

The Charyapada

Mystic Poems of Eighth Century India

Charyapada 1

Luipada

The body is like the finest tree, with five branches.
Darkness enters the restless mind.
Strengthen the quantity of Great Bliss, says Luyi.
Learn from asking the Guru.
Why does one meditate?
Surely one dies of happiness or unhappiness.
Set aside binding and fastening in false hope.
Embrace the wings of the Void.
Luyi says: I have seen this in meditation.
Inhalation and exhalation are seated on two stools.

Charyapada 2

Kukkuripa

Milk from the tortoise cannot be contained in a pail.
While the alligator eats tamarind off the tree.
Listen musician, the courtyard is inside the room.
At midnight the *kanet* is stolen by thief.
The father-in-law falls asleep, the daughter-in-law is awake.
Where can we find the *kanet* stolen by the thief?
During the day she is afraid of the crow,
At night she goes to amorous Kamrupa.
Kukkuripa sang such a charya.
Only one in a million can understand it.

Charyapada 3

Virupapada

There is a woman winemaker who enters two rooms
She ferments wine with fine barks.
Hold me still, Shahaja, then ferment the wine

So that your shoulders are held strongly and your body free is from age and death.
When the sign is seen on the tenth door
The customer who walks in cannot get out.
A small pot, small is its nozzle.
Pour very carefully, hold steady, says Virupa.

Charyapada 4

Gundaripada

Press the three circles and, oh Yogini, embrace me,
Mashing the lotus.
Vajra, prepare a meal for the evening.
Yogini, I cannot live for a moment without you.
I shall kiss your mouth and drink the nectar of the lotus.
Friction cannot besmear you, Yogini.
She enters orient by climbing *manikula*.
Put a lock and key on the mother-in-law's room
And cut the wings of the sun and moon.
Gundaripada says: I am the hero of all sensuousness.
Between man and woman I raise my *linga*.

Charyapada 5

Chatillapada

The river of life, dark and deep, moves swiftly.
The two sides are muddy, the middle is depthless.
Chatilla makes a bridge for the sake of Dharma.
Those who wish can cross in confidence.
With the axe sharpened with Nirvana
Split open the tree of delusion and join the planks together.
When you climb the bridge, do not go right or left.
Bodhi is near you, do not go any further.
Those of you who want to cross to the other side
Ask Chatillapa, the greatest Guru.

Charyapada 6

Bhusukupada

Who have I accepted and who have I given up?
All sides are surrounded by the cries of the hunter.

The deer's own flesh is his enemy.
Bhusuku the hunter does not spare him for a moment.
The deer touches no green, nor drinks water.
He does not know where the doe lives.
The doe tills the deer: leave this forest, and free yourself.
Thus the deer sped for hid life, leaving no hoof marks behind.
Bhusuku says 'this does not reach the heart of the unwise'.

Charyapada 7

Kanhupada

Truth and untruth close the road which saddens Kanhupa.
Where will he live?
He who is supposed to be wise is also unwise.
They are three, they are three, three, they are all separate,
Kanhu says: the world is cleansed.
Those who came all went away.
Comings and goings make Kanhu sad.
O Kanhai, the City of Great Bliss is very near, says, Kanhu.
Yet I cannot get into my heart.

Charyapada 8

Kambalambarapada

Loading the boat of *Karuna* with gold
Leaves no room for silver.
Hey Kamli, glide towards the sky.
How does the cycle of rebirth return?
Take the wooden pole out and loosen the rope.
Ask a good Guru and sail ahoy.
When you climb into the boat, look around.
There are no oars, without them who can move?
Pressing right and left, he found his way
to great happiness.

Charyapada 9

Kanhupada

Destroy the stronghold of evamkara.
Free yourself from all bondage.

