



Vaishnava Saints

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Bengali sources**

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1. Sri Abhirama Gopala Thakura

Sri Abhirama Gopala Thakura was also known as Sri Rama Das. He was a great devotee of Lord Nityananda. On the order of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, he became a great acharya and preacher of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

He was a very influential personality, and atheists and blasphemers were very much afraid of him. Empowered by Sri Nityananda Prabhu, he was always in ecstasy and was kind to all fallen souls. It is said that if he offered obeisances to any stone other than a salagram-sila, it would immediately burst into pieces.

According to Gaura-Ganodesha-Dipika (12) in Krishna-lila he was Sridama, one of the 12 prominent boy cowherd friends of Sri Krishna. He was Nityananda's dearest devotee. Abhirama Gopala's wife's name was Sri Malini devi.

Abhirama Gopala Thakura lived in Khanakula Krishnanagara. Khanakula Krishnanagar may be visited by taking the narrow gauge train from Howrah Station in Calcutta to Amta. It is located in the present Hooghly District of West Bengal. There, in Khanakula Krishnanagara, near the bank of the Khana river, is the temple of Abhirama Thakura. Because it is a town (nagara) with a Krishna temple, the town is called Krishna-nagara, and because the temple is on the kula (banks) of the Khana, it is called Khanakula Krishnanagara. Just outside the temple is a bakula tree. This place is known as Siddha-bakula-kunja. It is said that Abhirama Thakura used to like sitting beneath this tree.

The story of how the Gopinatha deity of Khanakula Krishnanagara was established is as follows.

One day, the deity of Gopinatha appeared to Abhirama Gopala in a dream, and informed him that he wanted to manifest himself in Khanakula Krishnanagara. It is said that he was buried in the earth, and that in the dream he ordered Abhirama Gopala to excavate him and inaugurate his worship. Abhirama Gopala went to the place where the Lord had indicated he would be found, and began excavation. There, after digging for some time, he found the mind-enchanting deity of Sri Gopinatha. The place where this discovery was made is now called Rama kunda, and there is a small lake there.

The Bhakti Ratnakara says, "After having excavated the Gopinatha deity, all the devotees headed by Rama Dasa (Abhirama Gopala) bathed in the sacred waters of the kunda near the spot where the deity had been found. From that day on the kunda became famous as Rama Kunda. Whoever bathes there becomes free from repeated birth and death."

One day Sri Abhirama Gopala was overwhelmed with the ecstasy of sakhya rasa, and had a desire to play the flute of a cowherd boy. Intoxicated by the bliss of Krishna-prema, he began searching the four directions for a suitable flute. As he searched through the forest for a suitable instrument all at once he saw before him a big log. The log was so huge that sixteen men could not move it. Grabbing hold of that log, he turned it into a flute and began to play upon it.



The Caitanya Caritamrita says, "Rama dasa was one of the principle branches of the Nityananda branch of the Caitanya tree of bhakti. He was full of sakhya-prema - love of Krishna saturated with the mellow of friendship. He once picked up a log that sixteen men couldn't lift and used it as a flute."

Sri Abhirama Thakura had a bullwhip that was imbued with divine power. Its name was "Jayamangal". Whoever was struck with this whip became filled with Krishna prema. One day Srinivasa Acharya went to take darshan of Abhirama Gopala. At that time, Abhirama Gopala touched him three times with Jayamangal. The Thakur's good wife, Malini, cried out, "My Lord! Do not touch him again. Calm yourself. Srinivas is only a boy. If you touch him again he will lose consciousness." As a result of coming in contact with the whip of Abhirama Thakura, Srinivasa Acharya became filled with Sri Krishna prema.

When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ordered Nityananda Prabhu to preach in Bengal, he sent Abhirama Gopala and Gadadhara Das along with him. Simply upon seeing Abhirama Gopala, atheists and blasphemers would flee in terror. He was a remarkable scholar, well-versed in all the scriptures. He married his wife, Malini, upon the order of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. His disappearance day is on the seventh day of the dark moon in the month of Chaitra, and on that day a great festival attended by thousands of devotees is held every year in Khanakula Krishnanagara.



2. Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana

Srimad Baladeva Vidyabhusana Prabhu was a pure devotee of the highest order, who cared for nothing but the service of the Lord. He didn't have a spot of desire for name and fame. He was the composer of many scriptures which are as priceless as precious gems, for the ultimate benefit of all those who have taken human birth. The exact location of his birth, the names of his mother and father, and their family tree is not known. The exact circumstances of his birth and childhood are, therefore, unknown. Still, some are of the opinion that he took birth in a place called Baleshvara, a village neighboring Remuna, in the early part of the 18th century A.D, as the son of a vaisya, an agriculturist.

At an early age he became learned in Sanskrit grammar, poetry, rhetoric, and logic. After becoming expert in all these subjects, he began wandering to different places of pilgrimage. After wandering about in this way for some time, and after visiting many holy places, he happened to stay at a temple of the Tattvavadi followers of Sri Madhvacharya.

There, he became fluent in his understanding of the tattvavada-siddhanta, that is, the philosophical and theological conclusions of the followers of Madhva. After this, he took sannyasa, and preached the tattvavada-siddhanta very vigorously throughout the length and breadth of India.

As he wandered from one place to the next, he gradually came to Jagannatha Puri. There he remained and preached for a few days. At that time, he chanced to meet one of the foremost disciples of Sri Rasikananda Deva, Pandit Sri Radha-Damodara, with whom he discussed devotional principles. At that time, Srimad Radha-Damodara deva Goswami instructed Baladeva on the subject of Sri Gourasundara's pastimes of mercy and His teachings on Gaudiya Vaishanva siddhanta to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya.

After hearing the divine wisdom spoken by Sri Radha-Damodara Goswami, Baladeva's heart was deeply moved. After a few days of hearing from him, he accepted initiation into the Radha-Krishna mantra, and began studying the Sat-Sandarbhās of Jiva Goswami at the holy feet of his gurudeva, Radha-Damodara Goswami.

After a short time, Baladeva became expert in the Gaudiya Vaishanva siddhanta. After staying with Radha-Damodara Goswami for some time, he was ordered to further his studies in Gaudiya Vaishnavism by going to Vrindavan and taking shelter at the holy feet of Vishvanatha Cakravarti Thakura.

After first visiting Nabadwipa, he soon arrived in Vrindavan. Sri Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakur (Sri Harivallabha dasa), was very happy to see Baladeva's submission, modesty, learning, and renunciation. From that day forward, for some time, he kept Baladeva by his side and taught him the acintya-bheda-abheda philosophy of Sri Chaitanya and many other important siddhantas related to the Gaudiya Vaishnava conception of Krishna-bhakti. From this point on, Sri Baladeva's life and soul was fully dedicated to the theistic conception of the Gaudiya



Sampradaya. His mind was fixed on this, and with one-pointed determination, he now began preaching this line to the exclusion of all others.

One day, in Jaipur, in the royal court, the Ramanuja sampradaya began arguing a case in connection with the Gaudiya sampradaya. They informed the king that the Gaudiya sampradaya had no commentary on the most important revealed scripture of Vedic religion—Vedanta; therefore they had no siddhanta and no real sampradaya, or school. As a consequence they should give up their service of the deities of Govinda and Gopinatha, and entrust with those who were bona fide members of a genuine sampradaya.

At that time, the king of Jaipura was a follower of the Gaudiya sampradaya. He immediately sent word of the controversy by messenger to Vishvanatha Cakravarti Thakur in Vrindavan, wanting to know if the Gaudiya sampradaya actually did have any commentary on the Vedanta. If there was, the king wanted that the commentary be sent immediately to Jaipur to satisfy the scrutiny of the pandits from the Ramanuja Sampradaya.

At this time, Sri Vishvanatha Chakravarti was very old and infirm. It was impossible for him to make the arduous journey to Jaipur. He sent his student and disciple, Sri Baladeva, in his place. Baladeva Vidyabhusana was an expert scholar in all the important scriptures. In the midst of a huge assembly of pandits from the Ramanuja sampradaya, Baladeva challenged them all to argue with him in scholarly debate. A long, and hard-fought debate took place, with tumultuous arguing from the Ramanuja school. Still, none of them could stand before his conclusive statements, keen scholarship, and penetrating intellect. Baladeva argued that the founder of the Gaudiya Sampradaya, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu established the Srimad-Bhagavatam as the topmost commentary on Vedanta.

The Bhagavatam itself claims that it is bhashyanam brahma-sutranam, the natural commentary on Vedanta. This is confirmed on the basis of evidence given by Jiva Goswami in his Sat Sandarbha. Therefore, the Gaudiya sampradaya has chosen to accept Srimad-Bhagavatam as the original commentary on Vedanta, and sees no need for a separate commentary.

At that point, the pandits from the Ramanuja sampradaya shouted: "He admits that there is no commentary! They have no commentary!"

Having no other recourse, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana promised to show them the Gaudiya commentary on Vedanta within a few days. The pandits were astonished to think that such a thing existed. They were suspicious that this might be some kind of trick, but were silenced for the time being.

Very troubled within his mind, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana went to the temple of Sri Govinda, the deity of Rupa Goswami. After offering his eightfold obeisances before the deity, he related everything that had taken place.

That night in a dream, Sri Govinda told him, "You must compose the commentary. That commentary will be personally sanctioned by me. No one will be able to find any fault in it."



Seeing this in his dream, Baladeva became very happy, and his heart was full of strength, ready for the task at hand. After this, he meditated on the lotus feet of Govinda and began writing his commentary. Within a few days it was completed. This commentary became known as the Govinda Bhashya commentary on Vedanta.

In an addendum appended to the Govinda Bhashya, after it was published, Sri Baladeva has written, ³vidyarupam bhushanam ye pradaya, khatim nitte teno yo mamudarah, Sri govinda-svapna-nirdishtha bhashye, radhabandhurangah sa jiyat.² "May Sri Govinda be all glorious. By his mercy, he revealed this commentary to me in a dream. The commentary revealed by him is especially appreciated by the highly learned, and as a result of this I have been given the name Vidyabhushana, but it is Sri Govinda who deserves all credit. May that Sri Govinda who is the most dear life and soul of Sri Radhika, be all-victorious."

With the Govinda Bhashya commentary in hand, Baladeva Vidyabhushana arrived at the assembly hall of the king, where the pandits were waiting for him. When he showed them his commentary, they were speechless. The Gaudiya sampradaya was proclaimed victorious. The king and all the Gaudiya Vaishnavas were supremely happy. At that time the pandits gave Sri Baladeva the name ³Vidyabhushana,² or one whose ornament is knowledge, in honor of his great scholarship. The year was 1628, Shaka era. From the day forward, the king of Jaipur decreed, everyone would attend the aroti of Sri Govinda, the deity beloved by the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, who was ultimately responsible for such a wonderful commentary on Vedanta.

The Ramanuja pandits, falling under the influence of Sri Baladeva Vidyabhushana, accepted him as their acharya and wanted to become his disciples. With great humility, Baladeva Vidyabhushana refused, explaining that there are four sampradayas, among which the Sri Sampradaya is a genuine school that preaches servitude to God as the best religious process. By advancing the views of the Gaudiya sampradaya, he meant no disrespect to the Sri sampradaya. To insult the Sri sampradaya would be a great offense, he said.

Sripad Baladeva Vidyabhushana returned from Jaipur to Vrindavana carrying the message of his victory. Upon returning, he submitted to the lotus feet of Sri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura and told him the news. All the visiting Vaishnavas and the residents of Vrindavan were delighted and Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura bestowed his blessings upon Baladeva Vidyabhushana.

After this, Baladeva Vidyabhushana began writing a commentary on the Sat Sandarbha. Soon Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura passed away, and the Vaishnava community felt as if a great beacon of divine light had been extinguished. At that time, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhushana became regarded among the Vaishnava community as the keeper of the flame, the leader among those who understood the teachings of Sri Chaitanya.

In his teachings, Baladeva establishes the transcendental position of the Vedas, and then argues that they are the best evidence for knowing the supreme truth. In his



Siddhanta-darpana, Baladeva has explained the position of transcendental sound in relationship to Krishna and his holy name as follows:

*ekameva pram tattvam vachyavachaka bhavabhak
vachyah sarveshvaro devo vachakah pranavobhavet
matsya-kurma-adibhir-rupair-yatha vachyo bahun-bhavet
vachako'pi tatharthadi-bhavadbahur-udiryate
adyantarahitatvena svayam nityam prakirtite
avirbhava tirobhavau syatamasya yugeyuge*

"The one absolute truth has two categories: the named (Krishna) and the name (Om). Parameshvara, Sri Krishna, the absolute person is the named; pranava, or omkara (Om) is the name. The named, or Parameshvara Sri Krishna, reveals himself in different forms as Matsya, Kurma, and many other forms. In the same way the name of the Supreme Lord expands into many different forms; such as the transcendental syllable Om, the gayatri mantram, and the Vedas themselves. There is no limit to the Supreme Personality of Godhead; he has no beginning and no end. As a consequence, his glorification is also eternal. He appears within this material world, stays for some time, and again disappears according to his own sweet will."

Baladev explains the potency of Godhead in his Siddhanta-darpana: "The Lord has three potencies thinking (jnana) feeling (kriya) and willing (bala). Through these three potencies he causes the material creation to come into being. The rays of consciousness emanating from him the jiva souls are his separated parts and parcels. By his thinking, feeling, and willing, they too come into being. The Vedas are spoken by the Lord, who is all-perfect. The Vedas are therefore free from the four defects of material existence: error, cheating, illusion, and imperfect perception. And so, the Vedas are the perfect form of evidence for understanding the Supreme Truth. The Vedas glorify Krishna as the absolute truth. The Puranas and Itihasas are as good as the Vedas. They too glorify Krishna as the absolute truth."

In his Vedanta-samantaka, Baladeva has expanded on this thesis of the Vedas being the best evidence for understanding the Supreme Godhead. There he says:

*tadevam sarvatah shreishtha shabdasya sthite tattvanirnayakastu
shrotilakshana eva na tvarshalakshanopi.*

"There are different ways of knowing what is truth: pratyaksha (direct perception), anumana (inference, hypothesis, and deduction), shabda (the words of the authorities), arthapati (interpretation), anupalabdhi (negative inference), sambhava (the laws of probability) and aitihiya (history). Of all these methods of arriving at truth, shabda, hearing from authorities, is best. The best source of knowledge about the absolute is the shruti: revealed truth received from Vedic authority. Different scholars always entertain different opinions about reality, but the Vedic shastras are eternal and transcendental, moreover they are free from the four defects of material existence, having sprung



directly from the Supreme Lord Himself. Therefore they are the best evidence for knowing the absolute truth." (Vedanta Samantaka 1/51)

What has been proved on the basis of solid evidence, pramana, is called prameya. Baladeva has written a book called Prameya Ratnavali, in which he states nine principles that he has established are facts, proven by the incontrovertible evidence of the Vedas. The teachings of Madhva-Gaudiya Vaishnavism as it has descended from Madhvacharya to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu have been summarised in the Prameya Ratnavali. His nine principles are stated in the following verse (PR 8):

*Sri madvhah praha vishnum paratamam akhilamnaya vedyam ca cisvam
satyam bhedam ca jivam hari carana jusas tartamyam ca tesham
moksham vishnuv-anghri-labham tad-amala-bhajanam tasya hetum pramanam
pratyaksadi trayam cety upadisati hari krsna-caitanya chandra*

"Sri Madhvacaharya taught that:

- 1) Krishna, who is known as Hari is the Supreme Lord, the Absolute.
- 2) That Supreme Lord may be known through the Vedas.
- 3) The material world is real.
- 4) The jivas, or souls, are different from the Supreme Lord.
- 5) The jivas are by nature servants of the Supreme Lord.
- 6) There are two categories of jivas: liberated and illusioned.
- 7) Liberation means attaining the lotus feet of Krishna, that is, entering into an eternal relationship of service to the Supreme Lord.
- 8) Pure devotional service is the cause of this relationship.
- 9) The truth may be known through direct perception, inference and Vedic authority. These very principles were taught by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

According to Baladeva there are five categories of tattvas or truths which constitute reality: ishvara, God; jiva, soul; prakriti, matter; kala, time; and karma, action. Ishvara or God, is the greatest. He is all-knowing, he is the utmost realization of transcendental bliss, and his very nature is ecstasy. He is full in all qualities and is the absolute person. He is the master of everything and is eternally free from birth and death. He is the master of all the gods headed by Brahma and Shiva. He is the supreme husband, the Lord of lords, and the Supreme Person, the worthiest of receiving prayers. He alone remains as the absolute truth even after this material world (which is his separated material energy) is destroyed along with all the demigods such as Brahma, Shiva, and Indra.

Baladeva further explains that Krishna has three energies, parashakti, kshetrajna-shakti, and maya-shakti.

Parashakti means svarupa-shakti or the Lord's internal potency. Kshetrajna-shakti means jiva-shakti or the living beings, and maya-shakti means the Lord's external potency, his potency for keeping the souls in illusion. This explanation is on the basis of the Vishnu Purana. He goes on to explain that there is no difference between the body and soul of God. They are one and the same.



As Krishna, the Supreme Lord has two hands, he plays a flute, he has a transcendental form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, and he is known by the names Govinda and Gopal.

Lakshmidēvi is nondifferent from Him, in that he is the Supreme Energetic and She is His Supreme Energy. (sei jaganmata lakshmi vishnur anapayini shakti) This confirmed throughout the shastra. Whatever form the lord appears in, there is a corresponding Lakshmi form who acts as his eternal consort. When the Lord appears as a god, Lakshmi appears as a goddess. When the Lord advents as an ordinary human being, Lakshmi also descends upon this earth as an ordinary human being.

Baladeva Vidyabhushan says:

*teshu sarveshu lakshmi-rupeshu radhayah svayam laksmītvam
mantavyam sarveshu bhagavad-rupeshu krishnasya svayam bhagavatvavat
(Vedānta-samantaka 2.37)*

"Of all the manifestations of Lakshmidēvi, Srimati Radharani is the Supreme Goddess, just as amongst so many avatars of Godhead, Krishna is the supreme Personality of Godhead."

This is confirmed in the Brihad-Gautamiya Tantra, which states, "Sri Radhika is the Supreme Goddess. Her very nature is Krishna, for her very existence is permeated by Krishna. Therefore she is known as Krishnamayi or one who is full of Krishna. She is known as Paradevata, for she is the Supreme Goddess. All other goddesses are subordinate to her. She is the Supreme Lakshmi and her transcendental effulgence surpasses all conceptions of brilliance. She is the supreme enchantress, for she enchants Krishna Himself, who is capable of charming millions of cupids."

Baladeva cites Shaunaka Muni who says in Srimad-Bhagavatam that of all the avatars, expansions of Godhead and Personalities of Godhead, Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The worship of Krishna, must therefore be regarded as the highest form of worship.

According to Baladeva, the jiva souls are the atomic spiritual energy of the Lord. The souls are eternal and can never be destroyed by any means. The soul's true eternal nature is to be filled with transcendental knowledge:

*sa ca jīvo bhagavadāso mantavyah dasabhūto
harereva nanyasyaive kadācaneti padmat
(Vedānta-samantaka 3.11)*

"It is the constitutional nature of the soul to be a servant of Bhagavan Sri Krishna. It is the version of the Padma-Purana that the soul is an eternal servant of Hari, and has no other genuine position."



By surrender to the lotus feet of a spiritual master who is a devotee of Krishna, one attain Krishna-bhakti by the guru's mercy. Upon attaining Krishna-bhakti one gets Krishna Himself.

In His Vedanta-samantaka, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana offers the following prayer to the lotus feet of his gurudeva, Sri Radha-Damodara Goswami:

*radhadidamodara nama vibhrata,
viprena vedantamayah syamantaka
Sri radhikayairviniveditomaya
tasyah pramodam sa tanotu sarvada*

"Having been deputed to do so by my gurudeva, the brahmana named Sri Radha-Damodara Goswami, I have compiled this commentary on the Vedanta known as Vedanta-syamantaka for the sake of Srimati Radharani's pleasure. This commentary is a summary of the important points of Vedanta. May it be pleasing to Sri Radhika."

Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana had two super excellent disciples who were perfected souls. Their names were Sri Uddhava Dasa and Sri Nandana Mishra. Among the books compiled by Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana were as follows:

His commentary on Vedanta called the Govinda-bhashya;

the ³jewel of conclusions² or Siddhanta Ratna;

Sahitya Kaumudi; a summary of Vedanta philosophy known as Vedanta Syamantaka;

the ³jewel of factual principles² (outline the nine principles held in common by both the Madhva and Chaitanya schools) known as Prameya Ratnavali;

a summary of Gaudiya Vaishnava principles called the Siddhanta Darpana;

the Kavya Kaustubha (a book of selected Sanskrit verses for Vaishnavas);

the Aishvarya Kadambini;

Vyakarana Kaumudi (a book on grammar);

Padakaustubha (selected prayers);

commentaries on important Upanishads beginning with the Isha Upanishad and including the Gopala Tapani Upanishad;

a commentary on Bhagavad-gita known as Gitabhushana Bhashya;

as well as commentaries on: Vishnu-Sahasra-nama, Srimad-Bhagavatam

(Vaishnava-nandini-tika), Jiva Goswami's Tattva-Sandarbha, Rupa Goswami's

Stavamala, Nata-chandrika, Jayadeva Goswami's Chandraloka, his own Sahitya

Kaumudi, Laghu-bhagavatamrita, Nataka-Chandrika, and Shyamananda Shataka.

Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana disappeared in the Christian year 1768.



3. Srila Bhugarbha Goswami

Just as there is very little mentioned in the scriptures about the life of Srila Lokanatha Goswami, in the same way, there is little written about his dear friend Srila Bhugarbha Goswami. Srila Lokanatha and Sri Bhugarbha Goswami were of one heart and mind. On the order of Caitanya Mahaprabhu they went to live in Vrindavana. Bhugarbha Goswami was a disciple of Gadadhara Pandita. Among his disciples were Sri Govindadeva's pujari Caitanya Dasa, as well as Mukundananda Cakravarti, Premi Krisnadasa and others.

Sri Krisnadasa Kaviraja Goswami writes: "The eleventh branch of Gadadhara Goswami was Bhugarbha Goswami and the twelfth was Bhagavata Dasa. Both of them went to Vrindavana and resided there for life."

Sri Kavikarnapura writes in his Gaura-ganodesa-dipika that Bhugarbha Goswami was formerly the gopi named Prema Manjari in Vrindavana. While in Vrindavana, Bhugarbha Goswami passed away and entered into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord on the fourteenth day of the full moon in the month of Kartika.

Lokanatha Goswami and Bhugarbha Goswami lived together in Vrindavana as one. Srila Narahari Cakravarti Thakura writes about them in his Bhakti-ratnakara: "Bhugarbha Goswami and Lokanatha Goswami were world-preachers; they were so close and affectionate to one another that they were like one body."

In Vrindavana, Bhugarbha Goswami and Lokanatha Goswami were regarded as among the principle Goswamis, as they were senior by age and experience to many. The foremost among the subsequent followers of Rupa Goswami, Narottama Dasa Thakura, writes about Bhugarbha Goswami, with whom he had much affectionate association: "O Hari! Why am I addicted to this abominable path of karma? I didn't worship Radha-Krishna in Vraja even one iota, nor could I understand the position of spontaneous devotion - raga-marga. Svarupa Damodara, Sanatana Goswami, Raghunatha Bhatta, Raghunatha dasa, Gopala Bhatta Goswami, Bhugarbha Goswami, Jiva Goswami, and Lokanatha Goswami - I never offered a drop of service to their lotus feet. How then shall I attain the goal of life? Krisnadasa Kaviraja is among the most exalted rasika-bhaktas, devotees whose sole interest is in relishing the mellows of devotion to Radha-Govinda and Mahaprabhu. He compiled the Caitanya-Caritamrita which describes the pastimes of Sri Caitanya and the Govinda-lilamrita, describing the pastimes of Radha-Krishna. Hearing the pastimes of Gaura-Govinda would melt even stone, but it had no effect on my consciousness. Not only have I failed to take advantage of the association of all these great souls, but I have also neglected their associates and followers. What a sad story my life has become. My life and birth are all useless. Shame on me. Alas, alas. Thus laments Narottama Dasa."



4. Sri Birchandra Prabhu

Srimad Birchandra or Birabhadra Prabhu took birth within this world on the ninth day of the dark moon in the month of Kartik, which corresponds to the divine appearance day of Sri Srimad Bhakti Raksaka Sridhar Maharaja.

Sri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Goswami writes (CC Adi 11.8-12):

"Sri Nityananda Prabhu is the topmost branch of the indestructible tree of eternal love of Godhead, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu...From that branch grow many branches and sub-branches...After Nityananda Prabhu, the greatest branch is Birabhadra Goswami (Birchandra Prabhu)...although Birabhadra Prabhu was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He presented Himself as a great devotee. And although the Supreme Godhead is transcendental to all Vedic injunctions, He strictly followed the Vedic rituals. He is the main pillar in the hall of devotional service erected by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He knew within Himself that He acted as the Supreme Lord Vishnu, but externally He was prideless. It is by the glorious mercy of Sri Birchandra Prabhu that people all over the world now have the chance to chant the names of Caitanya and Nityananda. I therefore take shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Birchandra Prabhu so that by His mercy my great desire to write Sri Caitanya Caritamrita will be properly guided."

In his Anubhashya commentary on Caitanya Caritamrita, Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura describes the life of Birchandra Prabhu. He writes that Birchandra Prabhu, also known as Virabhadra Goswami was the son of Nityananda Prabhu and the disciple of Jahnava Mata. He was born from the womb of Sri Vasudha, Nityananda Prabhu's other wife. In the Gaura-Ganodesha-Dipika, he is mentioned as an incarnation of Kshirodakshayi Vishnu as follows:

*sankarshanashya yo vyuha, payobdhishayi-namakah,
sa eva virachandro'bhu-caitanya-abhinna vigraha*

"Sri Sankarshan Deva expands Himself as Kshirodakshayi Vishnu. His avatara is Birchandra Prabhu. He is nondifferent from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in that he is Vishnu-tattva, God Himself."

In a village of the name Jhamatapura in the district of Hugali, Birchandra Prabhu had a disciple named Yadundanacharya, who had two daughters - his own daughter by birth, Srimati, and a foster daughter named Narayani. Both these daughters married Birchandra. The marriage of Birchandra Prabhu has been mentioned in the Bhakti Ratnakara of Sri Narahari Chakravarti Thakura as follows:

"Near Rajabol Hatta is Jhamatpura. Sri Jahnava Mata went there to the temple of one of her disciples. There, lived the brahmana Yadunandana Acharya. By the mercy of Sri Jahanava Mata he was endowed with great devotion. Yadunandana had a wife named Lakshmi. It was said that she was a pure and highly religious wife. They had two daughters - Srimati and Narayani. Their bodily beauty was wonderful



beyond compare. Upon the wish of Jahnava Mata that fortunate brahmana gave his two daughters to be wed to Birchandra Prabhu."

Sri Yadunandana Acharya was a disciple of Birchandra Prabhu. Srimati and Narayani were given mantra initiation by Jahnava Mata. Sri Vasudha's daughter was Gangadevi. She was an avatar of Gangadevi herself. She was wed to Sri Madhava Acharya, who was an avatara of Shantanu Maharaja. The Mahabharata celebrates Shantanu Maharaja, the father of Bhishmadeva in Dwapara-yuga, as the husband of Gangadevi herself. Madhava Acharya was a great devotee who was deep in Krishna-prema.

On the order of his mother, Sri Birchandra Prabhu made a pilgrimage to Sri Vrindavana Dhama. First he visited the home of Uddharana Datta Thakura in Saptagrama. Uddharana Datta Thakura's son, Srinivasa Datta Thakura greeted Birchandra Prabhu with a respectful reception, and Birchandra Prabhu stayed there for two days.

From there, he went to Shantipura where he visited the house of Sri Advaita Acharya. Advaita Acharya's son Sri Krishna Mishra cordially welcomed Birchandra Prabhu with a full reception, and there was sankirtan, in which everyone was drowned by the sweet waves of the holy name.

From there, Birchandra Prabhu went to Ambika Kalna, where he visited the home of Sri Gauridasa Pandit. Sri Hridaya Caitanya Prabhu met him there with great warmth and affection.

From Ambika Kalna Birchandra Prabhu went to Nabadwipa dhama to the house of Sri Jagannatha Mishra. Seeing the son of Nityananda Prabhu, all the followers of Sri Caitanya who were present there were overjoyed, and welcomed him with great happiness.

There he stayed for two days, after which he traveled on to Sri Khanda. There he was met by Sri Raghunandana and Sri Kanai Thakura who received him affectionately and embraced him.

After staying there for some time, he continued on to Yajigrama to visit the house of Srinivasa Acharya. With great devotion, Srinivasa Acharya offered puja to Sri Birchandra Prabhu, knowing him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There he stayed for some days, and there was a great sankirtan festival there.

After this, Birchandra Prabhu went on to Kanthak Nagara, near Katwa, where Mahaprabhu took sannyasa.

After staying there for a day, he continued on to Badhuri Gram, where he arrived at the house of Govinda Kaviraja. With great devotion, the advanced Vaishnava, Govinda Kaviraja gave him a respectful reception and worshiped him with puja.



Being very please with his great devotion, Birchandra Prabhu stayed at his house for two days.

After this, he visited Kheturi Gram, the hometown of Narottama Thakura. This is all recorded in the Bhaktiratnakara: "To increase Sri Narottama Thakura's bliss beyond measure, That important branch of the Sri Caitanya tree, Sri Birchandra Prabhu came to Kheturi Gram and danced in sankirtan. At that time, countless people came to see Sri Birchandra Prabhu, who is Vishnu Himself."

After staying in Kheturi Gram for some days in a great festival of sankirtan, Birchandra Prabhu continued on his way to Vrindavana. By his influence, many sinners and atheists were delivered on the path. When he reached Vrindavana, being informed of his auspicious arrival, and wishing to welcome him as soon as he arrived, the important devotees in Vrindavana waited for him on the road. These devotees were all great souls, and included Sri Jiva Goswami, Srimad Krishna dasa Kaviraja Goswami, as well as Sri Ananta Acharya and Sri Hari Dasa Pandita, who were Sri Gadadhara Pandit's disciples and the pujaris of the deity of Sri Madana-Mohan. Sri Krishna Dasa Brahmachari, Sri Gopinatha Adhikari, and Sri Madhu Pandita were also there, as was the pujari of Sri Gopinatha, Bhavananda. Kashishvara and his disciples Sri Govinda Goswami (the pujari of Sri Govinda in Vrindavana) and Sri Yadava Acharya were also there as well as many others.

Bhakti Ratnakara says, "Everyone came out to see Birchandra Prabhu, and all the residents of Vrindavana were delighted to take His darshan. There was no one who was not overwhelmed by the seeing the manner of ecstatic bhakti exhibited by Birchandra Prabhu. He sang of the superlative qualities of Vrindavana and all the Vaishnavas there. After this he visited the deities of Sri Govinda, Sri Gopinatha, and Sri Madana Mohana and took darshan of their holy forms."

After this, on the order of Sri Jiva Goswami and Sri Bhugarbha Goswami, Birchandra Prabhu wandered throughout the forests of Vrindavana on an extensive pilgrimage. He saw the twelve forests of Vrindavana, Radha Kunda, Shyama Kunda, and Govardhana Hill. And as he saw these things, he exhibited amazing and wonderful manifestations of divine love. All the residents of Vrindavana were enchanted by seeing these demonstrations of ecstasy in Krishna-bhakti.

In this way, after gradually visiting all the important holy places in Vrindavana, Sri Birchandra Prabhu returned to Gaudadesha. After these wonderful expressions of divine love by Birchandra Prabhu, his fame was preached far and wide. His divine opulences were nondifferent from those of Nityananda Prabhu.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saratswati Thakura, in his Anubhasya commentary, writes that Birchandra Prabhu had three disciples who are regarded as his sons - Gopijana-vallabha, Ramakrishna, and Ramachandra. The youngest, Ramachandra, belonged to the Sandilya dynasty and had the surname Varavyala. He established his family at Khoradoha, and its members are known as the goswamis of Khoradoha. His eldest disciple, Gopijana-vallabha, was a resident of a village known



as Lata near the Manakara railway station in the district of Burdwan. The second, Ramakrishna, lived near Malda in a village named Gayeshpura.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura notes that since these three disciples belonged to different dynasties and also had different surnames and lived in different places, it is not possible to accept them as real sons of Virachandra Prabhu.

Birchandra Prabhu's youngest disciple, Ramachandra had four sons, of whom the eldest was Radha-Madhava, whose third son was named Yadavendra. Yadavendra's son was Nandakirshora, his son was Nidhikrishna, his son was Caitanyacand, his son was Krishna Mohan, his son was Jaganmohana, his son was Vrajanatha, and his son was Shyamalal Goswami.



5. Devananda Pandit

Devananda Pandita lived in Nabadwipa-dhama, in the section known as Kuliya, or Koladwipa (near where the present-day Sri Caitanya Saraswata Math of Srila Sridhara Maharaja is now located). Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu used him to manifest the glories of Srimad-Bhagavatam to the world. Devananda Pandita was highly renowned for his expertise in considering the sayings of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Many people used to go and study the Srimad-Bhagavatam under him.

One day Srivasa Pandita went to hear the Srimad-Bhagavatam class given by Devananda Pandita. After some time, Devananda began giving his lecture. He was surrounded on all four sides by his students, who listened carefully to his reading. Srivasa Pandita was a highly exalted rasika bhakta, a devotee experienced in tasting the mellows of devotion. Hearing the sweetness of the verses of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Srivasa Thakura fell to the ground with tears of ecstasy in his eyes. Weeping and wailing with tears of ecstasy in his eyes, he began rolling on the ground with his voice choked up with emotion.

Seeing all this, the students of Devananda said, "This man is mad. He is not properly giving his attention to the Srimad-Bhagavatam. Throw him out! Eject him!"

Devananda Pandita saw all this, but did nothing to prevent his disciples from ejecting Srivasa Pandita from the class. If a disciple commits a sin as a result of the guru's ignorance, the guru partakes of the sinful reaction. Therefore Devananda Pandita also partook of the sinful reaction of offending Srivasa Pandita. Without saying a word of this to anyone, and without telling anyone of his suffering at the hands of Devananda Pandita, Srivasa Thakura returned home. All these events took place before the advent of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

At length, the advent of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took place, as the Supreme Lord made his appearance within this material world. Gradually he manifest his childhood pastimes, his studies, his pastimes of learning, and his pastimes as a young professor, as well as the revelation of his divinity in the house of Srivasa Thakura.

At the time of that divine manifestation, when the Lord revealed his Mahaprakasa in the temple of Srivasa Thakura amidst all the devotees, he told Srivasa, "Srivasa! Don't you remember the time when you went to hear Srimad-Bhagavatam at the house of Devananda Pandita? When you fell to the ground in ecstasy upon hearing the nectarine verses of the Bhagavatam, then the disciples of Devananda - as a result of his ignorance of your exalted devotion - threw you out of the class. At that time you went home, feeling distressed, but you told no one of the incident. Do you remember this?"

Hearing the words of the Lord, Srivasa was astonished and fell at his lotus feet, catching hold of them.



One day, as Mahaprabhu was wandering through the towns of Nabadwipa, he came upon the road near where Sarvabhauma's father, Mahesvara Visarada Pandit used to live. There was the house of Devananda Pandita. And at that time, within the house of Devananda Pandita a class on Srimad-Bhagavatam was being held. From a long way off, Caitanya Mahaprabhu could hear this. Upon hearing Devananda's Bhagavatam class, Mahaprabhu became enraged.

Caitanya Bhagavata records: With sharp words, the Lord said, "What does this fellow know about the meaning described by the Bhagavatam? He will never know the Bhagavatam even in many lifetimes. The Srimad-Bhagavatam is the literary avatara of Krishna Himself. The Bhagavatam promotes bhakti as the ultimate goal of life. The Srimad-Bhagavatam is the essence of the four Vedas; it is the literary form of divine love. The four Vedas are like milk; the Srimad-Bhagavatam is like butter. Sukadeva Goswami is the churner of the butter, which was eaten by Parikshita Maharaja. That Sukadeva Goswami, who is dear to me, knows the meaning of Srimad-Bhagavatam. In the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sukadeva expressed the truths about Myself; he expressed my own opinions. Me and My servants are glorified in the Srimad-Bhagavatam; one who finds a difference between Myself and My servants will find all his good intelligence destroyed. An irreligious person who rejects bhakti and finds some other meaning in the Srimad-Bhagavatam will never understand the Bhagavatam."

After saying all these things in an angry mood, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, began to flee away from the house of Devananda Pandita, which he considered condemned. The devotees caught hold of him and begged him not to go.

The Lord again said, "All the scriptures sing of the Srimad-Bhagavatam as being highly mysterious, inconceivable. It cannot be understood by vast learning or powerful austerity. One who attempts to know the Srimad-Bhagavatam through scholarship will never understand it. One who recognizes that the Bhagavatam is nondifferent from the inconceivable Supreme Controller knows that the essence of the Bhagavatam can be known only through devotion and not through scholarship."

"One who understands that Srimad-Bhagavatam is Krishna Himself can understand Srimad-Bhagavatam. One can only understand the Bhagavatam's meaning through divine love. If one wants to understand this he must served both the book Bhagavata and the devotee Bhagavata."

In this way, Mahaprabhu spoke many different truths to his followers and then returned to his own home, accompanied by the devotees. From far away, Devananda Pandita could hear all these different instructions. But at the time, he did not pay any mind to all this.

After some time, Caitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa and went to Jagannatha Puri. At that time, Devananda remembered the instructions the Lord had given. He began to think, "Such a great person as this came near my residence, and I did not



get to meet him? I could not understand the glories of such a great and exalted Personality as Caitanya Mahaprabhu who was filled with krishna-prema?"

One day in Kuliya, or Koladwipa as it is now known, Sri Vakresvara Pandita went to visit the house of a devotee. That evening Vakresvara Pandita was absorbed in kirtana and dancing. Hearing the news of this, people gathered from all around to take part in the kirtana. As the night went on, more and more devotees began arriving there. Hearing this news, Devananda Pandita could not maintain his steadiness. He also hurried to the place where the kirtana was going on.

Seeing the empowered figure of Vakresvara Pandita and hearing his sweet kirtana Devananda Pandita was astonished. He stood transfixed for what seemed like hours. As the night wore on, the crowd grew and, in attempts to push forward and see the dancing of Vakresvara Pandita, it became boisterous and rowdy. At that time, Devananda Pandita, with a cane in his hand, held the crowd back and quieted the mob.

When Vakresvara Pandita, after dancing and dancing, fell to the ground overwhelmed by ecstasy, Devananda Pandita carefully picked him up and held him on his lap. With his own scarf, Devananda wiped the dust from the holy body of Vakresvara Pandita. In this way, it was on that day that Devananda Pandita began his bhakta-seva, his service to devotees.

One day, five years after he took sannyasa, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu returned to Nabadwipa-dhama from Jagannatha Puri. Upon his return the devotees felt that their lives had returned. Their joy knew no bounds. In order to see the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu thousands of people gathered there. Whoever had previously committed offenses to the lotus feet of the Lord when he had manifested his lila in Nabadwipa was eager to be forgiven. They all came there to beseech the Lord's forgiveness for whatever offenses they might have committed.

At that time, in the place known today as the aparadha-bhanjanam, or the place of amnesty (where Srila Sridhara Maharaja now has his temple), Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu granted forgiveness to all who gathered there and instructed them in the science of devotion.

At that time, Devananda Pandita took darsana of the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Offering his obeisances unto the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya at a distance, Devananda cowered and shrank away from the Lord, standing off to one side. At that time the Lord saw him and said, "You are the servant of my dear devotee Vakresvara Pandita. By your service to him you have greatly pleased Me. As a result of your service to him you have come close to Me. Vakresvara is empowered by Krishna-sakti. By serving my dear devotee Vakresvara Pandita you have attained the mercy of Krishna."

