
Practical Mrdaᅅga Lessons



By Rāmānujāchārya Dās

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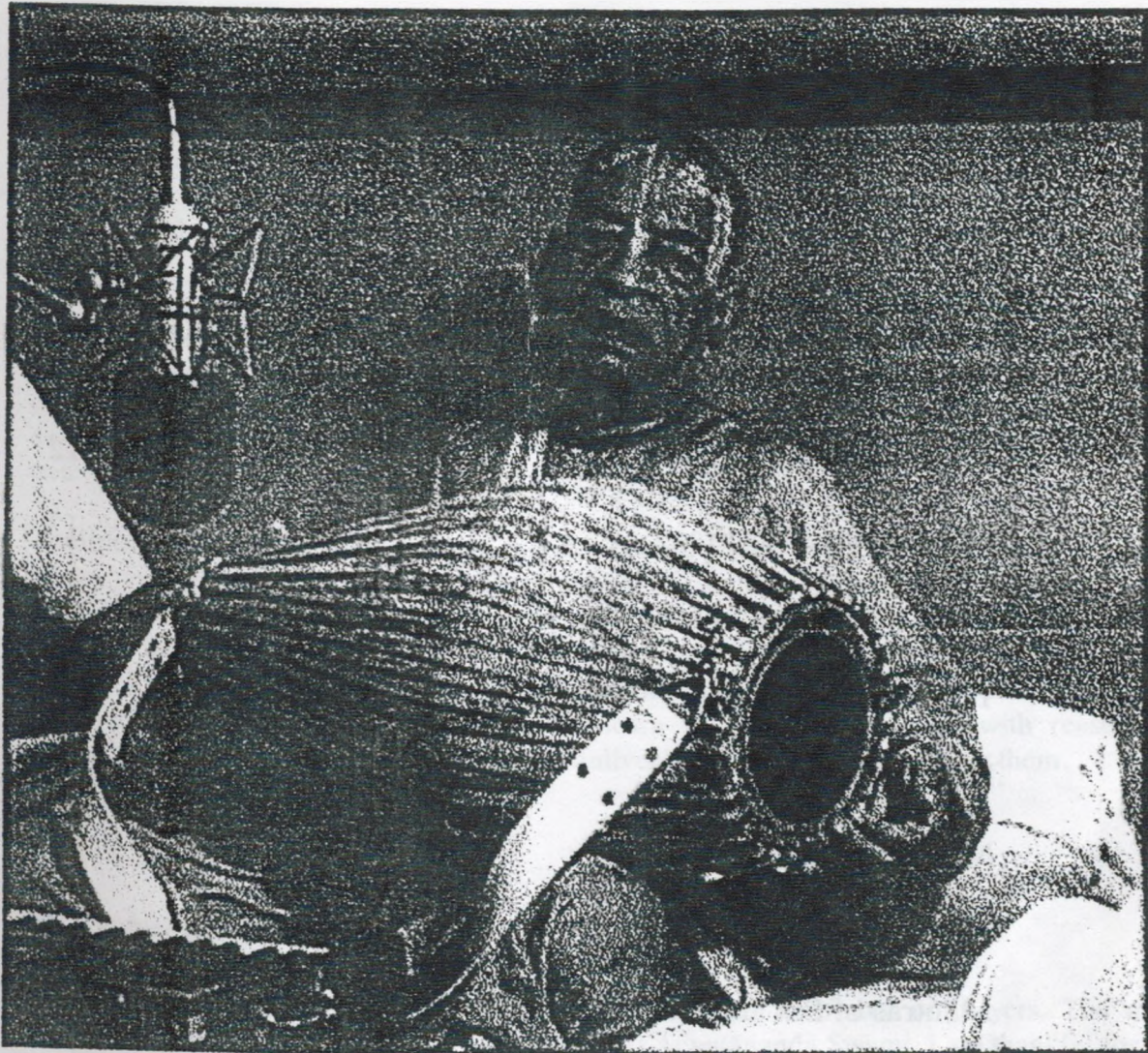
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Dedicated to the Service of
 Śrīla Prabhupāda
 and all of his followers.



*maṅgāprabhoḥ kīrtana-nṛtya-gīta-
 vāditra-mādyan-manaso rasena
 romāñca-kampāśru-taraṅga-bhājo
 vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

Chanting the holy name, dancing in ecstacy, singing and playing musical instruments, the spiritual master is always gladdened by the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Because he is relishing the mellows of pure devotion within his mind, sometimes his hair stands on end. He feels quivering in his body, and tears flow from his eyes like waves. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.

(Śrī Śrī Gury-aṣṭaka 2)

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Practical Mṛdaṅga Lessons

by Rāmānujāchārya Dās

Preface

Playing the *mṛdaṅga* is a very important skill for use in the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is often seen dancing in a *kīrtana* accompanied by *mṛdaṅga* players. Very soon after Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in America he sent for *mṛdaṅgas* from India. Even though the first American *mṛdaṅga* players were not very expert in comparison with many Bengali players, Śrīla Prabhupāda still praised their playing and encouraged them. He also personally gave *mṛdaṅga* lessons to the early devotees.

Now, by the grace of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the *saṅkīrtana* movement has spread all over the world. *Hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is heard in all of the major cities on the surface of the globe. Daily in temples throughout the world, regular *kīrtanas*, *āratis* and *bhajan*s are going on. It is obvious that Lord Caitanya's movement needs many competent *mṛdaṅga* players.