Kanhu was floating under ashab.
He became calm when he entered the lotus of Shahajananda.
When the elephant's passion is aroused by his she-elephant
He becomes wet.
Six kinds of living beings are by birth pure.
Neither existence nor nonexistence are impure
Even by a strand of hair.
Take ten forced jewels from the ten directions,
Reign over the elephant of learning easily.

Charyapada 10

Kanhupada

Outside the lies your hut, Dombi woman.
Shaven headed Brahmins, come and touch you.
Dombi woman, I shall make love to you
Kanhu is naked Kapali yogi who has no hatred.
There is a Lotus with sixty-four petals.
On it dances the *Dombi nari*.
O Dombi, let me ask you a question.
On whose boat do you come and go?
You sell the loom to others
While you spread the flat bamboo mat for me.
For you I have discarded the basket of reeds.
You see Dom-nari.
I the Kapalik wear a necklace of bones for your sake.
O Dombi, you have churned the sea and eaten the roots of the Lotus.
I shall kill you and take your life.

Charyapada 11

Kanhupada

The strength of the artery is firmly held in bed.
Spontaneous drums rise in heroic volume.
Kanhu, the kapali, is engaged in *ynic* joining
through the city of the body.
Knowledge and wisdom are tied to his feet
Like ankle bells of the hour.
Day and night are turned into ornaments of pleasure.
Wearing ashes from burnt-out anger-hatred-and illusion
he adorns a necklace with salvation pearls.
By killing his mother-in-law, sister-in-law and his mother,

Kanhu thus became a kapali.

Charyapada 13

Kanhupada

On the board of Karuna I play the nine strongholds.
With the mercy of Guru I win over the universal hold.
My king conquers duality.
With the blessing of the benefactor Supreme Bliss is near.
First I take the pawns with the bishop.
I defeat five.
I checkmate the living with my queen.
So is my victory over worldly existence.
Kanhu says: I check well
and take a count of sixty-four squares.

Charyapada 13

Kanhupada

Taking three refugees in a boat I captured eight.
In my body resides karuna and the chamber is empty.
I crossed the river of existence like a dream.
In mid-river I came to know the waves.
I used five '*tathagatas*' as oars.
Kanhai rows the boat like a dream.
Smelling, touching and tasting as they are
like a dream without sleep.
The mind is the boatman in a Great Void.
Kanhu goes for Union with Great Happiness.

Charyapada 14

Dombipada

The boat glides between the Ganges and Yamuna.
On it the Chandali woman takes drowning men across.
Row on Dombi, row on.
On your way, it is afternoon.
With the blessing of Guru
I shall return to the blissful 'ginapur'.
The five oars ply and the towing rope is bound at its end.

Bail water out with the pail of sky
So that water shall not enter the holes.
The sun and moon are the two wheels.
While Creation and Destruction are the masts.
Right and left and they cannot be seen.
Steer on.
She does not accept *cowrie* and *budi* as payment.
She ferries men across for free.
He who mounts the chariot,
not knowing how to steer,
only wanders from shore to shore.

Charyapada 15

Shantipada

Only the self can make itself conscious.
It cannot be perceived by any measure.
Whoever crosses the Shahaja path
Does not return.
Fool, do not wander aimlessly.
Samsar is a straight road.
Do not take the bends.
The high road is covered with a tent.
You do not understand the depth of the sea of illusion.
Neither a boat nor a raft can be seen ahead
Yet you do not ask Guru.
The way to the void cannot be seen.
Do not get lost by mistake.
If you take the straight road.
You will achieve the eighth *siddhi*.
Shanti leaves aside right and left and spends time playfully.
Where there are no tolls nor security checks nor any bush.
Listening to Guru's advice,
He can arrive at Shahaja with his eyes closed.

Charyapada 16

Mahidharapada

The '*anahata*' sound came pounding in three planks like black clouds thundering.
It made the unafraid '*mara*' flee with the *mandala*.
Like a wild elephant the mind runs towards the fathomless space. It thirsts.
Breaking the chains of virtue and vice, uprooting the pillar.