Hearing these words of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Devananda was overwhelmed with the sentiments of bhakti. His voice was choked with divine emotion, and he



said, "O My Lord; O Supreme Master - You have appeared in Nabadwipa just to deliver all the fallen souls. I am a sinner. I have committed great sins against divinity. I have failed to worship your lotus feet. As a result of this, I have cheated myself out of your causeless mercy. O Lord of all creation; Supersoul of all that lives! You are supremely merciful. By your causeless mercy I have been able to take darshan of your holy feet on this day. O Supremely Merciful one - please be kind upon me and instruct me in the goal of life. Please explain the meaning of Srimad-Bhagavatam to me as well."

Hearing this humble request of Devananda Pandita, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu spoke as follows: "Listen carefully, o brahmana. Always praise Srimad-Bhagavatam. Never let any explanation of Srimad-Bhagavatam other than bhakti issue forth from your lips. From beginning, middle to end, this is its meaning: constant devotion to Krishna is eternally perfect flawless, and infallible. It is the highest goal of life. The Supreme Lord appears in innumerable avatars beginning with Kurma. His appearance and disappearance is transcendental. In the same way, Srimad-Bhagavatam is not a material creation: its appearance and disappearance is completely divine.

In a trance of bhakti-yoga Vyasa compiled the Srimad-Bhagavatam. It passed through him and appeared on his tongue as a result of the mercy of Krishna. If one doesn't understand that the Srimad-Bhagavatam is divine truth on the level of God Himself he will never realize its meaning. This is the verdict of all authorized scriptures. One who understands the Srimad-Bhagavatam in that way has real knowledge. If one approaches the Srimad-Bhagavatam with material knowledge he will never understand it. If, however, one is unlearned but takes shelter of the Srimad-Bhagavatam he will be enlightened with its meaning. The Srimad-Bhagavatam is filled with divine love, prema. It is an extension of Krishna Himself and it reveals his confidential pastimes of divine love.

O brahmana! Previously you committed an offense to the lotus feet of Srivasa Pandita. You must go to him and beg forgiveness at his lotus feet. There is no difference between the book Bhagavata and the Bhakta Bhagavata. If you get the mercy of the Bhakta Bhagavata then you will easily attain the mercy of the book Bhagavata."

Having thus heard the words of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Devananda Pandita immediately went to Srivasa Thakura and begged forgiveness for his offenses. At that time, Srivasa Thakura embraced Devananda and forgave his offenses. The four directions were filled with the sound of the holy name of Hari as the devotees were all jubilant upon Mahaprabhu's return to Nabadwipa-dhama. From that day on, Devananda Pandita was accepted in the midst of the followers of Mahaprabhu as a great devotee. Devananda Pandita's disappearance day falls on the dark moon ekadasi of the month of Pausha, which corresponds to the month of December.



6. Gadadhara Dasa Thakura

Sri Gadadhara dasa Thakura used to live in Nabadwipa dhama, but after the disappearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he moved to Katwa. Finally he moved to a village called Endiyadaha-grama, where he made his ultimate residence.

Gadadhara dasa Thakura had a disciple in Katwa named Yadunandana Cakravarti. Gadadhara dasa was one of the eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu. The Gaura-ganodesa-dipika mentions Gadadhara dasa as the extension of Srimati Radharani's beauty and luster. There it is written:

"The gopi named Candrakanti, who was a vibhuti (expansion) of Sri Radha, appeared in Gaura-lila as Gadadhara dasa, a close associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu."

Sri Gadadhara dasa was not one of the Gopalas who served Nityananda Prabhu in the mood of sakhya-rasa, friendship. Rather he was always merged in the mellow of madhurya-rasa. Sripad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja writes as follows of Gadadhara dasa in his Caitanya-Caritamrta commentary: "About eight or ten miles from Calcutta on the banks of the Ganges is a village known as Endiyadaha-grama. Srila Gadadhara dasa was known as an inhabitant of this village...After the disappearance of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu Gadadhara dasa came from Nabadwipa to Katwa. Thereafter he came to Endiyadaha-grama and resided there. He is stated to be the luster of the body of Srimati Radharani, just as Srila Gadadhara Pandita is an incarnation of Srimati Radharani Herself. Caitanya Mahaprabhu is sometimes explained to be radha-bhava-dyuti-suvalita, or characterized by the emotions and bodily luster of Srimati Radharani. Gadadhara dasa is this dyuti or luster. He counts among the associates of both Srila Gaurahari and Nityananda Prabhu....Even though he was an associate of Lord Nityananda Prabhu, he was not among the cowherd boys but was situated in the transcendental mellow of conjugal love. He established a temple of Sri Gaurasundara in Katwa."

In 1434 sakabda (1534 A.D.) when Lord Nityananda Prabhu was empowered by Lord Caitanya to preach the sankirtana movement in Bengal, Sri Gadadhara dasa was one of Lord Nityananda's chief assistants. He preached the sankirtana movement by requesting everyone to chant the Hare Krsna maha-mantra....When Srila Gadadhara dasa was preaching the cult of hari-kirtana, there was a magistrate who was very much against his sankirtana movement. Following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Gadadhara dasa one night went to the house of the Kazi and requested him to chant the Hare Krsna mantra.

The Kazi replied, "All right, I shall chant Hare Krsna tomorrow." On hearing this, Srila Gadadhara dasa Prabhu began to dance, and he said, "Why tomorrow? You have already chanted the Hare Krsna mantra, so simply continue."



"...Srila Gadadhara dasa is considered to be a united form of Candrakanti, who is the effulgence of Srimati Radharani, and Purnananda, who is an expansion of Lord Balarama's dear girlfriend. Thus Srila Gadadhara dasa was one of the associates of both Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu. Once while Srila Gadadhara dasa Prabhu was returning to Bengal from Jagannatha Puri with Nityananda Prabhu, he forgot himself and began talking very loudly as if he were a girl of Vrajabhumi selling yogurt, and Srila Nityananda Prabhu noted this.

Another time, while absorbed in the ecstasy of the gopis, he carried a jug filled with Ganges water on his head as if he were selling milk. When Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared in the house of Raghava Pandita while going to Vrndavana, Gadadhara dasa went to see Him, and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was so glad that He put His foot on his head. When Gadadhara dasa Prabhu was present in Endiyadaha he established a Balagopala murti for worship there. Sri Madhava Ghosh performed a drama known as Dana-khanda with the help of Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Gadadhara dasa."

"The tomb of Gadadhara dasa Prabhu, which is in the village of Endiyadaha, was under the control of the Satyogi Vaisnavas and later under the direction of Siddha Bhagavan dasa Babaji of Kalna. By his order, Sri Madhusudana Mullik, one of the members of the aristocratic Mullik family of the Narikeladanga in Calcutta, established a padavadi (monastery) there in the Bengali year 1256. He also arranged for the worship of a Deity named Sri Radhakanta. His son, Balaicanda Mullik, established Gaura-Nitai Deities there in the Bengali year 1312. Thus on the throne of the temple are both Gaura-Nityananda Deities and Radha-Krsna Deities."

When Caitanya Mahaprabhu sent Nityananda Prabhu to Bengal to preach the nectar of the holy name, he sent Sri Rama dasa and Sri Gadadhara dasa with him. Once when he was carrying a waterpot on his head, Gadadhara dasa, in the mood of a gopi called out "Who will buy milk? Who will buy yogurt?" Saying this, he laughed at the joke.

The details of how Gadadhara dasa delivered the Kazi are as follows: One day, Gadadhara dasa went to the house of the Kazi, overwhelmed with krsna-prema, madly dancing and performing hari-sankirtana. When he arrived at the Kazi's door, he began loudly calling for the Kazi. The Kazi, enraged, went outside his house ready to chastise Gadadhara dasa for disturbing the peace. But when he beheld the beautiful form of Gadadhara dasa, who was the personification of Sri Radhika's divine luster, he was stunned.

When Gadadhara dasa embraced the Kazi with great affection the Kazi said, "Thakura! Why have you come?"

Gadadhara dasa said, "I want to have a talk with you."

"What do you wish to talk about?"



"Gaura-Nityananda have appeared upon this earth to deliver humankind with divine love by distributing the sweet nectar of the holy name of Hari. Why don't you chant this sweet name of Hari?"

"Tomorrow I shall chant the name Hari."

"Why chant the holy name tomorrow? I have come to deliver you with the holy name of Krsna. Now you have begun your life of auspiciousness by vibrating the holy name of Hari. From today on all your sins and miseries will disappear by the grace of the holy name if you simply continue this chanting - this is why I have come: to deliver you."

Hearing the words of Gadadhara dasa, the Kazi was bewildered. At length, he smiled and again said, "Tomorrow I will chant the holy name of Hari."

Upon hearing the holy name of Hari issuing from the mouth of the Muslim Kazi, Gadadhara dasa at once became mad in the ecstasy of Krsna prema.

At last he said, "Why tomorrow! Just now you have said the name ³Hari.² All your sins will now melt away and you will become supremely purified by the power of the holy name."

Purified by the grace of Gadadhara dasa and the holy name of Krsna, the Kazi took shelter of the holy feet of Gadadhara dasa.

In this way, Gadadhara dasa delivered countless sinners, nonbelievers, and yavanas with the holy name of Krsna. He disappeared on the eight day of the full moon in the month of Kartika.

All glories to Sri Gadadhara dasa Thakura Prabhu.



7. Sri Gangamata Goswamini

Within the present state of Bengal, lies what was once the kingdom of Sri Naresh Narayana. King Naresh Narayana had a daughter named Saci. From early childhood, Saci was a topmost devotee of the Lord. Within a short time, Saci began her education. At first she absorbed herself in grammar and poetry, but having become expert in these, she gradually became completely immersed in endlessly studying the scriptures. Even as a young girl, she was always fascinated with Krishna consciousness. As Saci came of age, all the young boys were charmed by her beauty. But within Saci's mind there was not the least attraction for any of the young men, no matter how handsome or rich they were. Her mind was always filled with thoughts of Madana Gopala.

Sri Naresh Narayana began to think of arranging for his daughter's marriage. Upon understanding her father's intentions, Saci told him, "I will not marry a mortal man, born of this world of death." The king and queen wanted to make arrangements to give her hand in marriage. But Saci did not want to be wed. Always regretting their failure to arrange for their daughter's wedding, in due course of time, the king and queen grew old and passed away.

After the passing of the king and queen, the royal succession fell to Saci. Saci accepted the responsibilities of governing the kingdom. One day, on the plea of seeing more of the kingdom Saci left to visit the holy places of pilgrimage, after appointing some relatives to govern in her place. Although she wandered here and there, nowhere could her heart find satisfaction. She decided to seek out a bonafide spiritual master. After much travel, she arrived in Jagannatha Puri. One day, after taking darshan of the Jagannatha deities, she received an inner message and was inspired to go to Vrindavana.

With this Saci felt that the moon of her good fortune had arisen. In Vrindavana, she chanced to meet Haridas Pandit, whose single-minded devotion to Gauranga and Nityananda was unsurpassed. Upon seeing the spiritual power and austerity of his divine form, Saci became filled with ecstasy. After meditating deeply for several days, Haridas Pandit gave Saci shelter. Sri Saci fell at the lotus feet of Haridas Pandit with her eyes pouring tears and prayed for his mercy.

The Caitanya Caritamrita gives Haridas Pandit's preceptorial ancestry as follows, "Ananta Acarya was a disciple of Gadadhara Pandit. His body was always overwhelmed by the ecstasy of Krishna-prema. He was magnanimous and advanced in all respects. Ananta Acarya was a reservoir of all good qualities. No one can estimate how great he was. Pandit Haridas was his beloved disciple."

In order to examine Saci's qualifications as a disciple, Haridas Pandit said: "It is not possible for the daughter of a king to go to Vrindavana and live as a poor devotee, constantly absorbed in bhajan with little to eat and no comforts. It will be better for you to stay at home and worship than to go to Vrindavana."



Sri Sacidevi could understand what all this talk was for. She paid no attention to all these words of discouragement. With fierce determination, renunciation, and austerity, she went on with her bhajan, and her service to her guru. As she absorbed herself in her austere service, step by step she renounced her opulent dresses and fine ornaments.

One day, Haridas Pandit Goswami said to Sacidevi, "If you like, giving up all pride and fear, you may wander throughout Vraja and practice begging from place to place as a renounced devotee. You have my blessings." Upon hearing the words of her gurudeva, Sachi's joy knew no bounds. Thereafter, freed from all false ego, her body covered only with rags, she went house to house in Vrindavana, begging alms in the fashion of a bumblebee who takes only a little pollen from each flower. In this way she showed the intense renunciation and austerity of a highly advanced devotee. All the devotees in Vrindavana were astonished by her severe renunciation.

Gradually, Sachi's body became frail and weak. She grew thin, and was covered with soot. Still, she took no notice of her condition, and continued following her austere regimen. Physically exhausted from her diligent service she would sleep on the banks of the Yamuna, and then rise again the next day to cleanse the Lord's temple. She would regularly circumambulate some holy places, see the aroti of the Deity, and listen to the lectures on Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Seeing the intense renunciation of Sacidevi, Haridas Pandit Goswami's heart was filled with pity. His mercy towards her increased. Smiling, he called Sacidevi and said to her, "You are a princess, and yet you have made such an intense effort to worship Krishna that seeing your renunciation and austerity in the cause of devotion I have become supremely happy. Soon I shall give you initiation into the mantra."

Haridas Pandit had one disciple named Sri Lakshmipriya, toward whom he was very affectionate. Just at that time she arrived in Vrindavana. Sri Lakshmipriya used to chant three hundred thousand names of Krishna daily. When she arrived, Haridas Pandit sent her to live near where Sacidevi performed her daily bhajan on the banks of the Radhakunda. Taking the order of her guru on her head, Lakshmipriya went to the Radha-kunda to be with Sacidevi and help her with her bhajan. Every day Sacidevi and Lakshmipriya would circumambulate Govardhan hill. In this way, in the company of Lakshmipriyadevi, Sachi continued her worship of Krishna with great determination, living on the banks of the Radhakunda, until one day Haridas Pandit called for her to return. He instructed her to quickly return to Jagannatha Puri, to continue with her bhajan and to preach what she had learned of Sri Caitanya's teachings. At that time almost all of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's personal associates had gone back to Godhead, and had entered into their eternal, unmanifest pastimes.

Sri Sacidevi left Vrindavana and returned to Jagannatha Puri. On the order of her gurudeva, she went to the house where Sarvabhauma Pandit had once stayed. There she engaged in bhajan and began giving classes on the Srimad-Bhagavatam. The old



house of Sarvabhauma was dilapidated and crumbling. For a long time no one had lived there. No one remained there to worship the Damodara Salagram that had once been worshiped by Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya himself. Sacidevi established first-class worship of the Shalagrama according to the traditional rules and regulations of the Shastra. In order to hear her wonderful siddhantic interpretations of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, faithful devotees would come to Sarvabhauma's house day after day. In a short time her Bhagavatam classes became very famous, and people would come from miles around just to hear her.

One day, the king of Jagannatha Puri, Mukunda Deva, came to hear the Bhagavatam from Sacidevi. Hearing her original explanations of siddhanta, the king was completely astounded. He thought to himself that he would like to make a nice offering to Sacidevi, out of appreciation for her devotion to Krishna.

That night he had a wonderful dream. Lord Jagannatha came to him in his dream and ordered him, "Offer Sacidevi a place on the banks of the Ganges."

The following day king Mukunda Deva went to Sacidevi. With great humility, Sacidevi offered the king a sitting place and asked him the reason for his visit. King Mukunda Deva explained about the vision he received from Jagannatha and how the Lord had instructed him to construct a place by the Ganges for Sacidevi. Sri Sacidevi was not disposed to accept any sort of wealth or comfortable situation and wanted to refuse. But the king kept pressing his wishes again and again. At that time, not wanting to violate Lord Jagannatha's order, King Mukunda Deva issued a decree naming a holy ghat by the side of the White Ganges after Sri Sacidevi.

The decree let it be known that Sri Sacidevi was a princess who had left everything to come to Jagannatha Puri and preach the holy gospel of Sri Caitanya.

One day the day of Mahavaruni-snana approached and Sri Sacidevi wanted to go to the Ganges to bathe. But Sacidevi's gurudeva had forbidden her ever to leave Jagannatha Puri. Remembering the order of her gurudeva, Sacidevi gave up her desire to bathe in the Ganges. That night, Jagannatha came to her in a dream and said, "Saci, don't think like that - the day when Varuni will take bath that day you must go and bathe in the White Ganges. Gangadevi has been praying for your association. So you must go to the White Ganges."

Having had such a divine vision from Jagannatha, Sacidevi was very joyful. The day of Varuni-snana came. In the middle of the night, Sacidevi went to the White Ganges to bathe. As she bathed at Sveta Ganga, the current of Gangadevi picked her up and began moving along. The waters of the Ganges overflowed the pond, and the current ran before her in a flood until she arrived at the Jagannatha Mandira. Seeing this, thousands and thousands of the dhambhasis in Jagannatha Puri became ecstatic and took their bath in the ganges. The four directions were filled with prayers that were shouted in great ecstasy, and there was a huge commotion. In the midst of great jubilation everyone bathed in the Ganges.



In the midst of the comotion the guards at the gate of the Jagannatha temple awoke. They were speechless at seeing the commotion going on in all directions. Hearing a great noise they went inside the temple. They began talking loudly amongst themselves. Hearing all the noise, the king had also awakened. Anxious to see that everything was all right, the king ordered the gates to the temple opened. At this, the gates were opened. By some miracle, Sacidevi was standing there, alone, inside the temple of Jagannatha. The servants and pujaris of Jagannatha concluded that she must be a thief who has come to steal the valuable ornaments of Jagannatha.

Many people said, "This cannot be! There must be some mystery here." Immediately Sacidevi was imprisoned in the dungeons to stand trial for theft. Sacidevi's mind, however, did not become weak or confused. While imprisoned, she absorbed herself in constantly chanting the holy name of Krishna.

Late that night, King Mukunda Deva saw Lord Jagannatha in a dream. Jagannatha angrily told him: "Immediately release Sacidevi from your dungeons. It was because I wanted to personally arrange for washing her holy feet that I had the Ganges bring her to my temple. If you want your life to be auspicious, then you had better make the pandas and pujaris bow at her feet and pray for forgiveness. You yourself must take initiation from her."

Seeing this in his dream, the king was repentant, and right after taking his bath, he had the pandas and pujaris go to the place where Sacidevi was being held and immediately release her, falling at her feet and begging for forgiveness. They went there and payed full obeisances, falling down like rods before her feet. The king himself went before Sacidevi, and with great entreaties begged her to forgive him for his offenses at the holy feet of a devotee. At that time, he told Sacidevi of how Lord Jagannatha had ordered him to accept her as his guru and take mantra initiation from her.

Understanding all these things to be the pastimes of Lord Jagannatha, Sacidevi became extremely joyful. Her heart filled with divine love for Krishna. Placing her hand on the king's head, she gave him her blessings.

Soon after this, on the order of Jagannatha, on an auspicious day, Sri Sacidevi initiated King Mukunda Deva into the eighteen syllable Radha-Krishna mantra. Along with the king, many pujaris also took shelter of her on that day. From that day forward, Sri Sacidevi was known as Gangamata Goswamini.

One day a smarta-brahmana named Mahidhara Sharma had come to the banks of the Sveta-Ganga to worship his ancestors. Having heard of the glories of Gangamata Goswamini, he was eager to have darshan of her holy feet. After showing great respect to the pandit, Sri Gangamata Goswamini offered him a place to sit. She asked him what his purpose in coming was. The brahmana pandit explained the righteous reason for his coming. Seeing his genuine earnestness and piety, Sri Gangamata Goswamini explained the siddhanta of Srimad-Bhagavatam to the



brahmana. The brahmana pandit was astonished by her explanations of Srimad-Bhagavatam, and dived and surfaced in the nectar of her ambrosial words.

After this, the pandit brahmana asked to take shelter at the lotus feet of Gangamata Goswamini. On an auspicious day she initiated him into the Radha-Krishna mantra of ten syllables. Mahidhara Sharma's birthplace is in Dhananjaya-pura. On the order of Gangamata Goswamini, he preached the message of nam-prema, and the teachings of Gaura-Nityananda throughout Bengal.



8. Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami

Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami was the son of Vyenkatta Bhatta, a brahmana resident of Sri Rangam, who was initiated in the Sri Sampradaya. The city of Sri Rangam is located on the Kaveri river in the district of Tanjor about ten miles west of Kumbhakonam.

Regarding this temple Sri Bhaktivedanta Swami remarks as follows. "The Sri Rangam temple is the largest in India, and there are seven walls surrounding it. There are also seven roads leading to Sri Rangam. The ancient names of these roads are Dharma, Rajamahendra, Kulashekhara, Alinadana, Tiruvikrama, Tirubidi and Ada-iyavala-indana. The temple was founded before the reign of Dharmavarman, who reigned before Rajamahendra. Many celebrated kings like Kulashekhara and others such as Alabandaru, resided in the temple of Sri Rangam. Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja, Sudarshanacharya, and others also supervised this temple."

According to Bhaktivedanta Swami, "Sri Vyenkatta Bhatta was a Vaishanva brahmana and an inhabitant of Sri Rangakshetra. He belonged in the disciplic succession of Sri Ramanujacharya. Sri Rangam is one of the places of pilgrimage in the province of Tamila-desh. The inhabitants of that province do not retain the name Vyenkatta. It is therefore supposed that Vyenkatta Bhatta did not belong to that province, although he may have been residing there for a very long time. Vyenkatta Bhatta was a member of a branch of the Ramanuja Sampradaya known as Badagala-i. He had a brother in the Ramanuja Sampradaya known as Sripada Prabodhananda Saraswati. The son of Vyenkatta Bhatta was later known in the Gaudiya Sampradaya as Gopala Bhatta Goswami and he established the Radha-ramana temple in Vrindavana. More information about him may be found in a book known as Bhakti-Ratnakara (1.100) by Sri Narahari Cakravarti."

The Gaura-parshada-charitavali describes the life of Gopala Bhatta Goswami as follows. The merciful Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in order to deliver the souls of this world, as well as to distribute krishna-prema everywhere, walked throughout the length and breadth of South India and moved from place to place inundating every town and village with the nectar of the divine name. Drinking the nectar of the holy name from the lotus mouth of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself, thousands and thousands of men and women who were burning in the desert of material existence, quenched their thirst. Thus their lives were freed from the burning of material life, and their souls were cooled. Day after day, the fallen people in general drank the nectar of Krishna's holy name and thus attained life's supreme treasure.

In order to shower nama-prema far and wide like a great thundercloud, Sriman Mahaprabhu came to stay for some time at the great holy place of Sri Rangakshetra. Sri Ranganath's huge and expansive temple is so tall that it appears to reach the heavens. That great temple has seven huge walls. Millions of devotees come to see that deity every year. Within the temple, the brahmanas are constantly chanting the glories of Sri Ranganatha.



When Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu entered that temple and began chanting Hare Krishna in kirtan, his song was far sweeter than that of millions of Gandharvas. Everyone was stunned and astonished, and the hairs of their body stood on end. His divine figure was wonderful to behold, and his bodily radiance was dazzling. From his lotus eyes showered torrents of tears of Krishna-prema. The brahmanas wondered, "Is he a god? Is such a manifestation of ecstasy possible in a man?"

Again and again exhorting everyone to chant the holy name, saying, "Haribolo! Haribolo!" he was drowning in the tears that poured from his lotus eyes, as he fell before the deities like a tree that has been cut down. Everyone thought that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared like a golden mountain that had fallen to the earth.

Sri Vyenkatta Bhatta, detecting in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu the symptoms of a Mahapurush, a great personage, could not contain himself as he saw the Lord performing sankirtan. His heart leaped with joy as it became filled with bhakti. Pushing his way through the crowd, he joined the kirtan party and lost himself in dancing and singing the holy name of Hari with the Lord. When the Lord had regained his external consciousness somewhat and had steadied himself, Vyenkatta fell in the dust of his lotus feet and asked the Lord for his mercy. The Lord, saying, "Krishna! Krishna!" heartily embraced him. At that time, Sri Vyenkatta invited the Lord to stay with him in his home during the four months of the rainy season.

At his home Vyenkatta Bhatta washed the Lord's lotus feet and drank the holy water. In this way there was great joy within the home of Vyenkatta Bhatta.

The above has been briefly described in the Caitanya Caritamrita as follows (ML 9.79-86):

*papa-nasane vishnu kailo darasane,
shri-ranga-ksetre tabe karila gamana
kaverite snana kari dekhi ranganatha
stuti pranati kari manila krtartha*

*premaveshe kaila bhauta gana nartena
dekhi camatkara haila saba lokera mana
shri vaishnava eka vyenkatta bhatta nam
prabhure nimantrana kaila kariya sammana
nija-ghare laya kaila pada praksalana
sei jala kaila sa-vamse bhakshana
bhiksha karaya kichu kaila nivedana
caturmasya asi prabhu haila upasanna
caturmasya kripa kari raha mora ghare
krishna-katha kahi kripaya uddhara amare
tanra ghare rahila prabhu krishna-katha rasa
bhatta-sange gonaila sukhe cari mase.*



"After visiting the holy place named Siva-ketra, Caitanya Mahaprabhu arrived at Papanashana and there saw the temple of Lord Vishnu. Then He finally reached Sri Ranga-kshetra. After bathing in the river Kaveri, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu saw the temple of Ranganatha and offered his ardent prayers and obeisances. Thus He felt Himself successful. In the temple of Ranganatha, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu chanted and danced in ecstatic love of Godhead. Seeing His performance, everyone was struck with wonder.

One Vaishnava known as Vyenkatta Bhatta then invited Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to his home with great respect. Sri Vyenkatta Bhatta took Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to his home. After he washed the Lord's feet, all the members of his family drank the water. After offering lunch to the Lord, Vyenkatta Bhatta submitted that the period of Chaturmasya had already arrived. Vyenkatta Bhatta said, ³Please be merciful to me and stay at my house during Chaturmasya. Speak about Lord Krishna's pastimes and kindly deliver me by your mercy.² Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu remained at the house of Vyenkatta Bhatta for four continuous months. In this way, the Lord passed His days in great happiness, enjoying the transcendental mellow of discussing Lord Krishna's pastimes."

In the year 1511, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu stayed at the house of Vyenkatta Bhatta. At that time Vyenkatta Bhatta lived with his two brothers, Prabodhananda Saraswati and Trimalla Bhatta. At that time, Sri Prabodhananda Saraswati was a tridandi sannyasi of the Ramanuja Sampradaya and Vyenkatta Bhatta and Trimalla Bhatta were also Vaishnavas in the Ramanuja Sampradaya. Vyenkatta's son was Gopala Bhatta. At the time of Mahaprabhu's visit, he was only a child. When the little boy offered his respects at the feet of Sri Caitanya, the Lord picked him up and held him on his lap, affectionately embracing the boy. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu used to call the boy and give him the remnants of his prasadam. By giving him his prasada in this manner, he was blessing Gopal Bhatta Acharya to become a great acharya in the future.

The Lord arrived in Sri Rangam during the time of Chaturmasya. At that time he stayed in the house of Vyenkatta Bhatta. In Sri Rangam live many Sri Vaishnavas. Seeing the manifestation of divine sentiments in Sri Caitanya, however, many of them were converted, for they experienced the nectar of Krishna-prema. Every day, one brahmana Vaishnava after another invited the Lord to take lunch. In this way, during the four months of Chaturmasya, the Lord accepted many invitations, and still could not honor all the invitations of the many Vaishnava grihasthas who wanted to show their hospitality to the Lord.

The Lord stayed at the house of Vyenkatta Bhatta. Every day, Sri Gopala Bhatta would serve him personally. At that time, Sri Caitanya instructed Vyenkatta Bhatta on the position of Lakshmidēvi and the worship of Lakshmi-Narayana versus the position of the gopis and the worship of Radha-Govinda. The Lord preached these points to him in a humourous style, laughing and joking in a clever way. The Lord said, "Bhatta! Your Lakshmidēvi is the crest jewel of chaste ladies. My Krishna is a gopa-boy who herds cows. Why does she want to be with Krishna?"



Vyenkatta Bhatta said, "Krishna and Narayana are one and the same. Krishna is one of the forms our Lord takes in order to enjoy pastimes of a clever and sporting nature. There is no violation of Lakshmidēvi's chastity if she takes an interest in Krishna - he is one and the same with Narayana. This is not in contradiction with any religious principles. Therefore why do you joke with me in this way?"

The Lord said, "What you say is true. But tell me, why is it that Lakshmidēvi performs great penances to attain Krishna, but cannot do so? On the other hand, the Upanishads also performed penances to attain Krishna and did so. How is it that the Upanishads succeeded in entering Vrindavana and getting Krishna's association where Lakshmidēvi failed?"

Vyenkatta said, "I cannot understand this at all." At this point he said, "You are Krishna Himself. You know the meaning of your own pastimes. Only those who you choose to enlighten can understand all these things. If you enlighten me, then I can also understand them."

At that time, Sri Caitanya explained that Lakshmidēvi wanted to remain in her position as the opulent goddess of fortune in Vaikuntha and at the same time enter into the pastimes of Krishna, where sweetness and beauty are superior to power and opulence. This is not possible. Only those who follow in the footsteps of the gopis and the residents of Vrindavana can attain such a position. The Upanishads succeeded where Lakshmidēvi failed because they followed in the footsteps of the Gopis.

Before this explanation was given Vyenkatta Bhatta thought that Sri Narayana was the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thinking in this way, he believed that the worship of Narayana was the supreme form of worship. Mahāprabhu understood his misconception and corrected it through joking about it. After this, Vyenkatta was convinced of the Supreme position of Krishna and Vrindavana, and converted to the cause of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, although he was raised in the Ramanuja Sampradaya. He offered his respects at the lotus feet of the Lord and the Lord embraced him.

In this way, the Lord spent the four months of the rainy season at the home of Vyenkatta, discussing many things about Krishna and His pastimes. After this, he bid farewell. The happy home of the Bhattas was plunged into tears. Gopala Bhatta fainted at the Lord's lotus feet. The Lord gave some consolation to Gopala Bhatta saying, "Now you must serve at the home of your mother and father. Later, you must come to Vrindavana. There you will constantly hear and glorify the holy name of Sri Krishna." In this way, after instructing the whole family, Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu went on his way.

Within a short time, Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami learned Sanskrit grammar, poetry, rhetoric and became expert in all the scriptures, beginning with the Vedānta sūtra. His uncle, Sripad Prabodhananda Saraswati instructed him extensively in the different bhakti-shāstras. His scholarship was unparalleled.



After he had been blessed by having darshan of the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga, Gopal Bhatta Goswami's mind was always absorbed in thoughts of the Lord's lotus feet. He began thinking, "When will I again obtain a vision of the Lord?"

Day and night he posed this question in his mind and could think of nothing else. And yet, he thought, "I cannot just give up my aging father and mother and go away." In this way, some time went by. At length his mother and father arrived at their final days. They called Gopala Bhatta to their side and said, "Boy, after we pass away, you must go to Vrindavana and take shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." Taking the order of his mother and father on his head, Gopala Bhatta went to Vrindavana, always remembering the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu.

When Gopala Bhatta arrived in Vrindavana, he found that Rupa Goswami was preparing to send messages with some devotees from Vrindavana to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Puri. Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Prabhu already knew that Gopala Bhatta would be coming to Vrindavana. Sri Rupa and Sanatana greeted him and treated him like a brother. From that time on, their lifelong friendship began.

When the messengers arrived in Puri, Mahaprabhu was happy to receive them. He heard from them of how Gopala Bhatta had come to Vrindavana. He sent the messenger from Vrindavana back to Rupa Goswami with the kaupin and outer garments of the babaji order, to be given to Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami as symbols of his renunciation. Sri Rupa received these things with great joy. Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami accepted the loincloth and dress of a babaji with great happiness, considering it to be the Lord's mercy and prasada. In this way he went on. He was very close to Rupa and Sanatana. He would pass his nights at different kundas, and spent all his time studying the shastra and writing.

Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami had twelve shalagram shilas. He used to keep them in a cloth bag hung round his neck. Still, he had a mind to worship the Sri Vighraha of the Lord in his deity form. At this time a rich man went to see Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami. Having seen him, he was very happy. Eager to serve, the rich man offered some fine cloth and ornaments for the service of the Lord. Sri Gopala Bhatta placed these things before his shalagrams. The wealthy man bid Gopala Bhatta goodbye.

That night, Sri Bhatta Goswami offered aroti and bhoga and put his shalagrams to rest, covering them carefully in a basket. At last, late that night Gopala Bhatta after performing different kinds of bhajan, took some prasada and went to rest. The next morning he bathed in the Yamuna. When he went to wake his shalagrams and opened the basket, he saw, in the midst of the shalagrams, something divine. One of the shalagram shilas had become a full-fledged deity of Krishna with a three-fold bending form, who stood there looking very beautiful.

Seeing the unprecedented beauty of this deity, Gopala Bhatta's happiness took the shape of a great ocean in which he was diving and surfacing. Offering his full dandavats to the deity, he began offering different hymns and prayers to the Lord. Hearing this beautiful language, Sri Rupa Goswami and Sri Sanatana Goswami, as



well as the other Vaishnavas and Goswamis, quickly went there and saw the world-enchanting beauty of the deity as tears of divine love flowed from their eyes and wet the earth. In the year 1599 of the Christian era, on the full moon day of Vaishakha, this deity form of Krishna became manifest. The Goswamis named this deity, "Sri Radha-ramana-deva."

After a time, Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami went to a town called Devavandya Gram in Saharan Pura near Haridwara. There he was received with great delight by the residents. One day, he was on his way to the house of a devotee near the edge of the town. In the afternoon, there was a great storm. On the road was the house of a brahmana in which Gopala Bhatta took shelter. This brahmana was very devoted to Krishna. He saw to the needs of Sri Bhatta Goswami with great care. Sripad Gopala Bhatta Goswami was very happy. The brahmana had no son. Gopala Bhatta blessed him, saying, "May you have a son who is a great devotee of Krishna." The brahmana then said, "I shall give you my first son to engage in the service of Krishna as you see fit."

Sri Bhatta Goswami stayed in Saharanapur and preached the holy name of Hari for a few days before returning to Vrindavana. At that time he went to the Gandaki river and retrieved twelve shalagram shilas from the river. One of these shalagramas was the one from which the deity of Radha-ramana-deva later manifest himself.

Almost ten years past since this time. One day, Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami went to take his noon bath in the Yamuna and afterwards returned to his kutir to perform his bhajan. From a distance he could see a young boy sitting in the door of his hut. When the boy saw Sri Bhatta Goswami he arose and offered his obeisances at the Goswami's feet.

Sri Gopala Bhatta asked him, "Who are you?" The boy said, "I am from Devavandya Gram in Saharan Pura. I have come from there."

Bhatta Goswami said, "Who is your father? Why have you come to me?" The boy said, "My father has sent me here to engage in your service. My name is Gopinatha." With this, Gopala Bhatta remembered his previous conversation with the boy's father, in which the brahmana said he would give the Goswami his son to engage in the service of the Lord. After this time, Sri Gopinatha served Sri Bhatta Goswami with great attention and regard.

Subsequently that boy became known as Sri Gopinatha Pujari Goswami. He remained a brahmachari and served the Radha-ramana deity up until his death. Eventually his younger brother Sri Damodara Dasa took mantra initiation from Sri Gopinathaji and also engaged in the service of Sri Radharamana. Sri Damodara Dasa had three sons, Harinatha, Mathuranatha and Harinama.

Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami served his beloved Radha-ramana deity constantly, remembering the words and teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. While serving



in this way, the eyes of Gopala Bhatta were often filled with tears of divine love that flowed like torrential rain.

Whereupon Sri Radha-ramana deva bestowed upon Sri Bhatta Goswami a divine vision of Sri Gauranga Himself. "When Sri Bhatta Goswami was overwhelmed by Krishna-prema, Sri Radha-ramana revealed himself as Sri Gauranga deva." Bhakti Ratnakara 4th Taranga.

Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami gave mantra-diksha to Srinivasa Acharya. Srimad Sanatana Goswami composed Hari Bhakti Vilasa in collaboration with Gopala Bhatta Goswami, who edited the work. Sanatana Goswami had such great affection for Gopala Bhatta Goswami that he even published the book under his name. Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami was responsible for originating the six thesis of Sat Sandarbha later elaborately developed by Sri Jiva Goswami.

Jiva Goswami writes in the beginning of his Tattva-Sandarbha: "A devotee from South India who was born of a brahmana family and was a very intimate friend of Rupa Goswami and Sanatana Goswami has written a book that he has not compiled systematically. Therefore I, a tiny living entity called Jiva, am trying to assort the events of the book systematically, consulting the direction of great personalities like Madhva, Sridhara Swami and Ramanujacharya."

Gopala Bhatta Goswami has written a foreward to Jiva Goswami's Sat Sandarbha. He wrote a commentary on Krishna-Karnamrita. He also wrote Sat-Kriya-Sara Dipika, a guide to Vaishnava samskaras and rituals for birth ceremonies, sacred thread initiations, marriage ceremonies, sannyasa, and funerals etc. In addition to this he composed many other scriptures.

In the Gaura-Gandodesha-Dipika, Sri Kavi Karnapura Goswami writes:

*ananga-manjari sadya gopala bhattachah
bhatta goswaminam kocidahuh shri guna manjari*

"In my opinion, that person who in Vrindavana was Ananga Manjari is now Gopal Bhatta Goswami. Some authorities, however, have given their opinion that he was Guna Manjari."

Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami was born in the year 1503 of the Christian era on the 13th day of the dark moon in the month of Pausha. Srimad Gopala Bhatta Goswami lived within this world for 75 years. In the Christian year of 1578 on the sixth day of the dark moon, Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami left this world behind and entered into the eternal pastimes of the Lord



9. Sri Gopala Guru Goswami

Sri Gopala Guru Goswami was a disciple of Sri Vakreshwara Pandit. He was a brahmana from Utkala. From early childhood, he stayed with Vakreshwara Pandit and remained under his care and guidance. Sriman Mahaprabhu was always very affectionate towards him and played many jokes on him. Out of affection, the lord would jokingly call him "guru" and so he became known as Gopal Guru Goswami.

Under the authority of Sri Svarupa Damodara and Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, he was instructed in the system of rasa and attained expertise in the rasik principles. At the place where Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu stayed at the house of Kashi Mishra, Vakreshwara Pandita later stayed. After Sri Vakreshwara Pandit passed away, Gopal Guru Goswami stayed at that place, where he installed the deities Sri Sri Radha-Kanta.

Sri Gopal Guru Goswami composed a book called Smarana-paddhati, or "The System for Remembering the Lord". This book has twenty-six chapters. Sri Dhayanachandra Goswami was a disciple of Sri Gopal Guru Goswami and an important acharya in the Gaudiya Sampradaya. He wrote a book called the Dhyana Chandra Paddhati.

Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura visited the house of Kashi Misrha when he went to Jagannatha Puri. There he met Gopal Guru Goswami. (B.R.8.382) According to some, Gopal Guru Goswami was the gopi known as Tungavidya Sakhi.

On the ninth day of the full moon in the month of Karttika he entered into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord.



10. Sri Ishvara Puri

Srimad Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes: "All glories to Madhavendra Puri, the storehouse of all Krishna-prema! He is a desire tree of bhakti, and it is to him that the seed of bhakti first fructified. The seed of Krishna-prema next fructified in the fore of Sri Ishvara Puri, and then the gardener himself, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, became the main trunk of the tree of bhakti."

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati comments on this section of the Caitanya Caritamrita (CC Adi 9.10): "Sri Isvara Puri was a resident of Kumarahatts. (At this place there is now a railway station known as Kamarhatty. Nearby there is also another station named Halisahara, which belongs to the eastern railway that runs from the eastern section of Calcutta). Isvara Puri appeared in a brahmin family and was the most beloved disciple of Sri Madhavendra Puri."