Traditionally the training of a really expert *mṛdaṅga* player under the direction of a master player would take several years, with a minimum of one hour of practice per day. Ideally this training starts from an early age. This is still going on, especially in traditional centers of Gaudiya Vaisṇava culture such as Navadvīpa, Vṛndāvana and Jagannātha Puri. Many devotees throughout the world, however, do not have the opportunity, time or inclination to learn in this way, but they still want to learn to play the *mṛdaṅga* with reasonable competency, and in a methodical, clear and enlivening way. This course is for them.

Acknowledgements

I learned to play *mṛdaṅga* by listening to and copying a number of players. The most prominent among them are Śrīla Prabhupāda and Acyutānanda Swami. I am thankful for the personal instruction that I received from Viṣṇu Datta Prabhu. I also learned a number of rhythmic patterns from Duryodhana-guru Prabhu's book, *Introduction to the Balaram Mridunga*. The section on the description of the *bols* is largely based on the relevant section from his book. I am grateful to all of these devotees.

Maggie Laganpersad of the Playhouse Photographic Studio, Durban took the photos for the section on the *bols*. The same photos and the picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda were scanned and edited by His Holiness Bhakti Caitanya Swami. I thank them for their valuable assistance.

I also thank Śrīmān Jay Gokool of Atlas Printers, Durban, and Śrīmatī Gaṅgā Devī Dāsī (PSD) for their valuable help in the printing of this book.

The Tāls (Rhythmic Cycles)

Before we touch the mṛdaṅga we shall first learn how to keep time by counting the *tāls* or rhythmic cycles as we use them in this course.

In Indian music the term *tāl* means a rhythmic cycle which contains a particular number of beats called *mātrās*. In each *tāl* there are beats with different degrees of importance. The most strongly emphasized beat is the *sam* (pronounced "sum") which is usually the first beat of the *tāl*. In some *tāls* there are other important beats that are called *tālīs*. An unstressed beat is called a *khālī*. *Khālī* means "empty." In musical notation the *sam* is indicated by the symbol "X," the *tālīs* are indicated by numerals such as 2, 3, etc. and the *khālīs* are indicated by the symbol "O."

The *tāls* are divided into sections called *khaṇḍas*. The first beat of each *khaṇḍa* must be either the *sam*, a *tālī* or a *khālī*. In musical notation the *khaṇḍas* are separated by vertical lines.

To keep time the *tāls* are indicated by various hand movements. The *sam* is indicated by a clap of the right hand upon the left palm, and the *khālī* is indicated by a wave of the right hand. The other beats are counted by tapping the fingers of the right hand upon the left palm, starting with the little (fourth) finger, then the ring (third) finger and then the middle (second) finger.

There are many different *tāls* in Indian music, but we will be using only two in this course, *Kaherwā Tāl*, which has eight beats per cycle, and *Dādrā Tāl*, which has six beats per cycle. To begin with we will only concern ourselves with *Kaherwā Tāl*. We will deal with *Dādrā Tāl* later on.

Below is the musical notation for our first and most important *tāl*, *Keherā Tāl*. It shows three lines. The first line shows the *tālī* and the *khālī* shown by "X" and "O" respectively. The second line shows the *mātrās* or beats indicated by numerals. And the third line shows the various hand movements indicating the various *mātrās* of the *tāl*.

Kaharwā Tāl or Kaherwā Tāl

X				O				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
clap	little finger	ring finger	middle finger	wave	little finger	ring finger	middle finger	

You should learn to keep time in *Kaharwā Tāl* with these hand movements while counting the numbers of the *mātrās*. This should be done very steadily and with a moderate speed.

The common *kārtāl* rhythm is shown as follows in *Kaharwā Tāl*.

X				O				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
ching	—	chī	chī	ching	—	chī	chī	

The dashes used on *mātrās* 2 and 6 indicate either an extension of the previous *mātrā* or a rest. You should practice reciting the syllables of this *kārtāl* rhythm while accompanying it with the appropriate hand movements as described above.

Tuning Balarām Mrdaṅgas

Any type of mṛdaṅga may be used with this course, but I would now like to give directions for tuning the Balarām Mrdaṅga. The Balarām Mrdaṅga was developed under Śrīla Prabhupāda's order and supervision. One of the reasons for its development is to avoid the use of leather (which may or may not be from non-violent sources). Another reason is its durability. Also, because rubber rims circle the heads, playing the Balarām Mrdaṅga is gentler on the hands. Another advantage of the Balarām Mrdaṅga is its easy tunability. The following are directions for tuning the Balarām Mrdaṅga.

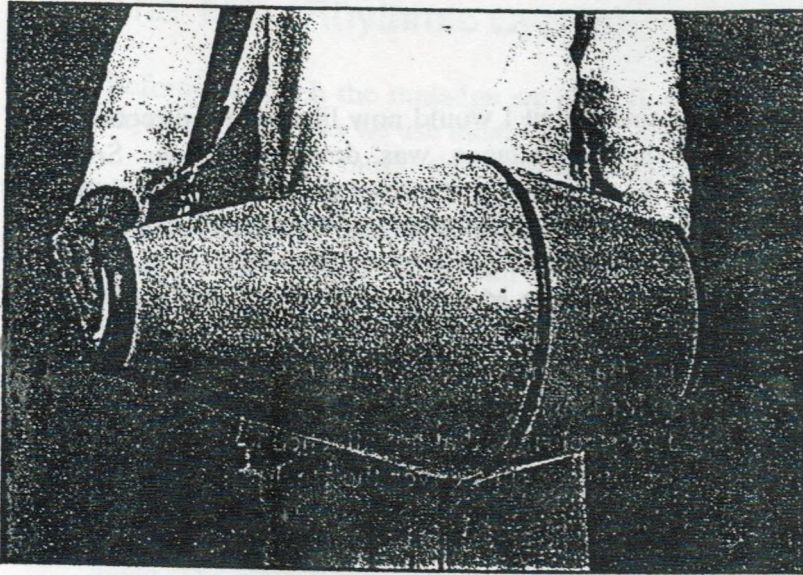
The Mylar plastic drumheads are held by steel rings that are attached to the fiberglass body of the mṛdaṅga by Allen screws. Rubber bumper rims cover the steel rings. Tuning is done with the tuning key that is provided, or an equivalent Allen key. The heads are first installed without the rubber rims by first loosely screwing in the screws. Then the rubber rims are installed over the steel rings. Then, while pulling back the rubber rims, screw in the screws until they are snug but not tight using the tuning key.