Only I could hear the sounds of nothingness in the sky.
My mind seeks Nirvana.
Intoxicated with the wine of Supreme Bliss
The drunkard ignores the three skies.
No enemy can be found for one who has mastered the five subjects.
The heat of the scorching sun
Drives me to the Ganges of the sky.
Mahidhara says: I have not seen anything in my dive.

Charyapada 17

Vinapada

The sun was the gourd, the moon was used as used as its strings.
The unstruck sound was the neck
And the ascetic woman became the disc.
O maid, it is the sound of Herua's Vina,
the sound of the Void as it vibrates into Karuna.
The duality of the real and the unreal are my bow,
While I console myself with wine of the elephant.
When the camel got caught in the camel trap,
the sound from thirty-two strings vibrated at the same time.
Dance vajrachary, sing goddess.
Buddham dharma is incomprehensible.

Charyapada 18

Kanhupada

I plied three worlds with great ease
and slept in the sport of great happiness.
O Dombi, tell me, how is your lover,
he who is at the high castle outside,
but inside, a kapali.
Dom woman, you have turned everything into the untouchable
Without any reason you have pushed aside the moon.
Some say you are very bad.
Wise men do not leave your neck.
Kanhu sings: you are chandali, passion-woman.
Dombi, there is no one as unchaste as you.

Charyapada 19

Kanhupada

Samsara and Nirvana are the tabor and the drum.
The mind and vital breath are the flute and the cymbal.
Victory cries spill over the sky.
Kanhupa goes to wed Dombi.
By marriage to Dombi he consumed the birth.
For a dowry he received blissful religion.
Day and night pass in love making.
Night ends in the net of the yogini.
The yogi is intense with Dombi.
He does not leave her for a second.
He is intoxicated with the love of Sahaja.

Charyapada 20

Kukkuripada

I have no hope, my husband is a monk.
My sensuous pleasures cannot be expressed in words.
When I looked at the confinement chamber
I committed an abortion.
What I want cannot be got there.
My first born a son was desired.
Only by feeling his pulses did I know how pitiful he was.
When I blossomed into full youth
I got rid of my mother and killed my father.
Kukkuripa says this world is static.
He who knows that is the winner.

Charyapada 21

Bhusukupada

The mouse feeds in the dark night.
He cuts ambrosia for food.
O Yogi! Kill the mouse-wind
To stop him from coming and going.
The mouse digs in the earth.
The restless mouse will cast an evil spirit, get rid of him.
Black is the color of the mouse.
I know not his caste.
He climbs to the sky and eats aman-paddy.
As long as the mouse keeps moving

still him with advice from Guru.
When the mouse stops eating,
Bhusuku says: all his ties will be cut off too.

Charyapada 22

Sarahapada

By making his own samsara and Nirvana
Man ties himself to it.
I do not know, unknown yogi,
How birth, death and life happen.
Death is like birth.
There is no difference between living and dying.
One who is afraid of birth and death
Should desire medicine or chemistry.
Those who travel in the three worlds
because of the cycle of action
cannot become immortal.

Charyapada 23

Bhusukupada

If you want to go hunting
Then kill five people.
To enter the lotus-garden
Remain single-minded
At morning it is alive at night it is dead.
Unless he gets the hunter's meat
Bhusuku will not enter the hut.
He caught the *maya*-deer
with the *maya*-net.
I know from Guru whose story it is.
The death of the body is not the end of self.
The garland remains.
The net cannot catch it.
Nor can the chains catch the deer.
In the restless race
the deer vanishes into the void.

Charyapada 24

Kanhupada

Like the moon the soul rises.
Illusion disperses with advice from Guru
The senses rise to the sky.
The seed is planted in the sky
Which penetrates three worlds.
When the sun rises, night disappears.
All illusions are cleared.
Like the swan which drinks milk only from milk-water
So should the substance of the world be drunk.