The nature of Sri Ishvara Puri's personal devotional service to the lotus feet of his guru, Sri Madhavendra Puri, is mentioned in another part of the Caitanya Caritamrita by Kaviraj Goswami as follows: "At the last stage of his life, Sri Madhavendra Puri became an invalid and was completely unable to move, and Isvara Puri so completely engaged himself in his service that he personally cleaned up his stool and urine. Always chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and reminding Sri Madhavendra Puri about the pastimes of Lord Krishna in the last stage of his life, Ishvara Puri gave the best service among his disciples. Thus Madhavendra Puri, being very pleased with him, blessed him, saying, ³May you have Krishna prema.²

Thus Ishavara Puri, by the grace of his spiritual master, Sri Madhavendra Puri, became a great devotee in the ocean of love of Godhead."

Srila Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada points out in his commentary on this verse, "It is by the mercy of the spiritual master that one becomes perfect, as vividly exemplified here. A Vaishnava is always protected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but if he appears to be an invalid, this gives a chance to his disciples to serve him. Ishvara Puri pleased his spiritual master by service, and by the blessings of his spiritual master he became such a great personality that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted him as his spiritual master."

Before initiating Sri Caitanya, Ishvara Puri stayed at the house of Gopinatha Acarya in Nabadwip-dham. There he lived for a few months. At that time he met Sri Caitanya, when he was Nimai Pandit, and requested him to help him with his book, Krishna-lilamrita. The Lord was highly pleased with Ishvara Puri's devotion and highly praised his book, saying that it was faultless. Still, when he was pressed, he made some corrections with his own lotus hands. This pastime is elaborately described in the Caitanya Bhagavata. The following is a synopsis of Vrindavan Dasa Thakur's account of Sri Ishavara Puri.



When Mother Saci saw that Sri Caitanya was happily engaged in his studies, her own ecstasy increased. At that time, Sri Ishvara Puri came to Nabadwipa in disguise. Caitanya Bhagavata records that Ishavara Puri was overwhelmed with the ecstasy of Krishna-rasa. And yet, as he was very dear to Krishna, he was also very humble and didn't want to attract any attention to himself as a great devotee. So that no one would know who he was, he hid his real identity and went to the temple of Advaita.

Upon arriving there, he found that Advaita was busy in service to the Lord in the temple, so he came in and sat down very cautiously and timidly. But the power of a great Vaishnava is not easily hidden from another great Vaishnava. Again and again, Advaita Acaraya kept looking away from his duties in the direction of Ishvara Puri.

Finally he asked him "O Father! Who are you?"

With great humility, Ishvara introduced himself, saying, "I am a sudra of the lowest class." In this way, the jewel of learned scholars and the best of the renounced, Ishvara Puri, showed how humility is the true ornament of a Vaishnava.

Immediately upon seeing him, Mukunda Datta recognized that Ishavara Puri was a Vaishnava Sannyasi. At that time, Mukunda Datta very sweetly began to perform Krishna-lila Kirtan. Vrindavana Dasa asks, "Who is there who can remain unmoved when Mukunda Datta performs his sweet kirtan?"

Upon hearing the deeply moving songs of Mukunda Datta, Sri Ishvara Puri lost his composure and fainted on the ground in a trance of deep ecstasy. Tears of ecstasy rained forth from his eyes. The assembled devotees were dumbstruck upon seeing such a display of transcendental emotion. When their power of speech returned, they all remarked that nowhere had any of them ever seen a Vaishnava such as this. Sri Advaita Acarya also began to experience grave symptoms of transcendental emotion. After this, they all concluded their visitor must be none other than the dearest disciple of Madhavendra Puri - Sri Ishvara Puri. At this, they all joyously began chanting the holy name of Krishna, saying, "Hari! Hari!" over and over again.

Sri Ishavara Puri stayed in Nabadwipa for a while. One day, the footpath near where he stayed was blessed by the divine footsteps of Sri Gaurasundara. Mahaprabhu was going home from school. Upon seeing Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Ishavara Puri was amazed by his perfect body and supremely grave disposition. He wanted to somehow make contact with the Lord. Finally, he called out, "O best of the brahmins! What is your name? Where is your house? And what book are you reading?"

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu with great humility offered his humble obeisances to Sri Ishvara Puri. Mahaprabhu's disciples said, "His name is Nimai Pandit."



Ishavara Puri said, "You are THE Nimai Pandit!?"

Ishavara Puri's joy knew no bounds. Mahaprabhu with great humility bowed his head and said, "Sripada, have mercy upon me and kindly grace my house with your company. This very afternoon we shall prepare prasada for your pleasure. Please accept it."

With these sweet and humble words, Mahaprabhu extended his invitation to Ishavara Puri. Accepting the invitation, Ishavara Puri went to the house of Mahaprabhu.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu washed the lotus feet of Ishavara Puri with his own hands. Sri Saci devi quickly prepared various wonderful kinds of preparations and offered them to the Deity. After it had been offered, Mahaprabhu accepted it.

Later, the two of them entered the temple of Vishnu and discussed Krishna with each other at great length. And gradually Krishna-prema sprang up in their hearts and flooded them with the ecstasy of love of Godhead.

In this way, for one month, Sri Ishavara Puri stayed at the house of Sri Gopinatha Acarya. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu would constantly invite Ishavara Puri to visit him. And from time to time Ishavara Puri would invite Mahaprabhu to visit him.

At this time, Sri Gadadhara was a young boy. Sri Ishvara Puri was very affectionate to him. He would read to Gadadhara from the book he had written, "Sri Krishna-Lilamrita." Every day around sunrise Mahaprabhu would come and offer his obeisances to Sri Ishavara Puri.

One day, Ishvara Puri told Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, "You are the topmost of pundits; I am writing a book about Krishna's pastimes. You must help me by pointing out whatever faults you may find in this work. This will give me great pleasure."

Sitting at the holy feet of Sri Ishvara Puri and hearing these words, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu smiled and said, "The words of Krishna's devotees are as good as Krishna himself. They are in the same category as he is, they are from his ³alphabet,² not from any material alphabet. Such words are not mundane. One who finds fault with Krishna or his devotees is a great sinner. What a bhakta writes is not mere poetry; it is completely different - it is dear to Krishna, and so is perfect."

"A devotee's prayers of love for Krishna have nothing to do with the rules of grammar and does not depend on them. Krishna is only interested in the love in such prayers. They are dear to Krishna in any case, whether they are properly constructed according to the rules of grammar or not. One who looks for faults in the words of a devotee will never be pleasing to Krishna."



Upon hearing Caitanya Mahaprabhu's words, Ishvara Puri felt as if his senses had been drenched in nectar. Ishvara Puri could understand that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Person. A few days later, Ishvara Puri left Navadwip with some devotees to continue visiting the holy places of pilgrimage.

In this way, Sri Gaurasundara's pastimes of scholarship reached their completion, and the Lord wanted to manifest his divinity. He wanted to reveal himself and distribute the nectar of the holy name of Krishna, and inundate the world in Krishna-prema, thus delivering the world. But first, he went to Gaya to offer oblations to his ancestors. At that time, Sri Ishvara Puri was in Gaya.

After staying in Gaya for some time, when Mahaprabhu had finished his offerings to his ancestors, he went to complete his worship of the lotus feet of Vishnu. When he had darshan of the holy feet of the Lord, and had heard the glories of the Lord he began to drown in the ecstasy of love of Godhead, and fell to the ground in wonder and delight. By divine arrangement, it was at that time that Ishvara Puri arrived. Upon seeing Sri Gaurasundara, he became speechless.

Candrashekaracarya, who was close by was informed of all this. A little time later, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu returned to external consciousness and saw Ishvara Puri nearby. At once he arose and then offered his humble obeisances at the lotus feet of Sri Ishvara Puri.

At that time, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Ishvara Puri heartily embraced one another. Soon the two of them were drowning in an ocean of tears that poured incessantly from their lotus eyes. At that time, Mahaprabhu said, "Now my visit to Gaya has really been fruitful, as by coming here I have had the chance to see your lotus feet. By traveling to a holy place and offering pinda one may deliver one's ancestors - that is the person who offers the pinda may deliver only his ancestors. But one who sees you automatically delivers millions of ancestors, and not only will they become free from certain of their sins, but they will all attain eternal deliverance from material bondage. Therefore this pilgrimage I have undertaken is unparalleled, because of your holiness having rendered everything perfectly auspicious."

In this way, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in great humility told Ishvara Puri, "All my visiting of holy places has become perfect because I have seen you. A saintly person is a real ³tirtha,² or holy place, since he sanctifies the holy places by his very presence. Therefore you are the supreme fulfillment of all holy places. All the holy places pray for the dust of your lotus feet. O Ishvara Puri, in the same way, I am praying for the dust of your lotus feet, knowing which I shall become free from the ocean of repeated birth and death and drink the nectar of divine rasa at the lotus feet of Sri Krishna. Because you alone can free me from the ocean of repeated birth and death, I offer you this body to do with as you wish. You alone can make me drink the nectar of divine rasa at the lotus feet of Krishna, and my desire is that you grant me this gift."



Hearing this from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Ishvara Puri spoke as follows: "Listen Pandit: Upon seeing your learning and character, I can understand that you are divinity Himself, descended amongst men. This very day, I had a beautiful dream. In my dream were many people, and their hands were laden with fruit. O Pandit! To speak truthfully, upon seeing you, I am filled with an unusual feeling of transcendental bliss that surpasses ordinary joy. In fact, after I first saw you in Nabadwipa-dhama, from that time on, I couldn't think of anything else but you. I didn't want to think of anything else but you. I am speaking the truth! Upon seeing you I am as happy as if I were seeing Krishna Himself! "

Upon hearing all this, Mahaprabhu humbly lowered his head in respect and smiling, said: "I am supremely fortunate."

A few days later, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in a mood of great humility sought out Ishvara Puri and said, "Your holiness, please show mercy upon me and initiate me in the Gayatri mantram as your disciple. For want of the Gayatri mantra my mind is very much disturbed. "

Sri Ishvara Puri, upon hearing the words of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was very happy and spoke as follows: "Whether I am giving you my words in speech or a mantra, it is my life I wish to give you; I wish to give you everything I have."

After this, Sri Ishvara Puri initiated Sri Gaurasundara in the divine mantra. One day, Sri Ishvara Puri came to the residence of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Upon seeing him, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu became ecstatic. He offered his obeisances and all proper respects and greetings and begged him to stay for lunch.

Ishvara Puri said, "I would consider myself extremely fortunate to accept some rice from your lotus hand." Mahaprabhu cooked with his own hands and with great care fed Sri Ishvara Puri. After lunch, the Lord smeared sandalwood pulp over the limbs of Sri Ishvara Puri and offered him a nice garland of flowers.

In this way, in order to acquaint us with the way in which to properly worship the guru, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has instructed us all by his personal example how to serve the guru-parampara. One who does not understand how to honor a saintly person can never attain Krishna-prema-bhakti. Service to the lotus feet of the guru is the gateway to Krishna-bhakti.

When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was returning to Nabadwipa from Gaya, he passed through Kurmarhatta, the divine birthplace of Sri Ishvara Puri. Upon arriving there, he became filled with divine love and his voice choked up in ecstasy. He soaked the earth with the tears of divine love from his lotus eyes. Before he left Kurmarhatta, he went to the place of Ishvara Puri's birth and took some dust from his birthsite. As he left for Nabadwipa, he announced, "This dust is my life and soul!"



After this, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa and went to Jagannatha Puri on the order of his mother. At that time, Sri Ishvara Puri had finished his role in the Lord's manifest pastimes. At the time of his passing into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord, he ordered his two disciples, Govinda and Kashishvara Pandit to live near Mahaprabhu and render service to Him.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta has written: "The best of sannyasis, Madhavendra Puri had as his foremost disciples Ishvara Puri, Nityananda and the great Advaita. In order to honor Sri Ishavara Puri, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the guru of the whole world accepted him as his spiritual master."



11. Sri Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja

*gauravirbhava-bhumes tvam, nirdestha saj-jana-priyah
vaishnava-sarvabhaumah shri-jagannathaya te namah*

"I offer my respectful obeisances to Jagannatha dasa Babaji Maharaja, who is respected by the entire Vaishnava community and who discovered the place where Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared."

Sri Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja was born in the Mayamansingh district of West Bengal. Gaudiya Vedanta-acharya Sri Baladeva Vidyabhushana had a disciple named Uddhava das. His disciple was Sri Madhusudana Dasa Babaji who lived in Suryakunda. Madhusudana Dasa Babaji's disciple was Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja.

Jagannatha Dasa Babaji lived in Vrindavan and performed his bhajan there for quite some time. He became famous among the devotees there as one who was perfect in Krishna-bhakti. In 1880, Srimad Bhaktivinoda Thakura went to Vrindavan and saw his lotus feet for the first time. While there, he received many divine instructions on Hari-bhakti from Jagannatha Dasa. Some time later, Babaji Maharaja visited the Bardhaman district during the month of Phalgun. He stayed at a town called Amalajorha. At that time, Bhaktivinoda Thakura again had the good fortune to take darshan of his holy feet.

Seeing Bhaktivinoda Thakur's enthusiasm for preaching the holy name of Krishna, Srila Babaji Maharaja was very happy. He stayed in Amalajorha during ekadashi, and that night there was kirtan and Hari-katha. Later, at Amalajorha, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura established his Prappana-Ashram.

In 1893, Srila Babaji Maharaja went from Koladwip (the part of Nabadwipa where Srila Sridhara Maharaja's temple is presently located) to Surabhi-kunja in Godrumadwipa. There he took his seat. His arrival in Surabhi-kunja was a wonderful event. Sri Jagannatha Dasa Babaji revealed many lost holy places in Mayapura, including the Yogapith, Srivasa Angana and others. It is said that when he came upon the holy place of Mahaprabhu's birth he danced, although he was very old and walked with difficulty. For some time he remained in Nadia and performed his bhajan on the banks of the Ganges. His bhajan kutir and samadhi mandir are still there at present. He ordered Bhaktivinoda Thakura to build a hut so devotees could stay near his bhajan kutir, and Bhaktivinoda did so.

When Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura was twelve years old, he was an expert in the Jyoti-shastras explaining Vedic astrology. Hearing this, Srila Babaji Maharaja one day called upon him to prepare the Vaishnava calendar in accordance with the proper siddhanta. He did so and Babaji Maharaja was very pleased. With this, the Nabadwipa Panjika, the Vaisnava calendar recording the dates of the appearance and disappearance of important Vaishnava saints and the celebration of important festivals, began.



Srila Babaji Maharaja always had great enthusiasm for kirtan and Vaishnava seva. Even when he was nearly 135 years old, he went on preaching the message of Sri Chaitanya throughout the world for the benefit of the fallen masses. In his old age, although he was almost paralyzed by infirmity, whenever it was time for kirtana he would still raise his arms in ecstasy.

Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja was the veda or Babaji guru of Bhagavat dasa Babaji Maharaja. Bhagavat dasa in turn gave the dress of a babaji Gaurakisora dasa Babaji. Jagannatha dasa Babaji's servant's name was Bihari dasa. He was extremely strong and powerful. In his old age, Babaji Maharaja could not walk. Bihari dasa used to carry him in a basket on his shoulders so that Babaji Maharaja could move from place to place.

When he went to Calcutta, Babaji Maharaja would stay at the house of Bhaktivinoda Thakura on Manikatala Street. Bhaktivinoda was always very eager to invite him to his house for prasada, but Babaji Maharaja was very renounced and would come only occasionally.

When he was in his old age, Babaji Maharaja was nearly blind. Many people would come to see him and to offer him donations for the service of Sri Krsna. His servant Bihari dasa would keep all these donations in a bag. One day, Babaji Maharaja said, ³Bihari! How many rupees have I got?²

Bihari dasa had put some rupees aside for some service he had planned to render Babaji Maharaja. When asked by Jagannatha dasa Babaji about how many rupees were on hand, Bihari placed some rupees in his hand and kept twelve Rupees aside. Even though his eyesight was failing, however, Babaji Maharaja detected the discrepancy.

³Bihari!² he said, ³Why have you kept twelve Rupees aside? Give me all the rupees!²

Smiling at this fun, Bihari surrendered the remaining coins to his guru. At that time, Babaji Maharaja made his wishes known as to how the money should be spent. The total came to two hundred rupees. Babaji Maharaja ordered Birari dasa to take the money at once and buy sweetballs, rasagolas, to feed all the cows in Nabadwipa dhama.

Once Babaji Maharaja was on the banks of the Ganges, living under a makeshift canvas tent. Nearby that place there lived a dog with five puppies. Whenever Babaji Maharaja would take prasada, the dogs would come around and lick the food from his plate. When Bihari dasa caught hold of one of the dogs to drive it off, Babaji Maharaja told him: ³Bihari! If you wish to drive these dogs off, you may take my plate away as well. I shall not eat today.²



When Bihari complained, ³But guru maharaja - these dogs are unclean!² Babaji Maharaja remarked, ³No. These dogs are residents of the holy dhama. You may not abuse them.²

Many people used to come and beg alms from Jagannatha Dasa Babaji. He did not want to give them alms, but told them to do service. One day a man named Sri Gaura Hari dasa came and asked Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja for alms, but Babaji Maharaja would give him nothing. When the man persisted for three days, fasting outside Babaji Maharaja's tent, Babaji Maharaja finally relented. He tore off a piece of his kaupina, his undergarment and gave it to Bihari dasa, his servant, with the instruction to present it to the beggar as alms, thereby informing the beggar that he must first learn to control his senses before taking up the profession of a saint.

One day, Sri Babaji Maharaja remarked about the professional readers of Srimad-Bhagavatam, ³This kind of professional Bhagavata kirtana is simply prostitution. Those who make their living by reading Srimad-Bhagavatam are offenders to the holy name of Krsna. No one should listen to the kirtana and Bhagavatam readings that they produce. And one who listens to such offensive readings and thus commits offenses against the holy name of Krsna certainly go to hell. Those who are involved in this professional reading should immediately give it up. Such a person should worship the residents of Vrndavan with great care and attention, considering himself most fallen, and thus pray for forgiveness.²

Srimad Bhaktivinoda Thakura remarked of Srila Jagannatha dasa Babaji Maharaja that he was the topmost general among Gaudiya Vaisnavas.



12. Sri Jayadeva Goswami

Sri Jayadeva Goswami was the court pandit of Sri Lakshman Sena, the King of Bengal. Jayadeva's father was Bhojadeva, and his mother's name was Bamadevi. They lived in the Birbhum district of what is now West Bengal in a village called Kenubilva Gram. He was born at the beginning of the twelfth century AD.

Jayadeva Goswami's wife was named Sri Padmavati. When he was the court pandit of Lakshman Sena, he lived on the banks of the Ganges. Approximately three hundred years before the appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Jayadeva Goswami lived in Bengal. He was the author of Sri Gita Govinda, which is mentioned by Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami in the Caitanya Caritamrita as follows (CC ML 2/11): "Day and night, in the company of Svarupa Damodara and Ramananda Raya, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu used to hear with great ecstasy the songs of Vidyapati and Chandidas, as well as a drama composed by Ramananda Raya. He also used to relish hearing the Krishna-Karnamrita and the Gita-Govinda. In his introduction, Jayadeva says that the Gita Govinda is a scripture describing the intimate pastimes of Sri Radha and Govinda. It may be worshiped and served by those who are extremely qualified in devotional piety. For those who are constantly remembering the rasik pastimes of Sri Hari within his mind, Sri Jayadeva has composed this divine poetic song glorifying the Lord's internal pastimes. He requests the topmost spiritually advanced souls to hear it with gravity and attention."

There are many many traditional stories regarding the life of Sri Jayadeva. The following story is generally accepted as authoritative. One day, Sri Jayadeva Goswami was composing a particular sensitive section of the Gita-Govinda, describing Krishna's relationship with the gopis headed by Radharani. He meditated deeply on what he had written and became concerned that he had perhaps gone too far in describing the exalted character of the gopis. What he had written seemed to represent Krishna's position as being, in a sense, subordinate to that of the gopis. And yet Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. How could he be subordinate to the gopis? He had been inspired to pen a line stating that Krishna bows down to touch the lotus feet of Sri Radha. But his hand shrank from the page. He hesitated thinking, "How can I commit such an idea to writing? How can I have the audacity to put such a thing in black and white?"

At that time he decided to go bathe in the Ganges, in hopes that perhaps some inspiration would come to him. Jayadeva Goswami went off to take his afternoon bath, leaving his wife Padmavati behind to cook the offering for the Deities.

While he was away, Krishna arrived at his house in the dress of Jayadeva. Krishna went over to Jayadeva's writing desk, and there found the sheaves of palm upon which the Gita-Govinda was written. Krishna picked up Jayadeva's pen and wrote the verse with the line "dehi padapallava-mudaram," wherein it says "Krishna bows down his head to the lotus feet of Sri Radha." With this Krishna, disguised as



Jayadeva, sat down and took the prasadam prepared by Padmavati. After finishing his prasadam, Krishna stepped outside and vanished.

Just at that time, Jayadeva returned from bathing at the Ganges. When he asked about prasadam, his wife was perplexed. When she told Jayadeva what had just happened, Jayadeva was astonished. He went over to his book and saw there in wet ink the verse he had thought of writing before he had gone to bathe in the Ganges: dehi padapallavam udaram: Krishna bows down his head to the lotus feet of Sri Radha.

Upon seeing that verse he said to Padmavati, "It is a miracle! See here: what I told you I was reluctant to write has been written here exactly as I thought of it." Tears of ecstasy flowed in rivers from his eyes as he understood the mystery of what had just transpired. "Padmavati!" he said, "You are most fortunate. Krishna Himself has written the line, ³dehi padapallavam udaram², and accepted prasadam from your own hand."

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written that although Chandidasa, Vidyapati, Bilvamangala, and Jayadeva lived before Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was externally manifest within this world, Caitanya Mahaprabhu's conception of bhakti had arisen within their hearts and was expressed in their writings.

Besides the Gita Govinda, Jayadeva Gowsami has written another book called "Chandraloka". The famous "Dasa-Avatara-Gita", describing the ten avatars of Vishnu is from Gita-Govinda.

Jayadeva Goswami's disappearance day is on Pausha-Sankranti. At present, at Jayadeva's birthplace in Kendubiva Gram, there is a festival every year on this day which is known as the Jayadeva Mela.



13. Sri Kaliya Krishna Dasa Thakura

Kaviraja Goswami writes (CC Adi 11.37) that Kaliya Krishna Dasa Thakura was one of the principle devotees of Nityananda Prabhu. He knew nothing other than the lotus feet of Sri Nityananda Prabhu.

According to Kavi Karnapura's Gaura-Ganodesha-Dipika, he was one of the 12 gopals in Vrindavana, and in the pastimes of Krishna in Vrindavana was known as Labhanga, one of Krishna's cowherd boy friends.

His birthplace is in the Bardhaman (Burdwan) district of West Bengal within a short distance from the Railway station at Katwa, at the village called Akai Hatta. This village is situated on the old king's road between Nabadwipa and Katwa. Akai Hatta is a very small village.

On the twelfth day of the dark moon in the month of Caitra, Sri Kaliya Krishna Dasa Thakura disappeared. This is not the same Kaliya Krishna dasa who accompanied Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to South India. At present, Kaliya Krishnadas's descendents live in different holy places in Bengal.



14. Srila Locana Dasa Thakura, Part One

Srila Locan Dasa Thakura took his birth in a family of brahmans who lived in a village in the Rada-desh, in Mahakumara, near Katwa, in the Burdhaman district of Bengal. When he was only a little boy, he enjoyed the good fortune of meeting the devotees of Sri Gauranga. His guru was Narahari Sarakara Thakura.

In his Caitanya Mangala, Srila Locana Dasa Thakura has written: "My hope of hopes is to be near the lotus feet of Sri Narahari Thakura, to serve and worship him with my very life. The cherished desire of the fallen Locana Dasa is to be allowed by the grace of Narahari to sing the glories of Sri Gauranga. My Lord is Sri Narahari Thakura and I am his servant. Bowing and praying before him I beg him to allow me his service. This is my only aspiration."

Previously in Bengal the poets used to compose sacred songs and verses in different forms of classic rhymes and rhythmic meters called Panchali. The Panchali style of composition was especially used for glorifying the Lord. Srila Locana Dasa Thakura used the Panchali form of verse-meter in composing his famous work, Sri Caitanya Mangala. The Panchali form employs five different kinds of song-styles.

The name of Sri Locana Dasas father was Sri Kamalakara Dasa. His mother's name was Sri Sadanandi. Locana Dasa was his father's only son and so was the darling of his parents. He spent the better part of his years staying at the house of his grandparents. There began his studies and his education. At a very young age, Sri Locana Dasa was married. From early childhood, Sri Locana Dasa had great attachment for Sri Gauranga and at the same time great detachment from material enjoyment.

In the prime of his youth he went to Sri Khanda where he found his gurudeva, Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, and took shelter at his lotus feet. He stayed there for some time, and there he was instructed in kirtan.

The principle source material that was drawn upon by Sri Locana Dasa Thakura in composing his Caitanya Mangala was a Sanskrit book by Murari Gupta called Sri Caitanya Caritamritam.

Locana Dasa Thakura explains this in his Caitanya Mangala as follows: "That very Murari Gupta who lived in Nadiya composed many Sanskrit verses about the life of Sri Gauranga, which he later arranged in the form of a book. Having heard these verses from Murari Gupta, Damodara Pandit taught them to me, and I memorized them with great delight. As these Sanskrit verses, and the conception of Caitanya Mahaprabhu imparted to me through Damodara Pandita, developed within my mind, it flowed forth from me in the form of these Panchali verses in Bengali, which I write in glorification of the life and pastimes of Sri Caitanya." (C.M. Sutra-Khanda)



In his preface to the Caitanya Mangala, Srila Locana Dasa Thakura offers his prayers to Vrindavan dasa Thakura before proceeding with the narrative. He says, "I offer my prayers of submission to Vrindavana Dasa Thakura with all my heart. The sweet song of his Caitanya Bhagavata has enchanted the whole world." (C.M. Sutra-Khanda)

Vrindavan Dasa Thakura's Caitanya Bhagavata was originally called Caitanya Mangala. It is said that Srila Locana Dasa Thakura and Srila Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Goswami gave it the name Caitanya Bhagavata. Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami writes:

*krishna lila bhagavate kahe vedadvyasa,
chaitanya lilara vyasa-vrindavana dasa.*

"Vedavyasa has described the pastimes of Krishna in his Bhagavata. The Vyasa of Caitanya Lila is Vrindavan Dasa."

From this comparison between Vedavyasa and Vrindavana Dasa, it has been concluded that Kaviraja Goswami is probably responsible for Vrindavan Dasa Thakur's work becoming known as the Bhagavata of Caitanya Lila or Chaitanya-Bhagavata.

There are many pastimes of Sri Caitanya that have only been touched on briefly by Vrindavana Dasa Thakura. These are described in detail in the Caitanya Mangala of Locana Dasa Thakura.

The Caitanya Mangala is divided into four parts: Sutra Khanda, Adi Khanda, Madhyama Khanda and Shesha Khanda. The Sutra Khanda has two chapters, Adi Khanda has seven chapters, the Madhyama Khanda twelve, and the Shesha Khanda three. The contents of the Adi Khanda are as follows.

The first chapter in the Sutra Khanda is called Mangalaracharanam, or auspicious invocation. It begins with a song of the glories of Sri Caitanya and then praises the Vaishnavas who were personal associates of Sri Caitanya. After this, Locana Dasa Thakura offers respects to his gurudeva, Narahari Sarakara Thakura, and prays for his guru's mercy. He offers his obeisances at the lotus feet of the countless devotees and personal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, known and unknown. Having prayed for the blessings of guru and vaishnavas, Locana Dasa explains that Murari Gupta had written a book in Sanskrit called the Caitanya Caritamritam, and that since that book is no longer available, he is giving its essence in the form of Bengali verse called Panchali. He then briefly describes the subjects found in the Adi, Madhya, and Shesha Khandas.

The second chapter of the Sutra Khanda is called Grantharambha, for here the book actually begins. In this chapter Locana Dasa relates how he heard from Damodara Pandita the story of Jaimini's Mahabharata recital, wherein he describes



a conversation between Narada and Uddhava. In that conversation Narada explained the cause of Krishna's appearance in the golden form of Sri Gauranga.

One time Narada saw that with the coming of the age of Kali the living beings had fallen into great suffering. He began to worry about how they could be delivered and the principles of dharma restored. Thinking in this way, he decided that only Krishna's descent into this world would deliver the fallen souls and restore the principles of religion. Wanting to appeal to Krishna to descend as an avatara, he set out for Dwaraka dham. At that time, Krishna was staying in the palace of Sri Rukmini devi.

Just then, upon learning that Sri Krishna would soon appear on earth in a golden form, with the golden luster and devotional mood of Radharani, Rukminidevi became deeply troubled. Feeling separation from the Lord, she fell at the lotus feet of Krishna and began praising the qualities of Sri Radha - whose devotion was so glorious that Krishna wanted to honor her by assuming her luster and mood. At that time Narada entered the room. He explained to Krishna the reason for his trip - that he wanted Krishna to descend to the earth planet in order to deliver the fallen souls. At that time, Krishna revealed to him how in the future he would appear as the son of Sacidevi and Jagannatha Mishra in Nabadwipa dham: in a golden form with all his transcendental associates.

Having seen that golden form revealed, Narada was overwhelmed with ecstasy. Constantly thinking of this golden form and the Lord's plans to appear in Navadwipa dhama as Sri Gauranga, Narada the best of munis went to visit Naimisharanya, all the while singing the glories of the Lord. There, in answer to Uddhava's inquiries about the welfare of the living beings, he explained how in Kali-yuga - the best of all ages because of Sri Gauranga's advent - Krishna would appear in a golden form as Sri Gauranga and perform the kirtan of the holy name of Hari. Narada told Uddhava how the Lord would come to establish the Sankirtana of the holy name of Krishna as the yuga-dharma, the religious principle for the age of Kali. Narada explained the glories of kirtana.

Thereafter, Narada Muni related to Uddhava the discussion that had previously taken place when he had gone to Kailasa and visited Lord Shiva, the best of Vaishnavas. There, Narada and Parvati discussed the glories of Mahaprasada, having heard of the glories of Mahaprasada from Narada, Parvati had performed 12 years of Lakshmi-seva. By her mercy, Parvati got some of Laksmidevi's own mahaprasada and also gave shiva a small bit of that prasada. Not able to tolerate the dancing of Lord Shiva upon obtaining this Mahaprasada, the earth came before Parvati, begging her to give the Mahaprasada of the Vaishnavas to all the jivas. With this proposal, Parvati explained how the Gaura-avatara would come in kaliyuga and distribute Mahaprasada to all the fallen souls.

After this, Narada went to Brahma and discussed the Gaura-avatara with him. Brahma, the creator, at that time explained to him the essential subject of the Shrimad Bhagavatam, and showed him how the version of the Bhagavatam



supported the gaura-avatara. After this, Narada began wandering here and there. As he went from place to place he became concerned about the sufferings of the jivas. As he was worrying about the living entities in this way, he came near Jagannatha Puri. There he heard a divine voice discussing the avatara of Jagannatha. On the order of the divine voice he went to Puri. From there, the Lord ordered him to go to Goloka. First he came to Vaikuntha. After this, he arrived in Goloka, where he saw many pastimes of the Lord. There he saw the Lord in his golden form as Sri Gaura, and fainted in ecstasy. After this, he went all over the universe, informing all the gods of the news.

In Shwetadwipa he saw the supernatural pastimes of Balarama, the very figure of service. After this, all the demigods began taking birth on earth. As previously mentioned by Krishna in his conversation with Rukmini, the Lord, along with Satyabhama, Rukmini, and all his eternal associates from the spiritual world came with the luster and mood of Radharani in a golden form as Sri Gauranga. He came to spread the sankirtan of the holy name of Krishna.

Balarama came as Nityananda, Shiva came as Advaita Prabhu, and other great souls descended as his other eternal associates like Murari, Mukunda, Shrivasa, Raya Ramananda, Ishvara Puri, and Madhavendra Puri. Locana Dasa Thakur concludes the chapter by praising the glories of his guru, Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, and his nephew Raghunandana Thakura.

The first chapter of the Adi lila of Caitanya Mangala describes the Janma-lila, or birth pastimes, of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The chapter first describes the advent of the Lord's eternal associates, who appeared in this world before Mahaprabhu Himself.

Locana Thakura describes the Lord as the remote and immediate cause of creation, the Parabrahman, Sri Narayana Himself. That Supreme Personality of Godhead descended within the womb of Sacidevi and advented Himself upon this earth. In this way, gradually Saci's womb grew day by day, and her body assumed a supernatural effulgence. Seeing her wonderful bodily effulgence, everyone was astonished, and thought, "Surely a great personality is about to take birth from the womb of Sri Sacidevi."

When her "pregnancy" was in its sixth month, one day Advaita Acharya Prabhu went to the house of Sacidevi and Jagannatha Mishra. Arriving there, he offered his obeisances to the child in the womb of Mother Saci and then circumambulated her. Sacidevi and Jagannatha Mishra could not understand the cause of Advaita's unusual behavior. In this way, Brahma, Shiva, and the other gods came to offer their respects to that Supreme Personality of Godhead who had hidden himself within the womb of Sacidevi, knowing well that he would soon advent Himself in this world to deliver the lowest of men with the highest nectar of Krishna prema. Detecting their presence, Sacidevi felt great joy. When the heart of Sacidevi was full of mercy for the whole world, that is to say, when the most merciful Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu had completely filled her heart, gradually the tenth month came. After



this, taking advantage of an auspicious moment on the full moon day in the month of Phalgun, in the midst of Hari-sankirtana, Sri Guarachandra appeared like a golden moon from the ocean of the womb of Mother Saci. In this way, the Lord appeared on earth, and the ten directions were jubilant. The gods and goddesses, men and women, eager to see the moonlike face of the son of Saci, hurried to the house of Jagannatha Mishra and Sacidevi. In this way, their home was transformed into Vaikuntha.

Jagannatha Mishra and all the residents of Nadiya who had turned out to see that divine child were all struck with wonder to see his beauty. He had a neck like a lion, arms like the trunks of elephants, and a broad chest. His lotus feet were marked with the auspicious symbols of Lord Vishnu: a flag, a thunderbolt, a rod for driving elephants.

Seeing all these wonderful and superhuman manifestations of divinity in the child, the people there were all astonished. Everyone speculated about his supernatural origin, saying, "He is definitely not an ordinary human." For eight days, the newborn child and its mother were quarantined, as is traditional for childbirth in Bengal, and on the ninth day a great festival was held. At that time, all the neighbors were filled with great joy to see the boy, and their attraction for him increased.

The second chapter of the Adi Khanda describes the Lord's bala-lila childhood pastimes. Here, Locana dasa Thakura describes how after six months, the grain-eating ceremony of Sri Gaurasundara was held, and after this the name-giving ceremony was performed. At the appearance of the Lord, the whole world was delighted. Since the Lord gave pleasure to the whole world, the brahmanas said his name should be Vishvambhara. Soon, Vishvambhara began to walk, by holding onto Jagannatha Mishra's finger with his tiny hand. The different women in the village used to decorate him with different ornaments, and they would wonder at the beautiful effulgence that emanated from the child, which was as bright as millions of moons. The moon outside can brighten the darkness of night only slightly, but the moon of Sri Gaurachandra can eliminate all darkness, both within and without.

Sacidevi would sing to her son while threshing wheat, and at that time, all the demigods offer prayers to her son. Seeing this, Sacidevi was quite amazed. Sometimes she would see Gaurahari chanting the glories of Radha-Krishna with the gods and would become astonished and faint. When she heard ankle-bells ringing on the bare feet of her child, again she was bewildered. Sometimes she was afraid that ghosts were causing a disturbance, and sometimes she would look in the mouth of her child, and, beholding the universal form, become completely astonished.

In this way, gradually Gaurahari grew old enough to play outside, where he astounded his newfound childhood friends with his divine antics. His playmates were quite attached to him. Sacidevi would carry the baby Gaurahari in her arms and watch after him carefully as he ran about, to keep him from smashing everything as he played. Once, he explained to Mother Saci the nature of things



pure and impure, instructing her on the aprakrita nature of Krishna, who is master of everything.

While sitting on a heap of broken clay pots soiled with leftovers, he instructed his mother on jnana. Seeing his mother bewildered, he brought her some coconut fruit. In this way, he performed many childhood pranks. He used to play with puppydogs. When Sacidevi chastised him for playing with a dog, and Gaurahari had to give up his pet, he cried tears of anger before Sacidevi. At that time, he bestowed a divine spiritual body upon that dog while performing Harikirtana. The dog went to Vaikuntha, and as Brahma, Shiva, and the other demigods saw the good fortune of the dog they were all amazed. Sacidevi was astonished at the activities of her son, who made her understand his Supreme Position as the Absolute Lord.

The fourth chapter of the Adi Lila of Caitanya Mangala describes the Lord's pauganda, or boyhood lila. Having heard Murari Gupta reciting the yogashastras, the Lord mimicked his gestures and speech, making fun of him and then began to laugh uproariously. Thus Murari Gupta was enraged and chastised the Lord with words of anger. In return, the boy, intending to express his contempt for the conclusions of yogis went to Murari's afternoon lunch and urinated on Murari Gupta's plate. After this, he instructed Murari Gupta on the superiority of Krishna-bhakti.

Finally, the author discusses Mahaprabhu's boyhood performance of sankirtana, and relates what he heard from Damodara Pandit of Murari Gupta's notes on the sannyasa of Vishvarupa, the Lord's older brother. He also relates the lamentation of Sacidevi and Jagannatha upon their son's taking sannyasa. He also recounts many other pastimes performed by the Lord as a boy.

At that time the Lord's hair-cutting ceremony took place. And soon thereafter, the day of Hate-khare, or the first holding of chalk, came. On that day, to signify the beginning of a child's formal education begins, he is given a piece of chalk and a chalkboard, upon which he is to draw the letters of the alphabet. Upon beginning his studies, the Lord was overjoyed to meet many new classmates. On the day that his son's education began, Jagannatha Mishra was very pleased. That night, however, he had a dream in which a brahmana appeared to him and told him that his son Vishvambhara was Bhagavan Himself. Who can educate the Supreme Lord, or discipline him as a small boy? From this, Jagannatha Mishra could understand the supreme position of his child. When his dream broke, he was again overwhelmed with the sentiments of parental love and soon forgot the dream.

At a particular time, the sacred thread ceremony of the boy was performed. After this, there is a discussion of the four ages and the yuga-avatara. In Dvapara-yuga, the Supreme Lord Himself, Sri Krishna the son of Nanda in Vrindavana, makes his appearance on earth. In Kaliyuga, Sri Krishna, appearing with the luster and mood of Sri Radha, advents himself as Sri Gauranga. By performing Sankirtana, he establishes the religious principle for the age of Kali: hari-nama-sankirtana. In order to establish the yuga-dharma, he comes as a preacher. Maddened with



Krishna-prema, he delivers all souls with the ecstasy of love of God, by moving here and there and distributing divine love. While in his grihastha-lila, he ordered his mother to refrain from eating grains on Ekadashi, in this way instructed everyone to follow this injunction.

Gradually, Jagannatha Mishra fell ill, and passed away, entering into the Lord's unmanifest pastimes. At that time, the Lord instructed Sacidevi on the fleeting nature of a man's short life within the material world. He also explained many other important principles of divine reality to her. With the passing of her husband, Sacidevi greatly lamented. Gaurahari Himself also lamented the passing of his father. After this time, he began paying close attention to his studies.

Chapter four describes the Lord's pastimes of youth and marriage. One day, after school, the Lord was walking home from his teacher's house and at that time he met Vanamali Acarya. As they talked, the Acharya made the Lord understand that he had just been to see his mother Sacidevi, where he had been making arrangements for the Lord's wedding. Sacidevi had rebuffed him, and unable to secure her permission for the match, Vanamali was a little unhappy. In this way, he was returning to his home, downcast. Sri Gaurahari returned home. Without intimating anything of his conversation with the matchmaker, the Lord informed her of his intentions to wed, saying that she should seek out Vanamali and make the necessary arrangements for the wedding of her son.