Avoid tuning one head of the drum while the other head is flat on the ground, for this will inhibit the resonance of the head that you are tuning.

Tighten (or loosen) each screw very slightly (from $1/8$ to $1/4$ of a turn), going around the circle until the desired pitch is reached. Strike the head after every adjustment in order to hear the result. Instead of going around in a circle, you can also go in a star pattern. With the eight screws of the large head, adjust every third screw; and with the five screws of the small head, tighten every second screw.

The large head should be tuned first since change of pitch of the large head tends to affect the pitch of the small head. The preferred pitch depends upon the individual, although a recommended combination is tuning the large head to the tonic and the small head to a perfect fifth up. C is recommended for the large head and G is recommended for the small head. The heads of the mṛdaṅga, which is played on the cassette, which accompanies this book, are tuned to C and G; so the pitch for tuning can be gotten by listening to the cassette.

Also, before playing the drum, talcum powder should be applied to the heads and rubber rims in order to reduce friction.



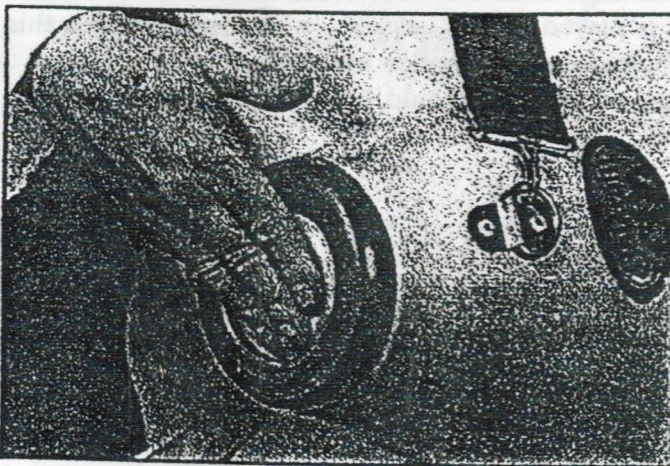
The Playing Position While Standing

The strap of the drum is worn across the right shoulder. The right hand strikes the small head and the left hand strikes the large head. Those who are left-handed should reverse sides.

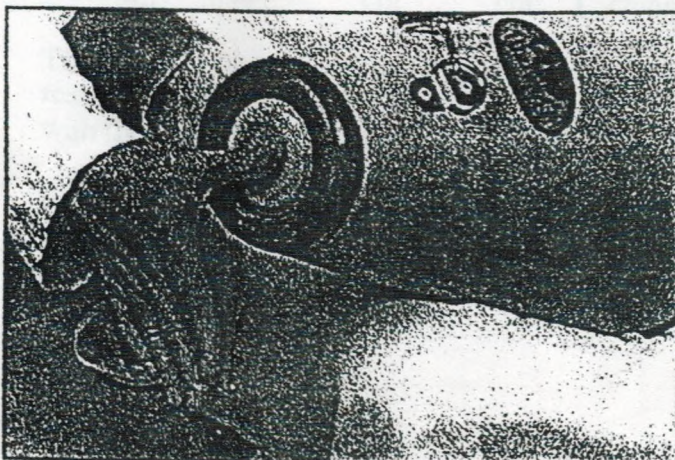
Please note: A glossary explaining the special terminology used in this course is given on page 23.

The Execution of the Bols

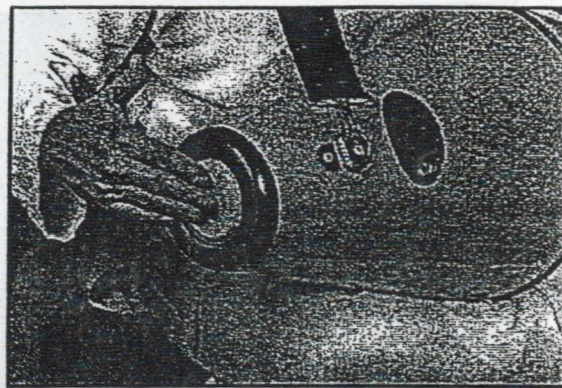
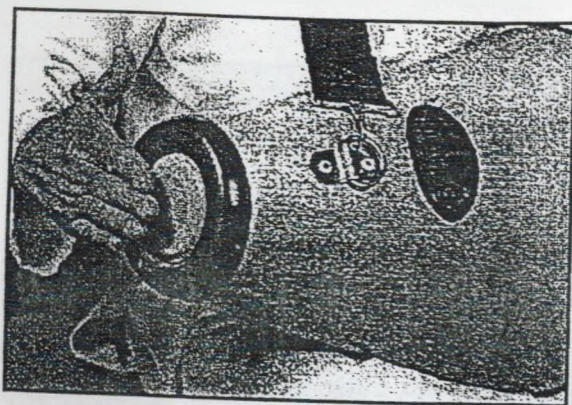
The *bols* are memory-assisting syllables corresponding to the various types of strokes on the *mridanga*.



