

JAI GURU SANKARA

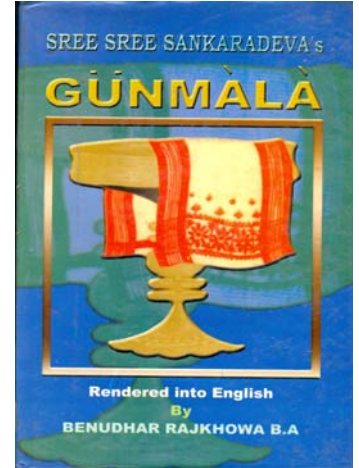
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Sankaradeva's 'Gunamālā' (The Garland of Praises of Lord Krishna)

Tr. by Srijut Benudhar Rajkhowa

Excerpted from '*Sree Sree Sankaradeva's Gunmala*', Benudhar Rajkhowa, 1st Published:1923; New Edition by Bani Mandir: 2003; 'Gunmala by Sree Sankara Deva, The Founder of Mahapurushia-ism, rendered into English from the original Assamese by Benudhar Rajkhowa, BA, Assam Civil Service.'



Gunamālā or 'The Garland of Praises (of Lord Krishna)', written by **Sankaradeva**, is a magnificent composition capturing in racy, rhyming and sonorous verses, the essence of the entire Bhagavata Purana, particularly dealing with the all-important Tenth Book (**Dasama Skandha**) of the venerable Text. This unique first-rate abridgment in the annals of world literature is famous for its amazing brevity and great mental speed.

The Gunamala is a sacred text for all Assamese Vaisnavas and is often placed in the *thapana* (pedestal) or the **Guru-Asana** (sacred throne) in the **Namghar** as the object of veneration.

According to the biographers, this monumental work was authored by the Saint within the span of a single night!

About this Translation:-

And in this translation of the same work by Srijut Benudhar Rajkhowa, we find the same racy, free-flowing style, the same jingling brevity, the same devotional spirit and fervor, all of which evoke in all of us the same spiritual ecstasy and turn our minds to the Divine. It would not be wrong to say that if Sankaradeva had succeeded in capturing the essence of the Bhagavata in his Gunamala, Srijut Rajkhowa has managed to capture the essence of the Gunamala through his translation of this delightful 'Mini-Bhagavata':-

*Oh, the Tenth Book's holy worth!
The verses inspire pure mirth!
Lord Krishna's excellent birth!
His wonderful deeds on earth!*

Srijut Benudhar Rajkhowa's literary quality is also excellent.

We at atributosankaradeva.org do feel proud to present his translation of the First and Second Parts of this great work. **To download the complete Gunamala of Sankaradeva (the Assamese original), click [here](#).**

[Translation follows on the next page]

'Gunamālā' (The Garland of Praises of Lord Krishna)

FIRST PART

1.

O Lord, eternal Godhood,
From whom all the world accrued,
Deliverer of the good,
I salute Thee, meek, subdued.

2.

Thou spotless and pure Deity,
Destroyest iniquity,
Didst rout the demons mighty
And charm the Gopees pretty.

3.

Thou sang'st the Vedantic verse,
Play'dst on the flute sweetest airs,
Master of the universe,
Redeemer from fallen course.

4.

Devotees' wealth and power,
Thou art their wish-fulfiller;
Thou Bidhi the creator,
Poor men's merciful treasure.

5.

Thou sweet'ner of piety,
Less'ner of distress doughty;
Queller of iniquity,
Lotus-eyed dazzling Deity.

6.

The fiends by Thee were ended,
The Gobardhana lifted:
Thou queller of fear earth-bred,
Killer of Mura hated.

7.

The fierce Kali didst Thou check,
Putana's life-blood didst suck,
The heavenly gods didst back,
The famous Vraja didst deck.

8.

Kesi, Batsa, Baka bold,
By Thee, the huge fiends of old
Were all swift and smart befool'd,
And made o'er to Yama cold.

9.

On many an occasion,

Thou didst take incarnation;
Heard'st the Earth's lamentation,
Mad'st light her heavy burden.

10.

Thou didst checkmate Indra proud,
To Thee Brahma himself bow'd;
Didst roam in the merry wood,
Thou didst love the Gopees good.

11.

In the amphitheatre,
Didst meet many a wrestler;
Thou didst display great power,
Didst kill all, O Cow-keeper.

12.

The glory and name do bear
Pure piety without peer;
Salvation, wealth and desire
Thou givest, O **Krishna**, sire.

