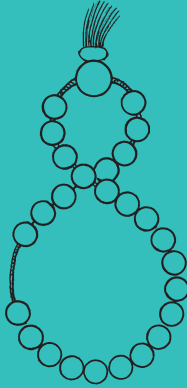


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**Much Ado About Religion**  
by Bhatta Jayánta



Edited and Translated by  
**CSABA DEZSŐ**

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS & JJC FOUNDATION

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*Artwork by Robert Beer.*  
*Cover design by Isabelle Onians.*  
*Layout & typesetting by Somadeva Vasudeva.*  
*Printed and Bound in Great Britain by*  
*TJ International, Cornwall on acid free paper*

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2005

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First Edition 2005

The Clay Sanskrit Library is co-published by  
New York University Press  
and the JJC Foundation.

Further information about this volume  
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ISBN 978-0-8147-1979-4

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, fl. 850–910.

Āgamaḍambara. English

Much ado about religion / by Jayanta Bhatta;  
edited and translated by Csaba Dezső.

p. cm. – (The Clay Sanskrit Library)

Translated from Sanskrit.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8147-1979-4

I. Sanskrit drama. 2. Nyāya–Drama.

I. Dezső, Csaba. II. Title. III. Series.

PK3794.J3472A713 2005

891'.22–dc22 2004026265

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*Tataḥ praviśati* ṚTVIG UPĀDHYĀYAŚ ca.

ṚTVIK: (*sodvegā*) Kaṣṭaṃ bhoḥ kaṣṭam! anyad eva cintitam  
anyad ev' ōpanatam. Veda|bāhya|sakal'|āgama|tiraskāreṇ'  
āsmīn prasaṅge sarvam asmad|bhogyam eva bhuvanam  
bhaviṣyat' itī cintitam. yathā|vyāsam ev' ādy' āpi bāhy'|  
āgamā vartanta ity upanātam. tathā hi:

Śaiva|Pāśupata|Pāñcarātrikāḥ  
Sāṅkhya|Saugata|Dig|ambar'|ādayaḥ  
sarva eva hi yathā|sthitā ime.  
snātakasya dhig apārthakam śrutam!

UPĀ°: Bho vayasya, nanu rāja|puruṣo 'sāv adya saṃvṛttaḥ.  
rājā ca parama|māheśvara iti tad|ārādhan'|āikatāna|bud-  
dhinā tena bhavitavyam. yataḥ:

4.5 Samīpato bhūmi|bhṛtāṃ hi pūruṣāś  
tad|uktam ev' ānuvadanta āsate,  
sva|vṛddhi|lubdhās tu na sādhu asādhu vā  
vivecayanti pratiśabdakā iva.

ṚTVIK: Vayasya, yathā manyase. kaḥ sv'|ārtham avadhīrya  
madhya|stho dharm'|āikatāna|buddhir bhavati? kiṃ tu  
kathaṃ Ved'|āika|viśaya|yājan'|ādhyāpan'|ādi|vṛttibhir  
asmābhiḥ kālo netavyaḥ?

UPĀ°: Vayasya, yath' āiv' ātikrānto nītas tath' āiv' āgāmy  
api grāsa|vasana|mātra|santoṣibhir neṣyate. yataḥ:

*Then enters the Vedic OFFICIANT and the Vedic INSTRUCTOR.*

OFFICIANT: (*agitated*) What an awful blow! I had one thing in mind and something completely different has happened. I had in mind that when all the extra-Vedic religions are censured, we'll be able to enjoy the whole country. But what has happened is that the heterodox religions are still just as widespread as they were before. For:

Shaivas, Pashu-patas, Pañcha-rátrikas, Sankhyas, Buddhists, Sky-Clad Jains and the rest: all of them remain as they were. Shame on the graduate's useless learning!

INSTRUCTOR: But, my friend, he is by now the king's man. And the king is supremely devoted to Shiva, so San-kárshana has to be completely focussed on propitiating Him. For:

In a monarch's vicinity, his men always repeat his words, but, eager for their own advantage, they do not distinguish between good or bad, like echoes. 4.5

OFFICIANT: Right you are, my friend. Who would disregard his own interests and impartially focus his attention on Dharma alone? But how should we spend our time? Our profession—officiating at sacrifices, teaching and the like—is concerned exclusively with the Veda.

INSTRUCTOR: My friend, we shall spend the future just as we have spent the past: content merely with something to eat and wear. For:



Adurjana|giro goṣṭhyo, vīta|māna|grahāḥ priyāḥ  
 puṇyair vinā na labhyante, niḥsapatnās ca sampadaḥ.

ṚTVIK: Evam eva. kiṃ kriyate? kiṃ tv idam adhikaṃ me  
 karṇa|śalyam.

4.10 UPĀ°: Kim iva?

ṚTVIK: Yad amī Pāñca|rātrikā Bhāgavatā brāhmaṇavad vya-  
 vahaṇti. brāhmaṇa|samāja|madhyam anupraviśya nir-  
 viśaṅkam abhivādaya iti jalpante. viśiṣṭa|svara|varṇ'ānu-  
 pūrvīkatayā Veda|pāṭham anusaranta iva Pañca|rātra|gra-  
 ntham adhīyate. «brāhmaṇāḥ smaḥ» ity ātmānaṃ vya-  
 padiśanti vyapadeśayanti ca. Śaiv'ādayas tu na cātur-  
 varṇya|madhya|patitāḥ śruti|smṛti|vihitam āśramam ava-  
 jahataḥ śāsan'|āntara|parigraheṇ' ānyathā vartante. ete  
 punar «ā janmana ā santater brāhmaṇā eva vayam» iti  
 bruvāṇās tath" āiva cāturāśramyam anukurvant' itī ma-  
 had duḥkham.