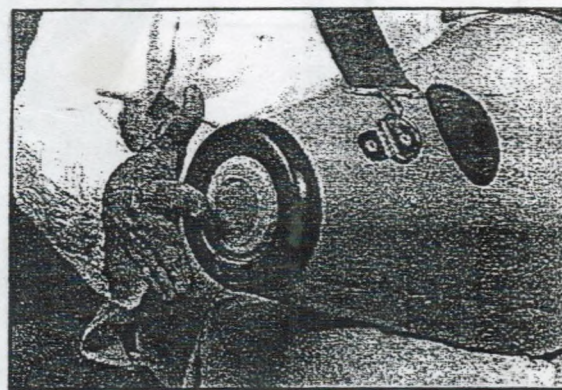
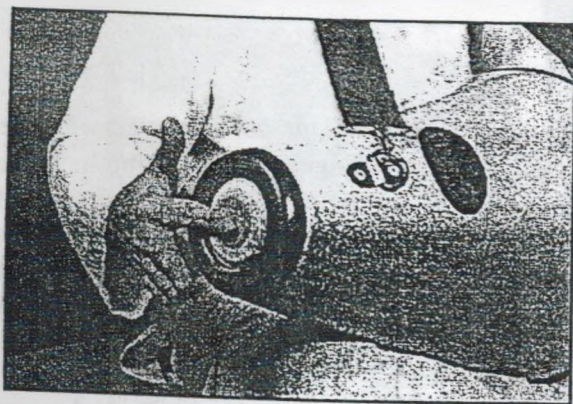
1. **te** This *bol* is played with the first three fingers of the right hand on the small head. The tips of the fingers contact the centre of the *gāb*. This is a non-resonant *bol*.



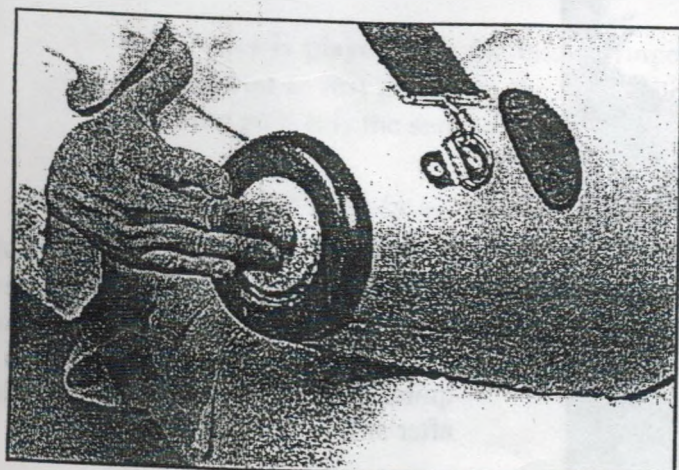
2. **re** This *bol* is played with the thumb of the right hand on the small head. The outer side of the thumb contacts the centre of the *gāb* to produce this non-resonant *bol*.



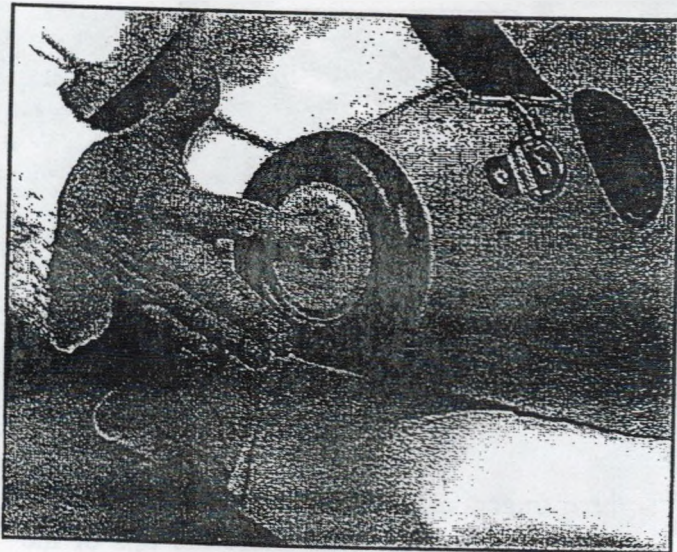
3. **tu** This *bol* is played with the first three fingers of the right hand. The fingers are held straight. The middle joints of the fingers contact the rim, while the tips of the fingers simultaneously contact the *gāb*. This is a resonant stroke, so immediately on contact, the fingers are allowed to rebound off the head.