Charyapada 25

Tantipada

How religion was founded can be best known by the Vajra.
There are five *kalas*.
In the loom pure cloth can be woven.
I am the weaver.
The yarn is my own yet I do not know how to describe it.
The world is three and a half arms long.
This yarn is enough to weave for the whole world.
'*Anahata*' looms prepare the static cloth.
Two places have been broken and joined again stronger than ever.
Seated, I hear everything.
I have forsaken weaving and taken up the Vajra instead.

Charyapada 26

Shantipada

After washing the cotton only fibers remain.
After washing the fibers nothing remains.
Yet Heruka cannot be found.
Shanti says: Why think of him?
After washing the cotton I ate the Void.
I returned to the Void by destroying myself.
Shanti says: While one is travelling
Duality cannot be seen
even at the hair's end.
Shanti says: Without cause there is no action.
Such logic is not applicable to those who have experienced self.

Charyapada 27

Bhusukupada

The lotus blossomed until midnight.
Bodies of thirty two yoginis were in ecstasy.
The moon descended on the '*abadhuta marg*'.
The jewels describe the greatness of *Sahajananda*.
The moon entered Nirvana.
The lotus flows down the nerves.
One who experiences the four happiness'
Is the true Buddha.
Bhusuku says:
 in union I have perceived Shahajanada and the great happiness.

Charyapada 28

Sabarapada

The mountains are high, the Sabari girl lives there.
She wears peacock feathers.
Her neck is adorned with a necklace of gunja berries.
O wild Sabara, o mad Sabara,
Do not cry of make a noisy complaint.
Your own wife is the Sahaja Sundari.
The tree blossomed into flowers, the branch touched the sky.
Sabari wears ear- ornaments and vajra.
She wanders in this forest alone.
The bed of three metals is placed.
Sabara spreads the bed with great pleasure.
Sabara the lover and Sabari his mistress made love into the morning.
The heart is a betel leaf, eating camphor with great enjoyment.
By embracing the Void in his neck he passes the night in bliss.
Consider the Guru's advice as your bow and, with you mind as the arrow,
Pierce through Nirvana in one try.

Charyapada 29

Luyipada

It is neither being nor non being.
Who will believe this explanation ?
Luyi says: O foot !

Real wisdom is very difficult to understand.
It is manifested in three elements.
But its location cannot be ascertained.
How can the Agama or Veda explain
That which does not have color, sign or image ?
Who shall I ask for an answer ?
Like the moon on water is untrue
It is neither here nor there.
Luyi says: What shall I think ?
What I am with I cannot find any reason.

Charyapada 30

Bhusukupada

Clouds of compassion dispel
The mist of being or non-being.
Bhusuku, look at the wonder rising in the sky
Shahaja in the true self.
To know it the divine illusion becomes dispelled.
In solitude your mind rests in perfect bliss.
I have experienced happiness
By freeing myself from my bonds,
Like the moon that enlightened the sky.
In this triad world there is much essence.
When Bhusuku rises, darkness is dispelled.

Charyapada 31

Aryadevapada

Where the mind, the senses, the vital- breath become destroyed.
Where does the spirit reside, I wonder ?
In a wondrous way karuna beats the drum.
Aryadeva is resplendent in hopelessness.
As moonlight reflects on the moon
so the mind bereft of the senses glows
I have discarded fear, hatred and social conduct.
By observation I have judged the Void.
Aryadeva foiled everything.
casting fear and hatred away.

Charyapada 32

Sarahapada

There is not sound, no drop- mp dun or the *mandala* of moon.
The mind is on its own, it is free.
When you leave the straight path, do not take the curved one.
Bodhi is in you. You do not have to go to Lanka.
Do not look at the mirror to see your bangles.
Look at yourself with inner sight.
The yogi achieves enlightenment on both sides of the band.
Evil in company truly dies.
Right or left is full of ponds and canals.
Saraha says, son, you take them for the straight path.