UPĀ°: Vayasya, kiyad idaṃ duḥkham?

Yājane 'dhyāpane yaune sambandhe 'nyatra vā kva cit  
 dūrāt parihṛtā eva śrotriyaiḥ Pāñcarātrikāḥ.

PRELUDE TO ACT FOUR: ORTHODOX IMPOSTURES

Without merit one cannot find assemblies exempt  
from villains' talk, lovers immune from sulkiness,  
and treasure not claimed by another.

OFFICIANT: Quite right. What to do? But this other thing  
annoys me more.

INSTRUCTOR: What is it?

4.10

OFFICIANT: That these Pañcha-rátrika Bhágavatas should  
adopt brahminical manners. They mix with brahmins  
and have no scruples about using the form of greeting  
that only we may use to our equals. They recite the Pañ-  
cha-ratra scriptures with a special pattern of accented  
syllables, as if they were taking the text of Veda as their  
example.\* “We are brahmins,” they say of themselves,  
and demand that others speak of them in the same way.  
Take the Shaivas and their ilk: they are not part of the sys-  
tem of the four social estates, they reject the life-periods  
determined by the Veda and the Smritis and they set  
themselves apart by adopting a different doctrine.\* But  
these fellows say that “We have been truly brahmins  
ever since our birth, for a long succession of ancestors,”  
and in the same way they imitate the system of the four  
life-periods: this is a great torment.

INSTRUCTOR: How great is this torment, my friend?

In officiating, teaching, matrimonial relations or  
any other context, brahmins learned in the Veda  
give the Pañcha-rátrikas a wide berth.

Brāhmaṇā iti tu vyapadeśas teṣām sva|samaya|saṃvyavahā-  
ra|mātram.

4.15 ṚTVIK: Kim etad alpaṃ duḥkham?

UPĀ°: Kiyad v” āitad? Śruti|Smṛtī adhyetum Mīmāṃsām ca,  
śrautaṃ smārtaṃ ca karm’ ānuṣṭhātum ete kva cid api  
na labhante. brāhmaṇīṃ ca kāṃ cana śīlāc cyutām upa-  
yacchantaḥ prātilaumy’|ôdantena yojyante. Ved’|âṅgāni  
tu kāni cit kiyad v” âpy adhigacchanto ’pi na kva cin  
niṣidhyanta ity alam udvegena. tad āstām etat. idaṃ tu  
śrutaṃ mayā.

ṚTVIK: Kim iva?

UPĀ°: Adya khalu bhāgavat’|āgama|vicāram eva kartum Śrī|  
saṅkarṣaṇo Vaiṣṇav’|āyatanam Bhāgavata|śata|sahasra|sa-  
mbādham gataḥ. brāhmaṇās ca Brahma|dvīpe vidvāṃ-  
saḥ sahasra|saṅkhyāḥ saṅghaṭitāḥ. tatra mahatyā goṣṭhyā  
bhavitavyam. tad ehi tatr’ āiva gacchāmaḥ.

ṚTVIK: Dṛṣṭaḥ Saṅkarṣaṇa|pratāpaḥ, sa hi sarv’|āgama|prā-  
māṇya|vādī. rājñī ca Śrī|Sugandhā|devī teṣv eva sānukrośā  
śrūyate. rāja|puruṣo ’pi kaś cid anugrāhakaḥ Sātvatānām  
ast’ itī vārttā.

As for the fact that they label themselves “brahmins”: this is merely the usage of their own sect.

OFFICIANT: Is this a small nuisance?

4.15

INSTRUCTOR: Why, how big is it? They will never get to study the Veda, the Smritis, or Mimámsa, or to perform solemn or domestic rituals. And if they marry some brahmin woman who has strayed from the path of decorum, they will gain a reputation for having married “against the grain.”\* No need to get upset that they will not be banned from some places, even if they learn just a few of the Vedic ancillary sciences to some small extent. Let’s drop the subject. But this is what I’ve heard.

OFFICIANT: What is it?

INSTRUCTOR: Today, apparently, the Honorable Sankárshana went to the Váishnavas’ sanctuary, which is crowded with hundreds and thousands of Bhágavatas, precisely to scrutinize their religion. And thousands of brahmin scholars have assembled in Brahma-dvipa.\* There must be a great conference there. So come, that is where we shall go.

OFFICIANT: We’ve seen Sankárshana’s ardor, for he is an advocate of the theory that all religions are authoritative. On the other hand, the queen, Her Majesty Sugándhadevi, is reported to sympathize with these people especially. Rumor has it that there is a royal functionary who also supports the Sátvatas.\*

4.20 UPĀ°: Alam asad|āśaṅkābhiḥ. na yathā|prastutād vyavahārād  
adhikaṃ tṛṇam api te kubjī|kartum īśate. tad ehi bā-  
hy'|āgamānāṃ Mīmāṃsaka|sarasvatī|sāgare nimajjatām  
unmajjatām ca vihvāla|vepitam anekavidhaṃ draṣṭuṃ  
tatr' āiva gacchāvah.

*Iti niṣkrāntau.*

PRELUDE TO ACT FOUR: ORTHODOX IMPOSTURES

INSTRUCTOR: Don't always fear the worst. They couldn't 4.20  
even bend a blade of grass if this was beyond the es-  
tablished customs. So come, let's go there and see the  
manifold, desperate floundering of the heterodox reli-  
gions as they are ducked again and again in the ocean of  
the Mimámsaka's streaming eloquence.

*Exeunt ambo.*