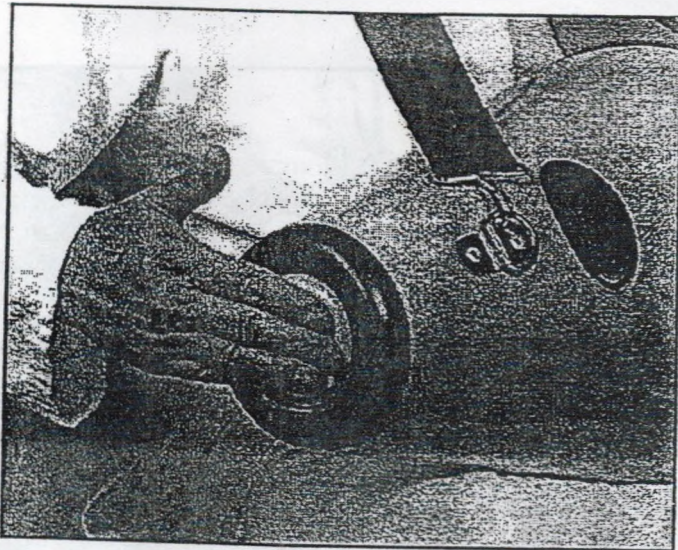
4. **tā** This *bol* is played with the index finger of the right hand on the small head. The middle joint of the index finger contacts the rim, while the tip of the index finger simultaneously contacts the *gāb*. This is a resonant *bol*, so immediately upon contact, the finger is allowed to rebound off the head.



5. **tī** This *bol* is played with the second and third fingers of the right hand on the small head. the tips of the second and third fingers contact the *gāb*, where they are allowed to resonate in order to produce this nonresonant tone.



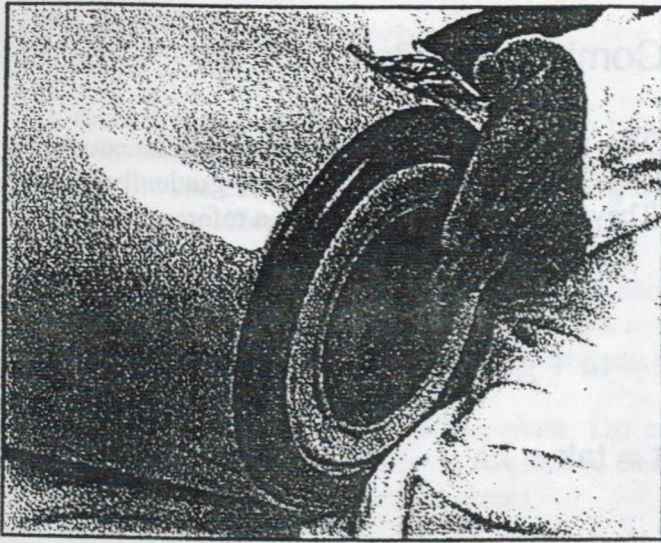
6. **ri** This *bol* is played with the index finger of the right hand on the small head in the same manner in which *ti* is executed. It is also a nonresonant *bol*. *Ti ri* is a standard pattern which is frequently used. The sequence may be reversed (*ri ti*) according to the discretion of the player.



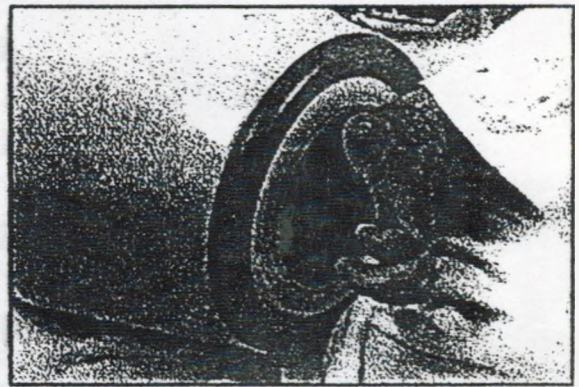
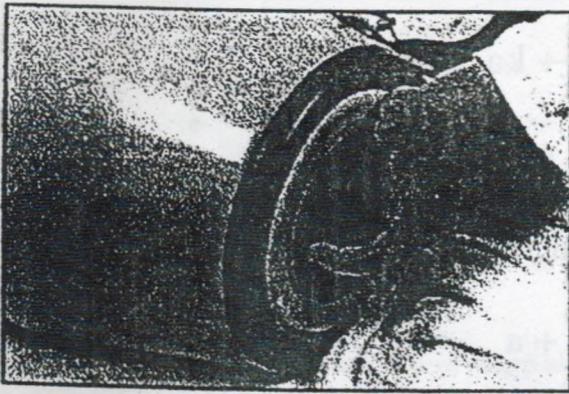
7. **tak** This *bol* is played with the first three fingers of the right hand on the small head. The middle joints of the fingers contact the rim, while the tips of the fingers simultaneously contact the *gāb*. The fingers should be slightly cupped in order to produce a "pop" sound. Because this is a nonresonant tone, the fingers are allowed to remain in contact with the head.



8. **ke, ki or ka** This *bol* is played with the entire left hand on the large head. The hand should remain flaccid. This is a nonresonant *bol*, which requires that the hand remain on the head after striking.



9. **ge** This *bol* is played with the three central fingers of the left hand on the large head. The uppermost part of the palm at the base of the fingers contact the rim, while the tips of the three fingers should simultaneously contact the *gāb*. This is a resonant *bol*, so immediately upon contact, the fingers are allowed to rebound off the head.



10. **ghin** This *bol* is played with the middle finger and the base of the left hand on the large head. The wrist is allowed to rest gently on the rim while the bent middle finger plays a resonant stroke on the *gāb*. Immediately following this, the base of the palm is pushed across the head from the outer edge to the midpoint of the *gāb*. This will produce a bending of the tone.

11. **a** This *bol* is played with the middle finger of the left hand on the large head. The wrist is allowed to rest gently on the rim while the bent middle finger plays a resonant stroke on the *gāb*. It is the same as the first part of the previous *bol*, **ghin**.