13.

Kill'dst the ten-headed monster,
Brought'st Janaka's daughter,
Thou ever-good creator,
Life of all that is matter.

14.

Thy varied deeds, -a long scroll,-
Are the friend of the vile soul;
So holy and beautiful,
Resplendent and wonderful.

15.

The fallen Thou raisest forth,
Thou shelterest all this earth;
Thou destroy'dst fiends, home and hearth,
Took'st amazing Dwarfish birth.

16.

Thou art the road straight and clear,
The three worlds dost deftly steer;
Let my firm faith remain near
To Thee, O God, now and here.

17.

Thy frame is of dark colour,
Pleasant as the cloud yonder,
August, stately and so fair,
Of attributes the shelter.

18.

Thine ears the *kundalas* deck'd,
By Thee the demons were hack'd,

By Thee all great sins were crack'd,
Thou art with pure wisdom stack'd.

19.

Thou takest all needs away,
Showerest merciful ray,
Thou playest the divine lay,
And lookest like Cupid gay.

20.

Thou bearest a smiling frame,
Thou destroyest sin and shame,
Thou forgivest all our blame,
Thou fulfillest all our aim.

21.

The whole world resteth in Thee,
Thou art Son of Daivakee,
Thy Feet are the only key
For enslaved men to be free.

22.

Of all wealth Thou art the seat,
Thy glory is infinite,
Thou deliverest the neat,
Thou art the One Great Spirit.

23.

Thou art so benevolent,
Thou art ever-existent,
Thou art changeless, effulgent,
To the pious kindly bent.

24.

Thou didst take incarnation,
Didst cause the fiend's destruction;
Thou protectest creation,
Thou art Lord, the Shining One.

25.

Dreadful Agha Thou didst slay,
Built of mighty mortal clay;
On Kali's head Thou didst play,
And soon the serpent prostrate lay.

26

Thou didst rout the demon horde,
Didst throw them all overboard;
Thou art the friend of the good,
O **Madhava**, mighty Lord.

27.

The demons Thou didst confound;
With great skill Thou didst them pound;
Suffering far off did bound,

The Vedas did back resound.

28.

To beings the world over,
Thou spreadst the peaceful cover;
Becam'st the piscine diver,
Worshipp'd by Brahma ever.

29.

Thou art pure, the great white goose,
Didst bring Thy essence abstruse,
Camest as the Yadu race,
Kill'dst Kansa wicked and loose.

30.

Thou enterest each being,
Enterest each worldly thing,
Hrishikesa, Divine King,
No one can know Thy meaning.

31.

Thou wearest yellowish dress;
With bravery and prowess,
Kill'dst Samvara with cutlass;
Shieldest all in strain and stress.

32.

O Lord, Thou art always full,
Thou art supremely joyful;
Redeemest many a soul
From the darkest earthly pool.

33.

Thou didst join the piscine race,
Satyavrata with king's mace,
From the dreadful sea apace,
Didst bring forth with supreme grace.

34.

As the Tortoise firm and still,
Thou held'st the Mandara Hill,
Oh, 'twas the sea-churning wheel,
Wearied Thou didst never feel.

35.

As the Boar Thou broughtest forth
From the sea the sunken Earth;
Didst cause Hiranyakshya's death,
Dragging him tusks beneath.

36.

As Man-lion Thou took'st form;
Shed'st lustrous bodily charm;
Thou, O Mighty Lord, didst harm
Hiranyakasipu firm.

37.

From Aditi Thou serene
Wast born as Dwarfish Brahmin,
With sweet, fascinating mein,
To dark'n Vali's wit and brain.

38.

As Parasurama bold,
Cut'st Kshatriyas' heads that roll'd;
Thou didst spare none, young or old,
In the famous battle-field.

39.

From Kausalya the good dame
Thou cam'st, Rama by name;
Slew Ravana deep in shame,
Lanka's king with hellish aim.

40.

As Balarama took'st birth,
Thou didst furrow the wide earth;
Didst destroy fiends, home and hearth,
That scorn'd most the Vedic Faith.

41.

As Buddha cam'st to the fore,
Didst confuse the Vedic lore,
Thou didst charm the mental store,
Didst shun the pious evermore.

42.

As Kalki, Thou fiery Lord,
All the diverse scoundrels' horde
Didst slay with Thy mighty sword,
Didst mete out their just reward.

43.