Charyapada 33

Dhendhonpada

My hut is on top the hill.
I have no neighbors.
There is no rice in my cooking pot.
Beloved guests keep coming in .
The snake attacked by the frog
Can drink milk return to the teat ?
The bullock has calved, the cow is barren.
The pail is full of milk after three evenings of milking.
One who is clever is fool.
One who is a thief is honest.
Everyday the fox fights with the lion.
The song of Dhendhonpa is understood by a few.

Charyapada 34

Darikapa

In body, work and mind
Darika holds the Void and compassion together
Floating in the sky.
He has acquired great happiness through changing
Non-destination into destination.
He exists in the enlightened bark in the sky.
What will your mantra, tantra, meditation or scriptures achieve?
In the unsettled realm of great bliss Nirvana is accomplished.
You mix happiness and unhappiness into an illusory net.

Darika does not feel conscious of the self of not-self.
The king, king and the other king,
all are captivated by delusion.
Darika has received the twelfth world in the palace of Luyi.

Charyapada 35

Vadepada

For so long I was under a delusion.
Now I have understood by the light of Guru
My mind-king is destroyed.
It had fallen into the sea or sky.
I see everything empty in the ten direction.
There is no sin or virtue without the mind.
The 'Vajula' gave me the signs in the sky where I drank water.
Vade says, I am with misfortune.
I have eaten my mind-king.

Charyapada 36

Kanhupada

The arm of the Void hit reality
And all illusion has been eaten.
He does not sleep.
He cannot tell the difference between self and non-self.
Kanhu the naked falls asleep easily.
He has no senses, feels no pain.
He is in a deep sleep.
By freeing everyone he enjoys the sleep of bliss
I dreamt that the three worlds were empty.
The cycle of coming and going has stopped.
I shall hold Jalandharipa as a witness
The pundits do not want me by their side.

Charyapada 37

Tadapada

I am not myself, whom shall I fear ?
Thus the desire for *mohamudra* ceased in me.
O yogin, feel Shahaja, do not make any mistake.

Like four million freedoms, so you have to be free.
O yogin, do as you wish.
Do not plunder along the shahaja-path.
If he feels the weight of his small while swimming,
How can knowledge of self-realization be explained.

Charyapada 38

Sarahapada

The body is a small boat, pure mind is its oar.
With the words of propriety Guru holds the helm.
Keep you mind still as you hold the helm.
One cannot go across by any other means.
The boat is towed by a rope.
Leave everything, unite under Shahaja.
There is no other way
There is fear on path
The dacoit is very dangerous.
The world is destroyed,
Saraha says : follow the bank.
If you can row you boat against the current,
then the boat will enter the sky.

Charyapada 39

Sarahapada

O my mind, even in sleep you remain attached
to ignorance for inherent weakness,
How will you fare listening to the Guru's words'
I wonder how this universe was created from sound.
You took a wife in Banga.
Your science flees towards the other shore.
O strange is the attachment to the earth.
Even the stranger seems close.
The world is like bubble in water.
With Shahaja the spirit becomes empty.
O my mind, while ambrosia is available you drink poison.
Saraha says an empty cow shed is bitter.
I alone destroy the world and roam freely.

Charyapada 40

Kanahupada

Within the mind all is futile,
Including the Agam and other texts and rosaries.
Say how to talk about Shahaja.
That which does not enter into body, speech or mind.
It is useless for the Guru to give advice to his disciple.
That which is beyond words, how can it be explained ?
The more that is said the more it is for nothing.
Guru is speechless and the disciple is without hearing.
Kanhu says : what is the Jina-jewel like ?
It is like the dumb trying to make the deaf understand.