12. **ghun** This *bol* is played by pushing the base of the palm across the head from the outer edge to the midpoint of the *gāb*. It is the same as the second part of *bol* number 10, **ghin**. It is played after playing the previous *bol*, **a**, but not as immediately as in **ghin**, but on a following beat. (*Bols* number 11 and 12, **a** and **ghun** are a separated form of *bol* number 10, **ghin**, but they are played on separate, successive beats.)

The Combination Bols

The following are combination *bols*. This means that they are played simultaneously on the large and small heads of the mṛdaṅga. These combination *bols* will be gradually introduced. It is not necessary to learn them now. They are merely listed here as a reference.

dhā = tā + ge

dhit = tak + ka

dhe = ti (ri) + ge

dhi = ti (ri) + ka

dho = tā + ka

dhin = ti (ri) + ghin

dhān = tā + ghin

dhat = ti + a

dhu = tā + a

The Mṛdaṅga Mantras

In the context of mṛdaṅga playing a *mantra* is a rhythmic pattern expressed with *bol*s. The student should first memorize a *mantra* before attempting to play it on the mṛdaṅga so that he/she can fully concentrate on playing it on the mṛdaṅga without looking at the book. "If you can't say it, you can't play it."

The names of the *bol*s in this learning system may differ from other systems or teachers although the *mantras* may be the same. In this course the *bol*s have been standardized in order to avoid confusion and to make learning easier.

Some of the *mantras* are more important. The numbers designating these *mantras* are underlined. More attention should be given to these. Knowledge of only these *mantras* is sufficient for most *kīrtans* and *bhajans*.

The first two *mantras* (1 and 2) are initially taught according to the traditional Bengali system. They are for practice only and are not used for accompanying *kīrtan* or *bhajan*. Nevertheless they are still very valuable, for they loosen up the hands and wrists and teach coordination between the two hands. Start slowly and gradually increase the speed until quite fast.

1. X O
 | te re ke tu | te re ke tu |

2. X O
 | te re te re | te re ke tu |

The following two *mantras* (3 and 4) are also practice *mantras*. They were taught by Śrīla Prabhupāda and recorded on his mṛdaṅga lessons tape.

3. X O
 | ki ti tā — | ki ti tā — |
 | ki ti tā ki | tā — — — |

4. X O
 | ge ti tā — | ge ti tā — |
 | ge ti tā ge | tā — — — |

After learning the above two *mantras* separately, play them alternatingly.

Bhajan and Kīrtan Mantras

All the following *mantras* can be used to accompany *bhajans* and *kīrtans*. The following two *mantras* (5 and 6) are actually adapted from *tablā mantras*. Number 6 is a variation of number 5. They have a very interesting sound and provide a very steady beat. They would be suitable for accompanying the Nṛsiṃha prayers. The strokes on the small head provide the same rhythm as the standard *kartāl* rhythm.

dhe = ti (ri) + ge dhā = tā + ge

5. X O
 | dhe ki ti tā | ti ge dhā ū |

6. X O
 | dhe ki ū dhā | ti ge dhā ū |

The following *mantra* is very important. It is one of the most important *thekas* in the whole course. It is very good for medium speed *kīrtans* and *bhajans*. It is useful for providing a very steady and sustained rhythm.

When two or more *bols* and/or rest signs are joined together with a curved line underneath them, as in the second and sixth beats of the following *mantra*, they have the value of one beat.

dhit = tak + ka

7. X O
 | dhā —ti tā dhit | tā ge ti dhā ge |

The following *mantra* is a variation of the previous one. It is usually used for variation when a *kīrtan* gets going in order to make the *kīrtan* more interesting.

8. X O
 | dhā —ti tā dhit | tā —ti tā dhit |
 | tā —ti tā dhit | tā ge ti dhā ge |

The following *mantra* is also based on *mantra* number 7 and is used for fast, driving *kīrtans*.

9. X O
 | dhā —ti tā dhe | tā ge ti dhā ge |

The following *mantra* is useful for variation.

10. X O
 | tā ki — dhit | tā ge ge ti |

The Prabhupāda Beat

The following *mantra* is most important. It is sometimes called "the Prabhupāda beat." Śrīla Prabhupāda generally used a close variation of this *mantra* as the basis of his playing. It is used for slow and medium *kīrtans* and *bhajans*.

11. $\begin{array}{c} X \\ \text{dhā} \quad \text{—} \quad \text{—} \quad \text{tā} \end{array} \left| \begin{array}{c} O \\ \text{ti} \quad \underline{\text{ri ti}} \quad \underline{\text{ri ti}} \quad \text{tā} \end{array} \right|$
 $\left. \begin{array}{c} \underline{\text{ka ti}} \quad \underline{\text{ri ka}} \quad \underline{\text{ti ri}} \quad \text{ge} \end{array} \right| \text{dhe} \quad \text{dhā} \quad \text{dhe} \quad \text{dhe} \left. \right|$

The following *mantra* is a variation of the previous one.

12. $\begin{array}{c} X \\ \underline{\text{tā ge}} \quad \text{—} \quad \text{—} \quad \text{tā} \end{array} \left| \begin{array}{c} O \\ \text{ti} \quad \underline{\text{ri ti}} \quad \underline{\text{ri ti}} \quad \text{tā} \end{array} \right|$
 $\left. \begin{array}{c} \underline{\text{ka ti}} \quad \underline{\text{ri ka}} \quad \underline{\text{ti ri}} \quad \text{ge} \end{array} \right| \text{dhe} \quad \text{dhā} \quad \text{dhe} \quad \text{dhe} \left. \right|$

Playing Breaks

Now we are going to learn how to play breaks. Breaks are played at the end of a sung *mantra*, line or verse, and are a very important part of the playing style.