She did so, and on the orders of Sacimata, Vanamali Acharya went to Vallabhacharya's house. There he informed Vallabhacharya of the Lord's intent to wed Vallabhacharya's daughter Lakshmidēvi.

Having made all the arrangements for the wedding, Sacidevi informed all her friends and relatives of the auspicious event and invited them to the occasion. Everyone floated in the waves of the joyful ocean. In this way, Sacidevi made preparations for her son's wedding.

All the residents of Nadia turned out to see the wedding. The relatives saw to it that all the old traditional Bengali wedding customs were followed. The Hindu ceremony of besmearing the bridegroom and bride with a paste of turmeric and then bathing them on the eve of the wedding was performed, as were many other rituals. The place where the wedding was to be performed was cleansed with sanctified water, and all the Vedic purificatory rites were observed. All this took place at the house of Vallabhacharya. At last, with great pomp and grandeur, in the midst of a great assembly of devotees, relatives and friends, the wedding of Sri Gaurahari and Lakshmidēvi was performed in the house of Vallabhacharya.

The Acharya himself performed the Vedic wedding ceremony. He offered his new son-in-law sanctified water and arghya to sweeten his lotus mouth. After this, he brought Lakshmidēvi up on the wedding stage and presented her to Gaurahari. Finally, the scriptural sacrifice that is performed at weddings took place. After this,



the brahmanas were fed sumptuous prasadam at the conclusion of the wedding, and Sri Lakshmidēvi was escorted to her new home as the bride of Sri Gaurahari.

The Fifth Chapter of the *Adi Khanda* of *Caitanya Mangala* describes more of the Lord's pastimes of youth, including his tour of Bengal. After some time the Lord journeyed down the banks of the Ganges, sanctifying that holy river even further by the touch of his lotus footsteps. In order to provide for his new family, the Lord set out for East Bengal, where he took up the occupation of teaching. In this way he gave his mercy to the residents of East Bengal who lived on the banks of the *Padmavati* river. When he returned to Bengal, he found that Lakshmidēvi had been unable to tolerate the pain of his absence. She was bitten by the snake of separation and passed away into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord. Sacidēvi was heartbroken and was consoled in her lamentation by Gaurahari who glorified the sublime qualities of Lakshmidēvi.

The Sixth Chapter of the *Adi Khanda* of *Caitanya Mangala* describes the arrangements made by Sacidēvi for the Lord's second wedding. Through *Dvija-Kashishvara* it was arranged that he was to be wed to the daughter of *Sanatana Pandita*, *Vishnupriya* devī. Here, the wedding of *Vishnupriya* and *Gaurahari* is elaborately described.

The seventh chapter of the *Adi Khanda* describes the Lord's journey to *Gaya*. Some time after the wedding of *Gaurahari* and *Vishnupriyadevi*, the Lord, having completed his education busied himself in his teaching work. One day, he left for *Gaya* to offer respects to his departed father. As he walked down the road, everywhere, the birds and animals who saw him were stunned with ecstasy upon beholding his lotus feet. After instructing a brahmana in *Krishna-bhakti*, the Lord allowed a brahmana to drink the water of his lotus feet. That brahmana immediately became free from all his bodily distress.

At that time, the Lord also instructed how the mysteries of *Krishna-bhajana* cannot be understood simply on the basis of one's birth in a brahmana family. At last arriving in *Gaya*, the Lord performed worship of the *devas* and *pitris*, in order to do his duty regarding his departed father. While so engaged, he went to see the lotus feet of the *Vishnu* Deity. At that time, the Lord met that best of *Vaishnavas*, *Sri Ishvara Puri*. He prayed for the mercy of *Ishvara Puri Prabhu*, who, soon thereafter, initiated him in the *Krishnamantra*.

With this, the Lord's transcendental ecstasy became manifest. After this, he went to take *darshan* of the lotus feet of *Vishnu*. Upon seeing the Lord's holy feet, *Sri Gaurahari* was overwhelmed with *prema* and exhibited his ecstasy by laughing, singing and dancing. Only a few days later, he returned home.

From this point the first chapter of the *Madhya Khanda* begins.



15. Srila Locana Dasa Thakura, Part Two

In the first chapter of the Madhya Khanda the author describes the Lord's pastimes as a teacher, and explains how he showed mercy to his students. Praising her good fortune, the Lord showed his grace to Sachimata. Soon after this he revealed symptoms of mahaprema at the home of Suklambara Brahmacari. This was the first time that he publicly revealed his absorption in Krishna-prema, by showing the symptoms of great ecstasy, such as swooning, tears shooting from the eyes, hairs of the body standing on end, choking up of the voice, laughing madly, and so on. Performing sublime kirtan, Sri Gaurahari drowned everyone in the waves of bliss. In this way the Supreme Lord appeared as his own devotee in order to glorify the position of Bhakti.

After this, the Lord began his pastimes of preaching the glories of Sri Krishna prema, engaging many devotees in preaching. He began organizing all the devotees, beginning with Gadadhara, as well as many devotees from within and without Bengal. One day the Lord went to the house of Shrivasa and his brothers. At that time, the devotees could hear the flute of Krishna. At that time the Lord became overwhelmed by the mood of Shrimati Radhika. In the madness of separation, he began laughing and crying. Sometimes he would fall completely silent and his mood became grave. In this way he manifest differing divine moods. At that time, a divine voice said, "O Vishvambhara! You are the Lord Himself. For the purpose of preaching Krishna-prema, you have descended within this world."

Later, at the house of Murari Gupta, the Lord would reveal his form as the Varaha avatara. At that time, Murari offered prayers before the Lord in great ecstasy, and the Lord told him to serve Krishna the son of Nanda, following in the footsteps of the residents of Vrindavana. Murari Gupta wanted to see the form of Sri Ramachandra.

At that time the Lord instructed him on the glories of the holy name of Krishna. At last, the devatas headed by Lord Brahma appeared before the Lord, praying for Krishna-prema and attained Krishna-prema by the mercy of Sri Gauranga. After this, the kirtan-performer Suklambhara Brahmachari began chanting "Jai Radhe! Jai Govinda!" and attained the mercy of Sri Caitanya. After this, Locana dasa Thakura describes the glories of Sri Sri Gaura-Gadadhara.

In the second chapter of the Madhya Khanda, the author describes the beauty of Sri Gauranga's divine form. The Lord performed a miracle by planting a mango seed that immediately became a mango tree with fully ripened fruit for the satisfaction of the devotees. Whoever ate the fruit of that tree was delivered from the tree of material existence. The Lord instructed Mukunda Datta on the supremacy of Krishna bhakti, and how one should give up thinking of the body and mind and think only of the worshipable service of Krishna. The Lord gave his blessings to Murari Gupta. The Lord's pastimes of kirtana at the house of Shrivasa Thakura are described. When a foolish brahman remarked that the murti of Sri



Krishna is a product of Maya, the Lord jumped in the Ganges with his clothes on, to purify himself from the offender.

The third chapter of the Madhya-Khanda describes the glories of Sri Advaita. Here, the author describes the Lord's pastimes with Advaita, how he performed kirtan in the house of Advaita, and how they embraced in ecstasy. A brahman who tried to stop the kirtan of Mahaprabhu by attempting to frighten Shrivasa Pandita was bewildered by the Lord's mayic potency. Also described is how the Lord, in the house of Shrivasa, performed the worship known as Gada-puja, wherein the club of Vishnu is worshiped in order to invoke the Lord's power in smashing the atheists.

This chapter also explains the visit paid by Advaita to Nabadwipa, how Advaita bowed before Sri Gauranga, and danced in ecstasy before him, realizing that his prayers for Krishna's descent had been fulfilled. When Shrivasa Thakura inquired into the glories of Advaita, Mahaprabhu described Advaita-tattva, and advised everyone to worship Sri Hari.

In the fourth chapter of the Madhyama Khanda, Sri Gaurahari explains the esoteric meaning of "Shrivasa." Murari Gupta's book, ³Raghubhirashtaka² is discussed. The Lord writes ³Ramdasas² on Murari's forehead. He reveals himself as Rama and orders Rama Pandita, the brother of Shrivasa Pandita to serve Shrivasa. The devotees are sent to search for Nityananda. The Lord meets Nityananda at the house of Nandana Acharya. The Lord explains the glories of Sri Nityananda and how it is that by Nityananda's mercy one may attain Krishna-prema. At that time, the Lord reveals his six-armed, four-armed, and two-armed forms to Nityananda.

The fifth chapter of the Madhya-Khanda reveals how, late at night, the Lord was weeping tears of ecstatic love for Krishna. He discussed his dream with Sacidevi. The story of how Nityananda Prabhu spent two days at the house of Advaita Acharya is recounted. Nityananda Prabhu's prema is described. The worship by Advaita of Mahaprabhu in the house of Shrivasa Pandita is described. The meeting of the Lord and Haridasa Thakura. The author also tells how Nityananda's kaupin was saved by Mahaprabhu, who later had the devotees wear it as a kavacha. Mahaprabhu's trance and the devotees' separation from the Lord is also described. The ecstasy of the devotees upon the Lord's reawakening is also described.

The sixth chapter of the Madhya-Khanda discusses the following subjects: How Gaurahari enjoyed pastimes of prema in the midst of the devotees; his meeting with Haridasa Thakura; His visit at the house of Advaita; his order to Advaita to preach Krishna-prema without any consideration of fitness and unfitness; His order to all the devotees to preach nama-prema and thus deliver everyone; the effects of nama-bhasa; How the Lord would wander through the streets of Nadiya performing Nama-kirtana; the story of the deliverance of Jagai and Madhai.

After this, the author glorifies the mercy of Sri Nityananda and Sri Gauranga.



The seventh chapter of the Madhyama-Khanda describes the following subjects: How the Lord cast his merciful glance upon the son of an East Bengal brahmana named Vanamali; the brahmana seeing the Shyamansundara form of the Lord offered many prayers to Sri Gauranga. After this, the Lord revealed his Nrishimha manifestation at the house of Shrivasa. He bestowed mercy upon a follower of Shiva. After a brahman lady touched his feet, he jumped into the Ganges. The Lord gave instructions regarding the worship of Sri Hari. His mercy towards Shrivasa is described as are Mukunda's prayers, the Lord's manifestation of His Godhead, and Shrivasa Pandit's abhishek of Mahaprabhu. The author's glorification of the qualities of Sri Gauranga and his instructions on the worship of Sri Gauranga conclude the chapter.

The eighth chapter of the Madhyama Khanda describes the following subjects: How the envious brahmana who was stricken with leprosy prayed for forgiveness in order to become freed from the sin of Vaishnava aparadha and was delivered by the mercy of Shrivasa Thakura; how a brahmana was forbidden to enter the Lord's nocturnal kirtan and how the Lord danced in ecstasy when that brahmana then cursed the Lord never to enjoy the pleasures of samsara. How the Lord in the mood of Balarama demanded honey is described. The assembly of devotees at the house of Advaita is described. The visit of the devotees headed by Acharyaratna is recorded. How all of them saw the Lord's manifestation of Balarama and bathed in the Ganges is also described.

The ninth chapter of the Madhyama Khanda of Sri Caitanya Mangala records the following subjects: the Lord's manifestation of Varaha; How the devotees headed by Advaita were ordered to preach and perform sankirtana; how the mood and qualities of the gopis was glorified in kirtan; how Shrivasa in the dress of Narada glorified Gadadhara Pandita; a discussion of the divine correlation between Sri Gadadhara and Sri Radhika; Thakur Haridas' visit; the ecstasy of Sankirtana; the Lord's mad manifestation of the mood of Vaikuntha opulence; How the Lord, in the dress of Lakshmidēvi rendered service to the Lord in great ecstasy; How the Lord expressed the inner moods of the personality of Godhead.

The tenth chapter of the Madhyama-Khanda of Caitanya Mangala describes the following: The Lord tells Shrivasa of the different religious principles for the different ages and how Sankirtan is the best religious principle in the age of Kali. In the mood of Sri Radha the Lord began asking "Where is Vrindavan? Where is Lalita?" in great anxiety. Murari Gupta consoled him, and they all performed kirtana. In a dream Sacidevi sees Gaurahari receive the sannyasa mantra from Keshava Bharati. The Lord's powerful separation from Krishna is described. Worried that the Lord will take sannyasa, the devotees are heartbroken. Mahaprabhu consoles the devotees.

The eleventh chapter of Madhyama Khanda describes the following: Upon hearing of the Lord's sannyasa, Sacidevi's lamentation; Her entreaty to Gaurahari to remain a grihastha; The Lord's advice to everyone to worship Krishna; His different



attempts to console his mother and his revelation of the divine form of Krishna to her.

The twelfth chapter of the Madhyama Khanda discusses the following subjects: The lamentation of Vishnupriyadevi; the Lord's sweet words of pacification to her and his instructions regarding divine reality, as well as his revelation of his four-handed Narayana form; the visit by Shrivasa and Murari, the Lord's attempt to pacify them.

The thirteenth chapter describes the following: The Lord's attempt to console the devotees, and his instructions on different truths; with the aim to take sannyasa, he swims across the Ganges and meets Keshava Bharati at Katwa; Sacimata and Vishnupriya faint; Nityananda Prabhu tries to pacify them; Headed by Chandrashekhara Acharya and Damodara Pandit, all the devotees follow Nityananda Prabhu to Katwa where the sannyasa is taking place. The Lord asks for the sannyasa mantra from Keshava Bharati; The Lord first gives the sannyasa mantra to Bharati and then hears it from him; the lamentation of all the devotees at the sannyasa of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu; The Lord's attempt to pacify them; the Lord's eagerness for Krishna-bhakti; the giving of the name Sri Krishna Caitanya; At the conclusion of sannyasa the Lord's wandering half-mad in the Radadesha.

The fourteenth chapter describes how Chandrashekara returns from Katwa to Nadia bearing news to Sacimata and Vishnupriya; their lamentation; Nityananda Prabhu causes Mahaprabhu to detour to Shantipura; the Lord's visit there; Nityananda's conversation with Sacidevi; the devotees of Nadiya go to the house of Advaita in Shantipur to see the Lord; the Lord's reciprocation of affection with the residents of Nadiya, and their separation.

The fifteenth chapter describes the Lord's deliverance of all souls through the performance of nam-sankirtan, and how he bestowed upon all the jivas the supreme goal of life. After this his journey to Jagannatha Puri is described as well as the humility of Haridasa Thakura, the exodus of devotees who went to Puri to be with the Lord, His sweet words of consolation, how the Lord used to chant the shloka, "rama-raghava raksha mam," on his way to Puri, how Nityananda Prabhu broke his sannyasa danda, and how the Lord manifest his pastimes of anger with Nityananda after the breaking of his danda.

The sixteenth chapter of the Madhyama Khanda describes how on the way to Jagannatha Puri, the devotees bathed in a place called Brahma-kunda; how they went to Remuna and had darshan of the Lord there; how the Lord danced before the Gopal deity; how after bathing in the Vaitarani river they had darshan of Varaha-deva; how the Lord went to Yajapura; How the Lord took darshan of a Shiva-linga there; Then, from Brahma-kunda, he visited Nabhigaya and Shivanagara; how he received the darshan of Kshirodakshayi Vishnu; how in a grove of mangos he took up the question of Shiva Prasada and prayers to Shiva; after this, how he went from Kapoteshwara and bathed in the Bhargavi river; How the Lord fainted before the Jagannatha deities while having darshan there; his visit



to the house of Sarvabhauma; How the Lord would go from the house of Sarvabhauma, take a position west of the Garuda Stambha, and see the deity of Lord Jagannatha; how Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and the Lord discussed Vedanta; How Sarvabhauma was converted; How the Lord revealed his six-armed form to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya.

From here, the Shesha Khanda begins.

The first chapter of the Shesha Khanda describes: the Lord's kirtan pastimes in which Sarvabhauma took part; the Lord's tour of South India and his journey to Setubandha; his mercy on Vasudeva Vipra, the brahmana who had leprosy; the Lord's visit to Jiyada-Nrishimha and its ancient history; the Lord's meeting with Ramananda Raya on the banks of the Godavari; Ramananda's vision of Mahaprabhu's dual feature as Rasaraja and Mahabhava; the Lord's visit to Panchavati and Sri Rangam; How he bestowed mercy on Trimalla Bhatta; His four month stay in Sri Rangam during the period of Chatur Masya; his meeting with Paramananda Puri; the prayers by Paramananda Puri to Gaura Bhagavan.

The second chapter of the Shesha Khanda describes the following: How the Lord continued on his South Indian tour and delivered the seven trees that had been standing since the time of Lord Ram; How at Setubandha in great ecstasy, the Lord chanted the names of Rama, Lakshman, Sita, and Hanuman; how the Lord returned to Alalanatha by way of the Godavari; his return to Jagannatha Puri; His visit to Mathura; His meeting with Rupa and Sanatana; How with Balabhadra Bhattacharya, he wandered down the banks of the Yamuna and through the twelve forests of Vrindavana.

The third and final chapter of the Shesha Khanda of Caitanya Mangala records: How the Lord returned to Jagannatha Puri; the Lord's trip to Gauda-desha; how he passed through in the Rada-desha; how he stopped in Kuliya; How everyone in Navadwip turned out to see the Lord; How they prayed for His mercy and he bestowed amnesty on all; How, to satisfy his mother's desire, he went to Nabadwipa and instructed her on of Krishna-bhajan; How the Lord went to Shantipura where he visited Sri Advaita; His kirtan there; How the Lord left Shantipura; His return to Jagannatha Puri; How he visited the deity of Jagannatha; How he performed kirtana day and night; How King Prataparudra attained the Lord's mercy; His revelation of the six-armed form to Prataparudra Raja; The Dravidian brahmana who came to visit the Lord, how he was fasting for seven days, and how he was delivered by the Lord's mercy.

In the Caitanya Mangala, Locana Dasa Thakura mentions the details of certain pastimes not revealed by Vrindavana Dasa Thakura. For example, Vrindavana Dasa Thakura does not record the conversation that took place between Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Vishnupriya Devi just before the Lord left to take sannyasa. But Locana Dasa Thakura describes this as follows:



«Seeing Mahaprabhu's eagerness to take sannyasa, the moon-faced Vishnupriya-devi said, with her voice choked in emotion, "Tell me, O Prananatha, Lord of my life, and I shall take your order upon my head. Will you take sannyasa? I have heard this rumor being circulated among the people in general. Hearing this, my heart is broken. If it is true, I shall enter into fire. You are the treasure of my life. Your beautiful form is always everfresh and newly youthful. Will you give up everything and go away? If am deprived of your association, I might as well give up my life by drinking poison."

Hearing the pitiful words of lamentation spoken by Vishnupriya devi, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu smiled a little, and spoke as follows: "Listen, O you who are dear as life itself: Please don't be in any anxiety. There is no need to worry at all. What I am about to say is for your own benefit. Please hear me attentively, with your whole mind. Whatever you see in this world is all false; the only truth is Bhagavan and the Vaishnavas, without that whatever you see is all illusion. Know this for a fact. Sons, wives, husbands, ladies, fathers, mothers, and everything else—all these relationships are illusory. They are temporary and transitional. In one lifetime we have one set of sons, wives, husbands, mothers and fathers, and in our next life this changes. Other than the lotus feet of Krishna, we have no real family. Everything else that we see as our family is an illusion of maya. What we see as man and woman is unreal.

Beneath the surface all souls are spiritual energy; the relationship between men and women is an illusory connection of maya. Sri Krishna is the real husband of everyone; he is the master. Everything else is material, but unfortunately this is not understood by the people in general. The soul is embedded in a mixture of semen and blood from which it is born into a body composed of stool and urine. In this way the soul moves upon this earth in ignorance. From boyhood to youth to old age, we suffer different miseries, all the while mistaking the housing of this body as our real self. Absorbed in false ego, we make friends, maintain attachments, suffering abuse, and are gradually cheated by old age. Even hearing the truth, however, still our eyes are blind, and while our suffering in the material world brings us to tears, we never worship Govinda.

Forsaking Krishna's service, we maintain these bodies in the material world of birth and death, trapped in the bondage of maya. Mad with false ego we have forgotten our Lord, and so we insure our passage to hell. Your name is Vishnupriya, however. Fulfill the real purport of Vishnupriya, and do not lament for what is false. Remembering what I have said here, cast your worries at a distance, and always think of Krishna within your heart, day and night."

Having conveyed all these divine instructions to Vishnupriya devi, the Supreme Lord, Sri Gaurasundara revealed to her His four-armed form, thus making her understand his absolute position. At that time, he told Vishnupriya devi, "You see before you the Supreme Lord, cast your mayik lamentation away." At this, Vishnupriya devi became joyful within. Her grief and pain vanished, and her heart became blissful upon suddenly seeing the Lord's four-armed form.



After hearing the instructions of the Lord and seeing his absolute form, Vishnupriya cast off her bewilderment, but her mentality of taking the Lord as her husband was intact. At that point, she fell at the feet of the Lord and said: "O Lord, please listen to my entreaty. Falling at your feet again and again, I implore you to accept my humble submission. I am certainly the lowest, having taken birth in this world of samsara; but you are my most dear Lord of life. This is my only wealth; without you I have nothing. Without your service, I will certainly go down."

Saying this, Vishnupriya devi began loudly weeping, sobbing and sobbing again and again in ever-increasing frenzy of sorrow. Seeing the affliction of someone so dear, the Lord bestowed his merciful glance upon Vishnupriya devi, embracing her with his eyes and so giving her his mercy.

At that time, the Lord said, "Listen O Vishnupriya devi, and give close attention to my answer to your words. I shall go there and there, but wherever I go, I shall still remain at your place: This truth I have spoken with great determination."

Upon hearing the order of the Lord, Vishnupriya devi could understand that the Lord is supremely independent. At that time she said, "You must do what makes you happy. Let no one be an obstacle to your divine mission."

Addressing the Lord in this way, Vishnupriya tearfully averted her eyes from the Lord's glance and fell silent. Thus went the conversation between the Lord and Vishnupriya, which is painful to hear.

This is reported by Locana Dasa.

Locana Dasa Thakura also sings the glories of Sri Gauranga and Nityananda in the following beautiful song:

*parama karuna pahun dui jana
nitai gaurachandra
saba avatara, sara shiromani
kevala ananda kanda
bhaja bhaja bhai, chaitanya nitai
sudhrida visvasa kori
vishaya chariya se rase majiya
mukha bolo hari hari
dekho ore bhai, tribhuvane nai
emona doyala data
pashu-pakhi jhure, pashana vidore
shuni yar guna gantha
samsare majiya, rahile pariya
se pade nahilo asha
apana koroma, bhunjaye shamana,
kohoye locana dasa*



This song was especially dear to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who translates it as follows:

«This is a song by Locana dasa Thakura. Locana dasa declares that the two Lords, Nitai-Gauracandra Lord Nitai and Lord Caitanya are very merciful. They are the essence of all incarnations. The specific significance of these incarnations is that prosecuting their way of self-realization is simply joyful, for they introduced chanting and dancing. There are many incarnations, like Lord Rama and even Krishna, who taught Bhagavad-gita, which requires knowledge and understanding. But Lord Caitanya introduced a process which is simply joyful simply chant and dance.

Therefore Locana Das requests everyone: "My dear brother, I request that you just worship Lord Caitanya and Nityananda with firm conviction and faith." Don't think that this chanting and dancing will not lead to the desired goal. It will. It is the assurance of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu that one will get all perfection by this process. Therefore one must chant with firm faith and conviction.

But what is the process? If one wants to be Krishna conscious by this process, one has to give up his engagement in sense gratification. That is the only restriction. If one gives up sense gratification, it is sure that he will reach the desired goal. One simply has to chant "Hari Hari!" without any motive of sense gratification.

Locana das says, "My dear brother, you just try and examine this. Within the three worlds there is no one like Lord Caitanya or Lord Nityananda, because Their merciful qualities are so great that They make even birds and beasts cry, what to speak of human beings."

Actually, when Lord Caitanya passed through the forest known as Jharikhanda, the tigers, elephants, snakes, deer, and all other animals joined Him in chanting Hare Krishna. It is so nice that anyone can join. Even the animals can join, what to speak of human beings. Of course, it is not possible for ordinary men to induce animals to chant, but if Caitanya Mahaprabhu could inspire animals to chant, at least we can encourage human beings to adopt this path of Hare Krishna mantra chanting. It is so nice that even the most stonehearted man will be melted. It is so nice that even stone will melt.

But Locana dasa Thakura regrets that he is entrapped by sense gratification. He addresses himself, "My dear mind, you are entrapped in this sense gratification process, and you have no attraction for chanting Hare Krishna. Since you have no attraction for the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda, what can I say? I can simply think of my misfortune. Yamaraja, the superintendent of death, is punishing me by not allowing me to be attracted by this movement."»

Sri Locana Dasa Thakura was born in Shakabda 1445 and disappeared in 1540.



16. Srila Lokanatha Dasa Goswami

Srila Lokanatha Dasa Goswami is mentioned as follows in the Caitanya Caritamrita:

*sange gopala-bhatta, dasa-raghunatha,
raghunatha bhatta-gosai, ara lokanatha:*

When Rupa Goswami stayed at Mathura, he was accompanied by Gopala Bhatta Goswami, Raghunatha dasa Goswami, Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami and Lokanatha dasa Goswami.

Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami gives the following information about Srila Lokanatha Goswami: "Sri Lokanatha Goswami was a personal associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and a great devotee of the Lord. He was a resident of a village named Talakhadi in the district of Yashohara in Bengal. Previously he lived in Kachnapara. His father's name was Padmanabha, and his only younger brother was Pragalbha. Following the orders of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Lokanatha went to Vrindavana to live. He established a temple named Gokulananda.

Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura selected Srila Lokanatha Dasa Goswami to be his spiritual master, and he was his only disciple. Because Lokanatha Dasa Goswami did not want his name mentioned in Caitanya Caritamrita, we do not often see it in that celebrated book.

On the E.B.R. Railroad, the Yashohara station is located in Bangladesh. From the railway station one has to go by bus to the village of Sonakhali and from there to Khejura. From there one has to walk, or, during the rainy season, go by boat to the village of Talakhadi. In this village there are still descendants of Lokanatha Goswami (i.e., descendants of his brother, see below.).

A pranam mantra for Lokanatha Dasa Goswami has been written by Narottama Dasa Thakura. It reads:

*srimad-radha-vinodaika-|
seva-sampat-samanvitam
padmanabhatmajam srimal-
lokanatha prabhum bhaje*

"I worship the lotus feet of Srila Lokanatha Prabhu, the son of Sri Padmanabha. He is a storehouse of singleminded service to the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha-Vinoda."

In the village of Talakhori Gram in the Yashohara district, lived the mother and father of Srila Lokanatha Goswami. His father's name was Padmanabha and his mother's name was Sri Sitadevi. Sri Padmanabha Bhattacharya was a very dear follower of Sri Advaita Acharya. One day, Sri Lokanatha Goswami took his birth in



the house of Sri Padmanabha and Sri Sita Devi. His younger brother's name was Sri Pragalabha Bhattacharya. The descendents of Pragalabha still live in Talakhori Gram.

From his early childhood, Srila Lokanatha was indifferent to family life. One day, giving up his mother and father, and leaving his home behind forever, he went to Mayapura in Nabadwipa to take darshan of the holy feet of Sri Gauranga. Sri Gaurangadeva embraced Lokanatha Goswami with great affection, and soon he ordered Lokanatha Goswami to quickly go to Vrindavana. But Lokanatha Goswami could understand by certain evidence that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would leave home and take sannyasa within two or three days. Therefore, he was in great anxiety.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu could understand the mind and heart of Lokanatha Goswami and consoled him, saying, "We shall be reunited in Vrindavana."

In this connection, Srila Narahari Chakravarti has written in his Bhakti-Ratnakara: "While he was weeping and weeping, crying out his heart at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya, Lokanatha felt himself being caught up and embraced by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Later, as Lokanatha bid him farewell, the Lord gave him a confidential message which consoled him greatly. After this, he offered his soul at the lotus feet of Sriman Mahaprabhu, and after giving his pranamas to the all the devotees, he went on his way."

After this, Lokanatha never returned to home life. Rather, afflicted with deep separation from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he began wandering from one holy place of pilgrimage to the next. Gradually, after visiting many holy places, he came to Vrindavana Dham.

In the meantime, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa and went to Jagannatha Puri. After staying in Puri for some time, the Lord had a mind to deliver the fallen souls, and so began his tour of South India. Hearing of the Lord's tour of South India, Sri Lokanatha also went to South India, in search of the Lord.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, after visiting many holy places of pilgrimage in South India and again returning to Jagannatha Puri for some time, finally came to Vrindavana. Hearing of this, Lokanatha Goswami quickly went to Vrindavana. Meanwhile, Caitanya Mahaprabhu had already left for Prayaga-dhama. Arriving in Vrindavana and not seeing Mahaprabhu, Lokanatha was heartbroken. He resolved to set everything right by starting out the very next morning for Prayaga, to meet the Lord. That night the Lord came to him in a dream and consoled him, saying, "O Lokanatha, stay in Vrindavana. I have not broken my vow. I have already come to Vrindavana and live there in another form. In this way you shall always maintain my connection."

A few days later, Srila Lokanatha Goswami chanced to meet the most dear followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatana, Sri Gopala Bhatta,



Sri Bhugarbha and others. The exchange of divine love between them was wonderful to behold! They were all of one mind, one heart. In the midst of the Goswamis, Sri Lokanatha was the oldest. He was fully absorbed in prema.

In his mangalaracana to the Hari-bhakti-vilasa, Sri Sanatana Goswami offers his respects to Lokanatha Goswami as follows:

vrindavan priyan vande sri govinda padasritan
srimad-kashishvaram lokanatam sri krishnadasakam

"I offer my obeisances unto Sri Kashishvara Pandit, Sri Lokanatha Goswami and Sri Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami who are very dear to Sri Govinda in Vrindavana, having taken shelter at his lotus feet."

Sri Lokanatha Goswami wandered throughout all twelve forests of Vrindavana in great ecstasy. In one of the forests there is a village named Umarao. There he stayed for some time on the banks of Kishori-kunda. He had a great desire to establish the worship of the deity and render service to Krishna in that way. Understanding Lokanath's aspiration to serve, Krishna Himself appeared before him and offered Lokanatha a vigraha, saying, "Worship this Deity here. This deity's name is Radhavinoda." After giving him this beautiful deity, the Lord suddenly disappeared.

At this, Lokanatha Goswami became stricken with anxiety. Seeing him absorbed in worry, Radhavinoda smiled and said, "Why have you brought me here? I have come here personally just to satisfy your purpose. What do you want from me? I live in the forest here, near the village of Umarao. By this Kishori kunda you see before you, I make my residence. You must now give me something to eat. Quickly."

Lokanatha Goswami's joy knew no bounds. He floated in the waves of prema. After this he prepared an offering for the Lord to eat. After offering fine rice on a fresh banana leaf to the deity he experienced great ecstasy by offering his life at the lotus feet of the Lord. He was stunned by drinking in the nectarine beauty of the Lord. After this he offered a bed of flowers and made the Lord rest.

Sri Lokanatha Goswami made this place his home. The local villagers and cowherd men wanted to construct a bhajan kutir for him, but he refused to accept it. In order to protect the deity, he prepared a cloth bag which he would keep around his neck at all times. Sri Radhavinoda became like a jeweled necklace around the neck of Lokanatha Goswami. The cloth bag was his temple. This was Lokanatha Goswami's practice until the day he disappeared from this earth, and is an example of the strict vairagya he maintained. With great care he always stayed in the association of the Goswamis of Vrindavana.

It is very difficult to exhaustively describe the life and pastimes of Lokanatha Goswami who was very dear to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and his dear followers beginning with Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana



disappeared, Srila Lokanatha Goswami could not tolerate the separation. After this his only purpose in life was to establish the wishes of Sri Caitanya Mahprabhu.

Srila Lokanatha Goswami gave mantra diksha to Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura. There is no mention in the shastras that he accepted any other disciples. Narottama Thakura served him in secret by going in the dead of night to the place where Lokanatha would pass stool and urine and cleansing the area very carefully. Seeing Narottama's humility, Lokanatha accepted him.

Srila Lokanatha Goswami, in his ripe old age, while performing his bhajan in Khadiravan in Khayara Gram, passed away and entered into the eternal unmanifest pastimes of the Lord. At that place is a kunda called Sri Yugala Kunda. On the banks of that kunda, Srila Lokanatha Goswami entered into samadhi.

It is said that when Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami went to Lokanatha Goswami and asked his blessings to compile the Sri Caitanya Caritamrita, Lokanatha Goswami gave his blessings, but prohibited Kaviraja Goswami from mentioning his name in the Caitanya Caritamrita. For fear of violating the order of Lokanatha, Kaviraj Goswami has only briefly mentioned him in the Caitanya Caritamrita. On the day of Krishnastami in the month of Shravana, he entered into the eternal pastimes of the Lord.

Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura Mahashaya prays as follows at the lotus feet of his gurudeva:

*ha ha prabhu lokanatha, rakha padadvandve
kripadrishthye chaha yadi haiya anande
manovancha siddhi habe hang purna trishna
hethaya chaitanya mile setha radhakrishna
tumi na karile daya ke kairbe ara
manera vasana purna kara eibara
ei tini samsare mora ara keho nai
kripa kari nija padatale deha thai
radhakrishna lilaguna gao ratri dine
narottama vancha purna nahe tuwa vine*

"O Lokanatha, O gurudeva! If you are pleased with me, please keep me in the shelter of your lotus feet, and cast your merciful glance upon me. By your mercy I can find the perfection of inner fulfillment. And by your mercy I can someday meet Sri Caitanya and Radha-Krishna. If you are not merciful to me, then what shall I do? Please, just once, fulfill my heart's desire. In the three worlds of birth and death no one is more in need of your mercy. Please give me your mercy and give me a place at your lotus feet. Day and night I sing the qualities and pastimes of Radha and Krishna. Still, the inner aspirations of Narottama for the service of Sri Sri Radha-Govinda and Caitanya Mahaprabhu can only be realized through your grace, o Lokanatha Goswami Prabhu."



17. Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura

About four miles west of Katwa, within the Bardhaman district is Sri Khanda, the birthplace of Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura. Sri Mukunda Dasa, Sri Madhava Dasa and Sri Narahari Dasa were brothers. Sri Mukunda's son was Sri Raghunandana Thakura.

Sri Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami mentions the devotees of Sri Khanda as a major branch of the Caitanya tree of Krishna-prema (CC Adi 10:78-79): "The residents of Sri Khanda include Mukunda Dasa, Sri Raghunandana, Narahari Dasa, Chiranjiva and Sulochana. All of them together form a major branch of the Sri Caitanya tree. As such they were an abode of the Lord's mercy. This branch produced the fruits and flowers of bhakti in profusion."

Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura was connected with many of Mahaprabhu's pastimes. Narahari Chakravarti Thakura writes in Bhakti Ratnakara: "Sri Narahari Thakura's glories are wonderful. In Vrindavana he was Madhumati, and his excellences are boundless."

Sri Locana Dasa Thakura was a dear disciple of Narahari Sarakara Thakura. In his Caitanya Mangala he describes his gurudeva as follows: "Sri Narahari Dasa is my Lord. He has taught me transcendental knowledge, and I am under his influence in many other ways. His abundant Krishna-prema saturates his very being; its symptoms are clearly evident in his body. No one can understand the extent of his devotion and Krishna-prema. In his former existence in Vrindavana he was known as Madhumati, a dear gopi friend of Sri Radha who was a storehouse of sweetness. That very sakhi friend of Sri Radha appeared in the pastimes of Sri Gauranga during the age of Kali as Narahari. He was a storehouse of Radha-Krishna prema."

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has mentioned Narahari Sarakara in his Gaura-Aroti song:

*narahari adi kori chamara dulaya,
sanjaya mukunda vasughosh adi gaya*

Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura was as great a singer as he was a poet. He wrote many poems and songs in connection with the pastimes of Sri Gauranga and Sri Nityananda. He has written a Sanskrit book of songs called Sri Bhajanamrita. A book of songs called Padakalpataru, describing intense separation from Sri Gauranga has been attributed to Narahari Sarakara Thakura, as have some other books.

Almost all of the songs of Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura have been included in Bhakti Ratnakara by Narahari Chakravarti Thakura. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to tell just which parts of Bhakti Ratnakara are the songs of Narahari Sarakara being quoted by Narahari Chakravarti, and which parts have been written by Narahari Chakravarti Thakura. By the same token it is hard to say exactly which



songs of Gaura-lila included in Bhakti Ratnakara are written by Narahari Sarakara Thakura. What complicates this is that both authors bear the same name and often end a song simply by saying "This song was sung by Narahari." This has led to a degree of confusion about the specific authorship of certain parts of the work, although both Naraharis are great devotees and Bhakti Ratnakara is revered as an authorized Vaishnava scripture describing the lives of the great Vaishnava saints.

Srila Locana Dasa Thakura has written "Before the birth of Sri Gauranga many different ragas were written by Narahari which sang of Vraja-rasa." Before he wrote songs of Gauranga, Narahari Sarakara Thakura composed many songs glorifying Krishna. Srila Narahari Sarakara Thakura passed away on the Krishna ekadashi (the eleventh day of the dark moon) in the month of Agrahayana.



18. Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura, Part One

Narottama Dasa Thakura was a lifelong brahmacari. He visited all the holy places and he was the best of pure devotees. On the banks of the Padmavati river, in the town of Gopalpura lived King Krsnanda Datta. His older brother was Purusottama Datta. The wealth and fame of these two brothers was beyond compare. King Krsnananda's son was Sri Santosa Datta. In the month of Magha Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura took his birth. Seeing many auspicious omens surrounding the birth of his son, Raja Krsnananda was very pleased, and gave lavishly in charity to the brahmanas. The brahmanas, seeing all the auspicious signs surrounding the child's birth, prophesied that the boy was a highly perfected soul and great personality, by whose influence many people would be delivered.

Just as a crescent moon gradually becomes full the king's son grew more effulgent and beautiful with each passing day. His bodily luster was just like molten gold. His eyes were large and shaped like lotus petals. His arms extended to his knees and he had a deep navel. All these are the bodily symptoms of a mahapurusa, a great personality. All the local townspeople used to gather to take darshana of the beautiful and saintly child. Soon, the boy's anna-pradanna-samskara, or grain-eating ceremony was held. At that time, in order to insure auspiciousness and a bright future for his son, King Krsnananda gave much charity.

The king's wife's name was Sri Narayani Devi. Having given birth to such a wonderful son, she was floating in the ocean of ecstasy. She always kept the boy close to her and was always concerned for his well-being, caring for him constantly. The boy was extremely peaceful. Wherever his mother put him, he would quietly stay put. Within the ladies quarters, the ladies used to nurture and care for the child with great ecstasy. Gradually the day of his entrance into school (Hate-Khari) approached.

As his schooling went on, everyone was astonished at his amazing intelligence. Simply by hearing a subject once from his gurus he would commit it to memory. In only a short time, he mastered the study of Sanskrit grammar, poetry, rhetoric, and became expert in many different scriptures. But gradually he saw as useless any knowledge which did not promote Hari-bhajan, and soon lost interest in everything but Krishna consciousness. He found that in previous times the learned, who understood what real knowledge is, left everything, renouncing the world of birth and death, and went off to the forest in order to worship the Supreme Lord, Hari. Day after day, Narottama began to think of how he could become free from family life and constantly engage himself in the Lord's service.

He was indifferent to all material enjoyment; where most children usually like to play, he was uninterested in playing games. At this time, hearing the glories of Shri Nityananda and Shri Gauranga, from the lotus lips of the devotees of the Lord, his heart was filled with spiritual joy. As if he had been given new life, he felt great ecstasy. Within a few days of hearing the wonderful qualities of Gaura and Nityananda, he began to chant their holy names in japa day and night. One night



the merciful Shri Gaurasundara, surrounded by his eternal associates appeared to Narottam in a dream and gave him darshan.