Thou didst again and again
Take these incarnations ten,
From the Earth took'st her burden,
Gav'st her relief so often.

44.

Sankara, Krishna's servant,
Composeth this sweetest chant,
Let men call out jubilant.
Krishna, Krishna radiant.

END OF THE FIRST PART

SECOND PART

1.

Lakshmi's Lord, fealty I vow,
The truest guide art Thou;
With humility I bow

At Thy august two feet now.

2.

Think of the Great Entity,
The boat of the world doughty,
The fire of iniquity,
Call out far with jollity.

3.

The beautiful religion,
Abiding from all times on,
Sing the chant Elysean,
Good beings the skies upon.

4.

Oh, the Tenth Book's holy worth!
The verses inspire pure mirth!
Lord Krishna's excellent birth!
His wonderful deeds on earth!

5.

All the fiends did heavy press
The Earth who wept in distress,
Told her tale of bitterness,
And woefully sought redress.

6.

Hearing Brahma's sad prayer,
Bhagavan came instanter;
Took on the earth *avatar*
From Daivakee good mother.

7.

Oh! how wonderful a lad,
With marks crescent-like and red,
That as jewel lustre shed,
Deck'd the beautiful forehead.

8.

He beareth a face smiling,
Lotus-eyes briskly rolling,
Teeth beautiful and sterling,
Yellowish cloth so dazzling.

9.

He beareth the lovely crown,
The *kundalas* of renown;
The *kaustubha* gem well-hewn
From His shell-neck hangeth down.

10.

The Lord of effulgent light
Beareth four hands-Divine Sprite;
Keyuras, Kankanas bright
Present a beautiful sight.

11.

Gainst His broad and handsome chest,
The sylvan garland is prest,
There the swarm of black-bees rest,
And make it a humming nest.

12.

Beautiful chain lightly prest
The Lord weareth at the waist;
Yellow cloth of silk finest
Hangeth down, splendid and best.

13.

His thighs are indeed pleasant
As the trunk of elephant;
Legs deck'd with good ornament,
Set with jewels radiant.

14.

Fascinating are His feet
Like lotus gay, exquisite;
The sound of *nupuras* sweet
Is festive and quit a treat.

15.

The finger-nails resplendent
Bear hallow'd signs of crescent,
By which off are errors sent,
Woes and troubles at once rent.

16.

On the soles of His red feet
Are hooks and lotuses sweet
All auspicious signs there meet,
Well-defined and so very neat.

17.

The great Father of the world
Lieth there, beautiful Lord;
There doth He four weapons hold
In His four hands, O behold!

18.

The two parents at this sight,
'Here is Lord God of all might'!
Thought thiswise, and all the night
Pray'd devoutly with delight.

19.

Lord shining as adamant
Spoke and became an infant;
Their hands broke in an instant,
They embraced Him jubilant.

20.

Vasudeva pious, good
Carried Him in loving mood;
Lifting his canopied hood,
Great Ananta with Him moved.

21.

With the banks invisible,
The Yamuna was o'er-full;
He pass'd o'er the banks fearful,
Reach'd Gokula delightful.

22.

He Laid Krishna in that place,
Calmly took the infant lass;
Vasudeva of good race
Came back silently apace.

23.

Nanda 'spied that a good son
To him in the night was born;
A jubilee was begun,
Alms-giving follow'd anon.

24.

In Nanda-Yasoda's house,
Wander'd about without fears,
Engaged in pastimes diverse,
The Lord of the universe.

25.

He perform'd brave deeds duly,
And devised schemes artfully;
Putana appear'd foully,
He suck'd her life out coolly.

26.

The undaunted infant Lord
Kick'd the pots of milk and curd
With the cart heavy with load,
And threw them all overboard.

27.

Chakravata of renown
Had his head instantly mown;
By Krishna's *leela* dropp'd down
And lay a corpse on hard stone.

28.

Master of the entire world,
The knower of the heart, Lord;
On His mother's lap a ward,
Yawn'd in a leisured mood.

29.

His inner body was, lo,

Of all things the rendezvous!
This strange sight she clearly saw,
And was greatly struck with awe.

30.

Garga Rishi came hasty,
Sat lone in deep piety,
Cast with care and probity
His divine nativity.

31.

With delight he gave His name
Krishna good and free from blame,
Described His future and fame,
And return'd to his lone home.

32.

In the famous Vrajapur,
He play'd about thereafter,
The sounding *nupuras* fair,
Was a musical wonder.