13.

X	ka ti	ri ge	tā	ka ti	ri ge	tā	ka ti	ri ge	
	tā								

Here is how you fit in this break with *mantra* number 7. On the accompanying cassette the first syllable of each *mantra* is replaced with the letter designating that *mantra*. This is done in order to keep track of where we are in the series.

	X				O				
(a)	dhā	—ti	tā	dhit	tā	ge ti	dhā	ge	
(b)	dhā	—ti	tā	dhit	tā	ge ti	dhā	ge	
(c)	dhā	—ti	tā	dhit	tā	ge ti	dhā	ge	
(d)	dhā	—ti	tā	dhit	tā	ge ti	dhā	ge	
(e)	dhā	—ti	tā	dhit	tā	ge ti	dhā	ge	
(f)	dhā	—ti	tā	dhit	tā	ge ti	dhā	ge	
(g)	dhā	—ti	tā	dhit	tā	ge ti	dhā	ge	
(h)	ka ti	ri ge	tā	ka ti	ri ge	tā	ka ti	ri ge	
(i)	tā	—ti	tā	dhit	tā	ge ti	dhā	ge	
(j)	dhā	—ti	tā	dhit	tā	ge ti	dhā	ge	

It is a valuable practice to repeatedly play lines (h) and (i).

Here is how you fit in this break with *mantra* number 11. On the accompanying cassette the first syllable of each *mantra* is replaced with the letter designating that *mantra*. This is done in order to keep track of where we are in the series.

	X				O			
(a)	dhā	—	—	tā	ti	<u>ri ti</u>	<u>ri ti</u>	tā
	<u>ka ti</u>	<u>ri ka</u>	<u>ti ri</u>	ge	dhe	dhā	dhe	dhe
(b)	dhā	—	—	tā	ti	<u>ri ti</u>	<u>ri ti</u>	tā
	<u>ka ti</u>	<u>ri ka</u>	<u>ti ri</u>	ge	dhe	dhā	dhe	dhe
(c)	dhā	—	—	tā	ti	<u>ri ti</u>	<u>ri ti</u>	tā
	<u>ka ti</u>	<u>ri ka</u>	<u>ti ri</u>	ge	dhe	dhā	dhe	dhe
(d)	dhā	—	—	tā	ti	<u>ri ti</u>	<u>ri ti</u>	tā
	<u>ka ti</u>	<u>ri ge</u>	tā	ka ti	<u>ri ge</u>	tā	<u>ka ti</u>	<u>ri ge</u>
(e)	tā	—	—	tā	ti	<u>ri ti</u>	<u>ri ti</u>	tā
	<u>ka ti</u>	<u>ri ka</u>	<u>ti ri</u>	ge	dhe	dhā	dhe	dhe
(f)	dhā	—	—	tā	ti	<u>ri ti</u>	<u>ri ti</u>	tā
	<u>ka ti</u>	<u>ri ka</u>	<u>ti ri</u>	ge	dhe	dhā	dhe	dhe

As in the above exercise, it is a valuable practice to repeatedly play lines (d) and (e).

The following is another break. It is more open and is good for faster *kīrtans*.

14.

X		O
ge tā	ge tā	dhā
ge tā	ge tā	ge tā
ge tā	ge tā	ge tā
dhā		

Here is how you fit in this break with *mantra* number 9. On the accompanying cassette the first syllable of each *mantra* is replaced with the letter designating that *mantra*. This is done in order to keep track of where we are in the series.

	X	O
(a)	dhā —ti tā dhe	tā ge ti dhā ge
(b)	dhā —ti tā dhe	tā ge ti dhā ge
(c)	dhā —ti tā dhe	tā ge ti dhā ge
(d)	dhā —ti tā dhe	tā ge ti dhā ge
(e)	dhā —ti tā dhe	tā ge ti dhā ge
(f)	dhā —ti tā dhe	tā ge ti dhā ge
(g)	dhā —ti tā dhe	tā ge ti dhā ge
(h)	ge tā ge tā dhā ge tā	ge tā dhā ge tā ge tā
(i)	dhā —ti tā dhe	tā ge ti dhā ge
(j)	dhā —ti tā dhe	tā ge ti dhā ge

As in the previous exercise, it is a valuable practice to repeatedly play lines (h) and (i).

More Mantras

Here's another *mantra* which is very nice for variety in *kīrtans*.

15. X
| ki ta ki -gc dhā | ki ta ki -gc dhā |

The following *mantra* is a variation of the previous one.

16. X
| ki ta ki -gc dhā | gc ta gc -gc dhā |

This *mantra* is also interesting for variation. It sounds nice when played with *mantra* 10.

17. X
| tā -ki ti ri gc | tā -ki ti ri gc |

Introducing the Bol Ghin

The execution of this *bol*, which is played with the heel of the hand on the large head, is described on page eleven.

The following *mantra* (19) is basically a practice beat, although it may sometimes be used for *kīrtans* such as the *Nṛsiṃha Prayers*. It has a very steady rhythm.

dhin = ti (ri) + ghin.

18. X O
| dhin tā ti tā | ti tā dhin tā |

The following *mantra* is a variation of the previous one, and is more developed.

dho = tā + ka.

19. X O
| dhin tā ti dho | ti tā dhin tā |

The following *mantra* is a variation of *mantra* 11, "the Prabhupāda beat."