After this, in order to understand how to become free from family life, Narottam das Thakura began to think day and night of how he could go to Vrindavan. Narottama has prayed, "Hari Hari! kabe haba Vrindavanavasi?" "O Hari, when will I become a resident of Vrindavana? When will I serve the beautiful divine couple in Vrindavana with tears in my eyes?"

In this way, Narottama would constantly sing. Seeing Narottama's indifference to all sense pleasure and his intense renunciation, King Krishnananda and Narayani Devi began to think about what to do with him. Seeing that he was not inclined towards family life, and that he might soon leave home unexpectedly to go to Vrindavan they became very worried. They employed a guard to watch over him, so that he couldn't leave. Narottama Das saw that the difficulties involved in escaping were becoming more impassable than the Himalayas, and thought that he might never be able to go to Vrindavana and absorb himself in the worship of the holy feet of Sri Gauranga. Thinking only of how to get the mercy of Shri Gaura-Nityananda, he began to pray very earnestly for guidance from them. And so it came to pass that some messengers came from the Ruler of Bengal, informing King Krishnananda that the ruler of Bengal wanted to meet with him. In order to meet with the Ruler of Bengal, Raja Krishnananda and his brother Purushottama Datta set out on a long journey to the court of the Ruler of Bengal.

Narottama took advantage of the moment, thinking it to be a good opportunity to leave home. At that time, he secretly left his mother and his protectors, turned towards Vrindavan and began his journey to that holy land. It was on the full moon day in the month of Kartika that Narottama Thakura left his family behind.

Passing through Bengal in a short time, he soon found himself on the road to Mathura. All the other pilgrims he would meet were very affectionate toward Narottama, as they could recognize him as the son of the king. He would sometimes live by drinking milk and sometimes would eat the roots and fruits as he went along. His constant hankering to see Vrindavan made his hunger and thirst go away. As he moved from place to place, he would hear the glories of Gaura and Nityananda from the mouths of many devotees. In this way he was always thinking about their lotus feet, constantly absorbed in meditation. As he walked and walked, he prayed to the lotus feet of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, as he has written: "ara kabe nitai chand...." "When will Nityananda show his mercy to me and free me from the world of birth and death? By his mercy one may give up material enjoyment and purify his mind. In this way, by the mercy of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, one can attain Vrindavana."

In this way, walking and walking, Narottama das arrived in Mathura and, seeing the Yamuna, he offered many prayers. Remembering the names of the Six Goswamis headed by Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana, he began to weep in ecstasy.



Gradually he came to Vrindavan itself and entered into that holy land. He was sent by Sri Jiva Goswami to serve the lotus feet of Lokanatha Goswami.

Lokanatha Maharaj was very ancient, and was so deeply agonized by the pain of separation from Sri Gauranga that it was as if his very life had been taken away. Narottama offered his obeisances to the lotus feet of Sri Lokanatha and Lokanatha asked him, "Who are you?" Narottama said, "I am your fallen servant. I wish to serve your lotus feet." Lokanatha replied, "How can I, who am unable to serve Gaura-Nityananda, accept any service?"

After this, Narottama Thakura would secretly go in the middle of the night to the place where Lokanatha Maharaj would pass stool and urine, and cleanse the area, maintaining everything there very nicely. After a year of serving in this way, his service was recognized by Lokanatha Goswami, and bestowed his mercy upon Narottama Thakura. On the full moon day of the month of Sravana, he initiated Narottama Thakura as his disciple.

He used to eat by practicing madhukari, and would study the Goswami scriptures under the guidance of Shri Jiva Goswami. Srinivas Acharya was his dear friend, and together the two of them used to study under Jiva Goswami. At that time Shyamananda Prabhu arrived from Gauda-Desh; he also began studying the Goswami's scriptures under the guidance of Shri Jiva Goswami. These three with one mind performed their bhajan in Vrindavana and yet still they felt that their inner aspiration had not attained its complete fulfillment. One day Jiva Goswami called the three of them to him and said "In the future, you must preach the message of Sriman Mahaprabhu far and wide. Taking the literatures of the Goswamis you must quickly go to Bengal and begin preaching."

The three of them gave up their residence in Vrindavana and accepting the order of their guru on their heads. Taking the treasured scriptures of the Goswamis with them they started on their journey to Bengal. As continued on their way, gradually they came to Vanavishnupur. In Vanavishnupur lived a king of dacoits and thieves named Shri Birhambir. At night he had the scriptures stolen, thinking them to be treasure of some kind. Awakening in the morning and seeing the scriptures stolen, the three of them felt as if their heads had been hit by a thunderbolt. Miserable beyond description, the three of them began searching the four directions for the scriptures, until finally news came to them that King Birhambir had stolen the books and was keeping them hidden in his royal storehouse.

At this, Shri Shyamananda Prabhu headed for Utkala and Narottama started for Kheturigram, while Shrinivas Acharya stayed behind, thinking to somehow deliver the Goswami's books from the King's storehouse.

In order to see the holy birthplace of Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Narottama went to quickly visit Nabadwipa. Arriving there, he began chanting "O Gaurahari! O Gaurahari!" on the banks of the Ganges hundreds and hundreds of times and



offered many prayers to the Lord. Sitting beneath the shade of a Tal tree, he began to wonder "Where is the actual place of Shri Caitanya's birth?"

He sat there for some time, thinking of what to see next. Just then, an old brahmana happened to walk by. Narottama rose to his feet to show respect to the brahmana. The brahmana said, "Baba, from where have you come? What is your name?"

Narottama introduced himself and expressed his desire to see the holy birthplace of Shri Chaitanya.

The brahmana replied, "Today my life has become auspicious, for before my eyes is a dear devotee of Shri Chaitanya."

Narottama said, "Baba! You have seen Chaitanya??"

The brahmana replied, "What are you saying! Every day Nimai Pandit sits with his disciples at this ghat and discusses the shastra, and then, from a distance I watch him and wonder at the beauty of his divine form. Today I remember seeing that very form sitting beneath this tree here, where he sits every day."

As the brahman spoke, tears of ecstasy poured from his eyes. Narottama said, "Baba! It is the fortune of a lifetime that I have beheld you with these eyes."

Saying this, tears fell from his eyes also, and, falling to the ground, Narottama touched the brahmana's feet to his head. The brahman said, "Baba! I give you my blessings that soon you will attain devotion to the lotus feet of Govinda. At that time, you will preach the glories of Gaura-Govinda far and wide."

After this, the brahmana showed Narottama Dasa the path to where the house of Jagannatha Mishra was. Finding that path, Shri Narottama walked until he came to the house of Jagannatha Mishra. Arriving at the house of Jagannatha Mishra, he fell down at the door with tears in his eyes and offered his full obeisances, while reciting various prayers in glorification of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Entering within the house he had darshan of the lotus feet of Shuklambara Brahmacari. Narottama offered his respects to his feet. From different signs, Suklambara Cakravarti could understand that Narottam was an agent of Sri Chaitanya's mercy. He asked, "Who are you?"

Narottama introduced himself, explaining that he had been living in Vrindavana under the care of Jiva Goswami and Lokanatha Goswami, and that he had just arrived in Nabadwipa. Shri Suklambara Cakravarti said, "Baba, you have come from Vrindavan? You were with Lokanatha and Jiva Goswami?"

At length, he made Narottama rise, and embraced him heartily, barraging him with endless questions about the well-being, activities, and good health of the



Goswamis. In this way he talked on and on with Narottama, as he wanted to hear all about Vrindavana and everything that was going on there.

Finally, Narottama got to meet Ishan Thakura, the old servant of Shri Shacimata, and upon meeting him, he offered his prayers of respect at his holy feet and introduced himself. Shri Ishan Thakura touched Narottama's head, bestowing his blessings upon him, and then embraced him affectionately. After this, Narottama met Shri Damodara Pandit and offered his respects to him. After this, Narottama went to the house of Shrivasa Pandit and offered his respects to Shripati and Shrinidhi Pandit. All of them affectionately embraced Narottama. After staying for a few days in Mayapura, Narottama went to visit the house of Advaita in Shantipura. There he offered his respects at the lotus feet of Acyutananda. Acyutananda introduced himself and inquired after the health and wellbeing of the Vrindavan Goswamis.

After staying in Shantipura for two days, he went on to Ambika Kalna to the house of Gauridas Pandit. At that time, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu was staying there. He was the disciple of Gauridas Pandit. Shri Narottama offered his respects to Hridaya Chaitanya. The two of them affectionately embraced and Narottama gave him news of the activities of the Goswamis in Vrindavan.

After staying in Ambika Kalna for a day, he went on to the place where the Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati meet ¹/₂a village called Saptagram. In that place Uddharana Datta Thakura lived. Shri Nityananda Prabhu had previously given his mercy to the residents of Saptagram, and so all the people there were great devotees. After the disappearance of Uddharana Datta Thakura, the people in the village felt like they had lost their vision. Shri Narottama went to the house of Uddharana Datta Thakura and there, he found that the devotees were absorbed in separation from their guru, in great agony passing their days. Narottama Dasa offered his respects to all the Vaishnavas there and continued on his way to Kharadaha Gram.

In Kharadaha Gram Shri Nityananda Prabhu had a residence where his two energies, Shri Vasudha and Jahnava Devi lived. Shri Narottama went to the house of Nityananda and remembering the sublime holy name of Nityananda his voice choked up in ecstasy. Shri Parameshvari Das Thakura took Shri Narottama within the inner portion of the house reserved for women and brought him to the lotus feet of Shri Jahnava Mata and Shri Vasudha.

Having been introduced to Narottama, who they could understand had received the mercy of Lokanatha and Jiva Goswami, they bestowed their mercy upon him. It is said in the Bhakti-Ratnakara that both Vasu, who was the knower of all truths, and Shri Jahnava, who is the Supreme Mistress, bestowed their incomparable mercy upon Narottama.

Four days later, Narottama, after having spent much time discussing Krishna-katha in great ecstasy with Shri Jahnava and Vasu, bade them farewell and left for



the town of Khanakula Krishna-nagara to see the place of Abhiram Gopal Thakura. Having met him, Narottam offered his respects to the holy feet of Abhiram Gopal. He was passing his days in the great pain of separation from Shri Caitanya and Nityananda. He had become extremely internal, barely spending any time in the plane of external consciousness.

Seeing him in that condition, Narottam wept a great deal. The Gopinath Deity of Abhiram Thakura was wonderful to see. Narottam took darshan of the deity and recited many prayers and verses in praise of the Lord before the deity. The next day, after taking his leave of the house of Abhiram Gopal, Narottama had some inspiration from within and set out for Jagannatha Puri.

Constantly absorbed in thinking of the eternal associates of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, it seemed to Narottama that he reached in Jagannatha Puri in no time at all. Shri Gopinath Acharya and many other devotees, seeing Narottama on the path all went out to greet him on the road. In this way, surrounded by devotees, he arrived in Jagannatha Puri. After Shri Narottama had paid his obeisances at the lotus feet of Gopinatha Acarya and the Acarya had warmly embraced him, Gopinath Acarya said, "This very day I was hoping that you might arrive."

Soon Narottama and all the devotees from Vrindavan and Bengal began talking on and on about Krishna, Gauranga, the Goswamis and many other things. All the devotees were very happy to have Narottam in their midst, and they took him to have darshan in the temple of Jagannatha. While taking darshan of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra, Narottama offered many fine prayers in their glorification and bowed down before them again and again.

After this he went to the samadhi of Haridas Thakura and upon arriving there began to drown in the ocean of Shri Krishna Prema. After this he went to the house of Gadadhara Pandit, and began to shout at the top of his lungs in a loud voice, "O life and soul of Gauranga! O Gadadhara!"

Thereafter he took darshan of the Tota Gopinath deity and offered his respects at the lotus feet of Shri Mamu Goswami Thakur who was at that time engaged in the service of Shri Gopinatha.

Thereafter, Shri Narottama Dasa Thakura drew near to that part of the Gopinath deity where it is said that Mahaprabhu entered into, when he disappeared from this earth by entering into the deity in the presence of his devotees. This is recorded in Bhakti-Ratnakara: "It is difficult to understand the movements of that crown jewel of sannyasis, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Upon his disappearance, all of a sudden the earth became dark. He entered into the Gopinatha mandir and never came out. In this way he left the visible plane and entered into the invisible plane. (B.R. 8:357).

Hearing of the disappearance of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Narottama said, "O Sachinandana, O Gaurahari!" and fell unconscious on the ground. Seeing



Narottama's bewildered state of separation from the Lord, all the devotees began crying tears of prema.

After this, Narottama went to the house of Kashi Mishra, took darshan of the generous lotus feet of Shri Gopala Guru Goswami and saw the deities at the Radha-Kanta math.

After this he went to the Gundica temple for darshan, and remembered the Lord's pastimes in the Jagannatha vallabha gardens. Then he visited the Narendra Sarovara, and many other places.

After a few days, having experienced great transcendental bliss in the association of the devotees of Jagannatha Puri, and having visited all the places of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes, he took his leave of the devotees and left for Shri Nrishingapura. Once there, he went to Shyamananda Prabhu's house. Seeing Narottama after such a long time, Shyamananda Prabhu was floating in the ocean of ecstasy. In the ecstasy of Krishna-prema the two of them joyfully embraced one another.

Shyamananda Prabhu, out of affection kept Narottama in Nrishingapura for many days, not allowing him to leave. Shri Narottama sanctified the town of Nrishingapura by drowning everyone there in a nectarine flood of Sankirtan. Together Shyamananda and Narottama would go on discussing Krishna-katha in great ecstasy, without any knowledge of whether it was day or night. After some time, Shri Narottama Thakurs bade farewell to Shri Shyamananda Prabhu and set out for Gaudadesh.

He quickly came to Shri Khanda. There he offered his respects to the lotus feet of Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura and Shri Raghunandana. Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura had great affection for Narottama's father, Shri Krishnananda. Offering his respects to Narottama in return, Narahari blessed him many times, touching him on the head with his hand. Shri Raghunandana embraced him affectionately. They asked him to tell them all about the devotees in Jagannatha Puri. In this way, Narottama went from one place to the next in Shri Khanda, his transcendental pleasure always increasing. Narottama spent many days in Shri Khanda in great happiness, performing Sankirtan and dancing in the association of the devotees there.

Bidding farewell to all the eternal associates of Mahaprabhu in Shri Khanda, he went on to Kanthak Nagara, to the house of Gadadhara Dasa Thakura. He fell before the house of Gadadhara Dasa, offering his respects, and Gadadhara Dasa affectionately embraced him.

The Bhakti Ratnakara says, "Seeing Narottama, Gadadhara Das embraced him with great affection, wetting his body with tears of joy."



Shri Gadadhara Dasa Prabhu was passing his days in the pain of separation from Gaura-Nityananda. Narottama Thakura stayed there for two days, and then left to see the birthplace of Shri Nityananda Prabhu in the Radadesh. And so, Narottama went to Ekachakra Gram to visit the holy place of Nityananda's birth.

There, an old brahmana who was affectionately disposed towards Narottama showed him the different holy places where Nityananda had performed his lila. Remembering the holy names of Hadai Pandit and Padmavati Devi, Narottama fell to the ground, his voice choked up with ecstasy.

After seeing the holy birthplace of Nityananda, Narottama started out for Kheturi Gram. As the Bhakti Ratnakara says, "After inquiring about the way to Kheturi Gram from the local people, he quickly came to the banks of the Padmavati. Crossing over the Padmavati, he arrived in Kheturi. Upon his arrival, all the people of the village wanted to be the first to meet him."

Since Narottam had been away for so long, there was a big welcoming celebration. Hearing of his arrival, the residents of Kheturi Gram all began making preparations to welcome him. Raja Krishnananda and Shri Purushottama Datta, the father and uncle of Narottama had already passed away, and had gone back to godhead, to the spiritual world. But Purushottama, Narottama's uncle had a son whose name was Shri Santosha Datta. After the passing of King Krishnananda and Purushottama, he was shown much wealth and material enjoyment. Santosh. was the foremost of saintly persons in the village. And when he heard that Narottama Thakura was about to bless that town with his holy footsteps after such a long time, in order to be the first one to greet Narottama, he rushed out with the rest of the devotees to wait for him on the road outside Kheturi Gram.

After some time, Narottama could be seen in the distance. Upon seeing him, Santosh, after bowing prostrate with full obeisances, went forward with tears of ecstasy in his eyes, falling on the ground again and again to take the dust of Narottama's lotus feet. At this, Narottama affectionately embraced Santosh and asked how he had been faring all this time, asking him many questions about his health, happiness and well-being.

A few days later, Narottama Thakura initiated Santosh with the Radha-Krishna mantra. Raja Santosh Datta had previously wanted that a temple to be built and a deity installed. Now he begged at Narottama Thakura's lotus feet for his permission. Narottama gladly gave his approval.

Within a few months, Raja Santosh Datta had seen to it that a large temple was built. The temple compound included a big storehouse for food, a kirtan hall, a residence hall and ashram for devotees, a bathing pond, a beautiful flower garden, and a guest house.

On the full moon day of Phalguna on the festival day of Mahaprabhu's appearance the temple was dedicated and the deities were installed and a great



festival, which can only be compared to the Rajasuya-yajna of Yudhistira Maharaja in its vast expasiveness began and was celebrated for miles around. Messengers were sent out for miles around Kheturi Gram, to near and distant lands, to invite kings, landowners, poets, pandits, Vaishnavas, authors, as well as many other illustrious guests. Some were sent far and wide to invite the topmost singers and orators. Preparations were made to install six deities at one time.

The Great Festival of Kheturi Gram

In Buddharigram, at the house of Govinda Kaviraja, the news came of the festival. All the devotees there along with Srinivasa Acharya soon set out for an auspicious visit to the great festival in Kheturi Gram.

Within a few days, from Nrishingapura in Orissa came Shri Shyamananda Prabhu, from Khoradoha came Shri Jahnava Mata and Shri Parameshvari Das, Krishnadas Sarakhel, Madhava Acarya, Raghupati Vaidya, Minadekana Rama Das, Murari Caitanya Das, Jnana Das, Mahidhara, Shri Shankara, Kamala Kara Pippalai, Gauranga Das, Nakari, Krishna Das, Damodara, Balaram Das, Shri Mukunda, and Shri Vrindavan Das Thakura.

From Shri Khanda came Shri Raghunandana and many other devotees, from Navadvipa came Shri Pati, Shri Nidhi and others, from Shantipura came Advaita Acarya Prabhu's son Achutananda, Shri Krishna Mishra, and Shri Gopal as well as many others. From Ambika Kalna came came Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu and many other Vaishnavas.

Gradually they all arrived in Kheturi Gram. King Santosh Datta arranged a colossal boat to carry everyone across the river. On the other side of the river, he had arranged for palanquins, oxcarts and other conveyances to carry the devotees into Kheturi Gram. Shrinivas Acharya, Narottama Thakura, and Raja Santosh, went forward to cordially meet the devotees, and after showing them all due respect, they offered the devotees flower garlands, congratulated and welcomed them with great affection. All the devotees were given separate houses and servants. All those great Vaishnavas, who are the saviors of the world graced the land of Kheturi Gram with the dust of their lotus feet, thus making transforming it into a great place of pilgrimage. The Sankirtan of those great souls created a thunderous sound that filled the heavens.

The gates of the temple and the doors of the houses were all well-decorated with banana leaves, waterpots, auspicious things like mango leaves, small waterpots decorated with auspicious signs, different kinds of flowers. All the big gateways and ornamental arches in the city, as well as all the doors of all the houses were decorated with colorful auspicious symbols like swastikas and six-pointed stars.

The whole effect was one of unprecedented beauty and enchantment. Just before the festival stage in different places were mountain of all kinds of earthen pots, all kinds of silver vessels, and gigantic containers filled with milk, ghee, and thousands



of earthen pots filled with yogurt. All these waterpots, earthen pots, silver vessels and giant containers as well as giant heaps of vegetables, produce, and fruit that were to be prepared for the festival combined to give the appearance of a great and beautiful mountain.

The day before the installation ceremony, the devotees, on the order of Shri Jahnava Mata, began making the final preparations for the installation of the Deities on the holy appearance day of Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

That evening they began the preliminary celebratory ceremonies by performing Sankirtan after Narottama Thakura had first offered chandan and flower garlands to Shri Jahnava Mata and properly worshiped her.

Thereafter all the devotees were decorated with garlands, and upon the request of Shri Narottama and Shrivinas Acharya, Shri Raghunandana Thakura sang the mangalacarana, the auspicious invocation.

On and on into the middle of the night they devotees performed Sankirtan in order to make the atmosphere auspicious for the great festival that was to follow the next day. After chanting and dancing into the middle of the night the Vaishnavas finally took rest. Many thousands of people honored maha-prasada that night, on the eve of the Great Festival of Kheturi Gram.

The next morning, the installation ceremonies and the celebration of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance, began with all the Vaishnavas performing Maha-Sankirtan. Shrinivas Acharya presided over the auspicious abhishek ceremony for the six deities that were being installed.

About an hour before Shrinivas Acharya was to perform the abhishek, the six deities arrived within the temple. At that time, the local devotees, as well as those who had come from far away arrived there. The orators spoke, and the singers sang sweet songs. The expert dancers performed wonderful dances. The different devotees filled the four directions with the ecstatic sounds of the holy name of Krishna, and the glories of the Lord. In this way the four directions were filled with ecstasy.

According to the appropriate rules and regulations of the shastras, Shrinivas Acharya performed the abhishek ceremony, after which the deities were dressed in the finest cloth, and decorated with beautiful ornaments. After this different kinds of sweet rice and wonderful vegetable preparations and drinks and thousands of varieties of foodstuffs were offered to the deities.

The six deities, Shri Gauranga, Shri Vallabhikanta, Shri Krishna, Shri Vrajendramohan, Shri Radha Ramana, and Shri Radha Kanta, were offered all manner of wonderful preparations of bhoga in different pots. As the bhoga was offered, kirtan was performed, and then after the deities were satisfied in taking all the preparations to their heart's content, they were offered a soothing mouthwash,



of Tambula, and then the deities were decorated with fragrant chandan and garlands.

After this there was a great arotik, during which, in great ecstasy all the devotees performed sankirtan. After performing kirtan and dancing in great bliss, all the devotees, forgetting their material bodies fell to the ground offering prostrated dandavats.

After this, Shrinivas Acharya offered the prasadam chandan and garlands to Jahnava Mata. Thereafter, he gave garlands and chandan to all the devotees present. Shrinivas, Shri Narottama, and Shri Shyamananda Prabhu distributed all the sandalwood and garlands to all the devotees present, and when they were finished, on the order of Jahnava Mata, Shri Nrishinga Chaitanya dasa decorated Shrinivas, Shyamananda and Narottama with flower garlands and sandalwood pulp. Gradually the devotees took their seats in the kirtan hall. Jahnava Mata was seated on an elevated chair at the front of the hall.

At that time, on the order of Jahnava Mata and Achutananda, Shri Narottama Thakura Mahashaya began to perform kirtan. Shri Gauranga Das, Shri Gokula Das, and Shri Vallabha Das responded and Devi das played the mrdanga.

Gauranga Das and the others were the most expert in the assembly gathered in that town of all the different kinds of singing and kirtan, and understood perfectly the different classical modulations of voice, performing music by ear, as well as fixed and unfixed melodies.

The sweet and wonderful kirtan of Narottama Thakura with its sweet tune and unique style of voice filled the four directions and the heavens above, causing all the men and women weep to tears of prem, and they all sported in the waves of the Vaikuntha ocean of ecstasy.

At that time, Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, along with his own personal associates appeared there and joined in the sankirtan.

"Who can describe the wealth of happiness felt by the devotees when, in the midst of their kirtan, appeared the munificent Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. Like a flash of lightning in the midst of a mass of beautiful clouds, Shri Chaitanya Himself appeared within the crowd of devotees through divine manifestation." (B.R. 10: 572)



19. Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura, Part Two

Mahaprabhu appeared in their midst along with Shri Narahari, Shri Mukunda, Shri Gaouridas Pandit, Shri Advaita Acharya, Nityananda, Madhava Ghosh, Vasughosh, Govinda Ghosh, Acharya Purandara, Shri Mahesh Shri Shankara, Shridhara, Shri Jagadish Pandit, Shri Yadunandana, Shri Kashishwara, and many of the other of the Lord's internal associates. They danced in a large company, with a cast of thousands, and in their midst, Shri Achyutananda, Shri Raghunandana, Shri Pati, and Shri Nidhi as well as many others joined together in the intense devotional ecstasy of that great kirtan of singing and dancing.

"How overwhelmed in ecstasy were Advaita and Nityananda! How wonderful was the a circle the devotees made around Shri Chaitanya, who danced in its middle. Shrinivasa Acharya and Narottama Thakura fully understood these pastimes as the wonderful manifestation of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's causeless mercy! It was an act of grace shown to Shrinivas Acharya and Narottama Thakura. With this their satisfaction was complete". (B.R. 10: 607)

When Mahaprabhu, who is most affectionate to all devotees, appeared with his own eternal assoicates Shrinivasa Acharya and Narottama Thakura felt complete joy and satisfaction. After the Sankirtan, Shri Jahnava Mata offered the deities some red powder which is usually thrown by Hindus at the time of the Holi festival. After this, upon her order, the devotees began to play with the dye powder by throwing it all over each other in great joy. Everyone's body was covered with the red powder as the devotees threw it on each other. In this way, after the fun they had with the red dye powder, the evening approached and the time came to celebrate the appearance of Shri Gauranga with an abhishek ceremony. When the twilight came, the bathing ceremony began and it was conducted by Shrinivas Acharya, as the devotees sang the abhishek song for Mahaprabhu's appearance ceremony and celebration.

The song went like this:

"At an auspicious time during the full moon evening of the month of Phalguna, Krishna, the Lord of Gokula made his appearance within the town of Nadiya as the ocean of ecstasy rose, flooding every house. At that time, everyone had great fun with one another. Sachidevi was healthy and happy as the baby played on her lap within the house of Jagannatha Suta.

Morning, noon, evening, and night everyone wanted to see the child, to touch him and hold him. Accepting all kinds of difficulties to get a chance to see the new child, unlimited numbers of people went to the house of Jagannath Mishra to visit.

Everyone packed their eyes to the brim with the charming vision of that sweet boy and seeing that beautiful sight, they forgot their own bodies. Narahari says that the divine appearance of the son of Sachi, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in this way increased everyone's affection and brought their hearts to the point of melting."



Everyone was fully absorbed in the ecstasy of kirtan day and night; no one could think of anything else. Finally it was time for mangal aroti, and the aroti began. When the dancing and singing for Mangal aroti was finished, the vaishnavas offered obeisances to one another and returned to their kutirs to take their morning baths.

In this way, Shri Jahnava Mata quickly took bath, and in order to cook for the Deities, she entered the kitchen. Being expert in the science of cooking, Shri Jahnava Mata, within a short time had prepared various kinds of subjis and other vegetables dishes, sweets, cakes, and beverages. Shrinivas Acharya performed the abhishek and the puja and offered the bhoga to the deities.

After the bhoga was offered and the bhoga arotik was finished, all the great souls present there were seated for taking mahaprasada. Shri Jahnava Mata distributed prasadam with her own hand to the assembled devotees. A great sound of "Hari Hari!" filled the air from time to time as the great devotees assembled there honored prasada. After all the mahants were finished taking prasada, Shri Jahnava Mata requested Shri Narottama, Shrinivasa and Shyamananda Prabhu to take prasada. When everyone else was finished, Shri Jahnava Mata herself took prasada.

Outside the kirtan hall, King Santosh Datta distributed various kinds of mahaprasada to the full satisfaction of the thousands of people who had arrived for the festival. When all the friends and relatives of the brahmanas who were present there, as well as all the unexpected and uninvited guests finally finished taking prasada, then the King himself took mahaprasada at home with his personal entourage.

On the second day, Raja Santosha Datta especially requested all the devotees to cook within their kutirs all different kinds of prasada to be offered as before to the deities in a great feast.

On the third day, as the devotees in their places began to make preparations to leave, Raja Santosha Datta with tears in his eyes gave the devotees gold coins, cloth, different kinds of waterpots, and offered all the devotees his respects. All the devotees bestowed many blessings upon the king and embraced him with great affection, before bidding him farewell and beginning their journeys home.

Shri Jahnava Mata, accompanied by her own entourage began her journey to Vrindavana. Shrinivas Acharya, and Shyamananda Prabhu remained behind in Kheturi Grama for a few days longer, and then they too left for their own homes, and bade farewell to Kheturi Gram.

After the great festival in Kheturi, Shrila Narottama Thakur's fame spread to the four directions. Ram Krishna Acharya and Ganganarayana Cakravarti as well as many other learned devotees throughout the area soon took shelter of the lotus feet of Shrila Narottama Thakura.



In the town of Gopal Pur lived a brahmana named Shri Vipradas. One day, Narottama Thakura suddenly arrived at his home. Vipradas was extremely happy. He offered him a respectful welcome, offering him a seat and the hospitality of a humble brahamana, in accordance with Vedic tradition. In the place where Vipradas had his rice paddy stored a terrifying snake lived. Out of fear of the snake he didn't dare to go inside that storehouse. Vipradas told Narottama Das of his fear. Hearing this, Narottama Thakura smiled a little bit. He said, "Think nothing of it." And when the Thakura opened the door to the storehouse, the snake had vanished.

When Narottama came out of the storehouse, it could be seen that he had with him the deities of Vishnupriya and Shri Gaurasundara on his lap." (B.R. 10: 202) Everyone saw a great miracle!½ Out of the storehouse Narottama Thakura emerged holding deities of Shri Gauranga and Vishnupriya on his lap. Taking those deities of Shri Gauranga Nityananda with him, Shri Narottama Thakura went to Kheturi Grama, where he installed them to be worshipped. At present that deity is found in a place called Gambilat.



20. The Glories of Narottama

Once when Narottama Thakura passed by the school a learned smarta brahman, insulted Narottama Thakura in front of his students. Blaspheming him again and again, he called Narottama Thakura a Shudra.

After this offense, all the limbs of the brahmana began melting away from leprosy. Consumed by his incurable disease and seeing no hope for recovery the brahmana went to throw himself in the Ganges and die. That night Durga Devi came to the brahmana in a dream and said, "You fool. You have considered a great mahabhagavata, a pure devotee, to be a shudra. Even if you die and take many many millions of births you cannot be delivered. But if you simply go to him and beg forgiveness at his lotus feet, everything will be all right."

The next day, in the afternoon, the brahmana went with a piece of cloth tied around his neck to indicate great humility, and in complete submission, weeping and weeping, fell before the lotus feet of Narottama Thakur, begging his forgiveness. Gradually, as a result of his association with Narottama, his leprosy healed. Narottama Thakura advised him to engage himself in Krishna bhajan. Gradually he became greatly devoted to Narottama Thakura.

One day, Narottama Thakura and Shri Ramachandra Kaviraja went to the river Padmavati to take bath and at that time they saw two young bramahanas herding many goats and sheep. Narottama Thakura asked the two brahmanas if they were making their young lives successful by performing hari bhajan. The two young brahmana boys listened very attentively. Seeing the beautiful divine forms of Narottama Thakura and Ramachandra Kaviraj, and hearing their sweet words, they approached the place where they stood on the banks of the river and in a very humble mood offered their respectful prayers and obeisances.

Narottama Thakura asked them who they were and they introduced themselves, saying, "We come from the village of Goyasa Gram, and we are the sons of a Zamindar named Sivananda Acharya. Our names are Harinam and Ramkrishna. At our house, at present Durga Puja is being conducted, and on the order of our father we are bringing all these goats and sheep to be slaughtered. Please give us some advice as to what we should do."

Seeing the humble mood of the two sons of brahmanas, Shri Thakura Mahashaya smiled sweetly and began to speak as before on the truths of the Bhagavata, explaining what the Vedas say about how karma-kanda is often performed in the modes of passion and ignorance, and how those whose minds are contaminated by the lower modes are candidates for hell.

"The Vedas explain that the practitioners of karma receive some piety and as a result go to the heavenly planets for a short time, but having once gone to heaven for a short time, they fall into the hellish worlds to suffer. One who, being interested in material enjoyment, is captivated by the sweet words of the Vedas that promise



material enjoyment has his intelligence covered. Spending his life in material pursuits, such a person becomes a killer of animals, or a killer of the soul, and after death falls down into hell.

All souls are the energy of Krishna. One who sees the paramatma everywhere, who is free from violence to others, who has no false ego, and who always worships the Supreme Lord becomes free from repeated birth and death and attains the liberated position of divine service at the lotus feet of the Lord."

Hearing these words from the mouth of Shrila Narottama Thakura, the two brahmana boys fell before his holy feet and said, "Please bless these most fallen young brahmanas with the dust of your lotus feet." The Thakur then touched his hand to their heads, saying, "May you attain Krishna-bhakti."

At this, the young brahmana boys set the goats and sheep free, bathed in the Padma river, and went with Shri Ramachandra Kaviraja and Narottama Thakura to the temple of Shriman Mahaprabhu. That day, after taking prasada they again heard from Shri Narottama Thakura and Ramachandra Kaviraja about different aspects of the absolute truth. The next day, after shaving their heads, the two young brahmanas took initiation in the Radha-Krishna mantra. Harinam accepted the mantra from Ramchandra Kaviraja and Ram-Krishna from Narottama Thakura.

After some time, Shivananda Acharya began searching and searching for his sons until he found that they had been seen in Kheturi Gram where they were living as disciples in the ashrama of Narottama Thakura. Shivananda Acharya could not contain his anger.

A few days later, the two brothers returned home. Their foreheads were marked with the tilak of a Vaishnava, their throats decorated with tulasi mala, the twelve parts of their bodies marked with Vishnu tilak, their heads shaved, wearing the shikha of a devotee of Krishna.

Seeing all this Shivananda raged with the hot fury of an uncontrolled fire. He told them: "O fools! Where does it say in the shastra that the position of a Vaishnavas is greater than the position of a brahmana or that by becoming a Vaishnava one is better than a brahmana? You have neglected Durga for so long, but your life is useless without Durga. Moreover, if the Vaishnavas make disciples out of brahmanas it will lead to chaos in society; the brahmanas will lose their position, and if the pandits are defeated, religion will be destroyed and everything will be lost."

Hearing these words of their father, the two young brahamana boys spoke as follows: "On the other hand, that "religion" or "right work" which causes violence to others, and ends only misery, cannot properly be called religion or proper activity. Rather it must be called irreligion and wrong activity. O father! Giving up the worship of Shalagrama narayana, why have you established the worship of Durga-devi and other demigods? Giving careful thought to the conclusions surrounding



the performance of Shri Narayana bhajana you should understand the worship of Shiva and Durga to be a useless waste of time."

Shivananda Acharya and smarta pandits there were thus defeated by the conclusions given by the brahmana boys. Shivananda began to deeply consider: "If a great pandit were here, he could defeat all this and belittle the position of Vaishnava dharma by counter-argument and word jugglery".

Shivananda Acharaya brought a great mahapandit from Mithila named Murari. At that time, for the purpose of having a debate, he called for his sons and told them that he wanted them to explain before a public assembly their conclusions that a Vaishnava is better than a brahmana.

Shri Harinam and Shri Rama Krishna remembering the lotus feet of their guru maharaja explained the siddhanta or conclusions of the Bhagavatam, and the arguments of the smartas were so utterly cut to pieces that when it was his turn to speak the great smarta Mahapandit Murari was unable to put forward any arguments in response. When it was all over, the mahapandit fled the assembly in great embarrassment with his head held low and accepted the occupation of a beggar.

That night, as he lay defeated, Shivananda Acharya began to meditate on Durga Devi. Gradually he fell asleep and Durga Devi appeared to him in a dream. At that time she said: "O Shivananda! Shri Hari is the master of everyone. He is the way, the truth and the light. Those whom he covers with ignorance turn to my worship. And I assure the destruction of those who worship me. Those who aren't Krishna-minded are demons. On the other hand those who are dear devotees of Krishna are really dear to me. For your own sake, if you want to become free from the offenses you have committed and attain auspiciousness, you had better go to Narottama Thakura and beg forgiveness from his lotus feet. Otherwise I will destroy you, you offender of Vaishnavas!"

After speaking these words of chastisement to Shivananda Acharaya, Durga Devi disappeared.

Ganganarayana Chakravarti was a famous and highly learned brahmana living in Gambhila Gram. He heard from the lips of Narottama Thakura the siddhanta of the Goswamis with great attention and took shelter of the lotus feet of Narottama where he later studied very deeply the scriptures of the Goswamis.

There was another brahmana named Jagannatha Acharya who was a worshipper of Durga. One day in a dream Durga appeared to him and said, "O you simple brahmana. Go to Narottama Thakur. Take shelter of his lotus feet. Practice Krishna bhajan and you will achieve the highest good fortune. Krishna is my master and my guru. Not a blade of grass moves without his wish."



Jagannatha Acharya, after his afternoon bath, went to Kheturi Gram and offered his dandavats at the lotus feet of Narottama Thakura, explaining all that Durga had told him in the dream.

Hearing this, the Thakura smiled slightly and said, "You are very fortunate to have attained Krishna's mercy." On an auspicious day the Thakura initiated him in the Radha-Krishna mantra. Shri Jagannatha Acharya became a very dear and confidential disciple of Narottam Thakura.