Charyapada 41

Bhusukupada

In the beginning this world did not exist.
In delusion man begins to see the rope as if it is a snake.
Can a 'bora' snake bite him ?
He a wonderful yogi!
Do not make your hand salty.
If you do, this world and nature enters your heart.
All your desires and dreams will come to an end.
The mirage in the desert, Gandharva city,
Is like reflections in the mirror,
Like a cyclone that turns tidal waves into a wall of water.
Like thee, the barren woman's son at play.
Oil from sand, the horn of the hare.
The sky blossomed into a flower.
The soldier calls it strange,
Bhusuku calls it strange.
All have the same habit.
Fool, if are still under false belief,
Learn from the right Guru.

Charyapada 42

Kanhupada

My mind is still full of Shahaja emptiness.
Do not be saddened if my shoulders should fall.
How can you say Kanhu does not exist.

One who enters the three worlds at once.
The ignorant man is upset by the loss of the visible.
Do the broken waves swallow the sea ?
The fool cannot see when it is there.
He cannot trace the butter in the milk.
In this world no one actually comes or goes.
This thought engages the Kanhu yogi delightfully

Charyapada 43

Bhushukupada

The great Shahaja tree stands in all three worlds.
Who is free from worldly ties?
As water mixes with water easily,
likewise the mind-jewel mixes with the jewel of great bliss.
One who has no one as his own, who can be a stranger?
One whose beginning is with nothing
Does not belong to a world of birth and death.
Bhusuku and the soldier say: this is all the same.
In this world nothing comes, nothing goes.
There is no existence and no non-existence.

Charyapada 44

Kankanpada

When emptiness mixed with emptiness
It was the beginning of all religion.
I observe all four corners equally.
Through the middle stage Nirvana can be achieved.
The drop does not enter my heart.
When I want one the other is destroyed.
Learn about where you come from.
Set aside everything in the middle.
Kankana says: with the sound of '*tathata*'
Everything is destroyed.

Charayapada 45

Kanhupada

The mind is a tree, the five senses are its branches.

Hope bears fruits and leaves in abundance.
Kanhua says : using the advice of Guru as an axe
cut off the branches
so that passion, desire or thirst does not grow back.
The tree grows in the water of righteousness.
The Guru is witness, the wise uproot it.
One who does not know the mystery
of this tree's growth and destruction.
fool is he to have to come back again and again
in the Samsara receive pain.

Charayapada 46

Joyanandi

Behold, like in the dream, or in the mirror,
Existence is behind the curtain.
When the mind is free of illusion,
it is free of coming and going.
What does not burn, or get wet, or cut ?
See how the maya-illusion wraps it in strong ties.
Shadow, illusion, body are all alike.
They dwell on both sides in different images.
Joyanandi says : cleanse your mind clearly
with the enlightenment course and nothing less.

Charayapada 47

Dharmapada

I am united in the midst of the lotus and the thunderbolt.
The Chandali woman burns with equity.
The Dombi' house is on fire.
We put the fire down with moon water.
When the straw burns smoke cannot be seen.
From the tip of the Sumeru mountain I have entered the sky.
Harihara, Brahma, Bhatta have all been burnt down.
The nine virtue Patta is burnt too.
Dharma says : I know very clearly
that water has arisen through the five pipes.

Charayapada 48

Kukkuripada

Kulish and Karuna are united.
The army is in deep sleep
The senses are won over.
Great Bliss becomes king of the Void.
The shell played the 'anahata' sound.
The magic tree and the worldly powers fled away.
Kukkuripa raised his finger aloft and said :
In the city of Bliss all has been won over.
The three worlds became filled with Great Bliss.
So says Kukkuripa in great content.

Note : In 1907, Hariprashad Sastri, a scholar working in the Royal Archive in Nepal discovered an ancient palm-leaf manuscript. It contained mystic poems, which were written around eighth-ninth century. The language employed in the poems (collectively known as the 'Caryapada' / 'Charyapada') is such that lineage to it is claimed by Oriya, Bengali, Maithili, Assamese and other languages. The discovery brought to light the oldest specimens of Indo-Aryan literary creativity. The text has been received from one of our consultants, but he could not specify the name of the translator who has rendered 48 of the charyapadas.
--- MetaNym