20. X O
| ghin tā ghin — tā | ti ri ti ri ti tā |
| ka ti ri ka ti ri ge | dhe dhā dhe dhe |

The following *mantra* is a variation of *mantra* 7. dhān = tā + ghin

21. X O
| dhān —ti tā dhit | tā a ti dhān ghin |

The following *mantra* is a variation of the previous one. dhu = tā + a

22. X O
| dhu —ti tā dhit | tā a ti dhān ghin |

The above two *mantras* may be played alternatingly.

The following *mantra* is very effective. It must be played fairly quickly in order to sound good though.

23. X O
| ghin ti tā — a dhin ti | ghin ti tā — a dhin ti |

Mantras of Six and Twelve Beats Per Cycle

Until now all of the *mantras* that we have studied have been in *Kaherwā Tāl* and have had eight or sixteen beats. Now we will learn *mantras* in *Dādrā Tāl* which has six beats per cycle.

Below is the musical notation for *Dādrā Tāl*. It is shown in three lines. The first line shows the *tālī* and the *khālī* shown by "X" and "O" respectively. The second line shows the *mātrās* or beats indicated by numerals. And the third line shows the various hand movements indicating the various *mātrās* of the *tāl*.

Dādrā Tāl

X			O		
1	2	3	4	5	6
clap	little finger	ring finger	wave	little finger	ring finger

You should learn to keep time in *Dādrā Tāl* with these hand movements while counting the numbers of the *mātrās*. This should be done very steadily and with a moderate speed.

The common *kartāl* rhythm for *Dādrā Tāl* is shown as follows:

X			O		
1	2	3	4	5	6
ching	—	chi	ching	—	chi

The dashes used on *mātrās* 2 and 5 indicate either an extension of the previous *mātrā* or a rest. You should practice reciting the syllables of this *kartāl* rhythm while accompanying it with the appropriate hand movements as described above.

The following *mantra* and the variation that follows it are simple but very effective.

24. X O
| dhā — ti | tā ka ti |

25. X O
| dhā ge ti | tā ka ti |

The above two *mantras* may be played alternatingly.

Here's another nice *mantra* in *Dādrā Tāl*.

26. X O
| ge ti ri tā | ka ti ri tā |

The following two *mantras* have twelve beats per cycle.

27. $\begin{array}{c} X \\ \left| \begin{array}{c} dh\bar{a} \quad \text{---} \quad t\bar{a} \\ t\bar{a} \quad \text{---} \quad t\bar{a} \end{array} \right| \begin{array}{c} O \\ t\bar{a} \quad \underbrace{ka \quad ti} \quad \underbrace{ri \quad ge} \\ t\bar{a} \quad ki \quad ti \end{array} \end{array}$

The following *mantra* is very good for accompanying the popular melody for *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭaka* which uses this rhythm.

28. $\begin{array}{c} X \\ \left| \begin{array}{c} dh\bar{a} \quad \underbrace{ti \quad ri} \quad dhe \\ dh\bar{a} \quad \underbrace{ti \quad ri} \quad ti \end{array} \right| \begin{array}{c} O \\ dh\bar{a} \quad dh\bar{a} \quad t\bar{a} \\ t\bar{a} \quad dhi \quad t\bar{a} \end{array} \end{array}$

Glossary

bols — memory assisting syllables corresponding to the various types of strokes on the *mṛdaṅga*.

gāb — the dark center patch on each head of the *mṛdaṅga*. On a small plastic head it is on the inside.

dādrā — a type of *tāl* consisting of six *mātrās*.

kaharwā or *kaherwā* — a type of *tāl* consisting of eight *mātrās*.

khaṇḍa — a section of a *tāl*.

khālī — an unstressed (empty) beat in a *tāl*.

mantra — a rhythmic pattern expressed with *bols* on the *mṛdaṅga*.

mātrā — a beat (in keeping time).

sam — the most strongly emphasized beat in a *tāl*.

tāl — a rhythm cycle.

tālī — an important beat in a *tāl*.

tempo — (English word from Italian) the speed at which a musical composition or passage is performed.

Rāmānujāchārya Dās joined ISKCON in San Francisco in 1970 and was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda later that year. He served mainly in the USA, India, Kenya, England and South Africa. He has been resident in South Africa for about sixteen years. He studied Hindi at the University of California at Los Angeles, and from the Central Hindi Directorate in New Delhi. He studied Indian music under Śrīmān Anandrao Lingayat in Los Angeles, under Śrīmān Bansi Hariram in South Africa, and under Śrīmān Nandlal Pareekh in Vṛndāvan. He is the author of *A Vaiṣṇava Harmonium and Singing Method*, and he is the compiler and editor of *A Handbook of Vaiṣṇava Songs and Practices*. He taught harmonium courses for four years at the Vrindavan Institute for Higher Education, and has taught several harmonium and mṛdaṅga courses in South Africa. At the time of the publication of this book he has been included as a teacher of mṛdaṅga and harmonium courses for the February 2001 semester of the Mayapur Institute for Higher Education.

“Traditionally the training of a really expert *mṛdaṅga* player under the direction of a master player would take several years, with a minimum of one hour of practice per day. Ideally, this training starts from an early age. This is still going on, especially in traditional centers of Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava culture such as Navadvīpa, Vṛndāvana and Jagannātha Puri. Many devotees throughout the world, however, do not have the opportunity, time or inclination to learn in this way, but they still want to learn to play the *mṛdaṅga* with reasonable competency, and in a methodical, clear and enlivening way. This course is for them.”

(from the preface)

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