Seeing the glories of Shrila Narottama Thakura, the society of smarta brahmanas roasted with envy. A large faction of them went to the Raja Nrishinga and petitioned him for redress. They told him: "Maharaja! If you don't rescue the brahmanas, your reputation will be ruined and your death will be assured. The son of Raja Krishnananda Datta, Narottama Thakura, is a shudra^{1/2} and yet he dares to make disciples of the brahmanas. If this goes on, we shall all be drowned like the members of the Yadu dynasty." Raja Narasingha said, "I shall protect you. But please tell me, what is to be done?" The brahmanas said we shall all go to Kheturi Gram along with the great and famous, the world-conquering scholar Mahadigvijay Pandit Shri Rupa Narayana and defeat Narottama. With that great pandit as our leader, Narottama will not be able to say anything. You please assist us in all this." The king, Raja Nrishinga said, "I myself shall accompany you every step of the way. In this way, that group of brahmanas along with the great and learned world-conquering pandit Rupa Narayana began their journey to Kheturi Gram. As they were traveling on the road someone heard the news and went to Kheturi Gram where he informed Shrila Ramachandra Kaviraja and Narottama Thakura. When Shri Ramachandra Kaviraja and Shri Ganganarayana Chakravarti heard all this, they became very disturbed. Thereafter, after some inquiry, the two of them came to know that the party of smarta pandits, were about to arrive in the marketplace of a town called Kumara Pura, and that after resting there for one day, they would reach Kheturi Gram the following day. Ramchandara and Ganganarayana quickly went to that marketplace in Kumarpura and the two of them set up two different shops. Shri Ramchandra Kaviraja set up a stall for selling clay pots and Ganganarayana Chakravarti set himself up in a stall selling pan and betel nut. In this way, along with Raja Narashinga, the smarta pandits arrived in the marketplace of Kumarpura and set up their camp near the shops. The disciples of the pandits went to buy some clay pots for cooking with and went to the pottery shop. The potter (who was Ramchandra Kaviraja) began speaking to them in pure Sanskrit. The disciples of the pandits began speaking in Sanskrit also, and soon they began arguing back and forth in Sanskrit and were defeated. In the same way, when the students went to purchase pan and betel nuts from the shop of the pan-walla (Ganganarayana Chakravarti) he spoke to them in pure Sanskrit. They also began to argue. Gradually their teachers arrived at the place where the argument was going on and found themselves unable to reply to the arguments of the pan-walla and the clay pot walla. Finally the king, Raja Narasingha, arrived on the scene the great pandit Rupa Narayana. At that time a great uproar of argumentation filled the four directions. In the presence of the king, the potter and the pan-walla defeated all the smarta brahmanas, including Rupa Narayana. Raja Nrishinga made some inquiries and



came to know that the pan-walla and potter were disciples of Narottama Das. At that time he said to the pandits when you are unable to defeat a common, ordinary disciple of Narottama in the matter of siddhanta, how will you defeat Narottam himself?" The smarta pandits were silent. Realizing their defeat, they made preparations to return to their own villages. That evening, King Raja Narasingha and Shri Rupa Narayana saw Durgadevi in a dream. She told them, "If you don't accept the shelter of Narottam's lotus feet, I will cut you all to pieces with my sharpened sword." The following morning Raja Narasingha and Rupa Narayana arrived at the place of Narottama Thakura. Narottama Thakura received them with great affection and with all due respect and cordiality, offering them a seat. He said, "I am very fortunate to have the company of such highly learned and noble personages such as your good selves." Raja Narasingha and Rupa Narayana, were overwhelmed at Narottama's polite and gentle Vaishnava behavior and fell prostrate at his lotus feet begging forgiveness for their offenses. At length, upon being hearing of the pronouncement that Durga Devi had given them, Narottama smiled very sweetly. Thereafter, within a few days, he initiated them in the he initiated them in the Radha Krishna mantra. The disappearance of Shri Narottam Das Thakura Shrila Narottama Thakura was constantly absorbed in singing the glories of Shri Gauranga and Nityananda. Day after day many atheists, agnostics, offenders, Shiva worshippers, followers of Durga, dry logicians, mental speculators and karmis were purified by the touch of his holy lotus feet. Taking the blessings of Narottama, Shri Ramachandra Kaviraja went to Shri Vrindavana Dhama. After a few months there, he entered into the eternal lila of Shri Radha and Govinda. This extremely terrible and unbearable news came to Shrinish Acharya, and, unable to bear the separation from his dear disciple, he too passed away from this earth and entered into the eternal pastimes of Radha and Govinda. Hearing all this terrible news, Shrila Narottama plunged into the ocean of separation where he began to drown. In the great and unbearable agony of separation he wrote the song, "ye anilo premadhana." Barely able to keep afloat in the ocean of separation, Shrila Narottam Thakura went near banks of the Ganges in the village called Gambhilaya and entered a temple of Mahaprabhu. Narottam ordered the devotees to perform kirtan. The devotees began performing Sankirtan. After Sankirtan, Narottam Thakura went to the river's edge, and with tears in his eyes took darshan of the Ganges, offering his obeisances again and again. At that time, he entered the waters of the Ganges. After entering a short distance into the water he requested all the devotees to fill the four directions with the loud chanting of the holy name in Sankirtan. At that time, Shri Ramakrishna Acharya and Shri Ganganarayana Cakravarti began two kirtans in two different places. In the midst of all this, the Thakura told two of them, "Pour the waters of the Ganges over my body." Saying this, everyone was immersed in the waves of Sankirtan. As the kirtan went on they were just ready to take pour Ganges water over the body of Shri Narottama Thakura, when just at that moment Shrila Narottama Das Thakura, who was absorbed in chanting the holy name in Sankirtana, merged into the waters of the Ganges and vanished from worldly view. His disappearance day is celebrated on the Krishna Panchami day of the month of Kartika. In his Prema Bhakti Chandrika, Narottama Thakura has written: Song One



*jaya sanatana rupa prema bhakti rasa kupa jugala ujwala rasa tanu janhara prasade loka pararila saba soka prakatala kalpa taru jana prema bhakti riti jata nija granthe su-byakata kariyachen dui mahashay jahara srabana haite parananda haya cite jugala madhura rasaraya jugala kishora prem, jini laksa bana hema hena dhana prakashila janra jaya rupa sanatana deha more sei dhana se ratana mora gela hara bhagavata sastra marma nava bidha bhakti dharma sadai kariba su sebana anya devashraya nai tomare kahinu bhai ei bhakta parama bhajan sadhu shastra guru vakya cittete kariya aikya satata bhasiba prema majhe karmi jnani bhakti hina ihare karibe bhina narottame ei tattwa gaje Song two ana katha ana byatha nahi jena jai tatha tomara carana smriti majhe abirata abikala tuwa guna kala-kala gai jena satera samaje anya brata anya dana nahi karon bastu jnana anya seba anya deba puja ha ha krishna bali bali bedera ananda kari mane ara nahe jena duja Jibane marane gati radha krishna prana pati donhara piriti rasa sukhe jugala bhajaye janra premanande bhase tanra ei katha rahu mora buke jugala carana seba ei dana more diba jugalete manera piriti jugala kishora rupa kama rati guna bhupa mane bahu o lila piriti dasanete trina kari ha ha kishor-kishori caranabje nibedana kari braja-
 raja-suta syama brishabhanu suta nama shri radhika nama manohari kanaka-
 ketaki rai shyama marakata tay kandarpa darapa karu cura nata bara
 shiromani natinira shikarini dunhun gune dunhun mana jhura abharana
 manimaya prati ange abhinaya tachu paye narottama kahe diba nisi guna gaya
 parama ananda paya mane ei abhilasa hay*

"All glories to Sri Sanantan and Rupa Goswami who are fathomless wellsprings of prema-bhakti-rasa. They personify ujwala-rasa. They are desire trees whose mercy frees everyone from pain and sorrow. The books of those two great souls clearly explain prema-bhakti. Hearing of them will bring one great joy for they are the ashraya-vigrahas of madhura-rasa. O Rupa and Sanatana, you are endowed with the greatest wealth of divine love radha-krishna-prema which in your hands is like thousands of cupid's golden arrows. O Rupa and Sanatana, bestow some of that treasure upon me by piercing my heart with those jeweled arrows. The essence of Shrimad Bhagavatam is the ninefold path of bhakti. I shall always follow that path, without taking shelter of any other god. O brothers! Krishna-bhakti is the supreme form of bhajan. Making the words of guru, shastra and the sadhus my mind's only meditation I shall dive and surface in the ocean of Krishna-prema. The karmis and jnanis have no bhakti. Bhakti is different it is without any trace of karma, exploitation, or jnana, calculation. Thus sings Narottama of the truth." "I have no other topic of discussion but your lotus feet. I worry my mind with nothing other than the thought of your lotus feet, O Lord. I can speak of nothing else but your holy qualities in the company of other devotees. I have no other vow but your service. I have no other object of charity. I am interested in no other kind of knowledge besides knowing how to please you. I have no other duties. I worship no other gods before you. Chanting, "O Krishna! O Krishna!" I shall wander in ecstasy, thinking of nothing other than You. Radha-Krishna are my goal in life and death and the masters of my breath. Performing my bhajan only for them I rise and fall in the ocean of prema, divine love. I pray that I may always maintain this conception within my heart as my highest ideal: Let me serve the lotus feet of Shri Shri Radha



and Govinda. Let my mind be filled with dedication to their divine forms whose beauty surpasses that of Cupid and Rati. With a straw between my teeth I fall at their feet and present my humble petition: "O Kishora-Kishori! O son of King Nanda, Shyamasundara! And O daughter of King Vrishabhanu, Shri Radhika, you who enchant even Hari, you whose bodily complexion is the color of a golden lotus. O Krishna, whose bodily color is that of a blue jewel, whose beauty mocks cupid. O topmost dancer and danseuse, Shri Krishna and Shri Radha: Please dance within my mind. O you whose beauty increases the charm of your dazzling ornaments, my only wish is that day and night, in great ecstasy, I shall go on singing your glories."



21. Srila Nityananda Prabhu, Part One

Caitanya Bhagavata Adi-lila Chapter Nine, Part One Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the childhood pastimes of Nityananda up to his twelfth year, during which time he re-enacted the divine pastimes of Krsna, Rama, Vamana, and the other avataras of Vishnu. This chapter also describes his tour of different holy places which continued until his twentieth year.

On the order of Gaura Krsna, Ananta Deva had already made his appearance in the village of Ekacakra in Radhadesh. In this way, Nityananda Prabhu appeared like the moon from the sea of the womb of Padmavati, the wife of Hadai Oja. And just like the rising moon, he dispelled all the darkness covering the land of radha by his auspicious appearance. As a child, Nityananda constantly played with his boyhood friends imitating the pastimes of Krsna.

Once, his friends took the role of the assembly of gods, who were desirous of petitioning the Lord to relieve the burden of evil oppressing the Earth. Nityananda Prabhu took with him a child who was dressed as the earth, and together with the children who acted the roles of the different assembled gods, he went to the banks of the river Ganges. There he addressed the Lord who rests in the ocean of milk, Ksirodaksayi Visnu. At that time, one of the children took the part of Lord Visnu, and hiding unseen by the other children spoke in a grave voice that all could hear: "I shall surely be born in Goloka Mathura to lighten the burden of the Earth."

And so Nityananda Prabhu enacted the different pastimes of Krsna that the Lord performed during the Dvapara age. He enacted the pastimes of the marriage of Vasudeva and Devaki, the birth of Sri Krsna in the prison of Kamsa, the journey of Vasudeva to Nandagram and how he carried Krsna over the Yamuna river, as well as his return from Nandagram and how he brought Mahamaya who had just appeared as the daughter of Yasoda with him.

He enacted the slaying of Putana, the breaking of the cart, Krsna's butter stealing pastimes, the slaying of the demons, Dhenuka, Agha, and Baka. He also displayed the pastimes of the pasturing of the cows, the lifting of Govardhan hill, the stealing of the gopis clothes and the Lord's bestowal of mercy upon the wives of the sacrificial brahmanas. He performed the pastimes of sending secret advice to Kamsa in the guise of Narada, the killing of the Kuvalaya elephant and the wrestlers Canura and Mustika, and the killing of Kamsa.

Nityananda Prabhu also enacted the pastime of Vamanadeva's cheating Bali of the three worlds, and took the role of Ramachandra. His friends acting the part of monkey soldiers pretended to build a bridge of floating stones across the ocean, in imitation of the pastimes of Rama. Once, Nityananda took the part of Laksman, and, bow in hand, would storm the palace of Sugriva. Once he took the part of Rama Himself, enacting the pastime of breaking Parasurama's pride. Once, taking the role



of Laksman he pretended to kill Indrajit and then swoon, hit by the powerful arrows of Ravana, the demon-king.

He would enact the pastime of having the medicine from Gandamadana Hill brought by Hanuman and would recover from his wounds after receiving the medicine.

Nityananda spent twelve years enacting these kinds of pastimes. At that time, he went to visit the different holy places in order to purify them from the sins left behind by the pilgrims who visit them.

He toured the holy places in both Northern and Southern India, on the pretext of pilgrimage and in this way was occupied until his twentieth year when he arrived in Nabadwipa and met Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In the course of his wandering through the different holy places, Nityananda Prabhu met Madhavendra Puri, Isvara Puri, and Brahmananda Puri. Nityananda passed many days enjoying the ecstasy of krsna-katha in the company of Madhavendra Puri and his disciples. He then visited Setubandha, Danatirtha, Mayapuri, Avanti, Godavari Jiyura Nrismha, Devapari, Trimala, Kurmaksetra and many other holy places.

At last he arrived at Jagannatha Puri, where he took darshan of Jagannatha Deva and was profoundly moved to ecstasy upon seeing the Deity. From Jagannatha Puri, he returned again to Mathura. The chapter closes with an explanation of Lord Nityananda's renunciation.

Lord Nityananda who is identical with the powerful Balarama himself, manifest during this period his pastimes of preaching the holy name in love of God. The chapter concludes with a description of greatness of Nityananda Balarama.

Text of Chapter

All glories to Sri Krsna Caitanya, the ocean of mercy. All glories to Nityananda Prabhu, the friend of the helpless. All glories to the life and soul of Sri Advaita Candra. All glories to He who is the only shelter of Srivasa and Gadadhara. All glories to Visvambhara, the son of Jagannatha Misra and Sacidevi who is always beloved by his devotees and followers.

Before the advent of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Ananta deva himself had appeared on the order of the Lord. He took birth in the Radhadesh to help enact the divine lila of the Lord. His father's name was Hadai Oja and his mother's name was Padmavati.

He appeared in the village of Ekacakra within the land of Gauda. From infancy he was sober, highly intelligent and supremely qualified. The baby boy was millions of times more beautiful than cupid.



From the moment of his birth there appeared within the Radhadesh, all-auspicious symptoms. All varieties of famine, poverty, and unhappiness immediately disappeared. On the day that Sri Gauracandra made his advent in Sridhama Nabadwipa, Nityananda Prabhu shouted with joy. The vast universe was pervaded with the sound of his cries and the whole world became astonished.

Some said, "The thunderbolt has descended to Earth." Many could understand that the mighty disturbance was the result of some divine power. Some said, "We know the cause. The master of Gauda has spoken in a voice of thunder." And in this way, everyone gave their different opinions. But by the power of the illusory energy of Krsna, no one could recognize the transcendental position of Nityananda Prabhu.

In this way, keeping his divine nature unmanifest, the supreme Lord, Nityananda Prabhu delighted in the company of children. In all the games that the Lord played with the children, Krsna was the center. Indeed, their play was nothing but the lila of the Lord. Nityananda Prabhu would hold an assembly of the gods with one of the children acting the part of the Earth presenting the petition of the demigods to the supreme Lord Visnu. All of them would go along with the Earth to the banks of the river where together they would pray to the hidden Lord of the universe, Ksirodaksayi Visnu.

Unseen by all, one of the boys would loudly proclaim from his hiding place, "I will shortly be born in the cowherd village of Mathura."

Another day, Nityananda Prabhu and his childhood friends would gather in the village to celebrate the marriage of Vasudeva and Devaki. Once, having made their playhouse into the prison of Kamsa, he re-enacted the pastime of Krsna's divine appearance in the dead of night. Nityananda Prabhu built a cowherd settlement and took Krsna there, deceiving Kamsa by substituting Yogamaya for Krsna within the prison.

Another time he dressed up one of his childhood friends as Putana, while another boy, climbing his body pretended to suck his breast like the baby Krsna. Once, having built a cart made of reeds with the help of the children, Nityananda Prabhu broke it. Nityananda Prabhu would bring his childhood friends to the house of the local milkman and steal milk and yogurt, following in the footsteps of Krsna. His friends never left his company, nor would they return to their homes, but day and night they would play in the company of Nityananda Prabhu.

Nor did their mothers and fathers complain, but all loved Nityananda with their hearts and souls. He would hold his relatives and friends in affectionate embrace. Upon beholding his amazing childhood pastimes, everyone would say, "We have never seen such wonderful playing. How is it possible that this child has learned all these activities of Krsna."



One day having made serpents out of the leaves of trees, he brought the children to a pond. One of the children would enter the water and float motionless. Nityananda Prabhu would awaken him.

One day he took the children into a grove of palm trees, where they played at killing the demon Dhenuka and tasting the palm fruits known as tal fruits.

He would often go to the pasturing grounds and there play many different games with the children. After constructing toy demons and naming them Baka, Agha, and Vatsa, he would kill them. Nityananda Prabhu would return home with his childhood in the afternoon, all of them blowing on buffalo horns.

One day he would imitate Krsna's pastime of lifting Govardhana Hill. Another day after constructing a replica of Vrindavana, he would play there with his friends. One day he would steal the clothes of the gopis and another day would visit the wives of the brahmanas engaged in sacrifice. One of the children would take the part of Narada Muni and disguising himself with a beard he would give confidential advice to Kamsa. One day one of the boys dressed as Akrura and took Krsna and Balarama away from Vrindavana on the order of Kamsa. Nityananda Prabhu cried in grief, feeling separation from Krsna in the mood of the gopis. Streams of tears would flow from his eyes in the view of all the children.

Influenced by the illusory energy of Visnu, no one could understand the transcendental nature of Nityananda Prabhu's divine lila as all the children played in his company. After building a replica of Mathura, he would roam with the boys. Some of them would take the position of garland-makers and some would wear the garlands. Nityananda Prabhu would dress one of them as Kubja and would become perfumed by her.

One day, upon making a bow, Nityananda Prabhu broke it with a thundering noise. After killing the elephant Kuvalayapida and the wrestlers Canura and Mustika, he would knock to the ground and drag away by the hair one of the boys who had been made to play the role of Kamsa. Having killed Kamsa he would dance merrily with the children.

In this way, Nityananda Prabhu's pastimes as a boy made all the people of Ekacakra laugh with delight.

Nityananda Prabhu imitated in his pastimes the transcendental activities of all the avatars of Godhead. One day Nityananda Prabhu played Vamana and another child played Bali Maharaja. In this way, Nityananda Prabhu would deceive him into giving the three worlds in charity as one of the children, dressed as an old man, played the role of Sukracarya and forbid the gift. Then, Nityananda Prabhu as Vamana, after accepting the alms of Bali, placed his lotus feet upon that boy's head.

One day, Nityananda Prabhu played at constructing a bridge of trees and stones across the ocean as all the children played the role of monkey soldiers. In this way



he could chop veranda plants and throw them into the water, pretending they were giant trees as the children would shout "Jaya Rama! Jaya Raghunatha! Victory to Rama! Victory to the Lord of the Raghu dynasty!"

The Lord Himself assumes the role of Laksman, and bow in hand, he made his way to the palace of Sugriva in a fit of anger, saying, "You wretched monkey! My Lord, Rama, is becoming distressed by your actions. My Lord is waiting on Malyavan mountain, burdened with grief. And you, O wicked monkey, are busy making merry with women! If I am to spare your life, then go to Rama as fast as you can, and offer him your help."

Another day, in the mood of Laksman, he would chastise Parasurama in anger, saying, "O brahmana - I can't be held accountable for what happens to you if you do not flee at once."

The children, in their innocence, would take Nityananda Prabhu's absorption in the mood of Laksman to be nothing more than childish play. They did have any knowledge of his position as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Some of them would roam about as the five monkeys, and taking the role of Laksman, Nityananda Prabhu would ask, "Who are you monkeys who roam the forests? Tell me! I am the servant of Raghunatha!"

They would tell him, "We wander here in fear of Bali. Lead us to Rama! We accept the dust of your feet upon our heads." Giving them hearty embrace, he would lead them to his master and bow down before the feet of Rama, falling flat like a rod. In the role of Laksman, one day Nityananda Prabhu was beaten by Indrajit. Another day he would play at killing Indrajit. Having made one of the boys take the role of Vibhisana, he would lead Vibhisana in the presence of Rama and then install him as the king of Lanka.

Another child would shout, "Look! Hear I come as Ravana. Beware the shafts from my bow. Let Laksman protect you if he can." With this, the child playing the role of Ravana hurled a lotus flower at Nityananda Prabhu, who dropped to the ground, senseless, in the mood of a defeated Laksman.

Having swooned away, Nityananda Prabhu would not arise. Although the boys tried in many ways to arouse him in many different ways, Nityananda Prabhu showed no sign of life in any part of his body. The children all put their hands to their heads and wept and cried. Hearing their cries Nityananda Prabhu's mother and father hastened to the spot. Finding no life in their child, both of them fell upon the ground senseless.

All the people of the village gathered there and gazed upon the scene in amazement. The children explained everything. Someone from the crowd said, "I understand the reason for all this. A long time ago, an actor who was playing the role of Dasaratha gave up his life upon hearing of the exile of Rama to the forest."



Another said, "The boy is only acting his part. As soon as Hanuman brings the medicine and administers it to him, he will recover."

Of course, Nityananda Prabhu had already explained this to the children. He had told them, "As soon as I fall down, all of you make a circle around me and cry. After a short period of time, send away Hanuman. My life will return if the medicine is applied to my nose." But as soon as the Lord, who was perfectly playing his role, became unconscious, the children became very much upset. They completely lost their judgement and no one could remember Nityananda Prabhu's instruction.

They simply cried and cried, and called out, "O brother: get up!" But the bystander's remarks made them remember the Lord's advice. So, one of the children walked off as Hanuman and another child, dressed as a sage stood in his way. Greeting him with an offer of fruits and roots, the sage said, "Please stay with me a while, dear friend, and bless my humble retreat. Only by great good fortune can one attain the company of one like yourself."

Hanuman replied, "My work is urgent. I must make haste. I cannot stop; please excuse me but I must say goodbye. You must have heard of Laksman, the younger brother of Rama. Ravana has struck him unconscious with his sakti arrow. I must hurry to Gandhamadana mountain. His life may be saved only if I bring the proper medicine." The child who played the role of Hanuman spoke all these lines as he was trained by Nityananda Prabhu. Everyone looked on in amazement.

At the request of the sage, Hanuman went to a nearby lake to bathe. Another child caught hold of his feet from under the water. In this way, the child took the part of a crocodile and pulled Hanuman into the water. The child-actor playing Hanuman dragged the crocodile to the bank and then defeats him. Then Hanuman encountered an even more formidable foe.

A child disguised as a Raksasa ran after Hanuman and threatened to eat him, saying, "You have defeated the crocodile, but now you must defeat me. Who will revive Laksman if I swallow you alive?" Hanuman answered, "Your Ravana is a worthless dog. Take to your heels and be gone."

In this way the two children fought with each other until they had each other by the hair. They began beating each other with their fists. After some time, Hanuman defeated the Raksasa.

Finally, the child playing the role of Hanuman made his way to Gandhamadana mountain. There, some boys dressed as Gandharvas fight with him for some time, and, after defeating the Gandharvas, Hanuman brought Gandhamadana mountain away on his head. One of the children, acting as a doctor, remembering Rama, applied the medicine to the nose of Nityananda Prabhu, who was playing the part of Laksman. At last, the great Lord, Nityananda Prabhu regained consciousness and came to his feet.



At this, all the parents and everyone else laughed. Hadai Pandit took the child into his arms and all the boys were delighted. Everyone asked, "My dear child, where did you learn all these things?" And the Lord would laughingly answer, "These are all my divine pastimes."



22. Srila Nityananda Prabhu, Part Two

In his early childhood, the Lord's body was delicately fair. No one wanted to give up embracing him. Everyone loved him more than they loved their own sons. By the illusory potency of the Lord, no one could recognize him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way, from his early childhood, Nityananda Prabhu enjoyed nothing better than rehearsing the pastimes of Krsna.

All the children, giving up their parents and their homes, would constantly play in the company of Nityananda Prabhu. I offer my humble obeisances hundreds of times unto the lotus feet of all those boys who thus played with the Supreme Lord Nityananda Prabhu. In this way, Nityananda Prabhu performed his pastimes, and from infancy, nothing pleased him except the lila of Sri Krsna.

Who has the power to describe the transcendental pastimes of Ananta? They are only revealed through his mercy, of his own accord. And so, Nityananda Prabhu stayed at home for the first twelve years of his life. At that time he went on pilgrimage, visiting the different holy places of India. He wandered as a pilgrim until his twentieth year and at that time he appeared before Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Listen to the account given in this Adi-lila of Caitanya-Bhagavata of the pilgrimage of Nityananda Prabhu the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is blasphemed only by wicked and sinful atheists.

Nityananda Prabhu delivered the whole world. He is an unparalleled ocean of mercy. Only by his mercy do I understand the truth about Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Only by his means has the greatness of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu been proclaimed. Listen to how Nityananda Prabhu, the best beloved of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, traveled to all the holy tirthas in India.

The Lord first visited the holy place known as Vakreswara. From there he traveled all alone to the grove of Vaidyanatha. After visiting Gaya, he went to Kasi, the seat of Lord Siva, where the current of the Ganges begins to flow northwards. Nityananda Prabhu became filled with joy at the sight of the Ganges. At Kasi he bathed in the Ganges, and with an unsatiated thirst drank its sweet waters. He performed his morning bath at Prayaga in the month of Magha and from there went to the place of his previous birth in Mathura. Having sported in the waters of the Yamuna at Visrama-ghata, the Lord wandered about Govardhana Hill in great ecstasy and in this way he walked through all twelve forests of Vrindavana.

He visited the house of Nanda Maharaja at Gokula, and sitting down at that holy place, he wept out of emotion. Offering his obeisances to Madana Gopala the Lord journeyed to Hastinapura, the home of the pandavas and beholding the place of those great devotees, the Lord shed tears. All those who loved there, being nondevotees, could not understand. He bowed down, beholding the glories of



Balarama in the city of Hastinapura and in his ecstasy, shouted, "May Balarama, the holder of the plow, deliver us all."

Then, Nityananda Prabhu went to Dvaraka where he bathed in the sea in great joy. He went to Siddhapura, the seat of Kapila, and at the holy place known as the tirtha of the fish, Matsya-tirtha, distributed large quantities of cooked rice at a great festival. Nityananda Prabhu visited Siva-Kanchi and Visnu-Kanchi and laughed upon seeing the bitter schism between the followers of Vishnu and the followers of Siva.

He went to Kuruksetra, Priti-daksa, Bindhu-sarovara, Prabasa, and Sudarsana tirtha, and after paying a visit to the holy tirtha of Trita-kupa, he went to Nisala and from there to Brahma-tirtha and then to Cakra-tirtha. The Lord visited Pratisrota which is near the Saraswati of the West. And from there, that great magnanimous personality, Nityananda Prabhu, travelled to Naimisaranya.

At that time, Nityananda Prabhu went on to the city of Ayodhya and wept much upon beholding the holy birthplace of Sri Rama. Then he went to the kingdom of Guhaka, the candala, where Nityananda Prabhu fell unconscious out of ecstasy. Remembering the devotion of Guhaka-candala, Nityananda Prabhu was unconscious for three days. In all those forests, where the Supreme Lord Rama had stopped to spend a few days, Nityananda Prabhu rolled on the ground in the agony of separation.

He went to the banks of the Sarayu river and bathed in her waters and from there went to Kausaki and from there to the sacred retreat of Paulastya the sage. After bathing in all the holy tirthas of the Gomati, Gandhaki and Soma rivers, he climbed to the summit of Mount Mahendra, and having paid his obeisances there to Parasurama, he proceeded to Hardwara, where the flow of the Ganges originates on this Earth. He then visited Pampa, Bhima-rati and Sapta-Godavari, after bathing in the Tirthas of Benva and Bhipasa.

The great Nityananda Prabhu then had a view of Karttika and went to the mountain of Sri, where Siva and Parvati dwell. In the forms of a brahmana and his wife, Siva and Parvati resided on the top of the mountain known as Sri. Both of them recognized their own cherished Deity, Nityananda Prabhu, who had thus journeyed to the holy places disguised as an avadhuta. Both of them rejoiced upon beholding their guest, and the goddess Parvati herself, with her own hands, joyfully cooked prasadam for Nityananda Prabhu. As Siva and Parvati made offerings of food to Nityananda Prabhu with great regard, he smiled and offered his obeisances to both of them.

The confidential talks which they held between one another can be understood only by Krsna Himself. Taking his leave, Nityananda Prabhu went to Dravida. After visiting Vyenkattanatha, Kamakosti-puri, and Kanch, he arrived at the famed stream of the Kaveri and from there went to the holy place of Sri Rangam, where he stayed for some time. From there he went to Hari-ksetra, and then visited Mount



Rsabha. Then he travelled to South Matura, Krtamala, Tamraparni, and then journeyed northward to the Yamuna, where he visited the home of Augustya on Malaya mountain.

The people there were filled with great joy on beholding the magnanimous Nityananda Prabhu who accepted their hospitality, and from there with great pleasure, he travelled to Badarikasrama. Nityananda Prabhu stayed for some time at the abode of Naranarayana Rshik and passed his time in complete seclusion. From there he journeyed to the residence of Vyasa, who recognized Nityananda Prabhu as the mighty Balaram Himself.

Making himself visible, Vyasa welcomed his guest and the Lord offered his obeisances before Srila Vyasadeva. At that time, Nityananda Prabhu travelled to the seat of the Buddhists, where the Lord found them sitting together with one another. He questioned them, but no one replied in answer. Being angered by the Buddhists, the Lord kicked them on the head. Laughing, the Buddhists fled and Nityananda Prabhu continued on his pilgrimage undismayed.

At that time, the Lord arrived at the town of Kanyaka, and after visiting Durgadevi, travelled to the South Indian sea. Thereafter Nityananda Prabhu went to the town of Sri Ananta and from there to the pond of the five dancing apsaras or celestial nymphs. The Lord then visited the temple of Siva called Gokarna. He travelled from door to door over Kerala and Trigarta and after beholding the honored wife of Dvaipayana, Nityananda Prabhu travelled to Nirbindhya, Payosni, and tapti, in the course of his divine activities.

He visited Reva, the town of Mahismati and Malatirtha and then the Lord turned westwards, journeying by way of Suparakha. Nityananda Prabhu was devoid of all fear. He was never afraid of anyone, throughout the whole of his travels. His body appeared weak, by reason of constant absorption in Krsna consciousness. Nityananda Prabhu laughed and cried at intervals. Who could understand his transcendental moods? Such were the travels of Lord Nityananda Prabhu as he wandered from one place to the next, visiting the holy tirthas.

At that time, quite by accident, he met Madhavendra Puri. The body of Madhavendra Puri was surcharged with divine love for Sri Krsna. Madhavendra Puri was accompanied by all his disciples, who were filled with Krsna prema. Madhavendra Puri tasted no other food besides the mellow qualities of Krsna. The mellows of Krsna consciousness were his only sustenance. His holy body was the place of Krsna's pastimes. There can be no greater praise of his love for Krsna than to say that the great Advaita Acarya Prabhu was the disciple of Madhavendra Puri.

As soon as Nityananda Prabhu beheld Madhavendra Puri he lost external consciousness, and lay motionless, being overpowered with divine love. As soon as Madhavendra Puri saw Nityananda Prabhu he also lost external consciousness and became oblivious of the world around him.



Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu himself declared again and again that Madhavendra Puri is the original teacher of pure devotion. As Nityananda Prabhu and Madhavendra Puri fainted upon seeing one another, Isvara Puri and all the other disciples of Madhavendra Puri wept.

After regaining external consciousness, both of them began to embrace one another, crying tears of ecstasy. The two great teachers rolled on the ground in the ecstasy of divine love, and, transformed by their jubilation, shouted words of joy with voices of thunder. Tears of love flowed like rivers from the eyes of those two great masters. And wet with their tears, the Earth felt blessed. There was no end to the display of transcendental ecstasy shown by those two great souls whose bodies shivered as tears flowed from their eyes and their hair stood on end, for Caitanya Mahaprabhu himself danced within their hearts.

Nityananda Prabhu said, "Today I have obtained the complete fulfillment of all the pilgrimages that I have ever performed, for today, my eyes have beheld the holy feet of Madhavendra Puri. My life is glorified by witnessing such divine love as his."

Holding Nityananda Prabhu in a close embrace, Madhavendra Puri, choked with divine love, could utter no words of reply. And in his joy, Madhavendra Puri had no wish to release Nityananda Prabhu from his embrace.

Isvara Puri, Brahmananda Puri, and all the other disciples of Madhavendra Puri, felt irresistibly attracted to Nityananda Prabhu. Although they had met so many renounced saints, they could detect no trace of love for Krsna in any of them. And by meeting those unfortunate and wicked souls, they gained nothing but grief. And being aggrieved, they sought refuge in the forests. But now they were relieved of all their sorrows upon beholding in one another the manifestation of love for Krsna.

For days, Nityananda Prabhu travelled in the company of Madhavendra Puri, delighting in discussing the pastimes of Krsna. Madhavendra Puri's devotional service is wonderful to speak of. He would faint upon seeing a blackish cloud. Day and night, intoxicated by love for Krsna, he laughed and cried, ranted and raved, and shouted in grief just like a drunkard.

And Nityananda Prabhu, intoxicated with the nectar of Govinda's sweetness, would stagger and stumble. Falling on the ground, he would laugh heartily. On beholding the wonderful mood of Madhavendra Puri and Nityananda Prabhu, the brotherhood of disciples constantly chanted the name of Hari. Intoxicated by the sweet taste of divine love, no one knew when it was day or night, and time lost all meaning. Who can understand the talks that Nityananda Prabhu had with Madhavendra Puri? Only Krsna knows their meaning. Madhavendra Puri could not bear to part company with Nityananda Prabhu, but took delight in his constant association.

He said, "Although I have traveled to many holy tirthas, I could find no divine love of Godhead such as yours anywhere. Having obtained the company of such a



friend as Nityananda Prabhu, I have realized the mercy of Krsna. Krsna is so kind! Wherever one can get the association of Nityananda Prabhu, that place is more than Vaikuntha and all the holy tirthas combined. If one only hears of the devotion of such a devotee as Nityananda Prabhu, he is sure to attain Sri Krsnacandra. And whoever has the least bit of aversion to Nityananda Prabhu, can never be loved by Krsna even if he is a devotee of Krsna."

In this way, Madhavendra Puri glorified Nityananda Prabhu day and night and served him with love and attention. Nityananda Prabhu himself thought of Madhavendra Puri as his guru and thus engaged, those two great souls were so absorbed in love of Krsna that they could not tell whether it was day or night.

In this way, after passing some time in the company of Madhavendra Puri, Nityananda Prabhu set out on his journey to the bridge of Rama known as Setubandha, at the southernmost tip of India.

Madhavendra Puri went off to visit the Sarayu river. Being completely absorbed in Krsna, neither of them could remember anything of their own physical bodies. Completely forgetful of their own selves, they passed their days in the agony of separation from each other and so their life was preserved. For if any external consciousness had remained, it would have been impossible for them to survive the agony of separation. Whoever hears this account of Nityananda Prabhu and Madhavendra Puri with faith and devotion, obtains the treasure of love for Krsna.

In this way, Nityananda Prabhu wandered about in the ecstasy of divine love and after some time arrived at Setubandha, the bridge of Rama. After bathing in the ghat at Dana-tirtha, he went to Ramesvara, and from there, arrived in Vijayanagar. Having visited Mayapuri, Avanti, and Godavari, the Lord arrived at the seat of Jiyur-Nrismhadeva. He visited Trimala, and the sacred shrine of Kurmanatha. At last he set out to behold Sri Jagannatha-deva, the moon of Nilacala.

As soon as he entered the city of Lord Jagannatha, the blissful master of Nilacala, he fainted away upon beholding the sight of the Lord's cakra. He took darsan of Jagannatha, seeing his fourfold form as the Caturvyuha fully manifest in all his joyousness with the whole body of his servitors. Nityananda Prabhu lost his consciousness in the ecstasy of that vision, and once recovering, lost it again. This went on again and again. Nityananda Prabhu experienced shivering, perspiration, tears of joy falling on the ground, shouting words of ecstasy in a thunderous voice.

Who can describe the ecstasy of Nityananda Prabhu? After spending some time in this way in Jagannatha Puri, Nityananda Prabhu resumed his journey and with great enthusiasm, visited the place where the Ganges meets the ocean. Who can fully describe all his travels to the different holy places? I have only recorded a fraction of them, by his mercy. After visiting the holy tirthas in this way, Nityananda Prabhu returned to Mathura. He took up residence in Vrindavana and stayed there day and night absorbed in thoughts of Krsna.



He ate nothing, and only now and then would drink some milk if someone gave it to him without his asking for it. Nityananda Prabhu thought to himself, "Sri Gauracandra is staying in Nabadwipa, but his divine glory is remaining concealed. As soon as the Lord chooses to manifest his divinity, I shall immediately go to Nabadwipa and fulfill my role in his service."

In this way, having made up his mind, Nityananda Prabhu neither went to Nabadwipa, nor left Mathura, but sported constantly in the waters of the Yamuna and played in the dust of Vrindavana with the children.

And although Nityananda Prabhu possesses complete potency in all respects, he abstained from bestowing devotion for Visnu upon anyone. Thinking for himself that when Lord Gauracandra would manifest himself, then the time would come for performing the pastime of distributing divine love on the order of the Lord. By thinking that nothing should be done except by the command of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the greatness of the lord's service is not reduced, and so Nityananda Prabhu awaited the command of the Lord.

Nothing moves without the order of the Supreme Lord, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. And no one can do anything without his sanction, even if he is Ananta, Brahma, Siva, or any of the gods. The destroyers, rulers, and maintainers of the universe do their duty only upon the order of Sri Caitanya. Those sinners who are aggrieved in their minds by this, are completely unfit to be seen by a Vaishnava. The three worlds are witness to the fact that everyone obtained the treasure of love of god by the mercy of Nityananda Prabhu. He is the first of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's devotees. His tongue treasures the glorious praise of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Nityananda Prabhu discourses on Caitanya night and day; by serving him, devotion to Sri Caitanya is obtained. All glories to Nityananda Prabhu the primeval Lord, by whose mercy we can understand the glories of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Attachment to Nityananda Prabhu is the gift of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mercy. For one who knows Nityananda Prabhu there is no danger anywhere. If someone wishes to cross beyond this world of darkness and dive into the ocean of devotion, let him serve the moonlike Nityananda. Some say that Nityananda Prabhu is Balarama Himself. Others say that he is the abode of divine love for Sri Caitanya; let them say whatever they like. Whether Nityananda Prabhu is an ascetic, a devotee, or a sage; whatever he may be in relationship to Sri Caitanya, may his lotus feet be implanted firmly within the hearts of everyone. If after hearing all the good qualities of Nityananda Prabhu, there is still a sinful soul left who doesn't appreciate him or who wants to slander him or blaspheme him in any way, then I kick on his face with my left foot.

Certain followers of Sri Caitanya speak of Nityananda Prabhu in such a way that although they appear to speak ill of him, they are really praising him. Such exalted Vaishnavas (like Advaita Acarya) are always pure in heart and transcendently honest. Their seeming disagreement and quarrel is simply lila or sport.



If one looks at their disagreement externally and takes the side of one, slandering the other, he will be finished. By following only those who deprecate all slander of Nityananda, Sri Caitanya is attained. When will that day be mine when I shall obtain the divine vision of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu, surrounded by the assembly of devotees? May Nityananda Prabhu be my eternal master in every way. Remaining loyal to Nityananda Prabhu, may I serve the holy feet of Sri Gauracandra. May I read the holy Bhagavata at the feet of Nityananda Prabhu birth after birth.

This is my aspiration. All glories to the Supreme Lord, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. You gave us Nityananda Prabhu and you took him away from us. And yet, O Mahaprabhu, grant me this one favor - that my mind may remain always attached to you and to Nityananda Prabhu. He is your greatest devotee; without your consent, no one can attain his lotus feet. Nityananda Prabhu roamed throughout Vrindavana and different holy places until Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu manifest his divinity. Whoever listens to this account of the pilgrimages of Nityananda Prabhu attains the treasure of divine love.

Sri Krsna Caitanya is the life and soul of Nityananda Prabhu. Vrindavana Dasa, praying at their lotus feet sings Sri Caitanya Bhagavata.



23. Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami

*danda pranama kari bhatta padila carane
prabhu raghunatha bali kaila alingane*

"Raghunatha Bhatta fell straight as a rod at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Then the Lord embraced him, knowing full well who he was."
(Caitanya Caritamrita Antya 13.101)

From Kasidhama, Raghunatha Bhatta traveled on foot to Puri-dhama. When he arrived in Puri, he went straight to the place of Sriman Mahaprabhu and offered his respects at the Lord's lotus feet. At that time, the Lord embraced him, saying "Raghunatha!" Having been embraced by the Lord, Raghunatha Bhatta found that all his troubles went far away. Raghunatha Bhatta thought to himself, "I am coming to see the Lord after such a long time; He didn't know that I was coming. How is it that he is showing me so much affection? He has many devotees who are very dear to Him. Why should he show such affection for one such as myself, the lowest of devotees?" And yet, although he considered himself very low and mean, when Caitanya Mahaprabhu with a laughing, smiling, face said "Raghunatha!" and embraced him, Raghunatha began crying tears of ecstasy. With tears in his eyes, he fell at the Lord's feet and, holding them, said, "O most merciful Lord. In truth, tell me, why are you giving such great consideration to this humble one?" The Lord said, "Raghunatha! I cannot forget your parent's affectionate consideration for me around the time of your birth. Every day, with great affection, they used to feed me."

