher.”