33.

He would catch the blazing wood,
The vermin-infested weed;
If some boy did Him forbid,
He would not care to give heed.

34.

The houses of Gopees fair
Damodara would enter;
The Gopees He would bother
Playfully now and ever.

35.

The good Yasoda slowly
They all approach'd laughingly;
The deeds of Krishna holy
They thus narrated wholly:

36.

'Vanamali of small size,
Seeing Gopees with His eyes,
Doeth many naughty plays,
And mischievous pranks always.

37.

What shall we say, O good queen,
About Krishna thy urchin?
Oft our calves He sendeth in,
Before we have milk'd the kine.

38.

Entereth into the cot,
He drinketh draughts of milk hot;

Mischievous monkeys are brought,
Who'd drink all and break the pot.

39.

How naughty, O good queen, hear,
Hath become thy infant dear;
Krishna freely being near,
We can no longer live here.'

40.

Hearing such scandalous word,
Greatly ashamed was the Lord;
Copious tears flow'd downward,
The queen pitied her sweet ward.

41.

Forth her fair hands did she stretch,
Wetted with love did him catch,
Soothed Him with her velvet touch,
Took Him to her breastal couch.

42.

He with children of His age,
Engaged in all sorts of plays;
He ate with a smiling face
Lumps of earth with eagerness.

43.

They told the queen this event,
She grew very indignant;
She asked her child what this meant,
And reproved Him violent:-

44.

'Well, naughty boy, now tell me,
To act like this what led thee?'
'I did not, Mamma', and He
Open'd His mouth that she might see.

45.

She espied the world entire
Within His body inner!
Out she cried in awful fear,
Chanted the holy prayer.

46.

'A wondrous phenomenon!
Krishna this my dearest son,
Cannot indeed be human,
God He must be in person!'

47.

On a bright and fair morning,
Queen Yasoda was churning
Milk in a vessel shining;

Krishna came there soon running.

48.

Krishna near the vessel stood,
Caught with hand the churning wood;
Held it fast and held it rude,
She stopp'd work in gay mood.

49.

She took up her son in haste,
A kiss on his face imprest
With lips velvety-soft, chaste,
And made Him to suck her breast.

50.

Boiling was milk in cauldron,
Out did a quantity run;
She left at once her dear son,
And to save the rest hied on.

51.

Krishna grew angry and hot,
A stone-roller with hands caught,
Struck it hard and smash'd the pot,
Ah! milk and pot both were lost.

52.

Yasoda pick'd up a stick,
Brandish'd it round terrific,
Lo, Krishna began to shriek,
And took to His heels so quick.

53.

She chased Him without delay,
The lad tired and soon gave way,
Trembled and began to pray,
She then threw her stick away.

54.

She dragg'd Him in as He cried,
To a massive mortar tied;
There a captive He was laid,
On her business she then hied.

55.

Krishna pull'd, out from the stall
Did the mortar roll and roll;
It stuck athwart two trees tall,
He pull'd, down did the trees fall!

56.

Forth sprang suddenly gods twain,
Did from body lustre rain,
Pray'd Krishna once and again,
And ascended the heaven.

57.

‘What is all this!’ Nanda cried,
In an instant Him untied,
Brush’d off body dust aside,
Embraced Him and stood tongue-tied.

58.

Laugh’d the Gopees cheerily,
Clapp’d their hands quite jollily,
Krishna danced round verily
Like a fairy merrily.

59.

A huckstress did loudly cry
‘Luscious fruits for sale here lie’;
Krishna who was standing by
Wanted some of these to buy.

60.

He took fruits and put some rice
In the basket as their price,
The grains became jewels nice,
Lo, the Lord’s glorious grace!

61.

Gokula’s pastoral site
Narayana left outright;
To Vrindavana so bright
He departed with delight.

62.

The giant of hellish faith
Came as the calf, fierce forsooth,
He destroy’d and drove forthwith
To the dark City of Death.

63.

The giant as the heron
Came and swallow’d Him sudden;
He caught his strong beak amain
And sunder’d it into twain.

64.

As the serpent unholy,
Agha met Him jollily,
Open’d his large mouth fully
And swallow’d Him greedily

65.

Stuck to his throat as cement
The Lord kind, benevolent;
Expired in pain and torment
The huge devillish serpent.

66.

The good Lord kill'd him coolly,
Brought back to life really
Cows and cow-boys holy,
Got them out of his belly.