After this, Caitanya Mahaprabhu introduced Raghunatha Bhatta to all the devotees. All the devotees were very happy to meet him. On behalf of his parents, Raghunatha gave regards and affectionate obeisances to all the devotees. He also gave them news of Candrasekhara and all the other devotees of East Bengal. Finally the affectionate mother of Raghunatha Bhatta had sent some nice things for the Lord to eat, Bengali delicacies neatly packed in special bags. When the Lord saw them, he was very happy and ordered his servant Govinda to carefully put them away.

Sri Raghunatha Bhatta's father's name was Sri Tapan Misra. In his grihastha-lila, the Lord once went to East Bengal, to the Padma river, where he was a visiting professor of grammar. There he met with Tapan Misra and made his acquaintance. Tapan Misra was an Eastern Bengali and was a pandit in the sastra. Still, although He had given great consideration to both the practice of perfection and the perfection of life, he was unable to ascertain their inner meaning. One night he had a dream, and in his dream a god came before him and said, "Misra! Don't worry. Sri Nityananda has just arrived near here. He will teach you both the practice of perfection and the goal of life. He is not a man (nara) - he is the Supreme Lord, Nara-Narayana. Although He is the creator of the universe, he has accepted the form of a man in order to deliver the world." Saying this, the god disappeared.



The following morning, after finishing his morning duties, Tapan Misra set out to find Sriman Mahaprabhu. Just then he saw Sri Nimai Pandita sitting on the bench before his home, His brilliant effulgence illuminating his courtyard as if the sun had descended before him. His eyes were just like fresh lotuses, and his fine black hair was beautifully curled and flowing. His strong chest was decorated with a fine sacred thread and he wore a garment of brilliant yellow. Just as a shining moon in the midst of many stars illuminating all four directions, his effulgent form was surrounded by his disciples.

Tapan Misra offered his obeisances to the Lord, falling at his holy feet, and said, "O most merciful one! I am most fallen. Please be merciful to me." The Lord smiled affectionately, and offering him a seat, asked Tapan Misra to introduce himself. Having introduced himself, Tapan Misra inquired from the Lord about all the truths regarding the practice of perfection and the goal of life.

Mahaprabhu said, "In every millenium the Lord advents himself in order to deliver the fallen souls and instruct them in the appropriate form of worship for each age.

In Satya-yuga, meditation, in Treta-yuga, sacrifice, in Dvapara-yuga, deity worship and in Kali-yuga, sankirtana is the process for attaining the ultimate salvation. In each of the four ages there is a particular process for deliverance. In the age of Kali, this form of dharma is nama-sankirtana."

In this way, the Lord in his form as a spiritual teacher informed Tapan Misra about the real welfare for the soul as well as the true position of dharma in the age of Kali - that is, nama-sankirtana. He explained that apart from the holy name, nothing else will be fruitful.

He said, "In the age of Kali the sacrifice of the holy name is the essential principle. Nothing else will be effective in the age of Kali, and therefore there is no religious principle superior to this. Without the holy name there is no way to attain perfection in this age. One should completely renounce any tendency to follow any other path and always take to the chanting of the holy name of Krishna as follows:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

By the influence of this mantra you will be able to understand everything about the means towards perfection and the goal of life, since there is no difference between the holy name of Krishna and Krishna Himself."

Tapan Misra, upon hearing the the instructions of the Lord offered his obeisances at the Lord's feet with all his limbs prostrated upon the ground. When the Lord was about to leave for Nabadwipa, he wanted to accompany the Lord on His return journey to Nabadwipa. The Lord, however, ordered him, "Soon you will go to Kasi. There we shall again meet. At that time I shall instruct you further in all



these truths." Saying this, the Lord set out for Nabadwipa. Soon thereafter, Tapana Misra and his wife left for Kasidhama, which is also called Baranasi or Benares.

Some years later, out of his mercy for the fallen souls, Mahaprabhu took sannyasa and went to reside in Jagannatha Puri on the order of his mother. After staying there for some months, he went through the Jharikhanda forest (presently known as Choda Nagapura) on his way to Vrindavana and passed through Kasidhama. At the bathing ghata called Manikarnika he began chanting the holy name of Hari and exhorted everyone else to do so, saying, "Haribol! Haribol!"

Just at that time, Tapana Misra was taking bath at that very ghata. Hearing the holy name of Hari being chanted so loudly, he was astonished. It was like finding an ocean in the middle of a desert to hear the glories of Hari being chanted in the midst of the capitol of the Mayavadis, Kasidhama. He looked across the ghata and saw that on the banks of the bathing ghata stood a sannyasi of unprecedented beauty and stature. His supernatural effulgence illuminated all four directions. In complete amazement, Tapana Misra thought to himself, "Who is this great personality? Could it possibly be Nimai Pandit of Nabadwipa? I have heard that he has taken sannyasa. Could it be him?"

He got out of the water and looked more closely. At that time, as he looked across the water, he was certain that it was indeed Nimai Pandita. He hurried to the place where the Lord stood and offered his obeisances at the lotus feet of the Lord as joy arose within his heart. As he picked himself up from the ground, he found himself being embraced by Caitanya Maharabhu. After so many days he had finally met the Lord again.

With great affection, Tapana Misra brought the Lord to his home. There he washed the Lord's lotus feet and then drank that holy water along with his family. His ecstasy knew no bounds. He placed his little son Raghunatha at the lotus feet of the Lord and made him offer obeisances. The Lord took the boy upon his lap and cradled him there with great affection. Meanwhile, Tapana Misra quickly made arrangements for cooking, and Balabhadra Bhattacharya cooked. He made arrangements for the Lord's bath, and when the Lord had finished bathing and performing his noon duties, the Lord ate. Tapana Misra's little son Raghunatha massaged the Lord's feet, and the Lord took rest.

Hearing news of the Lord's arrival, Candrasekhara and the Maharashthrian brahmana, as well as the other devotees came to offer their respects to the Lord's holy feet. The Lord embraced Candrasekhara and then spoke some krishna-katha with all the devotees present. While he was in Benares, the Lord visited the temples of Visvesvara and Bindhu-madhava to take darshan. He also visited the Dasasvamedha-ghata. The Lord stayed at the house of Candrasekhara and dined at the house of Tapana Misra. Candrasekhara worked as a scribe, copying scriptures for the panditas of Kasi with his own hand, in a beautiful style of calligraphy. He was from a family of highly learned brahmanas.



In Benares, the slogans of the impersonalists like "tat tvam asi," and "aham brahmasmi" as well as the favorite words of the impersonalists - words like "Brahma," "atma," and "caitanya" - were constantly heard everywhere. No devotional words could be heard in Benares, and so wherever the Lord went, he performed sankirtana.

One day, the Maharashthrian brahmana submitted a request at the Lotus feet of the Lord. "O Lord," he said, "O Lord! Please deliver this city of Kasi. I met with the guru of the sannyasis, Prakasananda Saraswati, and three times I mentioned your name, "Krishna Caitanya." He also said the word "caitanya" three times, but he was unable to say the word "krishna" at all."

The Lord replied, "Because they are offenders at the lotus feet of Krishna, the holy name of Krishna never issues forth from their lips. The holy name and form of Krishna are no different from his very Self. They are one transcendental truth, full in ecstasy and divine reality."

Having thus instructed the devotees in various ways, the Lord set out once again to continue his long journey to Vrindavana. He would deliver Kasi with the mercy of Krishna later, on his return journey to Jagannatha Puri. And so the Lord went to Vrindavana.

After spending some time in Vrindavana wandering about in the ecstasy of krishna-prema, by and by the Lord returned to Kasi-dhama. One day, he met with Prakasananda Saraswati himself. Seeing the Lord's uncommon beauty, childlike humility, his generosity and magnanimity, Prakasananda was astonished. At length he fell at the Lord's lotus feet. After the conversion of Prakasananda Saraswati, all the sannyasis there also fell at the Lord's feet and sang his greatness, as the Lord delivered everyone there with the holy name of Krishna. The flood of nectar flowing from the holy name soon inundated Kasi, and washed away the false doctrine of impersonalism along with its followers.

This time the Lord spent ten days in Kasi, and the joy of his devotees and followers knew no bounds. Tapana Misra, Candrasekhara, and the Maharashthrian brahmana, as well as the other devotees there felt as if their life had returned, as again they had the opportunity to render personal service to Sriman Mahaprabhu. Tapana Misra's son, Raghunatha felt himself supremely fortunate to be able to serve his Lord and master, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu for ten days.

At last, the time came for the Lord to bid farewell to the devotees so that he might once again set out for Jagannatha Puri. All the devotees were heartbroken in agony at the prospect of separation from the Lord. Raghunatha Bhatta, the son of Tapana Misra, fell before the Lord, begging him not to go and held his lotus feet, weeping again and again. The Lord took the boy upon his lap and gave him many reassurances, trying to console him. He said, "You must serve your father and mother here, and by and by, you may come to Puri-dhama and see me again." Then, after first embracing Tapana Misra and Candrasekhara and instructing the devotees



there in certain truths of Krishna consciousness, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu bade farewell to Kasi forever, and began his long journey by foot to Jagannatha Puri.

Within a short time, Sri Raghunatha became expert in Sanskrit grammar, rhetoric, and poetry. Gradually, he became highly learned in the revealed scriptures. He continued to serve his mother and father into their old age, as the years passed. When he came of age, Raghunatha was ordered by his father to go to Puri-dhama to see Sri Caitanya Maharabhu. Raghunatha's ecstasy had no boundaries. In service to the Lord, Raghunatha's mother had prepared various kinds of delicacies to be offered to Him by Raghunatha on behalf of the Misra's. All these fine delicacies had been carefully packed together in a big sack.

After receiving the orders and blessings of his parents, Raghunatha left with a servant for Puri. On the road, he met a Rama-bhakta, a devotee of Rama, who joined him in traveling to Puri. His name was Sri Rama dasa. By birth he was a Kayastha, that is he took birth in caste of those who work in the service of the King. He was a highly learned scholar in the interpretation of that great epic, the Ramayana. Rama dasa bowed down before Raghunatha and took the dust of his lotus feet. He then snatched the sack of delicacies from Raghunatha's servant and began to carry it on his head.

Raghunatha said, "You are a learned scholar, and what are doing?" Rama dasa said, "Bhattaji! I am the lowest of sudras. It will do me some good to serve a brahmana." Raghunatha replied, "Panditji! Please. I beg of you, let my servant carry that heavy sack." At this, Rama dasa surrendered the work of carrying the sack to Raghunatha's servant. On the way to Jagannatha Puri, Raghunatha dasa discussed many scriptural conclusions with Rama dasa.

Sri Raghunatha Bhatta arrived in Jagannatha Puri and offered his obeisances at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. At that time the Lord, greeted him saying, "Raghunatha!" He picked him up from the ground and embraced him. The Lord inquired about the welfare of Tapan Misra and his wife, and asked about Candrasekhara as well as all the other devotees in Benares. Raghunatha dasa related all this to him and told him everything. Sri Rama dasa was brought to the place of Mahaprabhu. Sri Rama dasa offered his obeisances to the lotus feet of Sriman Mahaprabhu, but the Lord, who is the Supersoul within all living beings, detected that Rama dasa was maintaining desires for liberation within his heart. As a result, the Lord was not affectionate towards him.

The Lord ordered Raghunatha Bhatta to go see the deity of Lord Jagannatha after bathing in the ocean. Raghunatha went with the other devotees to the beach, where they all took bath in the ocean and then went to see Lord Jagannatha. Afterwards, he returned to the Lord's place, and Mahaprabhu ordered his servant Govinda to give prasada to Raghunatha Bhatta. The Lord took care to see to Raghunatha's food and lodgings, and there Raghunatha stayed. Raghunatha would cook for the Lord on a regular basis. He stayed in Jagannatha Puri for eight months in the service of the Lord and thus experienced great happiness. He witnessed for himself the



ecstatic singing and dancing of the Lord in various moods of divine ecstasy before the ratha-yatra car of Lord Jagannatha. After some time, Mahaprabhu ordered him to return to Kasi. He told Raghunatha to see to the service of his aging father and mother, and explained to him that, as they were Vaishnavas, they were not to be neglected. Raghunatha Bhatta took this order of the Lord very seriously, and the Lord began to instruct him on many other points. He ordered Raghunatha not to marry, and told him to study the sastra. He told him that after some time he should again return to Jagannatha Puri to see the deity of Jagannatha.

With this, Mahaprabhu gave him a tulasi garland from his own neck. The Lord also gave Raghunatha Bhatta some mahaprasada to be distributed among all the devotees associated with Tapana Misra and Candrasekhara in Kasi. When it came time to say goodbye, Raghunatha Bhatta's heart ached. He fell at the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu, offering his prostrated obeisances. The Lord helped Raghunatha to his feet and gave him a hearty embrace, just as before. Bidding farewell to Mahaprabhu and Jagannatha Puri, Raghunatha Bhatta started on his way back to Kasi.

Upon his return to Kasi, Raghunatha Bhatta served his parents carefully, and began studying the Srimad-Bhagavatam in earnest. After some time his mother and father passed away. Raghunatha, adhering strictly to the orders of Sri Caitanya, had never married. Without any family responsibilities to burden him any longer, he went to Jagannatha Puri to the lotus feet of the Lord. When the Lord again saw Raghunatha after such a long time, he was very happy. Hearing of the passing away of Tapana Misra and his devoted wife, Caitanya Mahaprabhu spoke of their great devotion at length, and glorified them. Raghunatha Bhatta was very happy to once again have the association of the Lord. He remained in Puri and served Mahaprabhu faithfully for another eight months. One day the Lord told him, "You must go to Vrindavana. You have much work to do there in Vrindavana. I must stay here in Puri, for I have been ordered by my mother to do so. As a result I cannot finish the work I have to do in Vrindavana. It is up to you to help me finish my work there."

Upon hearing these words from the Lord, Raghunatha Bhatta was sorrowful at the prospect of having to leave Him again. The Lord explained to him that in Vrindavana he would meet Rupa and Sanatana Goswami. He was to study the Srimad-Bhagavatam and related revealed scriptures under their guidance. On the Lord's order, Raghunatha Bhatta prepared to leave for Vrindavana. He bid adieu to the Vaishnavas and fell before the lotus feet of Sri 1/2 Caitanya Mahaprabhu for the last time. As Mahaprabhu was saying goodbye to Raghunatha Bhatta, he gave him a long prasada garland and some tambula mahaprasada and embraced him.

Having bid goodbye, Raghunatha Bhatta set out on the same path to Vrindavana that once was traversed by the lotus feet of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In this way, as he walked along the long road to Vrindavana, Raghunatha Bhatta would hear again and again of how the Lord passed on the same road. He would hear of the Lord's glories, and how he visited the different holy places and performed various wonderful activities.



When he finally arrived in Vrindavana, Rupa and Sanatana Goswami were very happy to see him and affectionately embraced him. All the Goswamis who stayed in Vrindavana with them were overjoyed to see him. They all accepted him as their affectionate godbrother.

Raghunatha Bhatta was exceptionally blessed with humility and meekness. It is recorded in Caitanya-Caritamrita that Raghunatha Bhatta would recite Srimad-Bhagavatam before Rupa and Sanatana Goswami, and when doing so, he would be overwhelmed with ecstatic love for Krishna. By the Lord's mercy he would be overcome by all the symptoms of ecstatic love of Godhead: tears, choking of the voice, and trembling. Overwhelmed in this way, he would not be able to continue the reading. It is said that his voice was as sweet as a cuckoo's, and when reading the Bhagavata, he would sing the verses in many different tunes, or ragas. In this way, his readings were especially sweet to hear. Raghunatha Bhatta was fully surrendered to the lotus feet of Gaura-Govinda. Those lotus feet were his life and soul.

After some time in Vrindavana, Raghunatha Bhatta arranged for his disciples to construct a temple for Govinda. He prepared various ornaments for Govinda, including a flute and shark-shaped earrings. Raghunatha Bhatta would neither hear nor speak about anything material. He would simply discuss Krishna and worship the Lord day and night. He would not listen to blasphemy of a Vaishnava, nor would he listen to talk of a Vaishnava's misbehavior. He knew only that everyone was engaged in Krishna's service; he did not understand anything else. When Raghunatha was absorbed in remembering the Lord, he would take the tulasi garland and the prasada of Jagannatha given him by Mahaprabhu, bind them together and wear them on his neck.

Regarding the spiritual position of Raghunatha Bhatta, the Gaura-ganodesa-dipika states, "In the Vrindavana lila of Krishna Raghunatha Bhatta was Sri Raga Manjari." Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami was born in 1505 A.D. He passed away from this earth and entered into the transcendental world in 1579 A.D.



24. Sri Sanatana Goswami, Part One

*vairagya-yug-bhakti-rasam prayatnair
apayayan mam anabhipsum andham
kapambudhir yah para-duhkha-duhkhi
sanatanas tam prabhum asrayami*

Raghunatha dasa Goswami has glorified Sanatana Goswami as follows in his Vilapa Kusumanjali (6) "I was unwilling to drink the nectar of devotional service possessed of renunciation, but Sanatana Goswami, out of his causeless mercy, made me drink it, even though I was unable to do so. Therefore he is an ocean of mercy. He is very much compassionate to fallen souls like me, and thus it is my duty to offer my respectful obeisances unto his lotus feet and take shelter of him."

The transcendental position of Sanatana Goswami is glorified in the Gaura-Ganodesha-Dipika of Sri Kavi Karnapura (181):

*sa rupa-manjari-presiha
purasid rati-manjari
socyate nama-bhedena
lavanga-manjari budhaih*

"Rupa Manjari's closest friend, who was known by the names Rati-Manjari and Lavanga Manjari, appeared in the pastimes of Sri Chaitanya mahaprabhu as Sri Sanatana Goswami, who was considered to be a personal extension of the body of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

Sanatana Goswami's literary contribution to the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya is paralleled only by Rupa and Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. The most important of the scriptures he compiled are the Hari-bhakti-Vilasa, the Brihad-Bhagavatamrita, his Dasama-Tippani commentary on Srimad-Bhagvatam, also known as the Brihad-Vaishanva-Toshani, and the Dashama-charita.

Sri Jiva Goswami gives the following account of the ancestral line of his uncle, Sanatana Goswami in the conclusion of his Laghu-Vaishnava-Toshani, a commentary on the Bhagavata:

Sarvajna was a Yajur Vedic brahmana descended from the dynasty of the sage Bharadvaja Muni, and as such was the most respectable brahmana of Karnataka. He became the king of the region in 1381 A.D. He was so learned that he was known as "Jagad-guru" or world-teacher. His son was Aniruddha, who became king in 1416 A.D. Aniruddha had two queens and two sons, Rupeshvara and Harihara. Rupeshvara was expert in all the branches of the sacred shastra. His brother Harihara was expert in the scriptures concerning royal politics and was also highly educated. Rupeshvara left Karnataka for Paurastya with his wife. He was well-versed in many branches of learning. There, he became the friend of the king, Raja Sri Shekhareshvar. Rupeshvara's son was Padmanabha, who was a great pandit in



the Vedic scriptures. Padmanabha settled at Navahatta, (Naihatti) on the banks of the Ganges in Bengal. He had eight daughters and five sons. All his sons were expert in the scriptures. The names of his sons were Purushottama, Jagannatha, Narayana, Murari, and Mukundadeva. His youngest son, Mukunda, moved to Fateyabada near Jessore in Bakla Chandradwip Paragana. Sri Mukunda deva's son was Sri Kumara Deva. He had many children. In their midst were Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatana and Sri Anupama or Vallabha. They were all great Mahabhagavata devotees of the Lord."

Sri Sanatana Goswami was born in 1488. Rupa Goswami was born in 1493.

Rupa and Vallabha (Anupama) were educated in a village called Sakurma near the capital of Gauda (Bengal) and lived in their maternal uncle's house when their father died. Sanatana was Kumaradeva's eldest son. Rupa was his second son. Vallabha was his youngest son. Jiva was Vallabha's only son. Sanatana and Rupa were the names given by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to the two brothers when they later became his disciples. Their former names are not known. Some say that their original names were Amara and Santosha respectively.

The ruler of Bengal, Hussain Shah, heard from pious men about the qualifications of Rupa and Sanatana. Having heard their glories, the Shah wanted to appoint them to positions in his regime. Out of fear of the Yavana king, they were forced to accept.

At that time it was not unusual for Hindus to accept posts in the government of the Muslim king. Among those Hindus who had accepted posts in the government of the Shah were many great devotees. Among them were Keshava Vasu Khan, who served the Shah as a City Magistrate or Police Commissioner in Bengal. Gopinatha Vasu and Purandara Khan served as Prime Ministers. Sri Mukunda Kaviraja was a doctor. Keshava Chatri was a Royal Diplomat and Counsel to the King. Sanatana became known as Sakara Mallik and was appointed Private Secretary. Mullik means "Lord" and was a title often given by the Muslims to respectable and wealthy families with intimate government ties. Rupa became known as Dabir Khas, and was appointed Revenue Officer and Secretary of Treasury by Hussain Shah, the king of Gauda. Sri Vallabha, or Anupama was Chief Superintendent of the Royal Mint. They were well-rewarded by the Shah for their services, who saw to it that they were given great riches.

According to the Vedic customs, if one associates with Muslim he becomes contaminated and must perform purificatory rituals. Sanatana Goswami always associated with Muslims without paying much attention to the customs of the day, and as such considered himself to be fallen from his high brahmana caste. He therefore always presented himself as fallen, although this was only a display of his great Vaishnava humility for which he was celebrated in the Caitanya Caritamrita and praised by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu himself.

Sri Rupa and Sanatana made their headquarters in Ramakeli, which had been established as the Capitol of Bengal in 1486 by Sultan Barbak. At present, Ramkeli



is located in the Maldah district of West Bengal, near the border of Bengal on the Ganges, and is about five miles from the Maldah railway station. Ramkeli was also the home of many famous devotees, including Sri Nrishinga, the son of Advaita Acharya.

From within and without Bengal many greatly learned scholars and brahmanas used to come to see Rupa and Sanatana in their homes. From Karnataka came many brahmanas who settled near the house of Rupa and Sanatana. Their residential home was near the banks of the Ganges near a town called Bhattavari. From Nabadwipa Dham many brahmanas and pandits also came to Ramakeli to serve Rupa and Sanatana in different ways.

Sri Rupa and Sanatana were accomplished scholars - they were the crest jewels of the Gaudiya Vaishnava scholars. Their teacher in philosophy and scripture had been the brother of the great Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya - Vidyavachaspati, who taught Sanatana Goswami all the Vedic scriptures. His devotion to Vidyavachaspati cannot be described. Vidyavachaspati would often stay in Ramakeli.

The three brothers, Sanatana, Rupa, and Anupama were absorbed in Bhava-bhakti from early childhood. Remembering Vrindavana they used to play in the forest of Tamal, Keli-Kadamba, and Tulsi trees that surrounded their childhood home. In the midst of this were ponds they named after Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda. In this way they were constantly absorbed in rendering service to Sri Madana Mohana. Hearing of the wonderful pastimes of Sri Gaurasundara in nearby Nabadwipa, they were anxious to one day have his darshan. But they were told by their inner voice, "You must be patient. Soon you will have darshan of that great Lord who is the savior of the fallen."

When Sri Sanatana was still young he had an unusual dream. In his dream he saw a brahmana. The brahmana gave him a Srimad-Bhagavatam. Upon receiving the Bhagavata, Sanatana's hair stood up in ecstasy. His dream broke. When he awoke and saw that the brahmana and the Bhagavata had gone, he became very depressed. The next morning, after he had bathed, while he was seated for worshipping the Lord, a brahmana appeared, carrying the Bhagavata. Standing near Sanatana, the brahmana said, "Take this Bhagavata. Always study it and all perfection will be yours." Saying this, the brahmana gave him the Bhagavata and went away.

Upon receiving the treasure of the holy Bhagavata, Sri Sanatana's ecstasy knew no bounds. From that day on, Sri Sanatana would only study the Bhagavata, leaving aside other scriptures, knowing the Bhagavata to be the essence of all scriptures. In his Krishna-lila-stava, he has written,

*madeka bandho matsangin
madguro man mahadhana
man nistaraka madbhagya
madananda namo'stu te*



Sanatana Goswami offers his respects to the Bhagavata, by saying: "O holy Bhagavata, you are my only company, my only friend, and my guru. You are my greatest treasure, my personal savior, the emblem of my highest fortune, the very form of ecstasy. I offer my obeisances to you."

When they heard the news that Sri Caitanya, the life and treasure of Nadia, had taken sannyasa and gone to Puri, Rupa and Sanatana fainted. Having never seen Mahaprabhu in Navadvipa, Rupa and Sanatana were despondent upon hearing that he was leaving Bengal forever. At this time they heard a divine voice saying, "Do not be in anxiety. The merciful Sri Gauranga will soon come here." Hearing this divine voice, they were consoled.

After happily spending five years headquartered in Puri, Mahaprabhu wanted to return to Bengal to take darshan of the Ganges and to see his mother, and so he set out for Nabadwipa. The joy of the devotees was boundless; getting the opportunity to see her son after such a long time Sacidevi completely forgot herself. For many days she cooked and Gaurasundara enjoyed her cooking. Mahaprabhu stayed at the house of Advaita in Shantipura for some days and then continued on to Ramkeli Gram.

This is recorded in Sri Caitanya Caritamrita:

When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu began to proceed from Kuliya toward Vrindavana, thousands of men were with him and all of them were devotees. Wherever the Lord visited, crowds of innumerable people came to see Him. When they saw Him, all their unhappiness and lamentation disappeared. Wherever the Lord touched the ground with His lotus feet, people immediately came and gathered the dirt. Indeed they gathered so much that many holes were created in the road.

The Lord eventually arrived at a village named Ramkeli. This village is situated on the border of Bengal and is very exquisite. While performing Sankirtan in Ramakeli grama, the Lord danced and sometimes lost consciousness due to love of God. While he was at Ramkeli-grama, an unlimited number of people came to see His lotus feet. When the Mohammedan King of Bengal heard of Mahaprabhu's influence in attracting innumerable people, he became very astonished and began to speak as follows: "Such a person, who is followed by so many people without giving them charity, must be a prophet. I can surely understand this fact."

The Mohammedan King ordered the magistrate: "Do not disturb this Hindu prophet out of jealousy. Let Him do His own will wherever He likes."

Mahaprabhu's auspicious visit was welcomed in Ramkeli, where all the devotees became overwhelmed by ecstasy. From all directions came thousands of people to see Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. When the King became a little concerned about this phenomenon and began asking questions about Mahaprabhu, his counselor,



Keshava Chatri, who was a devotee, told him, "Yes, I have heard about this mendicant sannyasi. He is begging here and there with three or four followers."

The king said, "What are you saying! Thousands and thousands of people follow him wherever he goes."

When he heard this, Keshava Chatri smiled a little and intimated that this was a great exaggeration. Hearing the words of Keshava Chatri, the Shah's mind was not pacified. He asked Rupa Goswami about all this. Rupa Goswami said, "Why are you questioning me? Better that you question your own mind. Because you are king of the people, you are the representative of the Supreme Lord. Therefore you can understand better than I who Caitanya Mahaprabhu is." After hearing this, the Shah was pacified.

Beneath a tree on the banks of the Ganges, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu stopped to rest. He was accompanied only by his most intimate associates. In the evening, Sanatana Goswami and Rupa Goswami arrived there. They met Nityananda and Haridasa Thakura who informed Mahaprabhu of their arrival. In great humility, the two of them took bunches of straw between their teeth, and, each binding a cloth around his neck, they fell down like rods before the Lord.

Upon seeing Mahaprabhu, Rupa and Sanatana were overjoyed and began to weep out of humility. The Lord asked them to get up and blessed them. They arose and, taking a straw between their teeth, they humbly offered their prayers with folded hands. They said, "All glories to Sri Krishna Caitanya, the most merciful savior of the fallen souls. All glories to the Lord."

Then they submitted themselves, saying, "Sir, we belong to the lowest class of men, and our association and occupation are also of the lowest type. Therefore we cannot introduce ourselves to you. We feel very much ashamed standing here before you. Dear Lord, you have incarnated to deliver the fallen souls. You should consider that in this world there is none so fallen as us. You have delivered the two brothers Jagai and Madhai, but to deliver them You did not have to exert yourself much. The brothers Jagai and Madhai belonged to the brahmana caste, and their residence was in the holy place of Nabadwipa. They never served low-class persons, nor were they accessories to abominable persons. Jagai and Madhai had but one fault - they were addicted to sin. However heaps of sin are burned to ashes simply by Namabhasa: the dim reflection of the holy name. Jagai and Madhai uttered your name in blasphemy, but their utterance of the divine name delivered them. We are millions of times inferior to Jagai and Madhai. We are more degraded, fallen and sinful than they. Actually, we belong to the caste of meat-eaters, for we are servants of meat-eaters. Because we associate with them we have become the enemy of cows and brahmanas."

In this way, the two brothers humbly submitted that because of their abominable activities they were now bound by the neck and hands by sin and wallowing in the filthy ditch of sense gratification.



They continued their appeal to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu: "No one in the universe is powerful enough to deliver us. You are the savior of lost souls. Only you can save us. If you deliver such fallen sinners as ourselves, the strength of your mercy will become famous throughout the world. You have come to save the most fallen. We are the most fallen. If you show your mercy to us, then, the power of your mercy will be witnessed by everyone and your mission to save the most fallen will be a great success. Although we are unqualified to receive your mercy, still it is our heart's desire."

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "My dear Dabhir Khasa and Sakara Mallika: you two are my old servants. From this day on your names will be Rupa and Sanatana. Now please give up this display of humility, for it breaks my heart. You have written me many kind and humble letters, from which I could understand all about you. In order to instruct you I sent you a verse that read: ³If a woman has a paramour she will perform her household duties even more carefully before, so that no one will know, all the while thinking of her paramour and relishing that mellow within her heart.² My only business in coming to Bengal was to see the two of you. Everyone asks why I have come to Ramakeli. No one knows that I have come here only to see you. It is well that you have come to visit me. Now you may return to your homes. Have no fear of anything: birth after birth you have been my eternal servants. I am sure that Krishna shall soon deliver you."

The Lord then blessed them by placing his hands on their heads. Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana then touched the Lord's lotus feet to their heads. When all the devotees saw the Lord's mercy upon Rupa and Sanatana they became joyful and began chanting the holy name of Hari. Many of the Lord's personal associates were there, including Nityananda, Haridasa Thakura, Srivasa Thakura, Gadadhara Pandit, Mukunda, Jagadananda, Murari, and Vakreshvara Pandit. Following the Lord's instructions, Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana touched the holy feet of all these great devotees, who became exceedingly happy and congratulated the two brothers for attaining the Lord's mercy. At this time Sri Vallabha also received the mercy of the Lord and became known as Anupama. After taking permission from the devotees there, Sri Rupa and Sanatana prepared to depart, but before doing so submitted a proposal before the Lord's lotus feet.

They said, "O Lord, although the Ruler of Bengal, Hussein Shah, has some regard for you, your mission here is now complete; thus we humbly request you to depart, lest some misfortune befall you and the devotees. The king may have some respect for you, but he is a meat-eater and a muslim and as such is naturally inimical to the cows and brahmanas. He cannot be trusted for long. It is our humble consideration that there is no need to go to Vrindavana with such a great crowd. Vrindavana is a place of simplicity and rustic beauty, not pomp and grandeur. We submit that it is best not to make a pilgrimage there with hundreds and thousands of followers. "

After speaking in this way, Sri Rupa and Sanatana offered their respects at the Lord's lotus feet and went home. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu then made up his mind



to leave that village. The following morning he left for Kanai Natashala, where he saw many of the paintings of Krishna's pastimes that were kept on display there.

That night he considered Sanatana's proposal not to go to Vrindavana with a big crowd. He thought, "If I go to Vrindavana with so many people, its mellow ambience of simplicity and rustic beauty will be ruined. I should go alone or with one other person to Vrindavana. In that way, my pilgrimage to Vrindavana will be very beautiful." Thinking in this way, the Lord returned to Jagannatha Puri.

The Caitanya Caritamrita (M.L. 19) describes how Sanatan Goswami managed to free himself from his government duties and escape from prison to join Sri Rupa in Vrindavana. On the plea of illness he left his post to study the Bhagavata with devotees and brahmanas at his home. When a doctor brought this to the Shah's attention, he went to Sanatana and demanded that he accompany him to Orissa. When Sanatana refused he was imprisoned. Sanatana Goswami made use of some money sent by Rupa Goswami and escaped by bribing his jailer. He then left for Benares to meet Caitanya Mahaprabhu. On the way Sanatana stopped at a hotel with his servant Ishan, and after realizing that the hotel keeper planned to kill them for gold in Ishan's possession, Sanatana made Ishan pay the hotel keeper his last coin, and begged his help to pass through the jungle. The hotel keeper was moved and, being the leader of the local dacoits, helped them through the jungle and over the Hazaribag mountains. Parting company with Ishan, he went on to meet his brother-in-law, Sri Kanta. Seeing that his brother had become a fugitive and a mendicant, Sri Kanta asked Sanatana to stay with him, but Sanatana refused. Upon the departure of Sanatana Goswami, Sri Kanta gave his brother-in-law a fine woolen blanket.

Finally Sanatana reached Benares and met Sri Caitanya at the house of Chandreshekhar. The Lord ordered him to shave his beard and long hair, and so Sanatana shaved his head and adopted the dress of a babaji, accepting some old cloth from Tapan Mishra. When he could understand that the Lord disapproved of a babaji in the dress of a mendicant wearing a fine and expensive woolen blanket, he traded the blanket to a brahman he met at the Ganges in exchange for a torn quilt. The Lord was pleased by Sanatana's humility and submission and instructed him for some time on the science of devotion.

At that time, he elaborated on the position of the soul in the material world and the soul's constitutional nature as an eternal servant of Krishna. He explained the different energies of Krishna - svarupa-shakti, maya-shakti, and tatastha-shakti. He described the relative positions of karma, jnana and bhakti by relating the parable of Sarvajna, the astrologer. He showed how that all scriptures have Krishna and his service as their aim.

At that time Sri Caitanya described the constitutional position of Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He discussed all the different forms, features, plenary expansions, and avatars of the Lord. He explained the spiritual worlds of Goloka and Vaikuntha, and described the Lord's opulence in Vaikuntha and his



sweetness in Vrindavana. The illusion of Brahma was discussed. After this Caitanya Mahaprabhu described the means of attaining Krishna Prema. He described the two kinds of jivas and explained how karma, jnana, and yoga divorced from bhakti are useless. He described the six kinds of surrender and showed the worthlessness of Varnashram devoid of Krishna. He spoke of the divine mercy of Krishna and explained how Krishna appears as diskha-guru, shiksha-guru, and chaitya-guru in order to enlighten the surrendered souls. He explained the development of faith, the three gradations of devotees, the twenty-six qualities of a pure Vaishnava and the three characteristic features of a true Vaishnava. Kindness as a primary feature of Vaishnavas was described, using the examples of Haridasa Thakura and Vasudeva Datta.

Mahaprabhu explained that association with sadhus is indispensable to Krsihna-bhakti and Krishna-prema, where bad association is detrimental to the growth of divine love. The meaning of surrender and self-abnegation were discussed, as were the characteristic features of a liberated soul.

At that time Mahaprabhu explained the two divisions of sadhana-bhakti: Vaidhi-Sadhana-Bhakti and Raganuga-Sadhana-Bhakti. The sixty-four branches of sadhana-bhakti were described with special emphasis on the five most important: association with devotees, chanting of the holy name, hearing Srimad-Bhagvatam, deity worship, and living in a holy place.

The nine different methods of devotion and the devotees who attained perfection in each of them were discussed. After this the internal and external development of raganuga-sadhana-bhakti was explained. After this bhava-bhakti and prema-bhakti were discussed along with the nine stages of sadhana, the characteristics of a bhava-bhakta and the characteristics of a prema-bhakta.

At this time, the Lord explained the Sixty-four qualities of Krishna, the meaning of true and false renunciation. He explained the essential importance of associating with saints and, by way of illustration, told the story of Narada and the hunter.

In this way, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu explained the transcendental position of Krishna, the nature of the jiva, the nature of devotional service, and the ultimate perfection of love of Godhead. He also explained the atmarama verse of Srimad Bhagavatam in sixty-one different ways.

After enlightening Sanatana in all the truths of bhakti, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ordered him to write books on devotional service, to establish the proper practices and behavior for devotees, to install deities and reveal the proper methods of deity worship, and to excavate the lost holy places of pilgrimage in Vrindavana.



25. Sri Sanatana Goswami, Part Two

The books of Sanatana Goswami

Among the important books compiled by Sanatana Goswami is the Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa, which explains the proper duties and correct behavior for Vaishnavas.

In the Caitanya-caritamrita, Krishna dasa Kaviraja Goswami records Mahaprabhu's instructions to Sanatana on compiling Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa.

Kaviraja Goswami writes (CC ML 29.326-345): "Folding his hands, Sanatana Goswami said, ³My Lord, you ordered me to write a directory about the activities of Vaishnavas. I am a most lowborn person. I have no knowledge of good behavior. How is it possible for me to write authorized directions about Vaishnava activities?²

Sanatana Goswami then requested the Lord, ³Please personally tell me how I can write this difficult book about Vaishnava behavior. Please manifest yourself within my heart. If you would please manifest yourself within my heart and personally direct me in writing this book, then, although I am lowborn, I may hope to be able to write it. You can do this because You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead Yourself, and whatever You direct is perfect.²

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu replied, ³Whatever you want to do you will be able to do correctly by Lord Krishna's favor. He will manifest the real purport. Because you asked me for a synopsis, please hear these few indications. In the beginning one must take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master. In your book there should be the characteristics of the bona fide guru and the bona fide disciple. Then, before accepting a spiritual master, one can be assured of the spiritual master's position. Similarly the spiritual master can also be assured of the disciple's position.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, should be described as the worshipable object, and you should consider the bija-mantra for the worship of Krishna, Rama or any other expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You should discuss the qualifications necessary for receiving a mantra, the perfection of the mantra, the purification of the mantra, initiation, morning duties, remembrance of the Supreme Lord, cleanliness, and washing the mouth and other parts of the body. In the morning one should regularly brush his teeth, take his bath, offer prayers to the Lord and offer obeisances to the spiritual master. One should render service to the spiritual master and paint one's body in twelve places with tilaka. One should stamp the holy names of the Lord on his body, or one should stamp the symbols of the Lord, such as the disc and club. After this, you should describe how one should decorate his body with gopicandana, wear neck beads, collect tulasi leaves from the tulasi tree, cleanse his cloths and the altar, cleanse one's own house or apartment and go to the temple and ring the bell just to draw the attention of Lord Krishna.



Also describe Deity worship, wherein one should offer food to Krishna at least five times daily. One should in due time place Krishna on a bed. You should also describe the process for offering arati and the worship of the Lord according to the list of five, sixteen, or fifty ingredients.

The characteristics of the Deities should be discussed as well as the characteristics of the salagrama sila. One should also discuss visiting the Deities in the temple and touring holy places like Vrindavana, Mathura and Dvaraka.

You should glorify the holy name and explain the importance of carefully giving up offenses when chanting the holy name. You should explain the symptoms of a Vaishnava and how to give up all kinds of seva-aparadha, offenses in Deity worship. The items of worship, such as water, conchshell, flowers, incense and lamp, should be described. You should also mention chanting softly, offering prayers, circumambulating, and offering obeisances. All these should be carefully studied. Other items to be considered are the method of performing purascharana, taking Krishna-prasada, giving up the eating of unoffered food and not blaspheming the Lord's devotees. One should know the symptoms of a devotee and how to associate with devotees. One should know how to satisfy the devotee by rendering service, and one should know how to give up the association of nondevotees. One should also regularly hear the recitation of Srimad-Bhagvatam.

You should describe the ritualistic duties of every day, and you should describe the fortnightly duties - especially observing Ekadashi fast, which comes every fortnight. You should also describe the duties of every month, especially the observance of ceremonies like Janmastami, Ramanavami and Nrsimha-caturdasi. You should recommend the performance of pure Ekadashi.

