



## A Festival of Krishna (with DVD)

*Harsha V Dehejia*

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To wait under the kadamba tree is to invite Krishna into our lives, prepare for his arrival with anticipation and adornment, and then when we hear his flute, surrender ourselves completely to him so that we may be touched by his mellifluous love, a love so divine that we forget our mortal world and enter the magical and charmed world of his love. The kadamba tree is Krishna's tree; of all the trees in Vrindavana, it is here that he plays his flute and under its canopy gopis gather, and when we wait there along with them, we do so with the bhava or feeling of a gopi, a bhava that seeks the sheer ecstasy of the heart and the joyous trembling of romance, and not the splendours of the world and the thrills of material success, a spirit that is prepared to turn its back on prapancha or the world of duties and tasks. For here under the kadamba tree we must put away the burdens and demands of the world and, like the gopis, leave our mundane chores behind, even if they are unfinished; like the birds that gather in its shade, we come asking for no worldly boons, but merely to sing of the miracle of love; like the blossoms that carry no thorns, but merely bring the perfumed wind and then fall at Krishna's feet to become his vanamal. Under the kadamba tree, our breath should carry no pious words or petitions, but just the simple melody of love songs that we will offer at his lotus feet, under that tree of love we will be like the cows that are drawn to Krishna, for after all he is Govind, and will become like the bees that hover around him, for he is also Madhusudana, the stealer of honey; for under the kadamba tree we will adore Kanha the dark one, of the colour of the clouds of ashadha and of the frolicking Yamuna, and let our hearts be stolen by him, for he is Mohana, the only who allures, and only then will we really find him and know his love, and in finding him we will discover ourselves.

Harsha V. Dehejia, takes us on a journey of the loves of Krishna, his lilas, kridas and his madhurya, and above all, the rasa lila. But Krishna is not only for the royalty and the nobility, he belongs to the people, the potter and the puppeteer, the bride and the mother, for he is celebrated at village fairs and in chowks. Equally the modern artist does not remain untouched by the magic of Krishna and depicts him on his palette. This journey is a festival of heart-throbbing love and pulsating romance, of tender moments of longing and belonging and, ultimately, of listening to the flute of Krishna within oneself for that is where the journey ends.

In the film on DVD Ateliers of Love, Harsha V. Dehejia takes us on an enchanting journey of discovering the patrons and the palaces where Krishna paintings were made and where, even today when the winds blow through the Kadamba tree, we hear Krishna's flute. We see the palaces of Mandu where we hear the foot falls of Baz Banadur and Rupa Mati, the forts of Kangra where Sansar Chand's foot prints are still seen and visit the enchanted environs of Kishangarh where we hear the hushed voices of Savant Singh and Bani Thani. And as the journey ends, we are privy to some of the most glorious moments of five magnificent centuries of Krishna painting.

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