67.

Narayana the glorious,
With band of boys so joyous,
Enjoy'd a feast sumptuous,
In the forest beauteous.

68.

The bulls, the calves, the cows prime
Brahma stole in the meantime;
Kept them in a conceal'd clime
And sped to his heaven-home.

69.

The glorious Lord became
Himself the cattle self-same;
To the Vraja's cow-shed came
Gayly at the evening time.

70.

Krishna in Many the One,
Brahma in wonder look'd on;
Fear uncouth o'ertook him then,
He shook like a leaf aspen.

71.

Down he dropp'd from his four swans
Prostrate on the ground at once;
Lost his faculties and sense,
And lay there as in a trance.

72.

Krishna saw Brahma prostrate,
Took pity on his sad fate;
He withdrew His divine state,
Brahma came back from Death's gate.

73.

Brahma left his conveyance,
Fell at His two feet at once,
Prayer in deep, solemn cadence,
And hied to his residence.

74.

Krishna kill'd fierce Dhenu, look!
The palmyra tree He shook,
The fallen fruits each boy took
And ate like a greedy rook.

75.

Their whetted thirst to allay,

The boys wandered any way;
They went, alas! Well-a-day!
From the Yamuna astray.

76.

They drank water, foul, dirty,
Became numb in verity,
Lost senses in entirety,
And joined the majority.

77.

Krishna saw this disaster,
Cast His eyes on thereafter,
Which ever rain sweet nectar;
Lo, the boys stood with laughter!

78.

From the high tree did He leap
Into the lake with a sweep;
Kali writhed in anger deep,
He rode on Him with a grip.

79.

Lord Krishna got on the hood,
Firm and heavy there He stood;
Danced on in a merry mood,
Lay dead Kali proud and rude.

80.

The wives of the great serpent
Humbly pray'd with their heads bent;
The Lord show'd in an instant
Mercy to the repentant.

81.

He then return'd with good cheer,
His kith and kin ran up there;
Yasoda came swiftly near,
Kiss'd Him and shed bitter tear.

82.

He shelter'd Kali elsewhere;
He drank up the big bon-fire;
He pleased His mates evermore
By his deeds full of wonder.

83.

Pralamba the great villain
Wanted to harm Him again;
The devil was quickly slain
By Rama of might and main.

84.

The brushwood was set on fire
That bumt wide, dismal and dire;

The whole band of cow-boys there
Became o'erwhelm'd with terror.

85.

Then Krishna bold and mighty
Took on His playmates pity,
Dispell'd the calamity,
And saved them with jollity.

86.

In summer and in spring prime,
In the rains and autumn time,
Krishna play'd in the sweet clime,
In fair Vraja of far fame.

87.

Each one Cupid's surest dart,
Long did the fair Gopees fast;
All of them pray'd in concert-
'O Hari, be our consort.'

88.

They doff'd their robes merrily,
Made their way, nude wholly,
To Yamuna holy,
Sported and swam lustily.

89.

In *leela* Krishna came nigh,
Stole the clothes that did there lie,
Climb'd up the *kadamba* high,
Gave them with a 'hurrah' cry.

90.

Krishna bann'd the rites as bad,
Made indeed the Brahmins sad;
Bless'd the good wives that they had,
And made them so very glad.

91.

Sankara singeth this lay,
Hear ye mankind what I say,
All other things aside ye lay,
Lord Krishna with fervour pray.

92.

Life on this side is too short,
Realise it in your heart;
Ye shall attend Yama's Court,
There is no doubt, be alert.

93.

To save mankind there is no seer
Beside Lakshmi's consort dear;
Know this to be the truth bare,

Devote yourselves to Faith here.

94.

There's none to save, God apart,

On this earth in any part;

Meditate His form in heart,

Say Hari each day from start.

95.

Madhava's glorious name

Is the religion supreme;

Forsake other rule and fame,

Sing ye the Great Krishna's hymn.

END OF THE SECOND PART



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About the Holy *Gunamala* in English: -

This was the first translation of the Holy *Gunamala* into English, rendered by Srijut Benudhar Rajkhowa way back in 1923. The translator had also incorporated a valuable introduction to this wonderful creation of Sankaradeva, in his book. Part of that introduction is now available online at:-

<http://www.tributetosankaradeva.org/gunamala.htm>

Want to buy the **Holy Gunamala in English**? Click [here](#) for publisher contact info (Bani Mandir)

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