Whatever you say about Vaishanva behavior, the establishment of Vaishnava temples and Deities and everything else should be supported by evidence from the Puranas. You should give general and specific instructions of the behavior and activities of a Vaishnava. You should outline things that are to be done and things that are not to be done. All this should be described as regulations and etiquette. I have thus given a synopsis of the Vaishanva regulative principles. I have given this in brief just to give you a little direction. When you write on this subject, Krishna will help you by spiritually awakening you."

Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa is based on notes collected by Gopal Bhatta Goswami and is known as a vaishnava smriti. If one examines its content, one will see that its content closely conforms to the instructions given Sanatana Goswami by Sri Caitanya.

Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami summarizes its contents as follows:

This vaishnava-smriti-grantha was finished in twenty chapters, known as vilasas. In the first vilasa there is a description of how a relationship is established between the spiritual master and the disciple, and mantras are explained.



In the second vilasa, the process of initiation is described.

In the third vilasa, the methods of Vaishanva behavior are given, with emphasis on cleanliness, constant remembrance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the chanting of the mantras given by the initiating spiritual master.

In the fourth vilasa are descriptions of samskara, the reformatory method; tilaka, the application of twelve tilakas on twelve places of the body; mudra, marks on the body; mala, chanting with beads; and guru-puja, worship of the spiritual master.

In the fifth vilasa, one is instructed on how to make a place to sit for meditation, and there are descriptions of breathing exercises, meditation and worship of the salagram-sila representation of Lord Vishnu.

In the sixth vilasa, the required practices for inviting the transcendental form of the Lord and bathing Him are given.

In the seventh vilasa, one is instructed on how to collect flowers used for the worship of Lord Vishnu.

In the eighth vilasa, there is a description of the Deity and instructions on how to set up incense, light lamps, make offerings, dance, play music, beat drums, garland the Deity, offer prayers and obeisances and counteract offenses.

In the ninth vilasa, there are descriptions of the devotees of the Lord (Vaishnavasa or saintly persons).

In the eleventh vilasa, there are elaborate descriptions of Deity worship and the glories of the holy name of the Lord. One is instructed on how to chant the holy name of the Deity, and there are discussions about offenses committed while chanting the holy name, along with methods for getting relief from such offenses. There are also descriptions of the glories of devotional service and the surrendering process.

In the twelfth vilasa, Ekadashi is described.

In the thirteenth vilasa, fasting is discussed, as well as observance of the Mahadvadashi ceremony.

In the fourteenth vilasa, different duties for different months are outlined.

In the fifteenth vilasa, there are instructions on how to observe Ekadashi fasting without even drinking water. There are also descriptions of branding the body with the symbols of Vishnu, and discussions of Caturmasya observations during the rainy season, and discussions of Janmasthami, Parsviakadashi, Shravana-dvadashi, Rama-navami, and Vijayi-dashami.



The sixteenth vilasa discusses duties to be observed in the month of Karttika (October-November), or the Damodara month, or Urja, when lamps are offered in the Deity room or above the temple. There are also descriptions of the Govardhana-puja and Ratha-yatra.

The seventeenth vilasa discusses preparations for Deity worship, maha-mantra chanting and the process of japa.

In the eighteenth vilasa the different forms of Sri Vishnu are described.

The nineteenth vilasa discusses the establishment of the Deity and the rituals observed in bathing the Deity before installation.

The twentieth vilasa discusses the construction of temples, referring to those constructed by the great devotees.

Sri Santana Goswami's commentary on Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa is called the Dig-Darhsini-Tika. Sri A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada writes of Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa: "Another famous book by Sanatana Goswami is the Hari-bhakti-vilasa, which states the rules and regulations for all divisions of Vaishnavas, namely Vaishnava householders, Vaishnava brahmacaris, Vaishnava vanaprasthas and Vaishnava sannyasis." Srila Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada notes, "This book was especially written, however, for Vaishnava householders."

Among the most important books compiled by Sanatana Goswami is the Brihad-Bhagavatamritam. Whereas the Hari-Bhakti-Vilas expands on Mahaprabhu's teachings to Sanatana regarding Vaishnava behavior and ritual, Brihad-Bhagavatamrita analyses the ontology and metaphysics of Mahaprabhu's teachings.

In Brihad-Bhagavatamritam, Sanatana Goswami records the conversation that took place between Pariksit Maharaja and his mother Uttara after he had heard the Bhagavata from Shukadeva. She asks him to explain the gist of the Bhagavatam, and Pariksit Maharaja begins by telling the story of Narada's search for the most fortunate and intimate devotee of Krishna. This part of the conversation reveals the gradation of intimacy in devotional service. Progressing from those devotees whose bhakti is mixed with karma (Brahma) and jnana (Shiva), Narada progresses to shanta-rasa (Prahlada) dasya-rasa (Hanuman) sakhya-rasa (Arjuna) and finally to Krishna's dearest devotee Uddhava, who aspires for a position in Vrindavana and who reveals the love of the gopis for Krishna as the last word in bhakti.

Part Two of Brihad-Bhagavatamrita reveals the story of gopa-kumara, an errant cowherd boy who, having received mantra initiation from a resident of Vrindavana, passes through one planetary system after the next, exploring different levels of consciousness in a spiritual odyssey that takes him from earth, through the heavenly planets to Brahmaloaka, Viraja, the brahmajyoti, Shivaloka, Vaikuntha, Ayodhya, Dwarka, Mathura, and finally Goloka, where he realizes his eternal position in the pastimes of Krishna in sakhya rasa.



In Brihad-Bhagavatamritam there are descriptions of devotees, intimate devotees, most intimate devotees and complete devotees. About this book, Sri A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada writes (CC Adi 5.203), "Sri Santana Goswami Prabhu, the teacher of the science of devotional service, wrote several books, of which the Brihad-Bhagavatamrita is very famous; anyone who wants to know about the subject matter of devotees, devotional service and Krishna must read this book."

According to Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami, "The second part describes the glories of the spiritual world, known as Goloka-mahatmya-nirupana, as well as the process of renunciation of the material world. It also describes real knowledge, devotional service, the spiritual world, love of Godhead, attainment of life's destination and the bliss of the spiritual world. In this way there are seven chapters in each part, fourteen chapters in all."

Sanatana Goswami Prabhu also represents the teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in his commentary on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Of this commentary, Sri Bhaktivedanta Swami writes, "Dasama-tippani is a commentary on the Tenth Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Another name for this commentary is Brihad-vaishnavatoshani-tika. In the Bhakti Ratnakara it is said that Dasama-tippani was finished in 1476 Sakabda...Sanatana Goswami gave his [Brihad] Vaishanva-tosani commentary to Srila Jiva Goswami for editing, and Srila Jiva Goswami edited this under the name of Laghu-tosani. Whatever he immediately put down in writing was finished in the year 1476 Saka. Jiva Goswami completed Laghu-tosani in the year Sakabda 1504. Sanatana Goswami also composed Krishna-lila-stava which is known as Dashama-charit and describes the pastimes of Krishna up to Mathura."

Elsewhere (CC Adi 5.203) Srila Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada writes of Dasama-tippani, "Sanatana Goswami also wrote a special commentary on the Tenth Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam known as the Dasama-tippani, which is so excellent that by reading it one can understand very deeply the pastimes of Krsna in His exchanges of loving activities."

After meeting with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and receiving the instructions that would form the basis for the scriptures he would later compile, Sanatana Goswami went to Vrindavana by the main road, and when he reached Vrindavana he met Subuddhi Raya. When he arrived in Vrindavana, he found that Rupa Goswami had already left. He then went to Jagannatha Puri through Jharikhanda, the Uttara Pradesh jungle. After contracting a skin disease he felt to be offensive to the Lord's touch, he decided to give up his life by falling beneath the wheels of the Jaganatha Ratha-Yatra cart, but Caitanya Mahaprabhu expressed his disapproval of suicide and saved Sanatana through his mercy. Later Sanatana Goswami met Haridasa Thakura and heard from him of the disappearance of his brother Anupama.

The Caitanya Caritamrita records how, while in Jagannatha Puri, Sanatana Goswami described the glories of Haridasa Thakura. When Jagadananda Pandit granted Sanatana permission to leave for Vrindavana, Sri Caitanya disapproved,



and glorified the qualities of Sanatana Goswami, ordering Sanatana Goswami to remain in Jagannatha Puri for a year.

Later, when Jagadananda Pandit went to Vrindavana, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu put him under the guidance of Sanatana Goswami. At that time, Jagadananda Pandit became angry with Sanatana for wearing a turban made from a piece of red cloth given him by a sannyasi other than Sri Caitanya, but was pacified by Sanatana's deep devotion. (At that time, Sanatana remarked that red cloth is unfit for Gaudiya Vaishnava Sannyasis, since it is worn by the Mayavadi followers of Shankaracarya's impersonal school. Since that time, out of respect for the words of Sanatana Goswami, Gaudiya Vaishnava Sannyasis have adopted the color saffron for the dress of renunciation.) When Sanatana Goswami finally returned to Vrindavana, he was reunited with Rupa Goswami, and the two of them remained there to execute the orders of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Sanatana Goswami and Madana Mohan

The Bhakti-Ratnakara describes how Sanatana began the worship of his Madana-Mohan deity. Among Mahaprabhu's orders to Sanatana was his instruction to establish the worship of the Deity of Krishna. The Bhakti Ratnakara describes how Sri Sanatana Goswami, when he was staying in Vrindavana, began the worship of Sri Madana-Mohan.

In Mahavana, nearby Krishna's birthplace in Vrindavana, Sanatana Goswami made a hut of grass. There he would perform his daily bhajan. One day, as he went out begging, he came to a small village on the banks of the Yamuna. At that time Madana Mohana Deva was playing on the side of the river with some small gopa boys. When he saw Sanatana, he cried out, "O Father! Baba!" With this, he came running after Sanatana Goswami and grabbed hold of his hand, saying, "Take me with you. I want to go with you."

"Little boy, why do you want to go with me?"

"I want to stay with you."

"If you stay with me, what will you eat?"

"What do you eat?"

"Only some dry chapatis and coarse rice."

"Then I will also eat that, Baba."

"Even if you could eat like that, you can't stay with me. You must stay with your mother and father."

"But, Baba! I want to stay with you."



Making the boy understand his wishes, Sanatana sent him home, and then continued his begging rounds.

That night, the boy appeared to him in a dream. In the dream, the boy was laughing again and again. He took hold of Sanatana's hand and told him, "Baba! My name is Madana Mohana. Tomorrow I shall come to you."

Saying this, Madana Mohana disappeared, and with this Sanatana awoke. He was so overcome by ecstasy that he felt as if his soul had been stolen from his body. He thought, "What have I seen? I have never seen such a beautiful boy."

His mind was filled with remembrance of Sri Hari. When he opened the door to his kutir, he found that standing in the doorway was a wonderful murti of Sri Madana Mohana. That deity was so beautiful that it filled the four directions with its effulgence.

Sanatana Goswami was stunned for some time, but after a while, he came to his senses, and at that time, his eyes filled with tears of ecstasy which gradually wet the earth beneath him. After this, he began the worship of the deity by performing an abhisheka ceremony. When Rupa Goswami saw that wonderful deity, he was filled with prema.

Sri Sanatana used to serve that deity in his own humble grass hut. Sri Rupa Goswami sent word of these auspicious events to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Jagannatha Puri by messenger.

After begging all day, Sri Sanatana Goswami would return to his grass hut in the evening and offer some dry chapatis to his deity, Madana-Gopala. Sometimes he would also prepare some shak or other vegetables to go with it. In any case, he would never prepare any vegetables with oil or salt. Most of the time he could only offer chapatis. As a result, Sanatana would become sorrowful, thinking himself unfit to properly worship the deity. But he couldn't afford it, because Caitanya Mahaprabhu had given him a service: to compose devotional scriptures. At the same time he had to spend all day collecting alms. When could he find the time to go out and beg for oil and salt? Sri Sanatana Goswami's mind was filled with grief. As Paramatma, the Lord knew Sanatana's mind. Madana Mohana thought to himself, "I am eating dry chapatis, and Sanatana's mind is very unhappy as a result. He wants to serve me in royal style. As a result he feels that his service is of no use."

At that time there was a wealthy merchant of the kshatriya caste named Sri Krishna Dasa Kapoor. He was on his way to Mathura to do some business. He was coming down the Yamuna in a big boat. When his boat became stuck on a sandbar, and he could see no way to continue, he began to think "What can we do now?"

At that time Krishna Dasa Kapoor heard from the local people that there was a big sadhu living in Vrindavana who could help. His name was Sanatana Goswami. When Krishna Dasa Kapoor came to see him, Sanatana was sitting in his hut,



writing, wearing only a loincloth, his body lean from austerity and renunciation. Sanatana offered his visitor a grass mat as a seat, and touching Krishna Dasa Kapoor with his hand, bade him sit.

At this, Krishna Dasa Kapoor said, "Baba! Give me your mercy."

Sanatana said, "I am only a beggar. What kind of mercy can I give you?"

"I only pray for your blessings. My boat is stuck on a sandbar in the Yamuna river and I can see no way to free it."

"I know nothing about it. Explain it all to Madana Mohana."

Krishna Dasa Kapoor offered his dandavats before the Madana Mohana deity and said, "O Madana Mohana Dev! If you give me your mercy and free my boat, then whatever profit I make from this business I will give it to you for your seva."

With this prayer, Kapoor asked permission to leave.

That day a big storm came and rain poured from the heavens, raising the level of the Yamuna's waters. As the waters grew higher and higher, Kapoor's boat was freed from the sandbar and began making its way down the Yamuna. Krishna Dasa Kapoor could understand that this was all the mercy of Madana Mohana. He had made a handsome profit on his cargo, and donated it all to build a lavish temple for Sri Madana Mohana, including a bhogashala where first-class edibles could be stored for the pleasure of the Lord.

From that time on, Madana Mohana was served in royal style. Seeing this royal service of Madana Mohana, Sanatana Goswami became very happy. Soon after this, Sanatana Goswami accepted Krishna Dasa Kapoor as his disciple and gave him initiation.

The Madana Mohan temple still stands today, and is an important place of pilgrimage for all Gaudiya Vaishnavas.

In discussing the importance of the Madana Mohan Deity, Bhaktivedanta Swami writes, "Srila Sanatana Goswami is the ideal spiritual master, for he delivers one the shelter of the lotus feet of Madana Mohana. Even though one may be unable to travel on the field of Vrindavana due to forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he can get an adequate opportunity to stay in Vrindavana and derive all spiritual benefits by the mercy of Sanatana Goswami."

Similarly, Krishna Dasa Kaviraj Goswami prays,

*jayatam suratau pangor
mama manda-mater gati*



*mat-sarvasva-padambhojau
radha-madana-mohanau*

"Glory to the all merciful Radha-Madana-Mohana! I am lame and ill-advised, yet they are my directors, and Their lotus feet are everything to me."

Kaviraja Goswami also says, "These three Deities of Vrindavana (Madana-mohana, the Deity of Sanatana Goswami, Govinda, the deity of Rupa Goswami, and Gopinatha, the Deity of Raghunatha Dasa Goswami) have absorbed the heart and soul of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, (followers of Lord Chaitanya). I worship their lotus feet, for they are the Lords of my heart." (CC AL 1.19)

Translating the commentary of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami writes: "The author of Sri Caitanya Caritamrita offers his respectful obeisances unto the three Deities of Vrindavana named Sri Radha-Madana-Mohana, Sri Radha-Govinda-Deva, and Sri Radha-Gopinathaji. These three Deities are the life and soul of the Bengali Vaishnavas, or Gaudiya Vaishnavas, who have a natural aptitude for residing in Vrindavana.

The Gaudiya Vaishnavas who follow strictly in the line of Sri Caitanya Mahrapabhu worship the Divinity by chanting transcendental sounds meant to develop a sense of one's transcendental relationship with the Supreme Lord, a reciprocation of mellows (rasas) of mutual affection, and ultimately, the achievement of the desired success in loving service. These three Deities are worshiped in three different stages of one's development. The followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu scrupulously follow these principles of approach.

Gaudiya Vaishnavas perceive the ultimate objective in Vedic hymns composed of eighteen transcendental letters that adore Krishna as Madana-Mohan, Govinda, and Gopijanavallabha.

Madana-Mohana is He who charms Cupid, the god of love, Govinda is He who pleases the senses and the cows, and Gopijanavallabha is the transcendental lover of the gopis. Krishna Himself is called Madana-Mohana, Govinda, Gopijanavallabha and countless other names as He plays in His different pastimes with His devotees.

The three Deities - Madana-Mohana, Govinda, and Gopijanavallabha - have very specific qualities. Worship of Madana-Mohana is on the platform of reestablishing our forgotten relationship with the Personality of Godhead. In the beginning of our spiritual life we must worship Madana-Mohana so that He may attract us and nullify our attachment for material sense gratification. This relationship with Madana-Mohana is necessary for neophyte devotees. When one wishes to render service to the Lord with strong attachment, one then worships Govinda on the platform of transcendental service. Govinda is the reservoir of all pleasures. When by the grace of Krishna and the other devotees one reaches perfection in devotional service, he can appreciate Krishna as Gopijanavallabha [Gopinatha], the pleasure Deity of the damsels of Vraja.



Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu explained this mode of devotional service in three stages, and therefore these worshipable Deities were installed in Vrindavana by different Goswamis. They are very dear to the Gaudiya Vaishnavas there, who visit the temples at least once a day."

Bhaktivedanta Swami gives further understanding on this subject in his introduction to the Caitanya Caritamrita: "In Caitanya Caritamrita, Krishnadas first offers his obeisances to Madana-mohana-vigraha (Santana Goswami's Deity), the Deity who can help us progress in Krishna consciousness. In the execution of Krishna consciousness, our first business is to know Krishna and our relationship with Him. To know Krishna is to know one's self and to know one's self is to know one's relationship with Him. Since this relationship can be learned by worshipping Madana-mohana-vigraha, Krishnadas Kaviraj first establishes his relationship with Him.

When this is established, Krishnadas begins to worship the functional Deity, Govinda (Rupa Goswami's Deity).

Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami maintains that the Radha and Krishna Deities (Radha-Govinda) show us how to serve Radha and Krishna. The Madana-mohana Deities simply establish that ³I am your eternal servant.² With Govinda, however, there is actual acceptance of service, and therefore he is called the functional Deity.

The Gopinatha Deity is Krishna as master and proprietor of the gopis. He attracted all the gopis or cowherd girls by the sound of his flute, and when they came, he dance with them... Krishna is therefore called Gopinatha because He is the beloved master of the gopis."

This progression - Krishna or Madana-Mohana, Radha-Govinda, Radha-Gopinatha - is also found in the three key words of the eighteen syllable Krishna gayatri. This is explained in Jiva Goswami's remarks on the Gayatri mantram, found in his commentary on the Brahma-Samhita which is translated by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura.

There, Jiva Goswami explains that the mantram has six elements, and that "Krishnaya," in the mantram refers to Krishna-svarupa, or in Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's language, "the proper self of Krishna." (Madana-Mohana).

The second element in the mantram, or the second aspect of Krishna to be revealed (Govinda) is "krishnasya chinmaya vraja-lila-avilasa-svarupa": "the true nature of Krishna's pastimes in Vrindavana."

The third aspect of Krishna is Gopijanavallabha, (Gopinatha) Krishna who is dear to the gopis.

It is therefore said that in the mantram "Klim Krishnaya, Govindaya, Gopijanavallabhaya, etc...", "Krishnaya" is Madana-Mohana, the first object of



worship represented in sambandha-jnana, whose acharya is Sri Sanatana Goswami. "Govindaya" is the Lord who is surrounded by his intimate serving group. Because Govinda accepts one's service, He is the deity of abidheya-tattva, whose acharya is Rupa Goswami. "Gopijanavallabhaya" in the mantram refers to Gopinatha, the master of the great rasa dance in which all the gopis take part. This represents the ultimate goal, or prayojana, whose acharya is Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, the acharya of the highest goal of life, accepts the lotus feet of Sri Rupa (the abidheya acharya) as his highest aspiration and thus shows us the path to the highest goal. Rupa Goswami in his turn always offers his respects to Sanatana Goswami (the sambandha acharya), whom he considered to be his spiritual master.

In his commentary on the talks between Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Ramananda Raya, Bhaktivinoda Thakura elaborates further on this theme. Bhaktivedanta Swami translates his commentary as follows: "In the mantra: klim kamadevaya vidmahe pushpabanaya dhimahi tan no nangan prachodayat, Krishna is called Kamadeva or Madana-mohana, the Deity who establishes our relationship with Krishna. Govinda, or pushpa-bana, who carries an arrow made of flowers, is the Personality of Godhead who accepts our devotional service. Ananaga or Gopijanavallabha, satisfies all the gopis and is the ultimate goal of life."

Bhaktivinoda Thakura, in his Anubhashya commentary on Caitanya Caritamrita, further explains this version on the basis of Jiva Goswami's comments on the Brahma-samhita verse: atha venuninadasya trayimurtimayi gatih, sphuranti praviveshashu mukhabjani sarojajah. This verse describes how the flutesong of Sri Krishna was heard by Brahma as the Gayatri mantram.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura translates "trayimurti gatih" to mean that the gayatri is "the mother of the three Vedas."

Bhaktivinoda explains that in this verse, the words "trayimurti gatih" means that the sound emanating from the flutesong of Sri Krishna, or Gayatri is the basis of sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana. He says that "trimurtimayi" also indicates the three murtis Madana-Mohana, Govinda, and Gopinatha. Upon hearing this sound, Brahma became initiated as a twice-born, and became acquainted with the ocean of truth (sambandha, abhidheya, prayojana), after which he uttered the famous "Govinda" prayers beginning with "chintamani prakara-sadmasu."

Bhaktivinoda Thakura supports this view by quoting at length from Brahma-Samhita, Jiva Goswami's commentary, Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura, and the Gopal Tappani Upanishad, which all corroborate the above version.

It is clear from the above that Sanatana Goswami occupies a special position in the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya. He is the acharya of sambandha-jnana, or knowledge of our proper devotional relationship with Krishna. Moreover his deity, Madana-Mohana, helps us to overcome the influence of the senses and fix our minds in devotional service.



Sanatana Goswami's literatures are a storehouse of nectar. His personal example of humility is beyond description. He is an intimate associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krishna, and the guru of Srila Rupa Goswami. Let us all pray for the shelter of his lotus feet.



26. Sri Sanatana Goswami, Part Three

Radharani appears to Sri Sanatana

In Bhakti-Ratnakara, it is written that one day Sanatana Goswami went to Radha-Kunda to see Sri Rupa and Sri Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. When they saw Sanatana approaching, they rose to offer him respect, and then offered him a seat. With this, the three of them began an ishta-gosthi, a discussion about Krishna. Sri Rupa Goswami had written a Stotram to Radharani called "Chatu-Pushpanjali" - an offering of four flowers. Sri Sanatana Goswami read the verses, and was struck by one in particular:

*navagorochana gauri, pravarendi varamvaram,
manistavaka-vidyoti-veni-vyalangana-phanam*

"O Vrindabaneshvari! I offer my respects unto you. Because your complexion is like newly molten gold, you are known as Gaurangi. Your dress is beautiful like that of a blue lotus. Your long braid of hair resembles a black serpent decorated with jewels."

When Sanatana saw the line, "Your braided hair resembles a black serpent..." he thought about this comparison and said, "Is this a logical or reasonable metaphor? To compare Radharani's hair to a serpent?"

That afternoon Sri Sanatana went to Radha Kunda to take his bath. After offering different reverential prayers to the Radha Kunda, he took his bath there. At that time, a little distance from the Kunda, he could see some gopi boys and girls playing, at the foot of some trees. As he glanced in their direction, he could just make out that right behind the head of one of the girls was what might have been a long, black, dangling braid, but looked to Sanatana Goswami much more like a deadly snake, swaying back and forth as if ready to strike.

At that time he called out, "O young girl! Be careful: there is a snake creeping up on your back!" The young girl, caught up in the joy of her playing, took no notice. Apparently she couldn't hear him. Thereupon he went running up to her and saw that the girl was none other than Sri Radha Thakurani. When the gopas and gopis saw him, they burst out laughing. They laughed and laughed for some time without stopping. Sri Sanatana Goswami was struck dumb. After this, he could understand the logic of Sri Rupa Goswami's metaphor.

Krishna brings milk

The Bhakti Ratnakara records how once Sri Sanatana Goswami was alone in the forest on the banks of the Pavana Sarovara performing his bhajan in a secluded place. He had been fasting from food and drink. As he is the supersoul in all living beings, the Lord could understand everything. He thought, "My devotee is starving. I cannot tolerate this."



In the dress of a gopa, Krishna entered the forest where Sanatana was staying, carrying a pot of milk. He came before Sanatana and said, "Baba! I have brought you some milk."

Sanatana said, "Why have you brought me milk?"

"You are not eating properly, that's why."

"How did you know that I am not eating anything?"

"Many gopas have come and gone by here. They told me you have not been eating."

"Why didn't they come?"

"They have much work at home, so they sent me."

"You are such a little boy, why have you taken so much trouble for me?"

"No, no, father. It is no trouble at all."

Taking the pot of milk, Sanatana said, "Sit down, little boy. I will finish the milk and give you back your pot."

"No baba. I cannot sit with you. I have to milk the cows. I will come and fetch the pot tomorrow."

Saying this, the boy vanished, and Sri Sanatana became speechless. He could understand that all this was the work of Krishna. He began to drown in the tears that poured from his eyes as he drank the milk. From that day on he ate by practicing madhukari, or only accepting a tiny bit from many different residents of Vrindavana. Gradually the residents of Vrindavana built him a kutir so that he could stay there.

Accepting Service from Sri Radha

One day Sri Rupa Goswami wanted to prepare some sweet rice for Sanatana Goswami, but didn't have the necessary provisions for making sweet rice in his kutir. At that time, she who brings about the fulfillment of the inner aspiration of devotees, Srimati Radha Thakurani, could understand everything. And so, in the dress of a young gopi girl she brought milk, rice, and sugar to Rupa Goswami, saying, "Swamiji! Swamiji! I have brought you a gift of uncooked rice. Please accept it."

Hearing the words of the young girl, Sri Rupa Goswami opened the door to his hut and looked out. There he saw a beautiful young gopi maiden with some offerings of food. Rupa Goswami said, "Little girl! Why have you come here?"



"Swamiji! I have only brought you some simple uncooked food."

"Why have you taken such trouble for me?"

"Baba! What trouble? I have only come to render a humble service to a saintly person."

Accepting the offering of milk, sugar and uncooked rice, Rupa Goswami said, "Young girl please take your seat, while I put these things away." The girl said, "I'm sorry, but I have some work to do."

Saying this, the girl disappeared. When Rupa Goswami turned around and saw that she had gone, he was very bewildered by all this. At length, he prepared the sweet rice and offered the bhoga to his deity, Govindadeva. After some time, he gave the prasada to Sanatana Goswami, who had just arrived. While honoring prasada, Sanatana Goswami experienced an unusual and enchanting kind of joy.

He asked Sri Rupa, "Where did you get this milk and rice from?"

Rupa Goswami said, "A young gopi girl came by and gave it to me."

Sanatana said, "A young girl just came by all of a sudden and gave you this milk and rice?"

Rupa Goswami replied, "Yes, she just came by all of a sudden. The strange thing is, I was just thinking, ³How can I make some sweet rice for Sanatana² and she just appeared, as if by magic, with this milk and rice and some sugar."

Hearing this, tears of prema began falling from the eyes of Sanatana Goswami. He said, "Can't you recognize something when it is right before your eyes? It was Sri Radha Thakurani Herself who has brought you milk and rice. By accepting service from Her we are ruined. Now we shall never attain our desired goal." And in this way, Sanatana Goswami continually condemned himself again and again for having accepted service from that person whom he most aspired to serve: Sri Radha Thakurani. This pastime of Sri Sanatana Goswami is recorded in the Bhakti Ratnakara.

The Bhakti-Ratnakara also records how, every day, Sri Sanatana Goswami would make the four mile pilgrimage around Govardhan hill, but because of his old age this was very troublesome. Still, he did not want to break his religious principles by not circumambulating Govardhan hill. And so he would suffer great physical hardship while circumambulating Govardhan.

The Lord knows everything and thus could understand the pain his devotee Sanatana was experiencing. He decided to do something about this. One day, a little gopa boy came to Sanatana and said, "Baba! You are old. Don't go to such trouble to walk around Govardhan hill."



Sanatana said, "This is one of the regular principles of my bhajan - I must maintain it."

The boy said, "Since you are old, you may give now up this rule."

Sanatana said, "I will never give up my religious principles."

Krishna then told him, "Baba! Won't you honor my words?"

Sanatana said, "If it is honorable, then I shall honor it."

At that time Krishna presented Sanatana Goswami with a shila, a stone, bearing the mark of his own lotus feet, and said: "This is Govardhan-shila, a piece of stone from Govardhan itself."

Sanatana said, "What shall I do with it?"

Sri Krishna said, "If you circumambulate this Govardhan-shila, your vow of walking all the way around Govardhan hill every day will remain intact, for by circumambulating this, you circumambulate Govardhan Hill. You will thereby get the same result, keep your vow intact, and not compromise your religious principles."

Sri Sanatana Goswami was silenced. He could understand that Giriraja himself had given him this shila. From that day forward, he used to circumambulate the Govardhan-shila marked with the divine marks of the lotus feet of Sri Krishna.

Following the orders of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Goswami did not climb Govardhana hill because they considered it nondifferent from Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. On some pretext, the Gopal deity granted Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu an audience beneath the hill, and Gopala similarly favored Srila Rupa and Sanatana Goswami. During his ripe old age, when Rupa Goswami could not go to Govardhan Hill because of invalidity, Gopala kindly went to Mathura and remained at the temple of Vithaleshavara for one month. It was then that Srila Rupa Goswami could see Gopala's beauty to his heart's content.

The activities of Srila Rupa and Sanatana Goswami while they resided in Vrindavana are described by Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami in the Caitanya Caritamrita (CC ML 19.128 - 132) as follows: "The brothers actually have no fixed residence. They reside beneath trees - one night under one tree and the next night under another. Srila Rupa and Sanatana Goswami beg a little food from the houses of brahmanas. Giving up all kinds of material enjoyment, they only take some dry bread and fried chick-peas. They carry only waterpots, and they wear torn quilts. They always chant the holy names of Krishna and discuss his pastimes. In great jubilation, they also dance. They engage almost twenty-four hours daily in rendering service to the Lord. They usually sleep only an hour and a half, and some days, when they continuously chant the Lord's holy name, they do not sleep at all. Sometimes they write transcendental literatures about devotional service, and sometimes they hear about Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and spend their time thinking about the Lord. When the personal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu would hear of the activities of Rupa and Santana Goswami, they would say, ³What is wonderful for a person who has been granted the Lord's mercy?²"



27. Sri Sita Thakurani

Sri Sita Thakurani is to be worshiped just as much as Sacidevi herself, as the mother of the universe. She is the eternal wife of Sri Advaita Acharya. She was the daughter of Sri Nrishinga Baduri. She was married to Sri Advaita Acharya in Phuliya Nagara.

After their wedding, Advaita Acharya went to Nadiya, to live in Shantipura. Sita Thakurani was always absorbed in vatsalya prema for Sri Gaurasundara Prabhu, and, out of parental concern used to instruct Jagannatha Mishra on how to care for the boy. Sri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Goswami has described the birth celebration at the house of Jagannatha Mishra upon the advent of the Lord, giving special attention to the position of Sri Sita Thakurani. Advaita Acharya's wife, worshipable by all the three worlds was Sita Thakurani. Taking the Acharya's orders on her head, she had come to take a look at this new child, this jewel of jewels, and to offer him presents.

On the eve of his son's advent Sri Jagannatha Mishra, seeing the imminent signs of his child's arrival, sent word to Advaita Acharya in Shantipura that the long-awaited child was being born. Hearing news of the advent of this unprecedented child, Advaita Acharya floated in the waves of ecstasy. With Sri Haridasa Thakura, he went to bathe in the river, and, after much dancing and song, he sent his wife to go quickly to Mayapura in Navadvipa.

According to Gaura-Ganodesha-Dipika, Sri Sita Thakurani is Yogamaya. The Gaura-Parshada-Charitvali says that in Krishna Lila, she was Purnamasi, the mother of Sandipani Muni, grandmother of Madhumangal and Nandimukhi and a disciple of Narada Muni. (Gaura-Ganodesha-Dipika, however, says that Purnamasi in Krishna-lila became Sri Govinda Acharya in Chaitanya lila.)

In Dvapara-yuga, during the celebration of Krishna's birth ceremony, she was present in the house of Nanda, and at that time gave Nanda and Yashoda many instructions on how to care for the child. The Caitanya-Caritamrita gives the following account of Sita Thakurani's visit to the house of Jagannatha Mishra after the birth of the Lord:

"One day, shortly after Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was born, Advaita Acharya's wife, Sitadevi, who is worshipable by the whole world, taking permission of her husband, went to see that topmost child with all kinds of gifts and presents. She brought different kinds of golden ornaments, including bangles for the hand, armlets, necklaces, and anklets. There were also tiger nails set in gold, waist decorations of silk and lace, ornaments for the hands and legs, nicely printed silken saris and a child's garment, also made of silk. Many other riches, including gold and silver coins, were also presented for the child.

Riding in a palanquin covered with cloth and accompanied by maidservants, Sita Thakurani came to the house of Jagannatha Mishra, bringing with her many



auspicious articles such as fresh grass, paddy, gorocana, turmeric, kunkuma, and sandalwood. All these presentations filled a big basket. When Sita Thakurani came to the house of Sacidevi, bringing with her many kinds of eatables, dresses, and other gifts, she was astonished to see the newly born child, for she appreciated that except for a difference in color, the child was directly Krishna of Gokula Himself.

Seeing the transcendental bodily effulgence of the child, each of His nicely constructed limbs full of auspicious signs and resembling a form of gold, Sita Thakurani was very much pleased, and because of her maternal affection, she felt as if her heart were melting. She blessed the newly born child by placing fresh grass and paddy on His head and saying, "May You be blessed with a long duration of life." But being afraid of ghosts and witches, she gave the child the name Nimai. On the day that the mother and son took bath and left the maternity room, Sita Thakurani gave them all kinds of ornaments and garments, and then also honored Jagannatha Mishra. Then Sita Thakurani, being honored by mother Sacidevi and Jagannatha Mishra, was greatly happy within her mind, and thus she returned home."

From that day on, Sita Thakurani would often come to Mayapura from Shantipura, in order to teach Sacimata how to care for the new baby. She would give her many different instructions on how to raise children. And after helping with the child in this way, she would return to Shantipura. When it came time for the child's birthday ceremony, Jagannatha Mishra and Sacidevi let the worshipable Sita Thakurani be the first to offer the child his new clothes.

Advaita Acharya Prabhu also had a house in Navadvipa. There he would live from time to time and discuss Krishna-katha with the devotees headed by Srivasa, diving and surfacing in the waves of joy until the break of dawn. After Sri Gaurasundara's appearance, all the devotees prayed together with Sri Advaita Acharya and Sita Thakurani that the child might live long in Mayapura and have good fortune.

Sita Thakurani and Sacidevi were of one mind; the baby Nimai was their life and soul. Every day Sita Thakurani would go to the house of Sacidevi and help her with the care and nurturing of the boy. In the house of Jagannatha Mishra, the divine child increased the pleasure of the eyes and minds of all the devotees, just as the waxing moon gradually grows more brilliant with each passing day.

After several years, when Jagannatha Mishra's son Vishvarupa - Nimai's older brother - had grown up, he suddenly took sannyasa. The grief and agony of Jagannatha Mishra and Sacidevi upon their son's leaving was great. Gaurasundara was also dismayed and unhappy at his brother's separation. At that time Advaita Acharya and Sita Thakurani consoled Jagannatha Mishra and Sita Thakurani, and helped take care of Nimai.



Srivasa Pandit's wife Malini Devi also was always very affectionate towards the child, nurturing him and caring for him. She and Sacidevi were of one mind in doing this.

After exhibiting his childhood pastimes, Nimai gradually progressed into his Kishora-lila, or pastimes of youth. After some time, he went to Gaya and revealed his true form and real purpose. Having returned from Gaya he gathered all the devotees at the house of Srivasa Angan for the purpose of beginning kirtan. At that time, Advaita Acharya brought Sita Thakurani from Shantipura to Mayapura, and, having arrived there was the first to worship the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya.

Gradually Sri Gaurasundara began, in Navadwipa, to unfold his kirtan pastimes, wishing to deliver the fallen souls. As time went by he took sannyasa and turned his face towards Vrindavana, and ran off, half mad into the jungle in search for Sri Krishna. Upon hearing this, Sri Sita Thakurani spent four days with Sacidevi, who, plunged in the darkness of separation as if the sun had left the sky forever, lay fallen on the ground like one near death.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, being bound by the ropes of love, was unable to go to Vrindavana, but was drawn to return to Shantipura. When he arrived in Shantipura, Advaita Acharya and Sita Thakurani felt as if their life has returned. After having fasted for four days, Sri Gaurasundara accepted prasada cooked by the hand of Sita Thakurani.

Previous to taking sannyasa also, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu along with Nityananda Prabhu would, from time to time go to the house of Advaita in Shantipura, where they would have a festival and perform Krishna-nama-lila-kirtan all day and all night. The beautiful nature of this subject has been described by Sri Parameshvari Dasa Thakura in his Sri Pada Kalpataru as follows:

One day the Lord laughed, having arrived in the temple of Sri Advaita and thus the son of Saci took his seat. Along with Nityananda, Advaita sat down, and the two of them began playfully assessing the idea of having a festival. Hearing all this, Sita Thakurani entered smiling. At that time, in sweet words which made the minds of those who heard them blissful, the son of Saci ruled that there must be a great festival. He said, "Listen Sita Thakurani: we shall extend invitations to all the different Vaishnavas who live nearby. Let whoever hears the sound of our song, resounding through the air, come and join us. We shall invite one and all."

Saying this, Sri Gaurachandra gave orders to the devotees saying,

"You, invite the Vaishnavas."

"You, ready the mridanga and karatalas."

"You, prepare sandalwood and aguru for distribution."

"Have everything ready at the ghat."



"Carrying out these assignments expertly, and after garlanding the devotees with flower garlands, the devotees shall gather together in a circle for an uproarious kirtan."

Hearing the words of Mahaprabhu, the devotees followed his orders with great affection, collecting garlands, sandalwood, betel, ghee, honey, and milk, and everything else essential for worshipping the Lord. The different gifts and fragrant articles for the devotees and the Lord were then distributed in the proper ways. The kirtan began at midday. At that time everyone chanted "Hari! Hari!" and the mridanga made the whole kirtan auspicious. Thus swims Parameshavara Dasa in the rasik pastimes of the Lord.

After Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa and went to live in Jagannatha Puri, Sri Advaita Acharya and Sita Thakurani used to go and visit him each year, bringing their son Achyutananda with them. On one such occasion, Sita Thakurani prepared some of the Lord's favorite preparations for him and invited Him to their home to take lunch. Simply to increase their ecstasy, the Lord, who was always absorbed in Krishna Nama, honored their invitation and took lunch in the home of Advaita and Sita.

Sita Thakurani, being always overwhelmed with vatsalya-prema treated him as affectionately as if he were her own son. The Lord himself also treated her with the same kind of regard and affection that he had for Sacidevi herself. Sri Sita Thakurani bore three sons, Achyutananda, Krishna Mishra and Gopala Mishra, who were followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

According to Bhakti-Ratnakara, Sri Sita Thakurani's father was Sri Nrishimha Baduri. Sita Thakurani also had a sister, Sri. According to the Gaura-Ganoddesha-Dipika, Sita Thakurani, the wife of Sri Advaita Acharya, is Yogamaya, and her sister Sri is the prakasha, or manifestation, of Yogamaya. (yogamaya bhagavati, grihini tasya sampratam, sita rupenavatirna, "Sri" namni tat prakashatah)

- THE END -

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